



EQUIPPING CHURCH LEADERS
• EAST AFRICA •

1 TIMOTHY: OUTLINE; COMMENTARY; INDUCTIVE TRAINING MANUAL

by

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First Timothy is one of the most important books in the New Testament, both doctrinally and practically. It deals with the most important aspects of our faith: salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ; the importance of prayer; the qualifications to be a leader in the church; and the centrality of Jesus. The book also deals with important practical issues: true versus false teaching; spiritually disciplining one's life; rebuking and counseling people; the church's responsibility to the poor and needy; issues involving church elders; and the gospel and money. This volume contains a detailed outline of, and commentary on, the book of 1 Timothy. The "Inductive Training Manual" is a series of questions on each section of 1 Timothy, designed for small group discussion, to help Christians in general and church leaders in particular evaluate their own spiritual lives and the condition of their churches.

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1 TIMOTHY: OUTLINE

1 Tim 1:1-2:15—False Doctrine vs. Gospel Faithfulness

I. Epistolary Prescript (1:1-2)

- A. From Paul**—an Apostle of Christ Jesus
- B. To Timothy**—Paul’s true child in the faith
- C. Greetings**—“Grace, mercy, and peace”

II. Thematic Introduction: False vs. True Instruction (1:3-11)

A. False teaching in the church (1:3-4)

1. Do not permit men to teach false doctrine
2. Do not let people pay attention to false doctrine
 - a. Myths
 - b. Endless genealogies
3. Effects of false doctrine in the church:
 - a. Causes speculation (argument; controversy)
 - b. Impedes the administration of God (which is by faith)

B. The goal of true instruction is love (1:5)

1. From a pure heart
2. From a good conscience
3. From a sincere faith

C. Those who turn from the goal of true instruction to the Law (1:6-7)

1. Stray after “empty talk”
2. Lack understanding

D. The Law itself is good, if used lawfully (1:8-11)

1. Who the Law is NOT made for: the righteous (1:9a)
2. Who the Law IS made for: the lawbreakers, rebellious, ungodly, sinful, unholy, and profane (1:9b)
3. Examples of those for whom the Law is made: murderers; immoral people; homosexuals; kidnappers; liars; perjurers; and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching (1:9c-10)
4. The standard of sound teaching: the gospel (1:11)
 - a. It is glorious
 - b. It is of God
 - c. It has been entrusted to Paul

III. Paul and the Gospel (1:12-17)

A. Paul’s personal example (1:12-16)

1. Christ blessed Paul (1:12):
 - a. Strengthened him
 - b. Considered him faithful
 - c. Put him into service
2. Paul was not worthy of such blessing (1:13):
 - a. Blasphemer
 - b. Persecutor
 - c. Violent man
3. The bases of Christ’s favor to Paul (1:14):
 - a. Mercy (Paul acted ignorantly in unbelief)
 - b. Grace (more than abundant)
 - c. Faith and love of Christ Jesus
4. Christ saves sinners (of whom Paul is the worst) (1:15)
5. Christ’s saving Paul is an example of his patience for those who believe (1:16)

B. Doxology (1:17)

IV. Command to Remain Faithful (1:18-2:15)

A. Fight the good fight of faith (1:18-19)

1. Paul’s command to Timothy

2. In accordance with previous prophecies
3. Faithfulness and a good conscience go together

B. Rejecting faithfulness and a good conscience shipwrecks one's faith (1:19-20)

1. Hymenaeus and Alexander have rejected the faith
2. Such men have been "handed over to Satan"
3. "Handing over to Satan" may teach them not to blaspheme

C. Faithfulness requires prayer out of a holy life (2:1-15)

1. Prayers should be made on behalf of all people (2:1)
 - a. All types of prayers
 - b. On behalf of all types of people
2. Prayers especially should be made for those who in positions of civil authority (2:2)
 - a. Prayers for those in all positions of authority
 - b. The purpose is that we may be able to live tranquil and godly lives
3. Prayer and godly living facilitate spreading the gospel (2:3-7)
 - a. God desires all men to be saved (2:4)
 - b. Christ is the only mediator between God and men (2:5)
 - c. Christ gave himself as a ransom for all (2:6)
 - d. Paul was appointed a preacher, apostle, and teacher of the gospel to the Gentiles (2:7)
4. Application to men (2:8):
 - a. Pray in all places
 - b. "Lifting up holy hands"
 - c. Without anger and dissension
5. Application to women (2:9-15):
 - a. Dress modestly (2:9-10)
 - b. Do good works
 - c. Quietly receive instruction (2:11)
 - d. "I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man" (2:12):
 - (1) Adam was created first, then Eve (2:13)
 - (2) Eve was deceived, not Adam (2:14)
 - (3) "But she will be saved through the childbearing if they continue in faith, love, sanctity, and self-restraint" (2:15)

1 Tim 3:1-13—The Qualifications to be a Leader in the Church

I. Overseers (elders; bishops; pastors) (3:1-7)

A. Whoever aspires to the office of overseer aspires to a fine work (3:1)

B. To be an overseer, one must be (3:2-7):

1. Above reproach
2. A "one woman man"
3. Temperate
4. Prudent
5. Respectable
6. Hospitable
7. Able to teach
8. Not addicted to wine
9. Not violent
10. Gentle
11. Peaceable
12. Free from the love of money
13. One who manages his own household well
14. Not a new convert
15. A good reputation with those outside the church

II. Deacons (3:8-13)

A. Deacons likewise must be (3:8-10, 12):

1. Dignified
2. Not double-tongued

3. Not addicted to much wine
4. Not fond of sordid gain
5. Holding to the mystery of faith with a clear conscience
6. Tested
7. Beyond reproach
8. “One woman men”
9. Good managers of their children and households

B. Women leaders (3:11)

Women likewise must be:

1. Dignified
2. Not malicious gossips
3. Temperate
4. Faithful in all things

C. Those who serve well as deacons obtain (3:13):

1. A high standing; and
2. Great confidence in the faith

1 Tim 3:14-4:16—True Godliness vs. False Godliness

I. True Godliness (3:14-16)

A. Purpose of writing: How to conduct yourself in the church (3:14-15)

B. Nature and description of the church (3:15)

1. Household of God
2. Church of the Living God
3. Pillar and Support of the Truth

C. Confession of true godliness (3:16)

1. Christ was revealed in the flesh
2. Christ was vindicated in the Spirit
3. Christ was seen by angels
4. Christ was proclaimed among the nations
5. Christ was believed in the world
6. Christ was taken up in glory

II. Apostasy and False Godliness (4:1-7a)

A. Introduction: The Spirit explicitly tells us this message (4:1a)

B. When apostasy will occur: in “later times” (4:1a)

C. Who will fall away: those who pay attention to deceitful spirits (4:1b)

D. Source of apostasy: deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons (4:1b)

E. Means used to cause apostasy: hypocrisy and lies (4:2a)

F. Effect in those who pay attention to the false godliness: a seared conscience (4:2b)

G. Examples of false godliness (4:3a)

1. Forbidding marriage
2. Abstaining from foods

H. Solution to apostasy and false godliness

1. Know the Word of God: test doctrine by the Word (4:3b-5)
2. Teach the Word of God: expose false godliness by means of the Word (4:6)

I. Summary: Have nothing to do with false godliness (4:7a)

III. Disciplines of True Godly Living (4:7b-16)

A. Discipline yourself for true godliness (4:7b-10)

1. Bodily discipline has some value (4:8a)
2. Spiritual discipline is even more important than bodily discipline (4:7b-8b)
 - a. Spiritual discipline holds promise for this life
 - b. Spiritual discipline holds promise for the life to come
 - c. The Life to come is of supreme importance (4:9-10)
 - (1) For it we labor and strive
 - (2) For it we have fixed our hope on the living God

(3) He is the savior who gives us eternal life

B. Prescriptions of spiritual discipline: ten imperatives (4:11-16)

1. Prescribe (command) these things (4:11)
2. Teach these things (4:11)
3. Let no one look down on your youthfulness (4:12a)
4. Show yourself an example of those who believe in:
 - a. Speech
 - b. Conduct
 - c. Love
 - d. Faith
 - e. Purity (4:12b)
5. Give attention to public reading of Scripture, including:
 - a. Exhortation
 - b. Teaching (4:13)
6. Do not neglect your spiritual gift (4:14)
7. Take pains with these things (4:15a)
8. Be absorbed in these things (4:15b)
9. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching (4:16a)
10. Persevere in these things, for this will ensure salvation for:
 - a. Yourself
 - b. Those who hear you (4:16b)

1 Tim 5:1-6:21—Practical Problems and Issues that Church Leaders Face

I. Rebuking/Counseling People (5:1-2)

A. Do not sharply rebuke

B. Treat people like members of your family

1. Older men as fathers
2. Younger men as brothers
3. Older women as mothers
4. Younger women as sisters

C. Treat women “in all purity”

II. Meeting the Material Needs of Worthy Widows (5:3-16)

A. Widows whom the church should support (5:3, 5-7, 16)

1. No other source of support
2. Hope in God
3. Do not lead wanton lifestyles

B. Widows who should be put on “the list” (5:9-10)

1. At least 60 years old
2. Reputation for good works
3. Have shown hospitality
4. Have served others

C. Younger widows should remarry and not be supported by the church (5:11-15)

1. The church should not support younger widows because:
 - a. They have sexual desires and want to remarry (5:11)
 - b. They might set aside their previous pledge of faithfulness (5:12)
 - c. They might become idle and sinful, as some already have done (5:13, 15)
2. Remarriage and bearing children will lead to a lifestyle above reproach (5:14)

D. Family members should support dependent widows (5:4, 8, 16)

1. Children are obligated to support dependent parents and grandparents (5:4)
2. Failure to support dependent parents and grandparents:
 - a. Amounts to a denial of the faith (5:8)
 - b. Burdens the church (5:16)

III. Dealing with Church Elders (5:17-25)

A. Elders who preach and teach should be paid by the church (5:17-18)

B. Accusations of misconduct against elders (5:19-20)

1. Accusations must be corroborated (“2 or 3 witnesses”)
2. Elders who continue in sin must be publicly rebuked

C. All dealings concerning elders must be done without bias or partiality (5:21)

D. Ordaining elders (5:22, 24-25)

1. Do not ordain (“lay hands on”) someone too quickly (5:22a)
2. By ordaining someone you share responsibility for his sins—so keep yourself pure (5:22b, c)
 - a. A person’s sins will become evident (5:24)
 - b. Likewise, a person’s good deeds will become evident (5:25)

(E. Aside to Timothy: Take some wine for medicinal purposes [5:23])

IV. The Conduct of Slaves in Their Employment (6:1-2a)

A. Slaves should respect their masters: At stake are the reputation of God and the gospel

B. Slaves who have believing masters should serve them all the more:

1. Serve well *because* they are believers
2. Serve well out of love

V. The Gospel and Material Riches (6:2b-19)

A. Teach and preach these principles (6:2b)

B. False teachers (6:3-5b)

1. Their doctrine (6:3)
 - a. Is not orthodox
 - b. Does not agree with the teachings of Christ
 - c. Does not conform to godliness
2. Their nature (6:4a, 5b)
 - a. Conceited
 - b. Lack understanding
 - c. Depraved minds
 - d. Deprived of the truth
3. Their interests (6:4b)
 - a. Controversial questions
 - b. Disputes about words
4. Their results (6:4c-5a)
 - a. Envy
 - b. Strife
 - c. Abusive language
 - d. Evil suspicions
 - e. Constant friction
5. Their motivation (6:5c): godliness is a means of “gain” (i.e., godliness is a means of gaining material riches)

C. The true relationship between godliness and material riches (6:6-10)

1. Godliness is “great gain” (i.e., godliness is gaining eternal life) (6:6a)
2. The “great gain” of godliness requires contentment with what one has (6:6b-8)
 - a. We brought nothing into the world (6:7)
 - b. We cannot take anything out of the world (6:7)
 - c. Therefore, if we have food and clothing we should be content (6:8)

D. The dangers of desiring to be materially wealthy (6:9-10)

1. Desiring wealth is a trap (6:9)
 - a. The desire for wealth leads to foolish and harmful desires
 - b. Foolish and harmful desires lead people to destruction
2. The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (6:10)
 - a. Longing for wealth causes people to leave the faith
 - b. Longing for wealth causes many griefs

E. The proper response to the lure of material riches and the love of money (6:11-14)

1. Flee from these things (6:11a)
2. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness (6:11b)
3. Remain faithful (i.e., “fight the good fight of faith”) (6:12)

- a. Faithfulness takes hold of eternal life
- b. You were called to this
- c. You confessed your faith before many witnesses
4. Faithfulness involves (6:13-14):
 - a. Keeping the commandment of Christ
 - b. Being without the stain or reproach of sin
 - c. Persevering until Christ appears

(5. Doxology [6:15-16])

F. The proper use of material riches (6:17-19)

1. Proper attitude of those who have material riches (6:17a)
 - a. Do not be conceited
 - b. Do not fix hope on the uncertainty of riches
 - c. Fix hope on God
2. Source of material riches: God (6:17b)
3. Purposes of God's giving people material riches (6:17c-18)
 - a. To enjoy
 - b. To do good
 - c. To be rich in good works
 - d. To be generous
 - e. To share
4. Results of using material riches for good (6:19)
 - a. The givers themselves acquire the treasure of a good foundation for the future
 - b. They take hold of real (eternal) life

VI. Conclusion (6:20-21)

A. Guard what has been entrusted to you (6:20a)

1. Avoid false worldly chatter and arguments (6:20b)
2. Professing false "knowledge" leads some people astray from the faith (6:21a)

B. "Grace be with you" (6:21b)

1 TIMOTHY: COMMENTARY

1 Tim 1:1-2:15—False Doctrine vs. Gospel Faithfulness

1:1-2: ¹*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope,* ²*To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus: 1. "Apostle" refers to someone who has been commissioned and sent out with authority for a specific purpose. It is the noun form of the Greek word *apostellō* ("to send"). The essential meaning of "apostle" is conveyed by such terms as "ambassador," "delegate," or "messenger."

2. Jesus' founding the church on the basis of 12 disciples/12 apostles symbolized that he was founding a new, spiritual Israel. Jesus' selection of 12 disciples/12 apostles (**Matt 10:1-2; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-26**) is symbolic of the 12 tribes of Israel. In fact, on the twelve gates of New Jerusalem are written "*the names of the twelve tribes of Israel*" (**Rev 21:12**), and on twelve foundation stones of New Jerusalem are "*the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb*" (**Rev 21:14**). The apostles themselves recognized the significance of the "12." In **Acts 1:12-26** they concluded that it was necessary to fill Judas Iscariot's position as apostle. Although Paul was an apostle (**Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; 9:1**), the NT (and Paul himself) recognizes a distinction between the apostleship of Paul and "the Twelve" (see **Acts 6:2; 1 Cor 15:5, 8**). This may have to do with the fact that Paul's ministry primarily was to the Gentiles (**Acts 9:15; 13:46; 18:6; Rom 11:13; Gal 1:16; 2:7**), whereas Peter, the evident leader and spokesman of the Twelve, primarily was an apostle to Jews (see **Gal 2:7-8**).

3. The NT recognizes two basic types of apostles: (A) foundational apostles; and (B) church-commissioned apostles. "Foundational" apostles were those apostles who were companions of Jesus, witnesses to the resurrection, and were specifically called to be apostles and witnesses by Jesus (see **Matt 10:1-5; Mark 6:7, 30; Luke 6:13; John 15:27; Acts 1:21-22**). They were able to attest to their special status by performing signs (see **Matt 10:1-8; Mark 6:7; Acts 2:43; 2 Cor 12:12**). Foundational apostles were the leaders of the early church and the "foundation" of the church itself (**Eph 2:19-20**). As such, those with the authority of

foundational apostles have not existed since the original apostles died (only one foundation can be laid for a building). “Church-commissioned” apostles are those men and women who have been delegated by a church to go out and preach the gospel, plant new churches, and build up the church (see **Acts 13:1-3; 14:14; Rom 16:7; 1 Cor 9:5-6; 12:28; 1 Thess 1:1; 2:6**). Both types of apostle are united in a man like Paul (see **Acts 9:1-16; 13:1-3; 1 Cor 9:1; 15:6-10; Gal 1:11-17; 1 Tim 2:7**). Church-commissioned apostles can have no greater authority than being commissioned by the church. The church is the body of Christ on the earth (**1 Cor 12:27; Eph 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Col 1:18**). The church is the temple of the Holy Spirit (**1 Cor 3:16-17**). Christ has ordained the church and given it His authority (**Matt 16:18-19**). Consequently, Christ can be expected to act through His church, not independently of it. By commissioning apostles, the church also provides them with credibility and accountability, both with respect to the church itself and in the eyes of the world.

4. The church needs to test people who call themselves apostles to determine whether they are true or false apostles (1 John 4:1-6; see also 2 Cor 11:3-4, 13; Rev 3:2). Many people today like to appoint themselves as “apostles.” That is contrary to the NT pattern (NT apostles were not self-appointed). Many of these self-appointed “apostles” claim to work miracles. However, even the working of miracles is *not* necessarily a sign that a person is called by God (**Matt 7:15-23; 2 Tim 3:1-9** [see **Exod 7:10-12, 20-22; 8:6-7, 16-19**]). In Africa, “the emergence of African prophets and apostles allowed for the proclamation of the equality of blacks and whites in faith and ministry (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11). It also established the principle of separation of the Christian faith from all colonial political connections.” (Ouedraogo 2006: 1434) Unfortunately, however, “many African prophets and apostles do not take the Bible as the basis for their faith and conduct. . . . They regard [what they claim to be direct revelations from God] as additions to the Bible. However, the Bible warns against making the slightest addition to the word (Rev 22:18-19). . . . Many African prophets and apostles also indulge in a personality cult. . . . Some even claim to be Christ’s successors or even another Christ. Such claims make them objects of worship. Sadly, many of them gain almost total control of the minds of their followers. The NT warns us against such people (Matt 24:11; Jude 4-16).” (Ibid.) Modern “apostles” need to be judged by their teaching (see **Acts 17:11; 1 Tim 6:3-5**) and their lifestyle (see **Matt 20:25-28; Mark 10:42-45; Luke 22:24-27; John 13:12-17; Acts 18:3; 1 Cor 9:11-18; 2 Cor 11:7; 12:13**).

5. Paul is writing in his capacity as, and with the full authority of, an apostle of Christ Jesus. Even though Timothy knew that Paul was an apostle, Paul mentions that fact to emphasize the capacity in which he is writing and to stress the authority of what he is saying. That makes his words and teaching equivalent to the teaching of Jesus Christ himself (see **1 Tim 6:3**). Since this letter was read in the churches (and is still being read today), we need to remember that Paul is still speaking to us as Christ’s apostle.

Christ Jesus, who is our hope: Paul said in **1 Cor 15:19**, “*If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most to be pitied.*” However, Paul recognized that this world and this life are not all that there is. Instead, there is eternity: there will be a new earth, and eternal life (which begins now) for people who have received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. The resurrection of Jesus is the “*first fruits*” and guarantee that those who are Christ’s will be raised and will experience eternal life on the new earth (**1 Cor 15:20-23**).

Timothy, my true child in the faith: 1. Paul first met Timothy in the city of Lystra, at the beginning of his second missionary journey (Acts 16:1-2). That occurred shortly after the important council at Jerusalem. The council had occurred in approximately the year AD 49. Thus, Paul met Timothy in about the year AD 50. First Timothy was probably written about AD 62-63.

2. Timothy was already a believer when he met Paul (Acts 16:1-2; 2 Tim 1:1-5; 3:14-15). Paul took Timothy with him. Thereafter, Timothy travelled and worked closely with Paul throughout Greece, the Roman province of Asia (modern Turkey), and Rome itself (see **Acts 16:3-12; 17:10-15; 19:21-22; 20:4; Phil 1:1; 2:19; Col 1:1; Phlm 1:1; 1 Thess 3:1-2; 2 Tim 4:13**). Timothy appears to have been Paul’s closest companion. He worked with Paul until the time of Paul’s death in about AD 66 (see **2 Tim 4:13**). Timothy is mentioned more frequently than any of the other people whom Paul mentored.

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord: 1. Paul usually begins his epistles with the greeting “grace and peace.” Only in 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy does he add the term “mercy” to his greeting. “Grace” essentially means “undeserved favor” (i.e., receiving a good gift that you have not earned and do not deserve). “Mercy” normally conveys the idea of having compassion on the unfortunate and needy. One commentator distinguished the ideas of “mercy” and “grace” this way: “[Mercy] always deals with what we see of pain, misery and distress, these results of sin, and [grace] always deals with the sin and guilt itself. The one extends relief, the other pardon; the one cures, heals, helps, the other cleanses and reinstates.” (Knight 1992: 66) Since in this context mercy is used along with grace, you can look at mercy as *not* receiving the bad

consequences (i.e., God’s wrath, eternal death, and hell) that you have earned and that you do deserve. “Peace” is the great thing we need: within ourselves; among people; and with God. Only Jesus gives us that peace. The peace that He gives us “*passes all understanding*” (**Phil 4:6-7**) because the peace that comes from Jesus “*is not as the world gives*” (**John 14:27**). The reason is that He unites us to Himself, changes us on the inside, and provides us with the Holy Spirit (**John 14:16-17, 26**), so that we will become like Him (**Rom 8:29**). He therefore gives us the ability to face any difficulty, whether internal or external, with peace, knowing that we are approved by the Father, in Christ, and are secure in His hand (**Rom 8:28-39**).

2. The use of “grace, mercy, and peace” together summarize the tragedy of humanity’s condition and God’s solution to our plight. The Bible views all people as having been one with Adam (“in Adam”), with Adam acting as our head or representative (see **Rom 5:12-19; 1 Cor 15:21-22**; cf. **Heb 7:9-10**). Mankind’s problem is that, as a result of Adam’s sin, the entire human race receives universal “legal” guilt and moral corruption (**Ps 51:5; Jer 17:9; Rom 3:9; 7:14-25**), which leads to universal individual sin (**Rom 3:10-18, 23**), and thereby to universal individual guilt. The exact mechanism of how and why Adam’s posterity have been found guilty and radically corrupted as a result of Adam’s sin is a matter of debate. But the result for all people is that on our own, without Christ, we are “*dead in our trespasses and sins*” (**Eph 2:1**). This means that there is a radical depravity or corruption about every person (also called the power of indwelling sin [see **Rom 7:14-23**]), which affects everything about us, including how we think, reason, speak, act, feel, and relate to people and to God. The result of this corruption is that, apart from Christ’s intervention, all people are: unwilling and unable to come to Christ and believe in him (**John 6:44, 65; Eph 2:8-9**); unwilling and unable even to see the kingdom of God (**John 3:3, 5**); unwilling and unable to submit to God’s law and obey him (**Rom 8:6-8**); unwilling and unable to understand spiritual truth about God (**1 Cor 2:14**); unwilling and unable to please God (**Heb 11:6**); enslaved by sin, the world, the flesh, and the devil (**Rom 6:17; Eph 2:1-3**); devoid of true spiritual life (**Eph 2:1; Col 2:13**); and are subject to God’s wrath and judgment (**Rom 6:16-17; Eph 2:1-3**). Thus, people do not have peace within themselves (they know what they should do but, because of the power of indwelling sin, they do not do it). The result is that there is not peace between different peoples (families, clans, tribes, and nations), and there is not peace between people and God.

3. Humanity’s attempt to solve this problem is through works-based religions. Although there are lots of religions in the world (Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, traditional African religion, etc.) at their core all such religions have the same basis: one must perform certain “works” (e.g., do enough good deeds, make sacrifices, deny oneself certain things, pray five times per day) in order to try to “bridge the gap” between a holy God and sinful man and thereby be accepted by God and achieve life, heaven, or nirvana. All such religions are doomed to failure, because they do not have an accurate understanding of mankind’s true condition. Humanity’s problem is *within us—there is something radically wrong with our “heart”—and we CANNOT change our heart on our own*. No amount of “external” acts (e.g., good deeds, sacrifices, denials of things, prayers) can change our sinful inner nature (see **Col 2:20-23**). The Bible alone accurately understands that, on our own, we have “*no hope and [are] without God in the world*” (**Eph 2:12**).

4. Christianity is unlike any other religion in the world. Christianity alone recognizes that humanity on its own cannot bridge the gap between itself and God. Only God can do what we cannot do—*give us a new heart*. He did this through the person and work of Jesus Christ. Christ was unique in all of history: God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ; Christ was both fully God and fully man at the same time. He alone was without sin. Therefore, he alone had the ability to be a perfect sacrifice for our sin. Christ sacrificed himself for us while we were his *enemies* (**Rom 5:8-10**). On the cross he took our sins, guilt, and the punishment we deserve onto himself. On the other hand, his obedience and righteousness are imputed to us by our faith in him. In other words, he takes all the bad in us, and gives us credit for all the good in him. Jesus was the “second Adam”: just as the first Adam imparted sin to mankind, so Christ imparts forgiveness and life to those who are “in Christ” (**Rom 3:21-26; 5:6-21; Col 2:13-14**). The resurrection of Christ demonstrates that the Father accepted Christ’s sacrifice on our behalf (**John 1:29, 36; 1 Cor 15:20-23, 42-49, 56-57; Heb 9:11-10:18; Rev 5:6-8**). Thus, Christianity, unlike every other religion in the world, is not about what we do for God, or do to try to reach God but is about what God has done for us in Christ. We can only be saved by the free gift of God’s grace through faith in Christ (**Eph 1:3-14; 2:8-9**). God then takes our “hearts of stone” and gives us new “hearts of flesh” (**Ezek 36:26; 2 Cor 3:2-3; 5:17**). He gives us the Holy Spirit who comes to live inside of us (**John 14:16-17; Rom 8:14-15; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16**), and enable us to live a new life in conformity to his will (**Ezek 36:27; Eph 2:10**). Through Christ’s grace and mercy we have peace with God, with other people, and peace within ourselves (see **John 14:26-27; 16:33; Eph 2:14; Phil 4:7; Col 3:15**).

1:3-4: ³As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, ⁴nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give

rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith.

Remain on at Ephesus: Ephesus was the largest and most important city of the Roman province of Asia. It is located on the western coast of modern Turkey. It was the home to one of the “seven wonders of the ancient world,” the temple of the goddess Artemis (or “Diana,” as the Romans called her), and a 25,000 seat theater (see **Acts 19:28-29**). The church at Ephesus was the most strategic and important church in Asia at that time. When Paul first went to Ephesus, he met some disciples already there (**Acts 19:1-7**). He stayed there for two years as his base for spreading the gospel throughout the province of Asia (**Acts 19:8-10**). When Paul returned to Ephesus and then left it for the last time, he departed with the love and affection of the church there (**Acts 20:16-38**). Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus (**1 Cor 16:8**). John recorded Jesus’ words to the church at Ephesus in **Rev 2:1-7**. Because of its importance, Paul had Timothy stay there in order to combat false teaching that was occurring in the church at Ephesus.

Strange doctrines, myths, and genealogies: 1. The word translated as “strange doctrines” is used again in 1 Tim 6:3 (where it is translated as “a different doctrine”). In context, it means “to teach doctrine that is essentially different from Paul’s gospel.” Although the false teaching Paul is referring to is not specifically defined, it appears to relate to: an interest in myths and genealogies [i.e., traditions about peoples’ origins] (**1 Tim 1:4, 4:7; 2 Tim 4:4; Titus 1:14, 3:9**); concern with the Jewish law (**1 Tim 1:7; Titus 1:10, 14, 3:9**); a tendency toward speculation, controversy and argumentation (**1 Tim 1:4, 6; 6:4; 2 Tim 2:14, 16, 23; Titus 1:10; 3:9**); deceptiveness (**1 Tim 4:1-3; 2 Tim 3:6-13; Titus 1:10-13**); immorality (**1 Tim 1:19-20; 2 Tim 2:16, 19 and 2 Tim 3; Titus 1:15-16**); a harsh asceticism forbidding people to get married or eat meat (**1 Tim 4:1-5**); and a desire to get material gain by means of their teaching (**1 Tim 6:5; 2 Tim 3:2, 4; Titus 1:11**). The false teaching may also have included a teaching that the resurrection had already taken place (**2 Tim 2:18**). As one commentator summarized, the false teaching “mixed in portions of aberrant Judaism, speculative superstition, and possibly magic.” (Mounce 2000: lxxv).

2. The issue of “endless genealogies” is particularly important. It is nice to know what family, clan, tribe, race, and nation we are from. We all draw our identities from such things. However, to draw our primary identities from such things is anti-Christian, sinful, and can lead to terrible divisions and evil (e.g., the holocaust against the Jews in World War II and the genocide in Rwanda in 1994). Racialism, tribalism, or ethnic particularism is not acceptable for anyone who takes the name of Christ. Christians of all races and tribes must think of themselves as *Christians* first and as members of ethnic, tribal, national, political, economic, or other categories second. It is true that “blood is thicker than water.” However, for Christians the blood of *Christ* must be seen as the common blood that binds us together, not the blood of family, tribe, or race. In fact, no race, tribe, clan, or other ethnic group has its “own blood”—all people’s blood is red and interchangeable. Any “theology” that has as its primary frame of reference any temporal sociological category (such as race, tribe, sex, or class) cannot be biblical because the gospel is *transcultural* and stands against ethnic particularism (e.g., **Gal 3:28; Eph 2:14-16; Col 3:11; Rev 5:9; 7:9**). Christ’s final “high priestly prayer” before he was crucified was, “*that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me*” (**John 17:21**). There is only one body of Christ, although that one body has many members who all are to work together in harmony (**1 Cor 12:12-26**). Any theology that draws its primary frame of reference from any ethnic, political, economic, or other group identity sets the body of Christ against itself. Christ warned, “*Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand*” (**Matt 12:25**). In short, Christians must see that their lives and how they relate to people of different backgrounds is governed by their theology—and that theology embraces all on equal terms; it is not filtered through the lens of clan, tribe, race, sex, class, or nationality.

1:5: But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

But the goal: 1. The word “but” (Greek = *de*) is a word of contrast. Paul is contrasting the *false* teaching (**1:3-4**), to which one should not pay attention, with the goal of *true* teaching, which should be concentrated on. This theme of the contrast between false and true teaching runs throughout the entire book.

2. Connecting words like “but” are important. They help us to see the author’s flow of thought. They also help us guard against thinking that each verse “stands alone” as a complete unit of thought. The basic “thought-units” in the Bible are paragraphs, not verses. Further, “the key to the meaning of any verse comes from the paragraph, not just from the individual words” (Koukl 2001: n.p.). The reason for this is that “the context frames the verse and gives it specific meaning. . . . This works because of a basic rule of all communication: Meaning always flows from the top down, from the larger units to the smaller units, not the

other way around” (Ibid.). “The paragraph is based around a specific theme. Although this theme can be made up of different elements, these will nevertheless link together to deal with the theme” (Wolvaardt 2005: 99). Words need to be understood in the context of the verses in which they appear; verses need to be interpreted in light of the paragraphs in which they occur; paragraphs need to be interpreted in light of the paragraphs around them; all of these things need to be understood in the light of the theme(s) of the chapters, sections, and book as a whole. This is so important that Koukl puts it this way: the “basic rule” is, “*Never read a Bible verse. Instead, read a paragraph, at least. Always check the context. Observe the flow of thought. Then focus on the verse. . . . It’s the most important practical lesson I’ve ever learned . . . and [the] single most important thing I could ever teach you*” (Koukl 2001: n.p.).

The goal of our instruction is love: 1. If you do not know what your goal is, you will never achieve it. If you are shooting at a target, but don’t know what the target is, you will never hit it. If you are travelling to a certain destination but don’t know where you are going, you will never get there. In this verse Paul has given us the goal of true instruction. That goal is LOVE.

2. Just as Christianity is unlike every other religion in the world by its diagnosis of mankind’s basic problem and by its solution to that problem, so Christianity is unlike every other religion in the world by its goal. Islam’s goal and ideal is *jihad*. Eastern religions (Hinduism and Buddhism) have as their goal “overcoming the world,” through a lack of involvement with the world. Western materialism has as its goal and ideal “personal peace and affluence.” Christianity alone puts the love of other people first.

3. Love is central to Christianity. How important is love? Jesus said that the entire OT depends on these two commandments: “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind,*” and “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*” (Matt 22:36-40). How important is love? On the night before he died, Christ told his disciples, “*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another*” (John 13:34-35). Christ loved people *truly*: he did not just say that he loved them, but showed people he loved them by feeding the hungry, healing the sick, comforting the grieving, and befriending those whom others looked down on. Christ loved people *equally*: he didn’t just show love to fellow Jews but to Samaritans and to gentiles; he showed love to the wealthy, the poor, common working people, and the unlovable. Christ loved people *sacrificially*: he put our interest, even the interest of his enemies, over his own life. He calls on his disciples to love other people truly, equally, and sacrificially. As Paul says, “*Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ*” (Gal 6:2). How important is love? In 1 Cor 13:1-3 Paul says that you can “*speak with the tongues of men and of angels,*” but if you do not have love you are simply “*a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal*”; you can have profound knowledge and powerful faith, but if you do not have love you are “*nothing*”; you can give away all of your possessions to feed the poor and can even give your body to be burned, but if you do not have love it profits you “*nothing*.” He concludes by saying, “*faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love*” (1 Cor 13:13). In Gal 5:14 he said that “*the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’*” How important is love? In 1 John 4:20 John tells us, “*If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.*” In other words, how we show love to people (i.e., how we apply the “second” great commandment [to “love your neighbor as yourself”]) is the test—the outward and visible sign—of whether we really are following the “first” great commandment [to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength”]).

Love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith: The “heart” is the “seat of physical, spiritual, and mental life,” the “center and source of the whole inner life, with its thinking, feeling and volition” (Danker 2000: 508). It is “the center of our being from which our life flows. It is what gives orientation to everything we do” (Willard 1997: 206). The heart indicates the “real us”—who we really are inside. Having a “pure” heart implies not only that we have been forgiven in Christ but that we are being transformed into the image of Christ (Rom 8:29; 12:1-2) by dwelling on “*whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything is worthy of praise*” (Phil 4:8). A “good conscience” implies that we know what we should be doing and we are doing it. A “sincere faith” concerns that which we believe. Mere mental assent to, or belief in, certain facts is not enough. The apostle James says that we are not merely to be “*hearers of the word*” but “*doers of the word*” (Jas 1:22-25). That is the test of whether our faith is “sincere.” In other words, our entire being, inside and out—who we are, what we believe, and how we act—is involved when we become Christians and proceed toward the goal.

1:6-11: ⁶*For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion,* ⁷*wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.* ⁸*But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully,* ⁹*realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers* ¹⁰*and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching,* ¹¹*according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.*

For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion: When one does not keep his eye on the goal, he will stray from the path he should be following, and never will reach the goal. The result will be a “fruitless,” wasted life (**Matt 13:3-23; 21:18-19; Mark 4:2-20; 11:12-14; Luke 3:7-9; 13:6-9; Jude 4, 11-12**). This is important, because Christ said on more than one occasion, “*a tree is known by its fruit*” (**Matt 7:15-20; 12:33-37; Luke 6:43-45; John 15:1-8**; see also **Jas 3:10-12**).

Wanting to be teachers of the Law: To the Jews, the Law of Moses was everything. Their attitude was something like that of Muslims, for whom their *sharia* is everything. The great problem, however, is that *one can never achieve the goal of love by means of the Law*. Our obedience to the law is always only partial, because we have corrupt, sinful hearts. That is why we *cannot* “earn” our salvation by good deeds or obedience to the law. Only Christ perfectly fulfilled God’s law. Only God’s grace and mercy can give us the peace that comes with a restored and right relationship with God and with others.

But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person: In order to understand the epoch-changing significance of the coming of Jesus, an issue of central importance is what effect Christ, His teaching, and His announcement of the kingdom, had with respect to the 10 Commandments and the OT law (Torah) in general, which is the focus of this passage. Paul realized that although the OT law was holy, spiritual, and good (**Rom 7:12, 14, 16**), it was not designed or able to impart life (**Gal 3:21**). In **Gal 3:22-4:11** Paul argues that the Law was a “*pedagogue*” (**2:24-25**), a “*guardian and manager*” (**Gal 4:2**), which had custody over “*minor children*” (**Gal 4:1-3**). It could not justify people (**Rom 3:21; Gal 3:11**). It was not a basis for righteousness (**Gal 3:21**). In fact, if the Law *could* have been the means of life, then Christ did not need to come (see **Gal 3:11-13, 19-24; 4:4-5**). Consequently, Paul tells us that “the law is not made for a righteous person” (**1 Tim 1:9**). The only way one can become righteous is in and through Christ. We can only come to Christ when we recognize our own unrighteousness and our helplessness to achieve righteousness on our own (i.e., by trying to “keep the law”). The law, of course, is for unrighteous people in that it restrains their bad behavior. Theologically, however, the OT Law was designed to have only a temporary and typological function that prepared people for Christ (**Gal 3:15-4:31**; see also **Rom 7:24-25**). First, it demonstrated the holiness and righteousness of God, which was epitomized in Jesus Christ. Second, it showed people that, try as they might, they could not perfectly keep the law. Therefore, it revealed to them that if they were to have right standing with God, it would have to be through some other means. Third, it pointed people to Jesus Christ and God’s grace as the only means of salvation, since only Jesus *could and did* perfectly keep the law, and through grace God imputes Christ’s perfect righteousness to those who are united to Christ by faith.

One commentator puts it like this: “[The function of the law] is that of a custodian who closely regulates and supervises God’s people in a period of spiritual minority. Like the elementary principles of the world [**Gal 4:3, 9**], the Law orders the daily affairs of its wards until sonship is realized. It was established as a temporary but necessary expedient given the operative principle of sin and functions as a ‘bridle’ for a people that are prone to sin, bringing to light the defined will of God as a basis for covenant obligation. With, however, the coming of faith in Christ, the Law’s function as guardian and custodian ceases and the Spirit becomes the internal guiding principle.” (Belleville 1986: 70) Thus, when Jesus appeared, He forced His contemporaries to make a choice: “what does loyalty to Israel’s god mean for a Palestinian Jew faced with the announcement that the long-awaited kingdom is now at last appearing? Jesus’ zealous contemporaries would have said: Torah provides the litmus test of loyalty to Israel’s god and to his covenant. Jesus said: what counts is following me.” (Wright 1996: 381) The same issue still faces us today. That same issue also confronts us today in the practical, ethical, and moral choices that we face: “When the New Testament writers were faced with ethical issues in the various churches to which they wrote, it would have been relatively easy to appeal to the Ten Commandments. This they did not do. Let us state this fact as a rule of thumb: the New Testament basis for ethical decisions is no longer Moses on Sinai but Christ on Calvary. . . . In dealing with ethical issues, indeed all matters of decision making (ethical or otherwise), the question we should ask ourselves is, ‘What course of action or behavior is consistent with the gospel?’” (Goldsworthy 2000: 96) Consequently, it is the gospel to which Paul now turns (**1**

Tim 1:11).

And whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God: In **1:9-10** Paul has listed examples of the type of people and behaviors for whom the law was necessary. None of those behaviors should characterize Christians, because we have been changed on the inside (given a new heart) which will result in changed outward behavior. For us in the New Covenant, the *goal* of “sound teaching” is “love” (**1:5**). The *standard* of “sound teaching” is “the glorious gospel” (**1:11**). The “glorious gospel” is the good news of Christ, i.e., who he is; what he has done; what he is doing; and what he will do. Hence, anything that is contrary to love and Christ is condemned along with the rest of the lawless, unholy, and ungodly people and behaviors listed in **1:9-10**.

1:12-16: ¹²*I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service,* ¹³*even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief;* ¹⁴*and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus.* ¹⁵*It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.* ¹⁶*Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.*

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service: The main clause in this sentence is “*I thank Christ . . . because he considered me faithful [or, ‘trustworthy’].*” The rest of the sentence is made up of subordinate clauses that flow from that. Christ could consider Paul faithful because he knows our end from our beginning. Even from the very beginning of Paul’s conversion, God knew not only where Paul would be a witness for Christ (**Acts 9:15**), but also “*how much he must suffer for My name’s sake*” (**Acts 9:16**; see **2 Cor 11:23-33**). Paul is expressing his amazement and gratitude that God saw him as trustworthy, in light of what Paul had done before he had his encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus (**Acts 9:1-19**). In order to be qualified to be “put into service,” Paul required 14 years of training in Arabia, Syria, and Cilicia (**Gal 1:15-2:1**). We should never look down on training or small beginnings (**Job 8:7**; **Zech 4:10**; **Mark 4:30-32**; **Luke 16:10**). It was only because Paul took the time to be well trained, and proved faithful in the small things, that God entrusted him with bigger things later on.

I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor: Before his conversion to Christ, Paul was a strict Pharisee who had been trained under Gamaliel, the leading rabbi of his day (**Acts 22:3-5**; **Phil 3:5-6**). However, his devotion to the Law led him to become a violent persecutor of Christians (**Acts 8:1-3**; **9:1-2**; **22:4-5**; **Gal 1:13-14**; **Phil 3:6**). He was responsible for the deaths of many Christians (**Acts 26:9-11**). Paul had a mindset similar to a Rwandese *genocidaire*. His life is an example of how the law cannot change a person’s heart but instead hardens it. He was a “blasphemer” because he was using God’s name and God’s law to do the very things that were contrary to God’s own “greatest commandments” (loving God and loving one’s neighbor). He was using God’s name and God’s law to *misrepresent God and God’s character* (God is love—**1 John 4:8**). As a result of his conversion to Christ, Paul went from being a persecutor to being persecuted (**2 Cor 11:23-33**). However, because he had Christ, he “*learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am*” (**Phil 4:11-13**). Paul’s life shows us that even *genocidaires* can be saved and transformed. No one is beyond God’s reach.

Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief: Paul was one of the most well educated men of his day. He knew the Scriptures “backwards and forwards.” Nevertheless, until God opened his heart and mind, Paul (like everyone else) could not even see the kingdom of God (**John 3:3**). We think we know what we are doing, but until God opens our eyes we are all acting “*ignorantly in unbelief.*” Thus, Jesus prayed from the cross, “*Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing*” (**Luke 23:34**).

The grace of our Lord was more than abundant: Paul is using the example of his own life as the paradigm which applies to everyone else. Here Paul applies to himself the “grace” he referred to in **1:2**. God’s grace is greater than the greatest sins (see **1 Cor 15:9-10**). His grace is greater than the greatest pain (see **2 Cor 12:7-10**). It is grace that separates Christianity from every other religion in the world. It is only grace that gives us hope, because on our own we are “*dead in trespasses and sins*” (**Eph 2:1, 5**), and “*There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one*” (**Rom 3:10-12**). Nevertheless, God is “*rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions*”

(**Eph 2:4-5**). Where sin abounds, grace abounds much more (**Rom 5:20-21**).

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners: 1. Who Jesus is, what he came to do, and what he has done, are unique in all of history. “The description of [Christ] as having come ‘into the world’ is an indication that he came from somewhere else. His origin is in heaven (John 6:38).” (Ngewa 2009: 30) Jesus came to earth to do what no one else could do: reconcile a holy God with sinful, rebellious men. No other religious leaders (e.g., Muhammad; Buddha) ever claimed to forgive sins or save sinful people. Jesus had been anticipated in the OT. **Jer 31:31-34** had promised a New Covenant. The New Covenant would be an everlasting covenant in which God would write his law in his people’s hearts; his people would truly know the Lord; and he would forgive their sins and remember them no more (see also **Jer 32:38-40; 50:4-5; Ezek 11:16-20; 36:24-32; 37:15-28**). “When the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son . . . so that he might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (**Gal 4:4-5**; see also **Mark 1:14-15**). At the Last Supper Jesus explicitly stated that he was inaugurating the New Covenant in his blood (**Luke 22:20**; see **1 Cor 11:25**). The covenant was confirmed and finalized on the cross (**Heb 9:12-17**). It was ratified when Jesus rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, and sat down on the throne with the Father (**Heb 10:11-18**). The New Covenant is the only one of God’s covenants which provides for the forgiveness of sins. That is accomplished through Christ, “the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (**John 1:29**; see also **Matt 1:21; Acts 5:31; 1 John 3:5**). Consequently, proclaiming the forgiveness of sins through Christ is central to the Gospel (see **Luke 24:44-49; Acts 2:38; 10:43; 13:38-39; 26:15-18**).

2. This statement again emphasizes the importance of the “goal” (1:5). Samuel Ngewa points out: “The word here translated ‘sinners’ is a very inclusive one and derives from a verb which means ‘to miss the mark’. The image is of someone shooting at a target, which in this case is God’s righteousness. The shot goes wide and lands somewhere else. And we all shoot wide. None of us manages to hit the target, that is, to meet the standard of God’s righteousness (Rom 3:23; 10:3). God’s plan of salvation is to bring us back on target. That is the mission on which Jesus Christ came.” (Ngewa 2009: 30) In **1:5** Paul told us what is the “goal” or “target” or standard of God’s righteousness: love (from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and a sincere faith). Consequently, the “other side of the coin” of forgiving sin, is pointing people toward the goal. That way, they will no longer be missing the mark.

Among whom I am foremost of all: By twice calling himself the “foremost” or “chief” of sinners (**1:15-16**) Paul is making the argument that, “since God saved and transformed me, he can save and transform *anybody*.” Paul understood the great depth of his own sin. He had not used his great education in the Scriptures, position, or power merely to obtain sex or money or more power. Instead, he used all of his great education, position, and power to *attack God* by persecuting Christ and his body, the church. Paul’s education, position, and power meant that he had *no excuses* for what he did. He could not blame a poor upbringing, ignorance, poverty, or any other worldly disadvantage for his sins. Thus, with great humility he declared, “*I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God*” (**1 Cor 15:9**).

Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life: 1. Just as he emphasized the necessity and importance of God’s grace in 1:14, so Paul repeats the necessity and importance of “mercy,” which he had initially referred to in 1:2. In **1:16** he also repeats his claim to be the “foremost” of sinners. His point is that, by showing him mercy, Christ demonstrated “*his perfect patience as an example*.” God had been patient with Paul for Paul’s entire life before his conversion. Before Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus, Paul had showed no sign of “reforming” his violent ways. Yet God did not strike him down. Likewise, God was very patient with us, both before and after our conversion. Are we patient with others?

2. The emphasis on Christ’s “patience” in connection with “eternal life” highlights the fact that eternal life is a way of life, not just a never-ending duration of life. “Eternal life means far more than just a long life; it means a life that is lived in Christ. The number one blessing it gives is God’s presence. We need to stress this point because in many African countries preachers emphasize the material blessings God gives us rather than the fact that God is with us no matter what we may be going through (2 Cor 12:9-10). Because eternal life is more a matter of quality than quantity, we can already begin to enjoy it here on earth, although we will only know all its fullness in the future.” (Ngewa 2009: 31) Because we now are living “in Christ,” we should demonstrate that new life by *how* we live. Patience and longsuffering are marks of love (**1 Cor 13:4**). They are part of the fruit of the Spirit (**Gal 5:22**). We therefore must be patient with others. We must patiently pray for them, point them toward the goal, instruct and counsel them from God’s Word, and show them how to live as Christians.

1:17: Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

1. The immediate context that caused Paul to burst into this doxology (an expression of praise to God), was Christ's *patience* in showing him mercy and saving him. This again indicates that our salvation from beginning to end is a sovereign work of God, not something we are responsible for on our own.

2. Although the references to "the king eternal" and "the only God" might be taken to refer to the Father, the context suggests that Paul is referring to Christ. First, the immediate context is **1:16** which clearly is referring to Christ. Second, Christ *is* God (see **John 1:1; 10:30; 14:6-11; 20:26-29**). He is eternal (see **John 1:1-2; 8:54-58**). His heavenly origin had just been indicated in **1:15**. He is reigning now (see **Acts 2:29-36; 1 Cor 15:20-28; Eph 1:18-22; Heb 1:1-4**). Third, this is the first of three passages in 1 Timothy where Paul focuses on Christ in a detailed way. The others are **3:16** and **6:14-16**. All three passages fit together as a coherent whole. **1:17** speaks of Christ's eternal nature; **3:16** speaks of Christ's incarnation and ascension; **6:14-16** speaks of Christ's second coming. Thus, together all three passages provide a complete theology of Jesus Christ, in correct chronological order!

1:18-20: ¹⁸*This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight,* ¹⁹*keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.* ²⁰*Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.*

In accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you: Evidently, when Timothy was ordained for ministry or missionary work the presbyters of the church and Paul himself (**2 Tim 1:6**) laid hands on him as they commissioned him. Someone had a prophecy relating to Timothy's spiritual gift (**1 Tim 4:14**). The Bible does not tell us what either the prophecy or the spiritual gift was.

Fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience: 1. When we read the Bible, we need to pay attention not only to *what* the author says but *how* he says it. In **1:18-19** Paul does not simply tell Timothy to "remain faithful," although that is the substance of his command. Instead, he tells Timothy to "*fight the good fight*." Paul phrases his command in that way because he knows that remaining faithful is not easy—it is a "fight." We are all tempted to fall into sin or to fall away. Further, the church today, just like the church in Ephesus where Timothy was, faces the problem of false teachers. We must therefore "*fight the good fight*" in a good way, always "*speaking the truth in love*" (**Eph 4:15**). We must know that this fight is a "good fight." Indeed, the fight to remain faithful to the gospel is the best fight of all, because it is the difference between eternal life and death.

2. As we "*fight the good fight*" of "*keeping faith*," we must remember that ours is an inner battle as well as an outer one. Paul mentions the importance of maintaining a "*good conscience*." He had first mentioned a "*good conscience*" in **1:5** in connection with achieving the goal of love. If we do not maintain a good conscience, we cannot achieve the goal. Our inner life has to be consistent with our outward actions. If we do not maintain a good conscience, we turn into hypocrites. Hypocrisy is not "*keeping faith*." Consequently, we need to regularly assess not only *what* we are doing but also *why* we are doing it.

Some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander: 1. Paul warns Timothy to "*fight the good fight*" because the prospect of falling away is always present. Falling away can even happen among leaders in the church. That is why all believers, especially the leaders, should help, encourage, and hold each other accountable. Cell groups or accountability groups are one way to do this. Regularly getting together with mature, trustworthy, Christian friends, where you can "*confess your sins to one another*" (**Jas 5:16**) is another way to remain faithful. However, those leaders who think that they are accountable to no one except God, and who have no human accountability structures, already are in danger of falling away because of their pride. This issue is especially important for leaders, because when their faith is "shipwrecked," they usually take many people—who had been relying on them and looking up to them—down with them.

2. Paul is not afraid to name the names of two well known men, Hymenaeus and Alexander, who had fallen away. The only other references to these men—Hymenaeus (**2 Tim 2:16-18**); Alexander (**2 Tim 4:14-15**)—after 1 Timothy was written, indicate that they were still fallen away, and that by opposing the gospel they had harmed the faith of other people. God knows everyone by name. Those two men have gone down through 2000 years of history as apostates who have a bad name. What kind of a name do we have?

Whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme: 1. Paul does not define what

“handing over to Satan” is, but from other passages we can come to a reasonable conclusion of what it is.

“Handing over to Satan” clearly is a form of church discipline. The only other passage that talks about someone being “*handed over [or ‘delivered’] to Satan*” is **1 Cor 5:5**. There a man was sleeping with his father’s wife. Both **1 Tim 1:20** and **1 Cor 5:5** involved very serious problems within the church: false doctrine of a significant nature (see **1 Tim 1:3-4; 4:1-7a; 6:3-5; 2 Tim 2:16-18**); and a public, sexual scandal (**1 Cor 5:1**).

2. In **2 Cor 2:5-11** Paul appears to be talking about the same situation that he addressed in **1 Cor 5:5**. **2 Cor 2:6** indicates that the “punishment” [i.e., the “handing over to Satan”] had been “inflicted by the majority” (of either the elders of the church at Corinth or by the majority of the church members). Thus, there appears to have been a *disciplinary process* that had been followed. The most likely process is a “progressive discipline” process suggested by **Matt 18:15-17**. The “handing over to Satan” appears to be the final stage of the process, and appears to involve the removal of the unrepentant offender from the church (see **1 Cor 5:2**), perhaps similar to God’s “giving people over” to their sins (see **Rom 1:24, 26, 28**). This indicates that church discipline should not be “excommunication or nothing.” There should be degrees of intervention by the church leaders, and degrees of discipline, based on the severity of the transgression. Factors that church leaders should consider regarding the degree of discipline to impose include: whether the transgression is publicly known or not, the repentance of the offender, whether restitution has been made (which is one indicator of genuine repentance), and other factors.

3. The ultimate purpose of “handing over to Satan,” or any form of church discipline, is the repentance and reformation of the offending party. In **1 Tim 1:20** Paul says that the purpose of “handing over to Satan” is so that the offenders “*will be taught not to blaspheme.*” In **1 Cor 5:5** delivery to Satan was “*for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*” Where the offender *does truly repent and change*, however, Paul says that the church should “*forgive and comfort him, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him*” (**2 Cor 2:7-8**). It is up to the church to determine whether repentance is real or not (see **2 Cor 7:10**). Consequently, even where someone in the church has been “handed over to Satan,” the leaders of the church should maintain contact with that person, counsel him, and try to win him back to the Lord (see **Gal 6:1**).

2:1-7: ¹*First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men,* ²*for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,* ⁴*who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.* ⁵*For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,* ⁶*who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.* ⁷*For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.*

First of all, then: 1. Although Paul is moving to a new subject—prayer—this phrase which begins **2:1** ties what he says in chapter 2 to what he has just said at the end of chapter 1. The Greek word for “then” (Greek = *oun*) typically is translated “therefore.” What Paul is saying is: “Therefore, if you want to remain faithful [i.e., the ‘therefore’ or ‘then’ relates back to what he has just said in **1:18-19**], the matter of first importance is prayer.” In fact, all of chapter 2 (indeed, the rest of the book) can be seen as a commentary about how to remain faithful, and what faithfulness looks like when it is applied by men and women.

2. This opening phrase of **2:1** should remind us that, when we are reading our Bibles, we need to pay attention to the little connecting words. Sometimes the chapter and verse numbers mislead us into thinking that each chapter or verse “stands alone.” The current chapter divisions did not appear until the 1200s; verse numbers for the OT were not introduced until the 1400s; the current NT verse divisions were introduced in 1551 (Metzger and Coogan 1993: 105-07). Because chapter and verse numbers were developed primarily to aid reference, “*they do not always agree with the natural development of thought in the text*” (Ibid.: 105). We need to be looking for the author’s flow of thought which may, as it does here, continue between chapters.

Entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men: The different words for prayer used in **2:1** suggest that all types of prayers be made for all types of people. Our prayer life reflects our relationship with God. Since we are constantly in God’s presence we should always be in communication with him (both talking to him and listening to him). Our prayers should include adoration and praise of God, confession of our sins, thanksgiving for what he has done and will do, as well as requests for ourselves and others. Thus, in **1 Thess 5:16-18** Paul tells us to “*rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.*”

For kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity: Christianity and society mutually affect and influence each other. Consequently, Christians need to be above reproach in how they live so that the government and the non-Christians in society will have no reason to attack the church (see **Matt 22:15-21; Rom 13:1-14; 1 Tim 6:1-2; 1 Pet 2:13-17**). To be able to live “*a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity*” will do much to help the spread of the gospel—and living out and spreading the gospel should always be our primary concern.

Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth: 1. This verse is linked with 2:2-3 and tells us the ultimate reason why we should pray and live godly lives. The way we live is a reflection of Christ and the gospel. God’s desire is for people’s salvation. Our lives are a witness for Christ. If we live lives of “*godliness and dignity*” (**2:2**) we will draw people toward Christ. Therefore, our prayers for all people, especially for leaders, so that we may live godly lives, are ultimately based on the goal of spreading the gospel.

2. This verse must not be taken out of the larger biblical context of God’s plan for salvation. The Bible indicates that, although it is God’s “desire” that all men be saved, *not* all men will, in fact, be saved (see **Matt 7:13-14; 13:24-30, 36-43; 25:31-46**). There are two essential ways to deal with this difference between what God “desires” and what actually happens. One way to deal with this is to say that “*all men*” referred to in **2:4** means “all *kinds* of people”—in other words, “all men *without distinction*” (as to race, tribe, language, economic status, etc.—see **Rev 5:9; 7:9**), *not* “all men *without exception*” (i.e., every single person in the world).

3. The other way to deal with this is to acknowledge that, in some sense, there are “two wills” in God. “We must certainly distinguish between what God would like to see happen and what he actually does will to happen, and both of these things can be spoken of as God’s will” (Marshall 1989: 56). In other words: “Scripture portrays God willing something in one sense which he disapproves in another sense” (Piper 2000: 110). The following examples indicate this: (A) *The death of Christ*—**Luke 22-23** shows that the betrayal and death of Christ were sinful acts inspired by Satan; however, **Acts 2:23, 4:27-28** and **Isa 53:4, 10** indicate that these events were done pursuant to the definite plan and will of God. (B) *The war against the Lamb*—**Rev 17:16-17** states that ten kings will (sinfully) wage war against Christ, but also states that it was God who “*put it in their hearts to execute his purpose.*” (C) *The hardening work of God*—**Exod 8:1** indicates that it was God’s will that Pharaoh let the Israelites leave Egypt. However, **Exod 4:21** and other verses indicate that God willed to harden Pharaoh’s heart. Likewise, **Romans 10-11** indicates that, even though God holds out his hands to Israel for their salvation, he divinely hardens their hearts for a time as part of an overarching plan. (D) *God’s right to restrain evil and his will not to*—**Gen 20:6, 1 Sam 2:22-25, Rom 1:24-28** and other passages indicate that God has the right and power to restrain people’s sins. Sometimes he does, but sometimes he does not. In the latter case, his will is that sin increase (even though sin is contrary to his stated will), in order that he justifiably may punish the sinner. In these and other ways, God’s will in one sense desires one thing, but in another sense he wills the opposite to occur (Piper 2000: 111-19). These “two wills” are sometimes called God’s “prescriptive” [or, “preceptive”] will (i.e., what he prescribes for people to do) and his “decretive” will (i.e., what he actually decrees will happen), or his “revealed” will and his “secret” will. As Ngewa puts it, “The Greek word translated ‘wants’ [in **1 Tim 2:4**] does not mean that this is God’s perfect will, which cannot be thwarted. Rather, Paul uses a word that indicates only God’s general purpose for humanity—he offers salvation to all. To put it another way, Paul is not saying that God wills ‘to save all people’, but that he wills that ‘all be saved’.” (Ngewa 2009: 42) Ngewa illustrates it this way: “Weddings and funerals in Africa are open to anyone who wants to attend. No one is turned away because they are not holding an invitation. Everyone who arrives is welcome . . . In the same way, everyone is invited to enjoy God’s salvation. All who come will be welcomed, but God’s purpose will not be frustrated if some people choose not to be saved.” (Ibid.: 42-43) With respect to salvation, however, it must be understood that, although there is a general invitation to believe in Christ and be saved, *no one*, in fact, will choose to do so on his own. Only those whose hearts have first been changed by God (i.e., regenerated) will respond to him in faith (see **John 3:3; Acts 13:48; Rom 3:9-18; Eph 2:1-9**). As we spread the good news of Christ, God uses us as his instruments to reveal those whom he has chosen, and work in their hearts.

4. **1 Tim 2:4** does not say *why* God desires all men to be saved but does not see to it that all men, in fact, will be saved. The answer to that question affects a host of other issues. The two major theological positions—Calvinism and Arminianism—both agree that God’s choosing not to save everyone, despite his stated “desire” that all be saved, can only be because he “is committed to something even more valuable than saving all” (Piper 2000: 124). They disagree as to what that something is. For Arminians, God’s commitment to respecting human free will overrides his will that all should be saved. Thus, Arminians view the Atonement merely as an *opportunity* for the salvation of *all*, but it does not actually *bring about or guarantee* the salvation of *anyone*. On the other hand, Calvinists recognize that God is much more actively involved in the world than is the God of the

Arminians. God exercises “final control over all calamities and disasters wrought by nature or by man” (e.g., **Amos 3:6; Isa 45:7**), is involved in the suffering of his people (e.g., **1 Pet 3:17, 4:19**), and has an overarching control over the details of one’s life (e.g., **Prov 16:9; Acts 18:21; Jas 4:15**) (see Piper 2000: 119-22). For Calvinists, God’s overriding commitment is the manifestation of his full range of glory in wrath and mercy (**Rom 9:22-23**) and the humbling of man so that man enjoys giving all credit to God for his salvation (**1 Cor 1:29**). Calvinists therefore see that Christ’s death on the cross *actually*, not just hypothetically as the Arminians would have it, atoned for the sins, and guaranteed the salvation of all those whom God has effectively called (see **John 1:12-13; 6:37-39, 44, 65; 10:25-29; Acts 13:48; Rom 8:30**).

For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus: 1. There is a great gap between God and humanity. God created human beings in his own image (**Gen 1:26-27**), and fellowshiped with them in the Garden of Eden (**Gen 2:15-25; 3:8**). God loves the world (**John 3:16**) and desires that people rejoice in him forever as his people, with him as their God (**Ps 144:15; John 10:10; Phil 4:4; Col 1:16; 1 John 2:25; Rev 21:3-4**). Instead of rejoicing in God and fellowshiping with him, all human beings turn away from God and sin and rebel against him (**Gen 3:1-7; Eccl 7:20; Rom 1:18-32; 3:9-18, 23; 8:7; 1 John 1:8, 10; 2:25**). All people have the power of indwelling sin inside of them (**Matt 7:10-11, 15-20; Mark 7:14-23; Rom 7:14-24**). As a result of this, people cannot even meet their own standards, let alone God’s. God is perfect (**Matt 5:48**). He is perfectly: loving (**1 John 4:8**); wise (**Ps 104:24; Rom 11:33-34**); good (**Ps 107:8; Rom 2:4**); holy (**1 Pet 1:15-16; Rev 15:4**); just (**Gen 18:25; Exod 34:6-7; Deut 32:4; Ps 96:13**); and true (**Ps 86:15; 117:2; Heb 6:18**). Because God is perfect and holy, he cannot have fellowship with sin (**Isa 59:2; John 9:31; 1 John 1:5-7**). Instead, in his justice he will judge all those who sin (**Rom 1:18; Eph 5:6; Heb 9:27**). The consequences of sin are death and everlasting separation from God (**Gen 2:17; Ezek 18:4; Matt 25:46; Rom 6:23; Acts 17:30; 2 Thess 1:6-9; Rev 20:11-15**). Because of their sinfulness, it is impossible for people to “earn” or “work” their way into a right relationship with God (**Acts 13:39; Gal 2:16; 3:11; Eph 2:1-3, 12**).

2. Only Jesus Christ is capable of “bridging the gap” between God and mankind, because only Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully man who never sinned. A “mediator” is someone who brings together and reconciles two parties who are opposed to each other. A mediator has to be able to relate to both sides. In the case of God and humanity, Jesus is fully God (**Mark 14:61-64; John 1:1; 5:18; 8:58-59; 10:30-33; 20:28; Col 1:15; 2:9; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:1-3; 2 Pet 1:1; 1 John 5:20**). He can therefore fully relate to God. Jesus is also fully man (**Matt 13:54-57; Luke 2:5-7, 40, 52; John 4:6; 11:35; 19:28, 34; Heb 2:17**). He can therefore fully relate to man. Unlike all other people, Jesus was without sin (**Luke 23:14-15, 41; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 1 Pet 2:21-22; 1 John 3:5**). He can therefore fully represent God to man and can also appeal to God as man. Therefore, only Jesus is capable of being a mediator between holy God and sinful man. He alone is capable of giving people everlasting life and reuniting God and mankind (**John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom 8:34; Col 1:19-20; 1 Tim 1:15; 2:5; Heb 2:14-18; 7:24-27; 9:11-15; 1 John 2:1, 23**).

Who gave Himself as a ransom for all: 1. Jesus took our sins upon himself on the cross (**Isa 53:6; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24**). In sacrificing himself on the cross—bearing our sins even though he had lived a sinless life, and dying on our behalf—Jesus paid the penalty for our sin (**Isa 52:10-11; Matt 27:46; Rom 5:8; Gal 3:13-14; 4:4-5; Col 2:13-14; 1 Pet 3:18; 1 John 1:7; 4:9-10**). Jesus lived the life we should have lived (i.e., one free from sin and fully pleasing to the Father), and died the death we should have died (i.e., bearing the penalty of our sins in our place, so that we wouldn’t have to). God the Father accepted Jesus’ sacrifice of himself on the cross. That is proved by the Resurrection (**Acts 2:22-36; Rom 1:4; 3:21-25; 4:25; Eph 1:18-2:7; Heb 10:11-14; Rev 5:1-14**). Eternal life and a restored relationship with God cannot be “earned,” because we are all sinful and cannot change ourselves from the inside out. Instead, Jesus gives everlasting life and a restored relationship with God as a gift to everyone who believes in him (**John 6:47-51; 10:10; Rom 5:8-21; 6:23; 1 Cor 1:21; 2 Cor 5:18-21; Eph 2:8-9; Col 1:19-22**).

2. The word “ransom” speaks of the payment of a price to secure someone or something; it came to be associated with the price paid to purchase a slave for the purpose of setting him free. The NT indicates that we were slaves to sin (**John 8:34-36; Rom 6:17-20; Eph 2:1-5; 2 Tim 2:25-26**). However, Christ paid the ransom price to purchase us and set us free in him (**Matt 1:21; 1 Cor 6:19-20; Eph 1:7; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 1:18-19; Rev 5:9**).

3. The phrase “for all” can only mean “for all without distinction,” or “for all his sheep,” not “for all without exception.” If Christ actually paid the ransom price for all the sins of all people without exception, then there arises the issue of “double retribution.” In other words, if all people’s sins have been atoned for by Christ, then they have nothing more to pay. It would therefore be unjust to send anyone to hell, since all people’s sins were, in fact, already paid for (just as, if a court imposes a fine on me for some infraction of the law, but my

brother pays the fine in full, then the government has no right to demand a second payment from me, since the full amount of the fine has already been paid). If one were to say, “Unbelievers are being sent to hell because of their unbelief,” then the question is: “Isn’t unbelief a sin?” The answer is, “Yes—unbelief is the essence of sin.” If unbelief is a sin, then it has already been paid for (just as, if my brother paid my fine but I wasn’t aware that he had done so, when I go to court to pay the fine, they would have no right to take the money from me, since the demands of the law had already been satisfied). Consequently, when fitting this verse together with the rest of Scripture that deals with the extent of the Atonement, the logical and biblical position appears to be what is known as the “Particular [or, Limited] Atonement”: Christ’s death actually effected or guaranteed the salvation of everyone “without distinction” for whom he died on the cross (i.e., his sheep—**John 10:25-29**).

2:8-15: ⁸*Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.* ⁹*Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments,* ¹⁰*but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.* ¹¹*A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness.* ¹²*But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.* ¹³*For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve.* ¹⁴*And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.* ¹⁵*But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.*

Beginning in **2:8-9** Paul *applies* what he has been saying about prayer, first to *men* and then to *women*. “The main goal of the instruction in 1 Timothy 2:8-10 is not to command the *act* of prayer (the specific command to pray having already been given in vv. 1-2) but the *demeanor* of both men and women *while* praying and worshipping . . . Paul is dealing with expressions of morality in connection with the religious practices of men and women. He insists that their outward appearance should not be in conflict with their inner character.” (Liefeld 1999: 95)

Therefore I want the men in every place to pray: The word “Therefore” links **2:8** with what has come before. The general context of **2:8** is prayer. The more specific context is prayer that we may live godly lives so that the gospel may spread and people will become saved. Christian men are to set the example. Prayer is not limited to an activity that occurs only on Sundays in church. Rather, because prayer reflects our relationship with Christ, and we are always with him, our Christianity is to be lived out at all times and “*in every place.*” Consequently, since prayer is the matter of first importance in remaining faithful (**2:1**), we should have an attitude of prayer at all times and “*in every place.*”

Lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension: 1. “Lifting up holy hands” is not a requirement about how we have to position our body (i.e., our physical hands) when we are praying. Rather, “*lifting up holy hands*” is a *metaphor* for praying *out of a holy life*. We know this for several reasons: (A) The context is prayer that we can live godly lives. We can therefore expect that when Paul makes a specific application to men, what he says will relate to the context of living a godly life. (B) “Holy” is a spiritual term, not a physical term. Washing one’s physical hands does not make them holy if the person is living a sinful life (see **Prov 6:16-19; Isa 1:10-17**). (C) The next phrase, “*without wrath and dissension,*” relates to and qualifies “*lifting up holy hands.*” That phrase indicates that what matters is the quality of one’s life, not the condition of one’s physical hands. (D) People can pray in any position: bowing the head (**Gen 24:26**); lying on the ground (**Josh 5:15; 7:6**); bending to the ground with head between knees (**1 Kgs 18:42**); kneeling (**Ps 95:6; Dan 6:10**); lifting the hands (**Lam 3:41**). One could pray while standing on one’s head. The position of the body is not important; the condition of the heart is. (E) Unlike the OT, which regulated the *form* of the Israelites’ worship, in the NT there is “an utterly stunning degree of indifference to worship as an outward form and an utterly radical intensification of worship as an inward experience of the heart” (Piper 2003: 215-16). Jesus said, “*an hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father . . . when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth*” (**John 4:21-23**). An important reason for the NT’s lack of external or physical regulations of worship is that “the New Testament is a vision for missions that is usable across thousands of cultures and therefore could not be laden with externals” (Piper 2003: 215). Of course, although the NT does not command specific rituals or bodily positions for prayer or worship, our external behavior does reflect the internal state of one’s heart. Thus, our external behavior can be an important way for us to evaluate our inner spiritual lives, and is also what nonbelievers will look at to evaluate the church, individual Christians, and Christianity in general. Therefore, we should be mindful of how we act, even though (or especially because) the NT gives us great freedom in such external matters.

2. “Without wrath and dissension” is an example of a typical sin of men that prevents them from praying out of a holy life (i.e., prevents them from “lifting up holy hands”). Anger, arguing, fighting, and disputing are typical male attitudes of self-promotion and self-centeredness. They are the exact opposite of an attitude of humility that puts God and his will first. Consequently, men who pray while in an attitude of “*wrath and dissension*” should not expect God to look favorably on them or their prayers.

3. The word translated “dissension” (NASB; “disputing,” NIV; “quarreling,” RSV, ESV) (Greek = *dialogismos*) can also be translated as “doubting” (KJV, NKJV). The basic meaning has to do with the reasoning process: i.e., the verbal exchange that takes place when conflicting ideas are expressed (“dissension, disputing, quarreling”—see **Luke 9:46-47; Phil 2:14**); or reasoning that gives rise to uncertainty (“doubting”—see **Luke 24:38**). Only the context can indicate the proper translation. In **2:8** three reasons suggest that the “dissension/disputing/quarreling” translation appears to be what Paul is getting at: (A) Anger and disputing are related concepts. Disputing is a manifestation of anger. The two words are connected by the word “and.” On the other hand, “doubting” is not closely connected with anger. If “doubting” was the meaning, one would have expected the word “or” between “wrath” and “doubting.” (B) The context of chapter 2 is concerned with one’s attitude and actions *toward other people* insofar as they manifest one’s attitude toward God. In **2:8** the “wrath” is directed toward other people. In **2:9-13** at issue is the impact of women’s behavior on others. In **2:1-7** the bases for the prayers we are to make primarily relate other people (i.e., we are to pray for all because God is concerned with all and pray so that the government and society will let us lead tranquil lives). “Dissension” or “disputing” likewise is something that primarily relates to other people, whereas “doubting” is unlike the thrust of the rest of the examples in the chapter. (C) Paul is discussing men specifically and is dealing with sinful attitudes and behaviors that are typical of men. “Doubting” appears to be a more general concept and is probably equally found in men and women, as opposed to being something typical of men, whereas quarreling or arguing is a much more typical male behavior.

Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly: The word “likewise” (or, “in the same way”), with which Paul begins **2:9** places his discussion concerning women in the same context as his discussion concerning men: namely, prayer—specifically, prayer to live godly lives and prayer out of a holy life. In **2:8** Paul talked about sins that are characteristic of men; in **2:9** he does the same thing regarding women. Although women get angry and argue, such behavior is not as characteristic of women as it is of men. Far more typical of women is concern over their appearance and flaunting their beauty and sexuality. “In verses 9-10 the example is that women’s inner piety should be expressed in good deeds. In ancient Greece, and to some extent still in Paul’s day, lavish dress, hair style, and jewelry were considered inconsistent with moral uprightness and true piety. Thus, Christian women were to dress ‘modestly.’ The description of the clothing, hairstyle, and jewelry suggests two reasons why they were improper. (1) One is inordinate expense. The mention of gold speaks for itself, and the adjective used to describe the inappropriate clothing is ‘expensive.’ (2) The other is traditional association with immoral behavior.” (Liefeld 1999: 95-96) In both cases, by their typical sinful behaviors both men and women draw other people’s attention to themselves and away from the Lord. Such self-centeredness is an attitude of mind and life that is completely contrary to a proper attitude of worship. It does not demonstrate love for God or for our neighbor. If we have such attitudes and behaviors we cannot achieve the goal of love. Paul is making clear that all aspects of our lives—our emotional lives, insisting on getting our own way, and even how we dress—ultimately demonstrate what we really think about Jesus and other people.

Not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, but rather by means of good works: 1. The issue of hair styles (“not with braided hair”) is an example of why we need to pay attention to the historical (cultural) context in which Paul wrote. The historical (or, cultural) context is “the culture, customs, languages, beliefs, and history of the author and his original audience” (Doriani 1996: 31). The historical context provides us with background information that may explain the significance of words, phrases, customs, people, places, and events that the biblical author refers to. The Bible was written on specific occasions, in specific cultures, to specific people, who were facing specific circumstances. However, it was written to serve as a message for all people afterwards. As a result, “The great intellectual challenge to the application of Scripture is *to bridge the gap between the cultures of the Bible and current cultures*” (Doriani 1996: 143). In other words: are biblical imperatives (commands)—even those of the NT—applicable to all people, in all times and places, or were they limited to the particular cultural context in which they were given?

2. Failure to distinguish between what are culturally-specific “relatives” and cross-cultural “absolutes” is a prime cause of the applicational errors of liberalism and legalism. “We do not want to make something that is transcultural into something that is culturally bound. On the other hand, we do not want to make that which is

a cultural non-absolute into an absolute for every culture.” (Webb 2001: 24) *Liberalism* in large part amounts to taking biblical “absolutes,” which apply to the original receivers and also to everyone else, and viewing them only as “relatives” that only applied to the original receivers but may be disregarded by everyone else. Liberals tend to view virtually everything as culturally-bound. *Legalism* is the opposite. Legalists take those parts of the Bible that are “relatives” meant only for the original receivers and view them as “absolutes” which apply to everyone. Typically, legalists look only to the *form* of biblical commands but never consider the cultural context or the underlying principle behind the form. Trying to distinguish between biblical texts that state transcultural “absolutes” (i.e., those which apply to all people in all times and places), and those that are “relatives” or “culturally specific” (i.e., those limited to the particular biblical culture and situation the biblical writer was addressing), or have limited applicability for other reasons—can be very difficult. The cultural context is often not explicitly mentioned in the Bible, because the cultural norms and historical circumstances were well-known by the Bible’s authors and their original readers. That is why materials from outside the Bible, such as commentaries, Bible dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other reference books, may have to be consulted.

3. When it appears that a biblical command is culturally relative we should still determine whether there is a transcultural principle that applies today that underlies the specific command (although the form in which the principle will be applied in our culture will look different from the way the principle was applied in Bible times). The following methodology is based on Doriani (1996: 146-47) and Hays (2001: 30-35). (A) *Determine the original meaning and application.* This requires us to use our hermeneutical and exegetical skills. (B) *Identify the cross-cultural principle behind the specific command.* Determining what was only “relative” to the people to whom the biblical command was given versus what is “absolute” (i.e., applicable not only to the original recipients but to all people or all believers at any place and time) is the heart of the issue. This may require us to distinguish between the *form* of the command and its *substance* (i.e., the meaning, point, “absolute,” or principle behind the command). “When we are in doubt as to whether something is culturally relative or absolute, it is helpful to place it in the context of the wider biblical message” (Wolvaardt 2005: 300). Doing that requires us to have a solid knowledge of the biblical story as a whole, and the ideals, doctrine, and examples that compose it. “The better one’s understanding of the broader message of the Bible, the easier it would be to make a distinction between absolutes and relatives” (Ibid.: 28). In many cases (but by no means all) both the form of the command and the principle behind it may be clear, and may be applied exactly as they are stated, particularly with respect to NT imperatives. However, we must be careful not to “overstate” the command, the principle, or the application. (C) *Discover a similar situation today.* This requires that we be good interpreters of our own culture. In doing this we need to determine relevant differences that may exist between the original audience and believers today. We need to think deeply about *why* a particular situation today is similar to the biblical situation. All OT laws, commands, and rules, and many NT imperatives, *apply by analogy, if they apply at all.* Application is appropriate only to the extent that the biblical and the contemporary situations are, in fact, analogous (i.e., have a significant similarity). (D) *Propose appropriate applications that embody the broader principles.* In making applications we might legitimately: 1. Extend biblical commands. For example, not coveting your neighbor’s donkey (**Exod 20:17**) has extended applications (i.e., don’t covet your neighbor’s car). 2. Change biblical commands that are based on different cultural circumstances. For example, instead of greeting one another with a “holy kiss” (**Rom 16:16**), a sincere handshake or hug might be employed. 3. Limit biblical commands. For example, instead of drinking a little wine for stomach problems (**1 Tim 5:23**) we might use antacid medicine or bottled water or other available drinks. 4. Even reverse biblical commands if a strictly “mechanical” application of the command would be contrary to the reason or principle behind it. For example, in **1 Tim 5:3-16** a widow over the age of sixty with no children or grandchildren, although technically falling within Paul’s requirements, might not be assisted if she received an inheritance, has a pension, or receives government assistance (none of which things Paul mentioned). On the other hand, a younger widow with children might properly be assisted if her children cannot support her (they may be too young, or her family may have disowned her, for example, if she had converted to Christianity from Islam), if she has no prospects of marriage (for example, if she has HIV/AIDS), or for other reasons. (E) *Compare our proposed application to other Scriptures, particularly with NT teaching.* If our application is consistent with several biblical passages, we gain confidence in it. We should be cautious when we encounter a biblical command that seems far removed from any contemporary situation. Biblical examples may confirm, or disconfirm, our proposed application.

4. The historical or cultural context of 2:9-10 and parallel passages indicate that the specifics of Paul’s statements regarding hair and clothing styles are culturally-specific, but the general principle of modesty is transcultural. Blomberg points out, “This ‘dress code’ is a sign that the wealthy women at Ephesus were the primary offenders addressed. They alone would have been able to afford the elaborate hair-dos described. In fact, the Greek text reads more literally, ‘not with braided hair *and* gold or pearls . . .’ There was nothing wrong with braided hair as such, but the ornate coiffure in which jewels were interwoven into the braids, as one way of

hold a woman's hair together, involved hours of attention to one's external appearance and was often accompanied by lavish, costly attire." (Blomberg 1999: 207) Earle adds, "At worst, this is what the prostitutes did. At best, it shows pride and self-centeredness, both of which are contrary to the spirit of Christ." (Earle 1978: 361) Further, **2:9-10** is virtually identical to **1 Pet 3:3-4**, which says that women's "*adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.*" The Greek text "does not include an adjective modifying *clothing (himation)* and the text literally says, 'Let not your adorning be the outward adorning of braiding of hair and wearing of gold or putting on of clothing.' It is incorrect, therefore, to use this text to prohibit women from braiding their hair or wearing gold jewelry, for by the same reasoning one would have to prohibit 'putting on of clothing'. Peter's point is not that any of these are forbidden, but that they should not be a woman's 'adorning', her source of beauty." (Grudem 1988: 140) Similarly, **1 Cor 11:5-6** talks about a woman covering her head because having an uncovered head "*disgraces her head*" and makes her equivalent to a "*woman whose head is shaved,*" and that "*it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved.*" In Paul's culture, a wife convicted of adultery had her head shaved and was reduced to the social status of a prostitute (Winter 2001: 128). In most cultures today, that does not happen. Indeed, in many African cultures many women shave their heads or have very short hair. There is no stigma associated with that at all. As noted earlier, Christianity is designed to be expressed in thousands of very different cultures around the world. Consequently, biblical references to matters like clothing and hair styles strongly indicate that the specific statements are culturally limited (since clothing styles are very different around the world, and even the nature of hair itself differs among different racial groups). However, the broader principles of modesty in dress, and not flaunting one's sexuality or wealth, apply cross-culturally—but the form of the dress, hairstyles, and what is acceptable behavior will differ from culture to culture.

A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression: 1. These verses have raised a huge dispute among biblical scholars concerning the extent to which they are culturally limited or express transcultural principles. All agree that "*quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness*" and "*remain quiet*" cannot possibly mean absolute silence, because elsewhere the Bible talks about women praying and prophesying in the church (see **Acts 21:9**; **1 Cor 11:5**). One of the marks of being filled with the Spirit (which applies equally to men and women—see **Acts 2:17-18**) is "*speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs*" (**Eph 5:18-19**). These verses raise a host of interpretive questions. Ngewa lists many of these issues: "Does this ruling [i.e., Paul's statement '*I do not permit*'] apply to the kingdom of God at all times? The verb is in the present tense, which could either be used to express a universal truth or could be translated 'I am not permitting', implying that this ruling applied only to the circumstances prevailing in the Ephesian church at that time. There is also debate about what exactly Paul meant when he spoke of 'a woman'. Did he possibly mean one particular woman who was in authority over one particular man? Or is he using a generic singular, so that 'a woman' represents all women? If so, does he mean all the Ephesian women who had been led astray by false teachers? Or all the women in Ephesus? Or all the Christian women of his day? Or all Christian women throughout the centuries? Assuming that we can resolve the question of which women are being referred to, we run into another problem. Who were the women not permitted to teach? Was it anyone at all, men in general, their husbands or the overseers? . . . Once we have resolved the problem of whom the women were not to teach, we run into the problem of what it was they were not to teach. The options include that they were not to spread erroneous teaching, nor to teach the truth of the gospel, or not to teach anything at all, including the truth of the gospel." (Ngewa 2009: 52-53) It is no surprise, therefore, that this is a difficult passage, especially given the great "cultural distance" between many contemporary cultures and the specific situation in ancient Ephesus (of which we have relatively little information).

2. The primary issue raised by these verses is the extent to which women may legitimately "teach or exercise authority over a man." Everywhere women have lots of different ministry roles in the church: they teach other women; they teach children in Sunday school; they minister to men and women in many capacities. The essential "bottom line" issue is whether women legitimately should be ordained so as to have the ultimate authority over men as senior pastors or bishops. One book which includes lengthy essays by both male and female scholars on both sides of this issue is James Beck and Craig Blomberg, ed., *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2001). Different denominations have different views on this subject, and differences within denominations also exist. Further, many, many passages, both in the OT and the NT, bear on this issue and would have to be consulted to arrive at an intelligent answer to the question. Without attempting to be at all exhaustive or definitive, the following is a hint at some of the major arguments, and

responses to such arguments, by the two major sides:

<u>Women may serve in all positions</u>		<u>Women should not have ultimate authority</u>
<i>Argument:</i> Gal 3:28 establishes the basic biblical principle that in Christ there are no longer to be sex-based (or other physical or ethnic) distinctions.	==>	<i>Response:</i> It is true that we are all equal in Christ, but that does not preclude differences in roles (e.g., only women can have babies, but men are equally valuable).
↓		
<i>Response:</i> Elsewhere (Romans 5) Paul makes clear that Adam, not Eve, caused humanity’s problem. Eve had not received the command directly from God so she (like most women in Paul’s time) did not have the same “education” that Adam had. Now women can be equally educated. Throughout the Bible primogeniture is overturned. The Greek word for “authority” is a rare word that suggests violence or domination, not the exercise of legitimate authority. This is only Paul’s personal desire for the Ephesian church, not a command for all churches at all times.	<==	<i>Argument:</i> Paul bases his argument about women’s role in the order of creation and the fall, indicating that this is a universal requirement, as opposed to referring to some specific problem limited to the church at Ephesus. Also, even though men were obviously involved in teaching error at Ephesus (see 1 Tim 1:19-20) Paul does not prohibit men from teaching or having authority, but only women.
↓		
<i>Argument:</i> The Bible contains many examples of women in the top levels of leadership: e.g., Deborah (Judges 4 —prophetess and judge over Israel); NT prophetesses in the church (Acts 21:9 ; 1 Cor 11:5); Priscilla (a woman) did teach a man (Apollos) (Acts 18:24-26); Junia (a woman) is called an “apostle” (Rom 16:7).	==>	<i>Response:</i> It is not disputed that women can play many important roles in the church. However, there are no examples of women as senior pastors or bishops in the Bible. Priscilla taught Apollos, but she did so privately in her home with her husband, not publicly from the pulpit. There is at least some evidence that Junia may be “Junias” (a man’s name).
↓		
<i>Response:</i> Paul uses the male gender in 1 Tim 3:2 because most elders are male. However, that does not preclude women from being elders any more than 1 Tim 5:3 , which refers to the church helping widows, precludes the church from helping widowers or other needy people.	<==	<i>Argument:</i> In 1 Tim 3:2 one of the requirements to be an elder in the church is to be “the husband of one wife” (i.e., to be a man). Also, Christ’s Apostles and all of the biblical examples of elders are men.

3. This passage highlights the importance of distinguishing between primary, secondary, and man-made matters. “Primary” matters are those issues that are central to the faith and that all Christians should agree on: the Bible is the word of God; God is Trinity; humanity is radically fallen in sin and cannot save itself; Jesus is fully God and fully man; Christ is the only way to salvation; we are saved only by God’s grace through faith in Christ; we are called to live a life of love. “Secondary” matters are those things that the Bible speaks about but is not absolutely clear about. Secondary matters include such things as: should infants be baptized or only people who profess faith? What should be the form of church government? Is Christ present in a special way during the Lord’s Supper or not? “Man-made” matters are those things that the Bible really does not talk about at all, but people have come up with particular rules or practices on their own. Man-made matters include such things as: the order of worship; the wearing of special clothes; what activities (e.g., music, movies, food and drink) are appropriate for Christians. Differences over secondary and man-made matters do not affect our salvation and should not affect our fellowship. Unfortunately, however, most divisions between denominations and among Christians are over secondary and man-made matters—i.e., the very things that are *least* significant. The issue of women’s role in ministry is a secondary matter. Maintaining close working relations with individual believers, churches, and denominations should not be affected if they differ from our own view on this matter. Christ prayed that we “*may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me*” (**John 17:21**). More unites us than divides us. We need to maintain unity based on the primary matters and have charity toward other believers concerning the secondary and man-made matters.

But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint: This is one of the most obscure and difficult verses in the NT. The above translation by the NASB (which is one of the most literal translations from the Greek) is not literal here. The Greek actually reads: “*but she [singular] will be saved through the childbirth if they [plural] continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.*” The word for “saved” can mean either spiritual salvation (its typical meaning in the NT) or physical preservation (for example, as from a storm—**Acts 27:20**). Here it cannot mean physical preservation during childbirth, because that would mean that the death of any woman as a result of giving birth would prove

that she really was not a believer (which is manifestly untrue). There are two main views of what the phrase “*saved through the childbirth*” means: (A) *The “birth of Messiah” position*: This view takes as its starting point **2:14** which talked about “the woman” who fell into sin. It maintains that **2:15** is the assurance that Eve’s sin was not fatal for her or for all women. Thus, **2:15** grammatically begins where **2:14** left off, by saying “*she* will be saved,” and picks up on the promise given to Eve in **Gen 3:15** that salvation will come through “*your seed*.” That occurred when Mary gave birth to Jesus. This view stresses that Paul could have used a verb for childbearing if he had wanted to talk about women bearing children. But he didn’t do that. Instead, he uses a rare noun for “childbirth.” Further, he places a definite article (“the”) before “childbirth” which indicates that a specific birth (i.e., the Messiah) is in view. On the other hand, in **5:14** when he wanted to say that younger widows in the church should get married and “bear children” he did use a verb (indeed, verb form of the same word he used in **2:15**). The conditional clause (“*if they continue . . .*”) transitions from Eve to women in general (or shows Eve as representative of all women “in transgression” [**2:14**]), to show how the salvation brought about by the birth of Messiah is appropriated by women: through faith (as evidenced by a godly life). (B) *The “women as childbearers” position*: This view picks up on the argument Paul began in **2:11-12**. According to it, **2:15** means that women should not try to usurp men’s role as teachers and authorities. Instead, women should accept and glory in their role as God created and designed them, which is typified by the bearing of children Ngewa’s position is a variant of this. He recognizes that it is awkward to speak of being eternally “saved” through “accepting a role.” Therefore, he accepts the NASB translation of “preserved,” and says that **2:15** means: “If women occupy themselves with childbearing and the challenges that go with it, they will be able to avoid [i.e., will be “preserved” from] the error some women in Ephesus have fallen into. But busyness alone is no guarantee of preservation from error. It needs to go hand in hand with a decision to practice the virtues of ‘faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint’ (NASB). Paul is teaching the women of Ephesus how to stay away from trouble by keeping busy and living Christian lives.” (Ngewa 2009: 56) These “women as childbearers” views stress the similarity of the words used for “childbearing” in **2:15** and **5:14** (they are cognates: i.e., one is the noun form and one is the verb form of the same basic word). They also emphasize that Paul appears to be making a very similar argument in **5:12-15** as he is making here: i.e., by getting married and bearing children, women will avoid trouble, sin, and following Satan.

1 Tim 3:1-13—The Qualifications to be a Leader in the Church

3:1-7: ¹*It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.* ²*An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,* ³*not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.* ⁴*He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity* ⁵*(but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),* ⁶*and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.* ⁷*And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*

The church is a corporate body, not merely a collection of individuals. It therefore requires some structure to operate well and fulfill its mission. The early church had two levels of leadership: the top level, known as elders or overseers; and a second level, known as deacons (see **Phil 1:1**). Any organization is only as good, strong, and successful as its leadership. Paul therefore turns to the requirements for leaders in the church.

If any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do: The Greek word for “overseer” is *episkopos* which is sometimes translated “bishop.” It is equivalent to, and used interchangeably with, *presbuteros* (“elder”) (see **Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7**). Essentially, what is being referred to is the top level of leadership in a local church, whether called pastors, bishops, overseers, or elders. These are the people who generally set policy and engage in the ministry of the word (preaching, teaching, counseling, evangelizing, discipling, etc.). The same requirements apply to those in positions of leadership over several churches. “It is noteworthy that here in 1 Timothy 3:1 Paul defines being an overseer in terms of function (‘a noble task’), not of status or office. He is not encouraging people to seek status but responsibility.” (Liefeld 1999: 116)

An overseer, then, must: Paul lists 15 requirements to be in the top level of church leadership. Two things need to be noted. First, Paul is not saying that to be in leadership a person must meet one, or five, or even a majority of the following requirements. Rather, to be a leader in the church, a person is to meet all of the requirements. Second, what is remarkable about the requirements is that (with the possible exceptions of the ability to teach

and not being a new convert) they are all requirements that *every Christian* should have. There are no special requirements concerning one's level of education, material wealth, or other such "external" matters. Instead, all the requirements relate to the person's *character*. Interestingly, in **1:9-10** Paul listed 15 examples of the unrighteous people for whom the law was made. Here Paul is saying that our character as leaders is to be the *complete opposite* of the type of people who must be subject to the law, because we *are no longer subject* to the old law. Instead, we are to have the character of Christ, because we are subject to the "law of Christ." Our behavior flows out of our character. Just as our character is to be the complete opposite of the unrighteous, so should our behavior be the complete opposite of the types of acts listed in **1:9-10**. The requirements for the position of deacon (**3:8-13**) are virtually identical to those for the position of overseer. People who are in positions of leadership in the church are the most visible representatives of Christ to the congregation and to nonbelievers in the community. Therefore, it is imperative that they have the character of Christ and truly model him by how they live.

Above reproach: The same requirement applies to deacons (**3:10**; see also **5:7**; **6:14**). The word for "above reproach" essentially means that one cannot legitimately be accused of wrongdoing. This implies that the person is clean inside and out. The idea is similar to John's metaphor of "walking in the light" (**1 John 1:5-7**). One aspect of light is its transparency: there is nothing hidden inside of the light; all is clear. In the same way, one who is "above reproach" does not have hidden sin. His inner virtue and character are transparent and clear to all.

The husband of one wife: 1. This requirement does not mean that a man has to be married in order to be an overseer. Neither Jesus nor Paul was married, and both of them obviously were qualified to be overseers in the church. However, if a man is married, he should only have one wife, not be polygamous. A polygamist can be a Christian and can play many important roles in the church (although he should not marry any more wives after he becomes a Christian). The leaders of the church, however, are to model God's ideal. God's ideal for marriage is monogamy (see **Gen 2:18-24**; **Matt 19:3-6**). Marriage is a picture of the relationship between Christ and his bride, the church (**Eph 5:25-32**; **Rev 19:7-8**). Christ has only one bride, and he is faithful to her. The leaders of the church who are married are to be like that.

2. The literal Greek phrase here is "one woman man." The same phrase is used regarding deacons (**3:12**; see also **5:9** ["one man woman"]). This implies that a married man should be faithful to his wife "inside and out." In other words, not only should he not cheat on her by sleeping with other women, but he should not commit "adultery in his heart" by looking with lust on and fantasizing about other women (see **Matt 5:27-28**).

Temperate, prudent: These terms are similar and convey the idea of being sober-minded: i.e., having a sound mind; sound judgment; self-controlled. "Temperate" is also used for women leaders (**3:11**; see also **Titus 1:8**; **2:2, 5**). Leaders must give wise counsel to church members. Those church members need to know that the leaders are thoughtful and that their judgment is not clouded by any improper influences.

Respectable: The word for "respectable" is the same word translated "modestly" in **2:9**. The basic meaning is "orderly," and it is sometimes translated "honorably." People will tend to show leaders respect because of the positions of authority and responsibility that the leaders hold. However, leaders need to ask themselves: "Am I *worthy* of the people's respect?" and "If the people saw what I am like in private, would they still respect me?"

Hospitable: To be "hospitable" essentially means that you love or care for people or strangers (see also **Titus 1:8**; **1 Pet 4:9**). This is important, because a leader needs to know his people well. Knowing their problems, hopes, fears, etc. helps you be a better pastor. Knowing their strengths, weaknesses, gifts, and abilities, helps you raise up new leaders, in order to use all parts of the body in ministry. That builds up and strengthens the entire church. However, hospitality comes at some cost. Many pastors are expected to provide food and shelter to anyone who comes to their home, yet the church provides the pastor with no money or resources to enable the pastor to do this. If the church expects the pastor to provide for anyone who comes to his home, then the church has an obligation to supply the means for the pastor to do so (see **5:17-18**). Further, by being hospitable to all kinds of people (e.g., people from different tribes, economic backgrounds, people with HIV/AIDS) the pastor may alienate some people in the church. That was one of the chief criticisms against Jesus: he was the "*friend of tax collectors and sinners*" (**Matt 11:19**; **Luke 7:34**). That did not stop Jesus from showing love and compassion to all sorts of people. Likewise, it should not stop church leaders from showing hospitality to all sorts of people.

Able to teach: This is the one real difference between the requirements to be an overseer and a deacon. Deacons

may have the ability to teach (Stephen—**Acts 6:8-7:60**; Philip—**Acts 8:4-6, 26-40**), but it is not a requirement for their position. There are many ways in which one can teach: from the pulpit on Sundays or during the week; leading a Sunday school or adult education class; leading a home Bible study or cell group. All of the overseers should be exercising their ability in some way.

Not addicted to wine: The term here indicates one who is “given to” or “addicted to” wine, a drunkard. A similar requirement applies to deacons (**3:8**; see also **Titus 1:7**). Paul’s was a wine-drinking culture. Many parts of the world (e.g., the church in Africa) are not wine-drinking cultures. The principle of not being “given to” or “addicted to” something still applies, even when the leader does not drink any alcoholic beverages at all. Unfortunately, however, many people in the church only focus on wine-drinking, not the underlying principle. Thus, many church leaders may not drink wine, but they are addicted to things like power, manipulation and control of people, fame, etc. Those things are far more damaging to people than is drinking wine. Leaders of the church should not let anything, whether a material substance like wine or a non-material thing like power, control them.

(Not) pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable: “Pugnacious” means “violent” or “a striker,” one who “lashes out” at others. One can be violent in more ways than just with one’s fists—i.e., with the tongue, or even the look he gives others. “Gentle” is the opposite. Many people wrongly think that “gentle” is another word for “weak.” Nothing could be farther from the truth. Jesus was “*gentle and humble in heart*” (**Matt 11:29**), but he was not a weak man. Gentleness takes true strength of character. Jesus demonstrated the strength of gentleness when he was viciously accused but did not lash back at his accusers (see **Matt 26:57-63; 27:11-14**). “Peaceable” indicates someone who is “not contentious” or “not quarrelsome” (see **Titus 3:2**). Leaders should be consensus-builders, not people who always provoke disputes. They should be seeking the mind of Christ and the leading of the Spirit, which will result in unity, rather than always insisting on getting their own way.

Free from the love of money: A similar requirement applies to deacons (**3:8**; see also **Titus 1:7**). Being free from the love of money is clearly a matter of one’s character (see **Heb 13:5**). This is so important that Paul warns about the dangers of the love of money at length in **6:6-11**. In fact, Jesus suggests that the lure of material wealth is perhaps the greatest danger to one’s spiritual state (see **Matt 6:19-24; Mark 10:17-25; Luke 12:13-34; 16:1-13**). The issue is not how much or how little money one has. The issue is: In whom or in what is one placing one’s trust? What is most important? What does one think about, desire, hope for, and dream about? Who or what motivates us? By what do we measure our success?

One who manages his own household well: A similar requirement applies to deacons (**3:12**). Paul is drawing the connection between one’s own household or family and the household or family of God. The reason is that the church is not like a business corporation or government agency, it is a family. We have been adopted into God’s family (**Rom 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5**). In **3:15** he explicitly calls the church the household or family of God. He reinforces that point again in **5:1-2**. Therefore, our own families are the testing grounds that demonstrate our competence in managing God’s family. The issue of the obedience of children (see **3:4**) is not simply whether they are outwardly obedient and respectful. The issue is *why* our children act the way they do. Are they obedient because of love and respect for the parents or out of fear? The issue is whether we manage “well” or not.

Not a new convert: A similar requirement applies to deacons (“*let these men also first be tested*”—**3:10**). Paul reinforces the same idea in **5:22** when he says, “*Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others.*” The idea is that by “laying hands” on someone (i.e., ordaining him to the position of elder in the church) you are vouching for his qualifications and character. The reason Paul gives in **3:6** for not making a new convert an overseer is a matter of character—he might “*become conceited*” if raised to high position too soon. Thus, one needs to get to know the person. Give him a little authority and see if he is faithful in it (“*He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much*”—**Luke 16:10**). If he is faithful, then give him greater authority. What constitutes a “new convert” will differ depending on the circumstances. Paul does not say how long someone has to have been a believer before he can become an overseer. In Paul’s day, when all the believers were new believers, the elders whom Paul and Timothy appointed probably would have been believers for only a few weeks or months. Nevertheless, those who assumed positions of leadership would have been mature, faithful believers of good, godly character.

A good reputation with those outside the church: The church does not just exist for itself. It exists to be “*the salt of the earth*” and “*the light of the world*” (**Matt 5:13-16**). The church is to be “*in the world*” even though it is not “*of the world*” (**John 17:11, 15-16**). Consequently, the reputation we have with nonbelievers in the world is of vital importance. What they see in us will either draw them toward Christ or push them away from Christ. Paul ends the list of requirements the same way he began, by talking about leaders of the church not falling into “reproach.” What Paul sees as most important for the leaders of the church is that they be people of Christ-like *character*. All of the 15 requirements for leadership implicate our character, directly or indirectly. If the churches seriously applied these requirements when choosing their leaders, instead of looking to worldly standards, the churches would probably look different and act differently, from how they look and act today. They would also be far more effective than they are today in bringing people to Christ and in transforming believers into Christ-likeness, because they would be the kind of churches that God wants to see.

3:8-13: ⁸*Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.* ¹⁰*These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.* ¹¹*Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.* ¹²*Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households.* ¹³*For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.*

1. The office of deacons originated in Acts 6:1-7. The role of deacons primarily is one of helps, service, and taking care of the physical needs of the congregation. The term “deacon” comes from the Greek *diakonos* which essentially means those who serve others; assistants, aides (see Danker 2000: 230-31). The role of a deacon is an important spiritual ministry: “To fulfill the goals of the early deacons, three things are necessary: (1) Churches must take initiative to seek men and women who have the moral and spiritual integrity described in 1 Timothy 3. (2) Such people need to have the vision, heart, and will to serve, already demonstrating this before their public appointment in acts of practical kindness. They need to *be* deacons before they are *named* deacons. (3) The church should make this an intentional ministry on behalf of the whole body. It should be visible to the community at large, so that the community may not only *experience* but also *perceive* the loving ministry of the church.” (Liefeld 1999: 138-39)

2. Most of the requirements for deacons have already been discussed above in connection with the requirements for overseers. In fact, Paul uses the word “likewise” at the beginning of **3:8**, the same word with which he began **2:9**. That brings the context of the essential requirement of a good and Christ-like character which overseers must have, as also applying to deacons. To the extent that Paul phrases his requirements for deacons differently than for overseers, his requirements still all focus on the *character* of those who are in the position of deacons, as is seen below.

Men of dignity: The only word that is common to the lists of qualification for elders (**3:4**), deacons (**3:8**), and women (**3:11**) is “dignity” or “dignified” (the verbal form of the Greek word is used in **3:4**; the noun form in **3:8, 11**). The same word occurs at the end of **1 Tim 2:2**. The word means “a manner or mode of behavior that indicates one is above what is ordinary and therefore is *worthy of special respect*.” If the leaders of the church meet the other requirements to be overseers or deacons, then they will be “worthy of special respect.”

Not double-tongued: Essentially the word means “sincere”—not saying one thing to one person and something else to someone else. Trustworthiness is essential for anyone who is a believer and especially so for anyone in a position of leadership in the church.

Holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience: The “*mystery of the faith*” refers to that which had been hidden but now has been revealed: i.e., that salvation is through God’s grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ (see **3:16; Rom 16:25-26**), and that in Christ salvation is given equally to all, Jews and Gentiles alike (see **Eph 3:2-6; Col 1:26-27**). Significantly, even those who are engaged in a ministry of helps and service are to have a clear understanding of “*the mystery of the faith*.” Anyone in church leadership needs to be able to understand and believe the essential aspects of what Christianity is. Even though the “ability to teach” is not required for deacons, all believers need to be able to “*give an account of the hope that is in you*” (**1 Pet 3:15**). That hope is found only in “*the mystery of the faith*” concerning Jesus Christ. Further, deacons (and all those in church leadership) need to maintain “*faith with a clear conscience*.” That is the only way to achieve the goal of love (see **1:5, 19**). Anyone in a position of leadership, whether as overseer or deacon, is an example to others and should be pointing others toward the goal. Therefore, deacons need to “*hold to*” their faith, which implies

that they live it out as well as simply understand and believe it (because if one does not live out his or her faith, that shows he or she really doesn't believe it).

Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things: The Greek word (*gynē*), translated here as “women,” can mean either “wife” or “woman.” Some have viewed this verse as referring to deacons' wives (although there is no comparable reference to overseers' wives). Others see it as referring to female deacons (i.e., deaconesses), such as Phoebe, who is called a “servant” in **Rom 16:1**. In **Rom 16:1** the Greek word translated “servant” is *diakonos*, which is the same word translated “deacon” in **1 Tim 3:8, 12**, although the word has a range of meanings, and does not necessarily mean a person in the office of deacon. The word “likewise” (which also was used in **2:9** and **3:8**) shows the close connection between the women of **3:11** and deacons. Regardless of whether they have an official position or office in the church, women certainly would be necessary for certain tasks and visitation. Consequently, similar requirements of character, faithfulness, and trustworthiness, as have been applied to overseers and male deacons likewise apply to the women.

1 Tim 3:14-4:16—True Godliness vs. False Godliness

3:14-16: ¹⁴*I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long;* ¹⁵*but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.* ¹⁶*By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness:*

*He who was revealed in the flesh,
Was vindicated in the Spirit,
Seen by angels,
Proclaimed among the nations,
Believed on in the world,
Taken up in glory.*

I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself: Paul here explicitly tells us why he is writing this letter. In the Greek text the subject of the verb “conduct” is omitted. Thus, it could be either Timothy specifically, or Christians (especially church leaders) generally. 1 Timothy clearly applies to Christians (especially church leaders) generally, even when exhortations or rules of conduct are addressed to Timothy specifically. Consequently, even the NKJV's “so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself” has general application (i.e., Timothy is representative of church leaders in general).

The household of God: 1. This is the first of three descriptions that Paul gives us of the church. The Greek word he uses (*oikos*) can be translated as either “house” or “household; family.” The church is sometimes compared to a building or temple, although even there it is said to be a “living” or “growing” one (see **1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:20-22; 1 Pet 2:5**). Nevertheless, “household” or “family” appears to be the correct meaning here (see **Heb 3:6; 1 Pet 4:17**). That follows from the connection Paul draws throughout 1 Timothy between one's earthly family and the family of God, all using the same word, *oikos* (**3:4-5, 12; 5:4, 8**). Paul reinforces the “church as a family” idea by using the language of family in **5:1-2**, where he says that older men are to be treated “as a father, the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters.” Further, the very next phrase after “house(hold) of God” is “which is the church.” The “church” consists of living people—the living people of the living God. That makes it clear that the church is a family. On the other hand, the “church as a building” idea is indicated in Paul's third description of the church in **3:15** (“the pillar and support of the truth”).

2. The concept of the church as a family has tremendous practical implications. Theologically it is a fact that all believers have been adopted into God's family (**Rom 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5**). Therefore, the church is a family that will be spending eternity together on the new earth. However, from a practical point of view many churches do not act like families. Tribalism, divisions between rich and poor, and disputes and factions based on many other things commonly characterize many local churches. The problem is not limited to division within local churches. If anything, the problem of divisions is worse among the different denominations. This is seriously impeding the church's witness to the world. Our unity or lack of unity directly affects whether the world believes that Jesus is God's Messiah (see **John 17:21, 23**). If the churches do not start treating their own members, and other churches, like beloved members of a common family, then the world will (rightly) continue to mock the church and ask: “Why should we become Christians, since you Christians can't

even stand each other?”

The church of the living God: The word for “church” here is the Greek *ekklēsia*, which basically means “assembly” or “congregation” of Christians, implying interactive membership. The fact that we are the church of the “living God” is important. First, this reinforces the notion that the church is a family, not a building. As Stephen pointed out, “*The Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands*” (Acts 7:48). Instead, he is a living God who dwells in living people (see John 14:17; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16). When we gather together in his name, he is in our midst (Matt 18:20). Second, as the “living God” he imparts life to his people (see John 10:10). We are to “walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:4). This means we are to stop living like worldly, unregenerate people, but we are to lay aside the old self and the old ways and put on the new self and new way of living (see Eph 4:17-32; Col 3:9-17). Only by living like the loving family we are supposed to be, do we show the world (and ourselves) the truth—that God is a “living God,” and that we are his people.

The pillar and support of the truth: As his body on the earth, the church is a “pillar and support of the truth” of the gospel. A “support” (or, “foundation”) holds a building firm; a “pillar” not only supports the roof, but raises it so that it may be seen from a distance. These terms speak of the importance of the church’s teaching the Word of God (which “is the truth”—John 17:17) and holding firm against false doctrine, and also of the church’s witness for Christ (who is “the way, and the truth, and the life”—John 14:6) by going and making disciples of all the nations (see Matt 28:18-20; Rev 5:9; 7:9). However, the church as “pillar and support of the truth” also speaks of the importance of how Christians live, because we teach in two ways—by what we say, and by how we live. Generally, how we live is the more important of the two. If our words do not match our lives, then people will reject what we say because we are hypocrites. On the other hand, if individual Christians are faithful in how they live and in their witness for Christ, Christ promises to “make him a pillar in the temple of My God” (Rev 3:12). The three images or descriptions of the church Paul gives us in 3:15 demonstrate the absolute centrality and importance of the church. We need to seriously evaluate how we are doing as a church, and bring ourselves into line with the high calling that Paul has laid out for us.

The mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh . . . taken up in glory: The church is to guard and proclaim the truth. In 3:16 Paul states an early creed or hymn of the church that describes the heart of that truth—and it is all about the person and work of Jesus Christ. Most commentators see it as three couplets of two lines each, based on the parallel contrasts between “flesh” and “spirit,” “angels” and “nations,” “world” and “glory.” A common articulation of this is J. N. D. Kelly’s: “First, Christ incarnate and thus in the form of a servant is seen vindicated at his resurrection [the revelation of Christ]. Secondly, Christ receives the worship of angels and is preached to the nations of mankind, i.e. he is brought to the knowledge of all rational beings, celestial and terrestrial [the proclamation of Christ]. Thirdly, he is accepted both throughout the entire created universe (cf. Col. 1. 23) and in the heavenly realm itself [the reception of Christ].” (Kelly 1960: 92; see Gundry 1970: 208; Ham 2000: 218-28) Some propose variations on this theme. For example, Robert Gundry sees lines 1 and 6 as forming a couplet “which appropriately frames the whole verse,” and lines 2/3 and 4/5 being couplets not based on contrast, but on synthetic parallelism (i.e., they build on each other) (Gundry 1970:208). In other words, “Christ’s justification in the spirit (line 2) leads to the appearance to angels (line 3) [both are in the invisible realm]. Proclamation among the nations (line 4) results in belief in the world (line 5) [both are in the visible realm]. Likewise, Christ’s appearance in the flesh (line 1) reaches its denouement in his ascension to heaven (line 6).” (Ham 2000: 218) Regardless of how one specifically analyzes 3:16, it is clear that the verse focuses on the person and work of Christ, from his incarnation to his resurrection, ascension, and enthronement. This is the heart of the Christian faith. The next major chronological aspect of Christ’s work will be his return to earth (the “Second Coming”), which Paul refers to in 6:14-16.

4:1-7a: ¹But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, ²by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, ³men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; ⁵for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer. ⁶In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following. ⁷But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women.

Paul has just finished describing the “mystery of [true] godliness.” Previously he had discussed in detail

what true faithfulness involves, including: the goal of true instruction (**1:5**); the gospel of salvation by grace (**1:12-17**); the importance of remaining faithful (**1:18-20**); the necessity of prayer arising out of holy lives, so that people may come to the saving knowledge of Christ (**2:1-15**); the requirements of good people to lead the church (**3:1-13**); the nature of the church itself (**3:15**); and the great “mystery of godliness” concerning Jesus Christ, which the church believes and proclaims (**3:16**). Now he turns to the problem of *false godliness*. He had begun 1 Timothy by describing a problem in the church in Ephesus involving false teaching by certain men (**1 Tim 1:3-4, 19-20**). In this next section, Paul gives a detailed examination of the nature of false teaching and false teachers and how to combat them.

But the Spirit explicitly says: Paul here is emphasizing the importance of what he is about to say by stating that it is the Holy Spirit who says this. Unfortunately, in our day: “Others have latched onto this phrase and used it themselves, arguing in support of their own ‘special revelations’ from the Spirit, so that we have a profusion of prophecies in the churches in Africa. These prophecies tend to result in a neglect of reading of the Word, which is the means by which God normally reveals himself to us today. We need to remember the difference between the apostles and us. They had been directly entrusted with the faith by Jesus himself and later put it in writing (2 Tim 1:14). Paul, as an apostle, had received the mystery of the faith directly from the Lord (1 Cor 11:23; Gal 1:11-12).” (Andria 2006: 1473) As indicated earlier, the church has an obligation to “*test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world*” (**1 John 4:1**).

In later times some will fall away from the faith: Whenever the NT talks about the “later times,” the “last days,” or uses similar expressions, it is referring to the time we are living in *now*. Such expressions denote the entire period of time between Christ’s first coming and his Second Coming. Thus, on the Day of Pentecost, when the disciples began speaking in other languages, Peter explained what was happening by quoting from the prophet Joel (**Joel 2:28-32**) who said, “*‘It shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘that I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind’*” (**Acts 2:17**). Thus, the “last days” began at least on the Day of Pentecost. **Heb 1:2** tells us that “*in these last days [God] has spoken to us in His Son*” (see also **1 Pet 1:20**). In **1 John 2:18** John twice says that, even when he was writing, “*it is the last hour.*” **Jude 17-18** expresses a thought similar to Paul’s in **1 Tim 4:1**. He reminds believers that the apostles had warned, “*In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.*” The entire period until Christ returns will be characterized by some people coming to faith, and by others making false professions of faith and falling away (see **Matt 13:24-30, 36-43**). That is why Paul warns again and again in 1 Timothy about false teaching and exhorts Timothy and the other believers to remain faithful (**1:3-4, 6-7, 18-20; 4:1-10; 6:3-5, 11-14, 20-21**).

Paying attention to: In this phrase, Paul tells us *who* will fall away. Those who fall away are those who “*pay attention*” to the false teachers and false teaching. At the beginning of the book Paul admonished Timothy *not* to “*pay attention to myths and endless genealogies*” (**1:4**). On the other hand, in **4:13, 16** Paul exhorts Timothy what he should “*pay attention*” to: “*the reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching*”; and “*yourself and your teaching.*” Scripture is our ultimate source of truth, and the standard by which we live our lives. Consequently, in **4:13, 16** when he tells Timothy what he should “*pay attention*” to, he begins with Scripture. He then repeats “*teaching*” (i.e., what we are to believe) twice, since what we believe will determine how we live. His reference to paying close attention to “*yourself*” indicates that we need to regularly assess our entire lives (thoughts, words, deeds, emotions, desires, loves, hates, etc.) in the light of the gospel and the Bible.

Deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons: Here Paul tells us the ultimate *source* of the false teaching that will lead people astray: “*deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.*” Although human beings are the writers and speakers of false doctrine, behind the human mouthpieces are spirits and demons. This is one manifestation of the fact that behind what we can see exists a great spiritual world, including great spiritual warfare (see **1 Sam 16:14-23; 1 Kgs 22:19-23; 2 Kgs 6:15-18; 19:35; Job 1:6-2:10; Dan 10:1-14; Mark 5:1-20**). Most of the time we are unaware of this, but what we do here on earth has spiritual implications (see **Matt 16:19**).

By means of the hypocrisy of liars: Here Paul tells us the *means* that lead people to fall away: “*the hypocrisy of liars.*” Satan is the “*father of lies*” (**John 8:44**). The prepositional phrase “*by means of*” (which translates the Greek preposition “*en*”) indicates that these false teachers are the *instruments* used to mislead those of the faith. This is one reason why Jesus was so harsh with the Pharisees and other hypocrites: he knew both the ultimate source, and the great, everlasting harm that hypocrisy and falsehood can bring (see **Matt 6:2-5, 16; 15:5-9; 22:15-21; 23:13-33; 24:45-51**). This is also why we need to judge teachers by *what they say* (see **Acts 17:11**) and by *how they live* (see **Matt 7:15-16; Jas 5:1-5**). Just as Satan himself presents himself as “*an angel of*

light” (2 Cor 11:14), false teachers typically come as great “Men of God.” They may claim to do, or even do, great signs and wonders. They may take in millions of dollars on television. However, such men usually live to enrich themselves. They are hypocrites who do not live like Jesus, the apostles, or most Christians down through history have lived. Their hypocrisy is known to the Lord and should be recognized by us. Their use of Jesus’ name does not fool Jesus (see Matt 7:21-23) and should not fool us.

Seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron: This clause describes the *effect* of paying attention to false teachers and false teaching. Their own consciences have been seared (i.e., burned and scarred) as if burned with a hot iron (just like cattle are branded with a hot iron). This has two related effects: (1) Their consciences are affected, so that they now call falsehood truth and no longer have any shame in using the name of Jesus to enrich themselves and lead other people astray. (2) Even more importantly, the branding mark shows who owns them. “These teachers carry Satan’s brand on their consciences, indicating that they belong to someone other than the God the believers belong to” (Ngewa 2009: 88). Those same phenomena will happen to their hearers if they “pay attention” to the false teachers. We all tend to become like the ones we pay attention to. This is the third time in 1 Timothy that Paul has mentioned the “conscience.” In 1:5 he said that part of achieving the goal of love was having a “good conscience.” In 3:9 he talked about “holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.” Now he talks about a “seared conscience.” This should warn us not to pay attention to false teaching, because that will prevent us from achieving the goal of love and will disqualify us from serving the Lord in the church.

Men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods: 1. Here Paul gives two examples of false godliness: forbidding people to get married; and not eating certain foods. The issue of eating (especially eating meat sacrificed to idols) and drinking wine were important issues affecting the early church and are still important issues in many parts of the world. The issue of what to eat goes back to the Mosaic Law. However, Christ freed Christians from the OT Law and declared all foods to be clean (Mark 7:19; Acts 10:9-16; see also Rom 6:14; Gal 3:13; 5:1-6; Col 2:13-14; Heb 7:11-12; 8:13; 10:9). Paul taught in some detail elsewhere about the issue of eating and drinking (see Rom 14:1-23; 1 Cor 8:1-9:4; 10:23-30). Those who forbid others to marry perhaps approached the issue sounding like “angels of light”: e.g., “You would like to be more like Jesus, wouldn’t you? Jesus was not married. So if you want to be really spiritual like him, you must not get married either.” Although such words sound spiritual, they overlook the fact that God created marriage (Gen 2:18-24; Matt 19:3-6). Marriage is a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church (Eph 5:22-32). Although Paul himself was single and, “in view of the present distress” (1 Cor 7:26), thought it better that people remain single, he recognized that marriage is a right and a gift from God (1 Cor 7:7; 9:5). He was not trying “to put a restraint upon you” (1 Cor 7:35). In fact, elsewhere in 1 Timothy he advocates that younger women get married and raise families (5:14).

2. The principles behind false godliness strike at the heart of the person and work of Christ. Paul is not attacking every error, misunderstanding, or wrong opinion that people may have or even that they may teach. In fact, on their face, not marrying and abstaining from certain foods, or other similar practices, may seem unimportant. One might think that Paul is overreacting when he calls such things “doctrines of demons.” Paul is not overreacting. What he is doing is attacking those doctrines, teachings, and rules that, when considered deeply enough, strike at the heart of Christianity and what Christ has done. The principle behind the commands “you cannot get married and you cannot eat certain foods” is fundamentally at odds with Christ for at least two reasons: (A) *Such man-made commands deny the sufficiency of the work of Christ to save and sanctify people.* What Paul is talking about is *not* an individual believer’s personal decision to remain single or to not eat or drink certain things (see Rom 14:1-2; 1 Cor 8:7, 10). Instead, he is talking about *man-made rules or commands to others* that, in effect, say: “If you want to be saved, or if you want to become spiritual or holy, then you cannot get married or eat certain things.” All such rules deny the sufficiency of Christ alone to save and sanctify us. All such rules are unbiblical: they are not contained in the Bible; and they also amount to saying that faith in Christ and obedience to him and his word are not good enough—instead, to such faith and obedience you have to add man’s own rules. We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone (see Eph 2:8-9). We have been freed from the old law (see Rom 6:14; Gal 3:13; 5:1-6; Col 2:13-14; Heb 7:11-12; 8:13; 10:9). We are now subject to the law of Christ (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6; Heb 8:8-13; 9:15). The “law of Christ” is the teachings of Jesus and of the NT writers (see, e.g., John 14:24-26; 16:12-15; 17:8, 18-20; 1 Cor 14:37; Gal 1:11-12; Eph 2:20; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Thess 2:15; 3:6, 14; Heb 2:3; Rev 1:11). Jesus said that if we “abide” or “continue in” his word (not the man-made word of a false teacher), then we “will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:31-32). (B) *Such man-made commands also are contrary to what Christ has done because they create two distinct “classes” of Christians: the “holy” ones who follow the man-made rules,*

and the lower, common ones who do not. Christ came to create “one new man” in him, not two (Eph 2:14-16). All those who are his disciples are his equally (Gal 3:28; Col 3:10-11; Rev 5:9; 7:9). To hold that there are two classes of Christians, first-class Christians and second-class Christians, based on man-made rules not found in the Bible, strikes at what Christ has done. It pits one type of Christian against another and amounts to saying that oneness in Christ is not good enough.

3. Paul dealt with the same type of problem, although a different issue, in Gal 2:11-21 where he even had to oppose Peter. In Galatians the issue was whether Jewish believers could eat with uncircumcised gentile believers. In effect, one party was saying, “In order to be saved you have to submit to the Law of Moses; or, although you might be saved by Christ, in order to keep your salvation you have to submit to the Law of Moses.” Peter was going along with that group, perhaps out of good motives (for example, to not offend Jews, or even to win them to Christ). However, Paul knew that such a position was deadly to Christianity: “In the long term, that would force Christianity to become a subset of Judaism; it would abolish all claims to the exclusive sufficiency of Jesus and his death on behalf of sinners. Gentiles would be driven to become Jews. Peter’s tactics might be finely motivated, but the gospel itself was being jeopardized.” (Carson 2002: 160)

4. The essential questions we must ask concerning all such practices that someone demands of Christians relate to the reason, basis, and presumed effects of such practices. Whether the specific issue is eating or drinking certain things, who we are allowed to associate with, whether we have to wear certain kinds of clothes, what activities are we allowed to do (either in general or on certain days), or other such things, we need to ask such questions as: Why? Where is that command found in the law of Christ? What is the reason you are demanding this? Why is this necessary? and What effect does it supposedly have on my spiritual state if I do it or if I refuse to do it? “Paul had thought long and hard about these things. He was . . . a remarkably flexible man himself. Thus, he could happily circumcise Timothy so that this young man could have as ready access to synagogues as the apostle himself (Acts 16:3). By contrast, Paul refused to allow Titus to be circumcised (Gal. 2:1-5), precisely because the demand for his circumcision was being made in a context that jeopardized the gospel. In other words, if someone argues that a Gentile must be circumcised in order to be a true Christian, Paul forbids it absolutely, because that would annihilate the exclusive sufficiency of Christ; if no one is making that sort of demand, Paul is happy to circumcise a believer if it will advance the interests of the gospel.” (Carson 2002: 160) What was happening in Galatia, and what Paul discusses in 1 Tim 4:1-7a, is the turning of man-made rules into “primary” things. We must know the gospel well enough that we do not shackle people under man-made laws of our own devising, like some false teachers tried to do in Galatia and Ephesus.

Which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer: Here Paul gives the first part of the *solution* to the problem of false teaching: *know the Word of God*—test everything by means of the Word. Christ is truth and his word is truth. The Bible is the standard by which we should evaluate people’s teachings and our lives. A true preacher, teacher, or messenger of God will not contradict God’s written word. If we keep his word, walking closely with God, the Holy Spirit will guide us into the truth (John 14:16-26; 16:13-16; Rom 8:14). We should therefore evaluate any teaching, and any proposed rule for how we are to live, by means of the Bible and the enlightenment that the Holy Spirit gives us through prayer. This shows the absolute necessity of having a good working knowledge of the word. It also gives us another reason why prayer out of a holy life (2:8) is so important.

In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following: 1. This is the second part of Paul’s solution to the problem of false teaching that was causing people to fall away from the faith: *teach the Word of God*—expose false godliness by means of the Word. It is the responsibility of those who are leading the churches to know the Word of God and to teach it. Knowing the difference between the true and the false has eternal implications for people. Since the stakes are so high, Paul frequently reiterates the importance of faithfulness and “teaching” in 1 Timothy (1:3, 5; 3:2; 4:11, 13, 16; 6:2). Proclaiming the true and exposing the false from the Word aids you, the teacher, as well. You will be “*constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.*” This also highlights the importance of *living* what we teach. The “words of the faith” will only “nourish” you if you have been “following” (i.e., paying careful attention to; conforming your own life to) what you have been reading in the Word and teaching to the people. That will cause you to grow in your own faith. However, if you have *not* been living what you have been saying, then you are a hypocrite—which is one of the marks of a *false* teacher. As a leader of the church, you are an example to your people. You are a “living Bible” to them. Most of your people either do not have their own

Bibles or do not read them. The only way they will learn the Word of God is if you teach them truly and model for them what the word looks like when lived out.

2. Being “a good servant of Christ Jesus” also emphasizes that a church leader’s attitude and manner of life are most important. Many leaders of churches like to think of themselves as great “Men of God” who are superior to those in their congregations. However, in **4:6** Paul calls Timothy a “servant” of Christ Jesus. The word for “servant” is the same word that is translated “deacon” in **3:8**: the Greek word *diakonos*. If pastors, elders, overseers, and bishops do not realize that they are first *servants*—servants of Christ and servants of Christ’s people, the church—then they will not be properly representing Christ and will not be properly fulfilling their office. As with so many other things, it comes down to “loving God and loving others.” One does not serve others or demonstrate love by having an attitude of superiority over other people. Christ is our superior. He loves his people and wants us to be his instruments to show them how much he loves them (see **John 13:5-16**). If we truly “love our neighbor as ourself” (**Matt 22:39**) then we will have the same concern and expend the same effort, energy, and expense to insure our neighbor’s well-being as we do for our own. Christ did. He calls the leaders of his church to do the same.

But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women: Paul summarizes this section on apostasy and false godliness, by saying two things. First, one should “*have nothing to do*” with the false (see also **1:4**; **Titus 1:14**). The reason is indicated by a Malgache proverb from Madagascar, “A pot of clean water can’t resist a ladle of dirty water.” In other words, “Even a little dirty water is enough to spoil a container full of clean water. Thus even if there are only a few people whose doctrine will pollute the church, every effort must be made to keep them away from those who hold to pure doctrine.” (Andria 2006: 1470) Second, he *mocks* false teaching by saying that false teaching is nothing but “*fables fit only for old women.*” He again uses the word “myths” that he used in **1:4**. Such stories are incredible and unbelievable. Only gullible and foolish people pay attention to them. However, if your people are not properly taught, they will be the prey of the “*false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves*” (**Matt 7:15**) who “*devour widows’ houses*” (**Luke 20:47**).

4:7b-16: ^{7b}*On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;* ⁸*for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.* ⁹*It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance.* ¹⁰*For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.* ¹¹*Prescribe and teach these things.* ¹²*Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.* ¹³*Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.* ¹⁴*Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.* ¹⁵*Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.* ¹⁶*Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.*

On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness . . . since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come: 1. Paul is here shifting from his discussion of *false godliness* back to *true godliness*—specifically, to how one (especially a church leader) should spiritually discipline his life. The marked contrast in the themes is well brought out by the NASB’s translation of the Greek word *de* (which is usually translated “but”) as “On the other hand.”

2. Although physical discipline is important for living a healthy life, spiritual discipline is of immeasurably greater value because it relates to “the present life and also for the life to come,” whereas physical discipline applies only to this life. “Discipline” implies regularity and effort. Just as that is true with respect to physical exercise, so it should be even more true with respect to spiritual exercise. “The *promise for the present life* is not the equivalent for worldly prosperity, but sums up the blessedness of godliness. Irrespective of his present earthly circumstances, the Christian may fairly be said to have the best of both worlds.” (Guthrie 1990: 107)

For it is for this we labor and strive: Paul is again emphasizing that maintaining a life of faith is not easy. In **1:18** he used the boxing or fighting metaphor “*fight the good fight.*” In **4:7-8** he used the Greek term *gumnaze* for “discipline,” which is an athletic metaphor that “clearly refers to athletic discipline . . . from which we get ‘gymnasium’” (Earle 1978: 373). Now he uses a double metaphor: the employment or work metaphor of “*labor*” and another term “*strive*” (Greek = *agōnizomai*) which was associated with athletic contests. In **Phil**

2:12-16 Paul uses a similar double metaphor when he tells us to “*work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure . . . holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.*” Even though Christ is with us, and in us, and leading us, ours is not to be a life of laziness and passivity but of walking, striving, and persevering in faithfulness.

Because we have fixed our hope on the living God: In **1:1** Paul linked the Father with Christ, who is the Savior (see **Luke 2:11; John 4:42; Acts 5:31; 13:23**), by calling “*God our savior,*” a phrase that is only found in the Pastoral Epistles (see **1 Tim 2:3; 4:10** and **Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4**). In **1:1** he also said that Christ is “*our hope*” (see also **Col 1:27**—Christ is “*the hope of glory*”). Now he reinforces the unity of the Father and Son by saying that it is “*the living God*” who is “*our hope.*” “*The living God*” picks up the same phrase Paul used in **3:15**. “*We have fixed our hope*” is in the Greek perfect active tense, which indicates something done in the past whose effects continue to be felt in the present. In other words, our hope is an ongoing and certain one which affects our lives now and the life to come for which we are “*laboring and striving.*” What Paul is saying here is almost paradoxical, like he said in **Phil 2:12-13** (“*work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God [i.e., the ‘living God’] who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure*”): (1) We have placed our hope, not on this world or the things of this world, but on God. The “rock” on which we have “fixed” our hope is secure and trustworthy, not like hope placed on this world or the things of this world (see **Matt 7:24-27; 1 Tim 6:17**). Our future is secure in him—he has guaranteed all those who are his eternal life (see **Rom 12:39; 1 Cor 15:20-22**). (2) It is *because* our hope is now on God in Christ and our eternal life is secure in him that we are working hard to become like him. Since we know that our future is secure, some people become passive and inactive, not caring about how we live here and now. Contrary to that, Paul says the fact that we know our future is secure in Christ is the very reason why we should be “laboring and striving” to become godly people who do all we can to achieve the goal of love now. The reason is that how we live makes a difference both in our present and in our eternal existence and in the lives of others.

Who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers: This clause has provoked some controversy. In light of the many other passages which indicate that not all people will be eternally saved (see discussion at **2:4**), this cannot mean that God eternally saves “every man without exception.” As with the case for the word “save” itself, “savior” (Greek = *sōtēr*) can refer either to a physical “preserver” or to an eternal “savior” (see discussion at **2:15**). In fact, “the last part of verse 10, which singles out believers as objects of God’s saving power, suggests that the word *Saviour* is here used in a double sense” (Guthrie 1990: 108). Thus, God is indeed the savior (in the sense of “preserver”) of all people. That is his “common grace” which gives everyone life and all the abundance of the world to enjoy (see **Ps 147:8-9; Matt 5:45; Luke 6:35; Acts 14:17; 17:25-28; Col 1:17; Heb 1:2-3**). On the other hand, he is the savior (in the sense of “eternal savior”) of his people (believers; the church). This clause therefore develops the thought of **2:4-6**.

Prescribe and teach these things . . . persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you: 1. **4:11-16** gives “10 commands” (or, “imperatives”) that show what “spiritual discipline” (i.e., **4:7b-10**) looks like in the life of a church leader. Each of these commands is in the Greek imperatival form. They are as follows: (1) “Prescribe” (or, “command”) these things, **4:11**; (2) “Teach” these things, **4:11**; (3) “Let no one look down” on your youthfulness, **4:12**; (4) “Show yourself” an example, **4:12**; (5) “Give attention” to reading Scripture, **4:13**; (6) “Do not neglect” your spiritual gift, **4:14**; (7) “Take pains” with these things, **4:15**; (8) “Be [absorbed]” in these things, **4:15**; (9) “Pay close attention” to yourself and your teaching, **4:16**; (10) “Persevere” in these things, **4:16**.

2. These 10 imperatives may be grouped according to the major themes that Paul has been developing throughout 1 Timothy. Paul has been emphasizing *what we believe and teach* (see **1:3-11; 3:16-4:7a**), and *the character of our lives* (see **1:5; 2:8-3:15**). Through it all, regarding both belief and life, he has been exhorting Timothy to *constancy, faithfulness, perseverance* (see **1:16, 18-20; 4:7b-10; 6:20-21**). Similarly, commands 1, 2, 5, and 9b all relate primarily to doctrine, belief, or teaching. Commands 3, 4, 6, and 9a all relate primarily to character and the way of life. Commands 7, 8, 9 (as a whole), and 10 all are exhortations to constancy, faithfulness, and perseverance.

3. The “teaching” commands implicate all aspects of our lives. When a biblical author repeats himself, it is generally to emphasize something important. That is especially so when an author begins a list of instructions by saying one thing and ends it by saying the same thing. The importance is enhanced even more when the same point is found at the beginning, the end, and also in the middle of the list. Paul has done that here with “teaching,” which is found at the beginning (**4:11**), the middle (**4:13**), and the end (**4:16**) of his 10

commandments of spiritual discipline. It is interesting to see what teaching is coupled with in each of those verses. In **4:11** teaching is coupled with “command” (or, “prescribe”) these things. In other words, the gospel and all of its implications for what we are to believe and how we are to live are not “optional.” For Christians, this is God’s ordained way of life, and the person who proclaims the gospel needs to do so with authority in a serious manner. In **4:13** Paul couples teaching with the public reading of Scripture and “exhortation.” In other words, the authority of our proclamation comes from God’s Word, the Bible. It is not of our own authority as pastors or church leaders. People need to be exhorted *what* to do, but also need to be taught *why* and *how* to do it. If they do not clearly *understand* what the Bible says, we cannot expect them to *do* what it says. In **4:16** Paul couples teaching with “yourself,” i.e., your own life. A pastor’s real authority ultimately resides in the Word of God. However, if his own life is not in conformity with that Word, then the people who hear him will not believe him or follow him. Thus, our lives necessarily must correspond with what we say. We cannot “command” or “exhort” others to do anything that we are not doing ourselves.

4. The “character” commands affect not only the person as an individual but affect his ministry and other people. Older people naturally tend to “look down on” younger people, because younger people do not tend to have the knowledge and experience that comes with age, or the wisdom that comes with knowledge and experience. Paul’s solution to this problem in **4:12** essentially is that “character trumps age and experience.” Consequently, if a younger leader is an “*example to those who believe*” in the essential areas of *speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity*,” then all people, even the old, will look up to him. If a leader’s Christ-like character shines through, even the old will think, “I wish my own son were like that” (or even, “I wish I was more like that myself”). Just as Christ is our example (**1:16**), so we are to be examples to others. Since being an example affects all of the most important aspects of our lives, we must “*pay close attention*” to ourselves (**4:16**). Actions speak louder than words. If we say all the right words, but our own lives do not measure up to what we are teaching, commanding, and exhorting, then the testimony of our own lives will drown out what we say. On the other hand, if we are not particularly gifted speakers, but our own lives shine forth as excellent examples of Christ-like character, then God will use that to enliven our words, and our hearers will understand, believe, and follow us.

5. The commands that exhort us to constancy and faithfulness apply to all aspects of our lives, and they last for as long as we live. In **4:15** the Greek word *meleta*, which is translated “take pains” in the NASB, carries with it the idea of “improve by care or study,” “practice,” “cultivate,” and also the idea of “fix the mind on,” “think about,” “meditate on.” Our whole being—body, mind, and soul—needs to be involved if we are to become the kind of people God wants (and expects) the leaders of his church to be. That is driven home in the next command in **4:15** which literally says “*be in*” these things, and in **4:16** which says “*pay close attention to yourself*.” The importance of not falling back—a theme with which Paul began the book (**1:18-20**), and which will end the book (**6:20-21**)—is stressed in **4:16**, which calls us to *perseverance*.

6. Both **4:15** and **4:16** point out that our faithfulness affects other people. First, *others will see our progress* as we become more Christ-like and get closer to the goal. Not only *will* our progress be “*evident to all*,” but it *should be* evident to all. Second, our faithfulness “*will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you*.” One important aspect of this is that, if Timothy’s life and teaching remain models of faithfulness to Christ, “he and his hearers will be saved, or kept safe from, the damaging influence of the false teachers. These teachers not only taught false doctrine but also lived immoral lives. If Timothy takes care to live a godly life and teach and preach pure doctrine, he will keep those he teaches from being polluted by their influence.” (Ngewa 2009: 106) The same is true for us. This has *eternal* implications. God has given the leaders of his church awesome responsibility regarding the souls and eternal lives of men and women. It is the highest calling one could have. Therefore it requires that all aspects of our lives remain faithful to God and others for as long as we live. If we do that, the result will be incalculable blessedness and joy forever, for ourselves and those whom we have shepherded.

1 Tim 5:1-6:21—Practical Problems and Issues that Church Leaders Face

5:1-2: ¹*Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers,* ²*the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity.*

Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters: 1. This paragraph strongly reinforces the idea of the church as a family, which Paul had mentioned in **3:4-5** and **3:15**. Here Paul is quite specific about how we should view the members of our church family. Often pastors and other church leaders tend to be somewhat distant from the other people in the congregation. From the pulpit, pastors subconsciously may think of

themselves as “up here” and everyone else as just an undifferentiated mass “down there.” However, if we really look at older men and think of our own earthly father, older women as our own earthly mother, younger men as our own earthly brothers, and younger women as our own earthly sisters, the people in the congregation will become much more “personal” to us. We might even start treating them like beloved members of a real family.

2. By differentiating younger and older, men and women, Paul is also recognizing that different types of people need to be (and can be) treated in different ways. Although the word for “older man” (Greek = *presbuteros*) can also be used for “elder” in the sense of “someone in the office of elder or overseer in the church” (as it is used in **5:17, 19**), the context here (i.e., the contrast with younger men, older women, and younger women) makes it clear that the meaning in **5:1** simply is an “older man.” All people, regardless of age or sex, need to be shown love and respect. However, we naturally show (and should show) a certain level of respect and deference to our parents (and older people in general) that we do not typically show to our brothers and sisters (or younger people in general). On the other hand, we typically can be a little “freer” with our siblings (and younger people in general, especially younger men). These dynamics also apply in the church, since the church is a family.

3. People should not be sharply or harshly treated, even when they have done wrong, but should be exhorted and appealed to. The underlying meaning for the word translated “sharply rebuke” literally is “strike at.” Church leaders are not to act that way. Hence, the “*appeal to*” applies to all four categories of people listed in **5:1-2**. The word translated “*appeal to*” is the Greek *parakaleō*. That is the verbal form of the noun translated as “exhortation” in **4:13**. It is often translated as “exhort” or “encourage,” but also carries the meanings of “request,” “implore,” “comfort,” “encourage,” and even of “treat someone in a congenial, conciliatory, or friendly manner” (Danker 2000: 764-66). When having to counsel people or correct errors the leaders of the church must remember always to “speak the truth in love” (**Eph 4:15**). Both sides of that equation are important: truth stated without love is not really truth; love expressed without truth is not really love. That is why it is vital for the leaders of the church to be disciplined spiritually (**4:7b-16**). Then the words they say, and the manner in which they say them, will be true reflections of the Word of God as mediated by the Christ-like character of their lives.

4. Particularly when having to correct older people, there are techniques that can help younger people who are leaders in the church. There are a number of things that a younger pastor can do when having to deal with an older person in the church who is causing trouble. (A) As Paul mentioned in **4:12**, if the pastor is an example of Christ-likeness in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, his authority and level of respect will increase greatly. The young leader then deals with the troublemaker not just with the authority of his position in the church but with the authority of a holy life. (B) Do not simply talk to the person by yourself, but go with older people (whether formal church “elders” or not) whom the troublemaker looks up to and respects. Going to someone with the “strength of numbers” was hinted at by Jesus in **Matt 18:15-20**. When you go with other well-respected people, if the troublemaker does not listen to you, he may listen to the others. They may be able to appeal to him in ways that you had not thought of. The concept of “village elders” who are held in respect by all, which is still honored throughout much of Africa, is a concept that should be used more in the church. (C) Appeal to the troublemaker on the authority of the Word of God. Scripture contains much that addresses how we should be living. For example, **Titus 2** contains admonitions for older men, older women, younger men, and younger women. By showing and discussing the Word of God with the person who has been causing trouble, he may see that his behavior primarily is not against you, or even against the church, but is against God. In all of this, however, remember that the point of counsel and discipline is to “win your brother” (**Matt 18:15**) back to a good, loving, faithful life in the body of Christ.

In all purity: 1. Paul includes this important phrase at the end of this paragraph because sexual temptation is always present, and sexual sin can ruin one’s ministry, family, and church. Sexual sin can be a great problem in the church. It can destroy both the man’s and the woman’s ministry and reputation. Sexual sin is the betrayal of a trust that has been given by God. In fact, one might even argue that because the church is a family (indeed, it is God’s family), sexual sin within the church amounts to *incest* in the family of God.

2. The church should have policies and procedures to help prevent sexual sin from occurring. All people have the power of indwelling sin within them. Therefore, even though we think “it will never happen to me,” it can. That is why Paul specifically warns male leaders to treat female parishioners as they would treat their own mothers and sisters “*in all purity*.” Churches can devise policies to help with this issue. Such policies might include the following: a male leader should never be alone with a female, particularly behind locked or even closed doors; a male leader should deal with females in the church sanctuary or outdoors where others may see; respected females in the church should be trained and commissioned to counsel and deal with the problems of other females; if marriage counseling is done, the pastor should always have his wife or another respected

woman with him, and counseling should always be done couple to couple. Different policies can be made for different circumstances. What works in one church may not work in another. However, all churches need to think about this issue and do something *in advance* to make sure that policies and procedures are in place to help prevent the always-present temptation from bursting into the fire of actual sin. The leaders of one church should find out what other churches and denominations are doing to address this issue. The risks are too great—for the leaders, the women, the families, the church, the name of Christ in the community—to do nothing.

5:3-16: ³*Honor widows who are widows indeed; ⁴but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God. ⁵Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope on God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day. ⁶But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives. ⁷Prescribe these things as well, so that they may be above reproach. ⁸But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. ⁹A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man, ¹⁰having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work. ¹¹But refuse to put younger widows on the list, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married, ¹²thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge. ¹³At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention. ¹⁴Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach; ¹⁵for some have already turned aside to follow Satan. ¹⁶If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, she must assist them and the church must not be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed.*

“Paul’s primary concern in this passage is to help Timothy distinguish between widows whom the church should support and those whom it should not. . . . Paul teaches that the true widow, the widow who should be cared for, must be totally alone, unable to receive any family support, and unwilling to remarry. She must be a godly woman who has set her hope on God, a godliness made evident by her behavior, such as being diligent in her prayers, being faithful to her husband, raising children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping the afflicted, and being truly devoted to a life of good deeds. Also, because the problem in Ephesus involved the younger widows, Paul says that the widow should be at least sixty years old if she is to be enrolled. This does not mean that the church could ignore widows who did not fit these qualifications. It means that the church was not supposed to enter into a formal, lifelong relationship with widows who were not this type of person.” (Mounce 2000: 299)

Honor widows who are widows indeed: The word “honor” and the word “indeed” are important. (The ESV says “*Honor widows who are truly widows.*” The NKJV says “*Honor widows who are really widows.*” The words “truly” or “really” are the important qualifying words there.)

1. The same Greek word, “honor,” in either its verb or noun form, is used in 5:3, 5:17, and 6:1.

Although the same word is used, the three contexts in which that word is used are all different—and the contexts indicate that the word “honor” means something different in each case. In **5:3** the context clearly indicates that “honor” refers to the *material support* of needy widows. That is shown in **5:4-5**, which talks about widows who have children or grandchildren versus widows who are alone and therefore have no means of support. When **5:4** says that children have to “*make some return to their parents,*” what it is saying is that “children are not doing their parents a favour when they care for them—they are *repaying* a debt” (Ngewa 2009: 114). **5:8** likewise points out that family members have a moral obligation to “*provide for his own.*” Failure to do so makes one “*worse than an unbeliever.*” **5:16** summarizes this whole section by repeating that those having dependent widows “*must assist them*” in order that “*the church [is] not be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed.*” In **5:17** “honor” relates to the church’s paying the pastor, as **5:18** makes abundantly clear. In **6:1** “honor” indicates “respect” (by working hard, being on time, etc.), as **6:2** makes clear. Context always determines meaning. That is as true in the Bible as in any other writing (see discussion at **1:5**).

2. The word “indeed” (“truly,” “really”) shows that Paul is making a distinction between different types of widows. By definition, a widow is any woman whose husband has died. Thus, in one sense any woman whose husband has died is a “widow indeed,” or a “true widow” or a “real widow.” However, Paul’s point here is not to define what a widow is. The point of this passage is to describe which widows the church has an obligation to materially assist. Paul realizes that, in his day as in ours, a church may not have the resources to

assist every needy person. Also, there are some widows who do not require assistance. Therefore, Paul is giving us some guidelines to help distinguish those widows whom the church should assist, from those whom it need not assist. In fact, the rest of this passage (i.e., verses 4-16) essentially defines who is a widow “indeed.”

3. This passage is an *example* of assistance to one particular class of needy people. Widows were the most vulnerable and dependent people in ancient society because generally they had been totally dependent on their husbands. The fact that the church should care for certain widows does not mean that the church cannot or should not support other needy people. Paul is giving a more detailed description of the general principle stated in **Jas 1:27**, “*Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.*” The fact that Paul’s reference in **5:3-16** to “widows” is an *example* of the types of needy people that the church should help is seen in **5:4** which refers to “parents,” and in **5:8** which refers to a person providing for “his own.” Both cases extend the principle of helping the needy beyond “widows.” The principles Paul discusses may be adapted and applied to other classes of needy people, such as old men; the unemployed; orphans; the mentally ill; people with HIV/AIDS, etc.

4. The passage consists of five structural units based upon contrasts between those whom the church should support and those whom it should not. (A) Honor widows who are truly widows (**5:3**)—but those with families should be cared for by their families (**5:4**). (B) A true widow has been left alone, has set her hope on God, and continues in prayer (**5:5**)—but those living in self-indulgence are already dead (**5:6**). (C) Prescribe these things so that they may be above reproach (**5:7**)—but if someone does not provide for his own family he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever (**5:8**). (D) Let godly widows of at least 60 years old be put on the list (**5:9-10**)—but do not put younger widows on the list for they are likely to get married and become idle (**5:11-13**). (E) Summary: younger widows should remarry (**5:14-15**); those with families should receive support from them (**5:16a**)—but the church should care for the “true” widows (**5:16b**).

5. The passage deals with three types of people, bracketed at each end by concern for the “true widow,” as follows:

5:3—Support “true widows”

5:4, 7-8, 16a—Family responsibility toward widows

5:5, 9-10—“True widows”

5:6, 11-15—Young and loose-living widows

5:16b—The church will support “true widows”

6. From this passage two principles emerge. (A) *Consider the person’s need.* Is the person seeking assistance “truly needy,” or does the person have family or other means of support? Today government benefits, insurance, pensions, inheritance, or other sources of support may be available. (B) *Consider the person’s attitude, character, or lifestyle.* (1) Is the person humble or arrogant? Is the person planning on continuing in a lifestyle of overt sinfulness or not? Is the person trusting in God or not? (2) Many people who come to the church seeking help will not be Christians and may have lived very sinful lives. If those people come to the church with an attitude of humility, the church should try to help them. By helping them an opening is gained for telling them about Jesus Christ.

A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old: 1. The “age 60” requirement is not a “law” that applies universally. Some churches apply this mechanically, as a clear command to all churches today. However, understanding the historical and cultural context give us a better picture (see discussion at **2:9-10**). “It is important to remember that the Ephesians, like many in Africa today, would generally not have known their exact age. Their society did not keep exact birth records. Thus the age of sixty was simply a round number that Paul probably settled on because in Jewish culture it was considered the start of old age.” (Ngewa 2009: 112) In fact, sixty was the recognized age throughout the ancient world when a person was considered “old” (Knight 1992: 223). Sixty “probably reflects that maximum age in antiquity at which individuals could reasonably be expected to work and provide for themselves” (Blomberg 1999: 209). In the first century fewer than 4% of women lived even to age 50 (Lysaught 2005: 67n.18). They were among the most marginalized of people and had few resources to rely on. “Once a woman was sixty, there was no chance that she would remarry” (Ngewa 2000: 112). By contrast, today, at least in most Western countries, 60 years old is not considered particularly “old.” Further, there are many government and other resources to care for the aged that did not exist in Paul’s day and culture. Consequently, the “sixty years old” requirement implied something far different in Paul’s culture than it does in many cultures today. Finally, the broad literary context of the rest of the Bible does not suggest that either the number sixty, or sixty years of age, has any particular significance (but cf., **Lev 27:1-7** where there was a sliding scale of the cost of redeeming people who had made difficult vows; the cost went down at age sixty). These considerations suggest that the age 60 requirement need not be applied universally as a “law” but may be changed as local circumstances warrant.

2. It is possible that “the list” referred to in **5:9** refers to widows who were enrolled in some official

ministry in exchange for their being supported by the church. “Most likely, being *put on the list* involved formal registration of these widows’ commitment to the church, and of the church’s commitment to support them for as long as they lived. Paul did not want his list to become too long, for then the church might end up breaking its promise. So he restricted the list to widows over sixty. However, he is not saying that the church should not help younger widows in times of desperate need.” (Ngewa 2009: 112-13) Many commentators believe that the “list” referred to an “order or office of widows” in which the enrolled widows were given ecclesiastical duties of prayer and charitable service to others in exchange for being materially cared for by the church. This is so because the requirements in **5:9-10** are not identical to those of **5:5**, and the qualifications listed in **5:9-10** are similar to those for others in formal church ministry (see **1 Tim 3:1-13**). In fact, the church in later centuries did form such an order of widows based on this passage. “The order of widows persisted well into the fourth century. But increasingly common in various parts of early Greek and Latin Christianity was the office of deaconess, in part as an outgrowth of 5:3-10. Women leaders were thought to be particularly well suited for ministries of prayer and practical service, including those in which it would not have been appropriate for men to be involved—especially counseling, visiting, catechizing or baptizing other women.” (Blomberg 1999: 209) Although the text does not strictly demand that interpretation, since the church historically used widows in ministry in exchange for material support, the church today should consider doing something similar. Older people have a wealth of experience and wisdom that can and should be put to use for edifying and building up the rest of the body of Christ.

3. The church should try to help the poor and needy become self-sustaining. (A) *Most needy people would rather be self-sustaining than simply beg for handouts.* The church can help them become self-sustaining. Some suggestions include: (1) Give micro-loans to needy persons. This will require that the recipients have specific, agreed-upon projects. It will also require follow-up and accountability procedures. One potential problem is loans that are not repaid. (2) Offer employment to needy persons. This will require knowing who in your congregation may have a business, needs domestic help, or otherwise can offer employment to people. The church itself may be able to pay people to clean the building and grounds or do other work for the church. The concept of an “order of widows” is another idea. (3) Provide non-cash assistance. The church could be a “storehouse” like the ancient temple was (see **Mal 3:10**), for clothing, non-perishable food, or other needed items. The church should know which members of the congregation could provide food, clothing, or other items to needy people. One PAG Church in Uganda had 43 widows. Instead of giving them money, it bought them goats. After two years the 43 goats had multiplied to become 281 goats. The widows were able to sustain themselves. They had milk. They could sell the goats for money. Some of the widows bought cows as a result of trading or selling goats. As a result, the widows were drawn closer to the church and many have been faithful “prayer-warriors” and givers back to the church. (B) *The church should be aware of other sources of support in its area.* The local church does not have the ability to provide all things to all people. However, it can partner with, or refer needy people to, other organizations that can provide the goods and services that the church itself cannot provide. (1) Other sources of material support include: government agencies; NGOs; Christian and other charitable organizations. (2) Different denominations have benevolence and public-welfare agencies. The Anglican Church has the “Mothers Union.” The PAG in Uganda has the “PAG Planning and Development Secretariate.” (3) Different churches, and churches of different denominations, should work together to meet the needs of their areas. Doing that would also demonstrate unity, which is a basic mission and purpose of the church.

5:17-18: ¹⁷*The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.* ¹⁸*For the Scripture says, “YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING,” and “The laborer is worthy of his wages.”*

The elders . . . double honor: 1. The same Greek word, *presbuteros*, was used in 5:1 and again here in 5:17. However, as is the case with the word “honor,” the two different contexts indicate different meanings. In **5:1** the word is used in its literal or general sense of “older man.” Here the context (those who “*rule well . . . especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching*”) clearly indicates that the word is used in its technical sense of “overseer, pastor, church leader.”

2. In the Bible, the churches were all led by multiple elders, not just by one pastor. In **5:17** “elders” is plural. Similarly, in **4:14** when Timothy was ordained “the presbytery” (or, “board of elders”) laid hands on him. That is the biblical pattern for church leadership: multiple elders, not rule by one man. Wherever the church is mentioned in the book of Acts, and whenever Paul and others formed new churches, they always appointed multiple elders (see **Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2-6, 22-23; 16:4; 20:17-18; 21:18**). That reflects the biblical wisdom that “*in abundance of counselors there is victory [or, wisdom]*” (**Prov 11:14; 26:4**), and as

“iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another” (Prov 27:17). Having multiple elders is important. Everyone has different gifts and abilities; no one man is sufficient. Multiple elders hold each other accountable morally, spiritually, and financially. Further, if church leadership rests just with one person, if something happens to that person the church may collapse. We must remember that the church is not about us, it is about Christ. The church is his body, not ours. We need to make sure that the church is properly led by men and women who are well-qualified (3:1-13). That way, if something happens to the pastor or any of the leaders, the church will be able to carry on well, because it has been built on a strong organizational foundation.

3. The context of “double honor” has to do with paying pastors who preach and teach well. “Double” does not necessarily mean “twice what the widows of 5:3 get,” or “a double salary.” However, it does suggest either “the respect that should be given to a hard-working leader of the church and also financial compensation,” or “ample provision” for a good and competent pastor. Although the contexts of both 5:3 and 5:17 indicate that “honor” involves material assistance, there is a difference between the two. In 5:3 one qualification for a widow’s receiving material support was that she was *not* able to support herself and had not other source of support. In 5:17 it is an obligation of the church to provide support to its pastor *even if* the pastor has another source of support. The importance of the church’s obligation to provide for good leaders is seen in 5:18, which quotes both Moses (see Deut 25:4) and Jesus (see Matt 10:10; Luke 10:7). The *amount* of compensation is, in part, based on how well he does his job (i.e., “*rules well*” and “*works hard*”). If the pastor has other sources of support, he may voluntarily choose to give back some or all of the compensation he receives from the church. However, the church needs to recognize its obligation to give back materially to those who have nourished it spiritually (see also 1 Cor 9:7-14; Rom 15:27; Gal 6:6).

4. The NT does not state the amount or specific method by which the church should pay its pastor. For example, pastors in some churches receive an actual salary; pastors in other churches receive a percentage of tithes or offerings. Nevertheless, there are several principles that should guide congregations in paying their pastors: (A) *The pastor’s income should in some manner reflect the average income of the congregation, perhaps what an average school teacher makes.* There will be a great variation between different churches, and between rural and urban pastors, since the incomes of their congregations will differ significantly. However, if there are only 10 families in a local church, and each family is tithing, that church should be able to support its pastor. (B) *In rural, subsistence-farming, non-cash-based areas pastors may be paid in agricultural produce and with animals.* In such areas a portion of a field may be dedicated to the church or pastor. In such areas pastors may also be paid in services (e.g., building a house for the pastor, digging a pit latrine, working on the pastor’s land, etc.). (C) *The apostle Paul, as an evangelist and church-planter sometimes worked at a “secular” job (tent-making) to earn money while engaged in gospel ministry* (see Acts 20:33-34; 2 Cor 11:9-12; 1 Thess 2:7-9; 2 Thess 3:7-8). Paul also accepted gifts from believers (2 Cor 11:8; Phil 4:14-18). (D) *Since Paul was not a pastor of a local church his situation is not necessarily the same as that of pastors.* Nevertheless, where pastors are planting churches, or where churches are small and unable to support a full-time pastor, the pastor may have to work at an outside job to support himself as Paul did. However, as the church grows it should move toward paying the pastor a living wage in accordance with the above biblical directions. (E) *Churches (and, especially, denominations) should include a retirement fund for pastors.* Many pastors who retire, or are required to retire, leave the ministry with nothing. Many denominations, and even individual churches, are now recognizing that that situation is a great injustice. As a result, they are establishing retirement funds for pastors. A small amount invested each month or year will grow to become a very large amount after many years. This is both a matter of financial stewardship and also is a way to honor those elders who have served their congregations well. (F) *There are several reasons why it is harmful for the pastor to continue to support himself with outside employment after a church has become established:* (1) The congregation is thereby permitted to shirk its biblical responsibility of supporting its pastor. That results in a loss of spiritual blessing and vision. (2) The church is robbed of the fruits of full-time ministry. There will be less time for visitation, mid-week Bible studies, and other mid-week activities. (3) The pastor and his ministry will be harmed. He will have less time and energy for study, prayer, visitation, and other essentials of the ministry. (4) Secular work may become a snare which tempts the pastor to leave the ministry entirely. (5) Lack of church support for its pastor becomes self-perpetuating. It will be harder for new pastors to follow in the pastorate, because the congregation will probably demand that they, too, be self-supporting. (Hodges 1953: 81)

5:19-25: ¹⁹*Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.*

²⁰*Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning.* ²¹*I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.* ²²*Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.* ²³*No longer drink water*

*exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.*²⁴*The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after.*²⁵*Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.*

This section deals with handling elders who sin and commissioning elders. It includes a number of principles which one commentator summarizes as follows: “(1) Sin must be confronted. (2) Accusations must be supported by multiple witnesses. (3) It is not the occasional but the persistent sin that requires action. (4) Public rebuke should be preceded by personal confrontation. But when the confrontation is ineffective, the public rebuke must be carried out. (5) The purpose of public rebuke is not so much for punishment as it is to instill a healthy fear. (6) A person executing judgment, even someone of Timothy’s stature, must strive to be as fair and pure in the process as possible. (7) The commissioning of elders is serious business, and there is a responsibility assumed by the one commissioning for the ones commissioned. (8) There is no substitute for caution and time. A person’s true character and deeds are not always immediately visible.” (Mounce 2000: 322)

Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses: The principle Paul cites goes back to **Deut 19:15** (see also **Deut 17:6**). The principle that a charge had to be corroborated by another witness was designed to prevent unjust convictions. However, if the statement regarding “*two or three witnesses*” is applied in a literalistic fashion, and we consider only the *form* of that statement and not the *substance* or principle it articulates, then a contrary injustice may occur. In the historical and cultural context of **Deut 19:15**, Israel was a pre-modern, agricultural society. The same was true in Paul’s day. Such things as photography, mobile phones, tape recording, and other such technology did not exist. Now all such things exist in all cultures. Further, many sins (such as sexual sins) are committed precisely because there are no human witnesses. Thus, if an elder is accused of adultery, it would be nonsensical, and could result in great injustice, for the other church leaders to refuse to receive the accusation because there were not two or three human witnesses to the act of adultery. Such accusations can be corroborated by credible evidence such as text messages left on mobile phones, photographs, witnesses who saw the elder and the one with whom he committed adultery together in places or at times where they shouldn’t have been together, etc. All such circumstantial evidence is competent in a civil court and should be considered if a credible charge is made against a church elder. Even Paul cited the principle of **Deut 19:15** in a “looser” way in **2 Cor 13:1**. There he was concerned about sin and problems in the Corinthian church. He quoted the OT principle in conjunction with the fact that “*this is the third time I am coming to you.*” He was implying that his own prior visits and writings to that church constituted the “*two or three witnesses*” that were sufficient to deal with wrongdoers in the church. Jesus did the same in **John 8:17-18** when he said, “*Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. I am he who testifies about myself, and the Father who sent me testifies about me.*”

Maintain these principles without bias: Paul is talking about disciplining and ordaining elders. In those two areas abuse is a great danger because of bias in favor of certain people or prejudice against others. Insofar as discipline is concerned, Guthrie rightly points out, “The abuse of discipline has often led to a harsh and intolerant spirit, but neglect of it has produced a danger almost as great. When faced with sinning elders a spineless attitude is deplorable.” (Guthrie 1990: 118-19) This same problem occurs with ordaining elders. Large donors to the church, members of the same tribe as the pastor, the pastor’s family members, and close personal friends, are often ordained as elders, even though they do not meet the requirements of **1 Tim 3:1-7**. Further, the sins of those elders are overlooked because they are large donors, family members, or friends, even though such sins would not be tolerated by church members who are not large donors, family members, or friends. Thus, “two classes of Christians” are created—not for the same reasons that Paul discussed in **1 Tim 4:1-7a**, but with effects just as damaging to the church. Paul is reminding us that, as the leaders of the church, our integrity and character are on the line with every decision we make. We will be held accountable to Christ for what we do in his name as leaders of his church. Therefore, we had better “*maintain these principles without bias*” so that we will have a “*good conscience*” (**1:5**) and a “*clear conscience*” (**3:9**) when we stand before him (as we will do at the judgment, and as we in fact do all the time now).

Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others: Some believe that this passage relates to “the idea of reconciliation on repentant fallen elders when they are received back into the communion of the church” (Earle 1978: 381). Others (probably the majority) believe that this passage “prohibits hasty ordination [which] fits in well with the main discussion of this chapter, And the laying on of hands in these epistles seems to be regularly associated with ordination (cf. 4:14; 2 Tim 1:7).” (Ibid.) The “*sharing responsibility for the sins of others*” appears to be related to the fact that, by ordaining someone you

vouch for his character and qualifications and thereby share responsibility for any sins he might commit.

The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after. Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed:

5:24-25 builds upon what Paul has said in **5:22**. The sense of these verses is that, “some men’s sins are so evident that there is no question about rejecting them as candidates. Their sins precede them to judgment—first Timothy’s judgment and finally divine judgment. The sins of others do not show up so soon but careful investigation will discover them. In the same way, the good deeds of qualified candidates will be easily seen. Those that seem less obvious will still appear or further search; they cannot be hidden.” (Earle 1978: 382)

No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments:

This verse is an “aside” to Timothy personally. An “aside” is a brief comment on a topic unrelated to what the main discourse is about. After making this personal aside, Paul immediately returns to the main subject. This verse has little to do with a “theology of drinking alcohol.” Instead, the point is that Timothy needed to be a good steward of his body. Evidently, the water he was drinking was contaminated and was contributing to his stomach problems. Ngewa points out, “Wine does have some healthful properties, if consumed in moderation. So Paul advises Timothy to take ‘a little’ wine because it would help his body fight his illnesses.” (Ngewa 2009: 133) Although in many cultures drinking wine or other beverages that contain alcohol is considered wrong or even sinful, even such cultures agree that taking medical remedies that contain drugs or alcohol is not wrong. That is what was going on here. Given the existence of modern medicines, bottled water, and other bottled drinks today, Paul might not have recommended taking wine for the stomach in a similar situation today. However, at that time and place, Paul was giving sound advice (which he may even have received from Luke the physician, since the two of them traveled together).

6:1-2a: ¹All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against. ²Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved.

1. This is a passage which we must apply by “analogy” today. This paragraph talks about “slaves” and “masters.” The economy of the Roman Empire was based on slavery. A large percentage of the population were slaves. Slaves worked in all kinds of occupations: in the fields; mines; homes; in businesses; as teachers, etc. Sometimes they could even purchase their freedom (see **Acts 22:25-28; 1 Cor 7:21**). Today slavery has been eliminated throughout much of the world. However, in some important respects there is an analogy (i.e., a significant similarity) between slavery and modern employment: in each case someone (slave/employee) is working for someone else (master/employer). Every analogy breaks down at some point. For example, slaves had no rights and could not leave their employment if they didn’t like their jobs or if they didn’t like how they were treated. On the other hand, employees have legal rights and can leave their jobs if they want to. Consequently, when the Bible discusses situations that are not identical to contemporary situations, we can still look for the transcultural principles that exist and apply such principles by analogy. When doing this we must be careful not to stretch the analogy too far (i.e., we must be aware of the *differences* between the biblical situation as well as the similarities). We must account for the differences between *ownership* of the employee by the employer (slavery) and *contractual relationships* between employee and employer (modern employment). The principle of honoring God in the way one relates to authority/management in the modern workplace might be expressed along the following lines: “Fulfill the terms of your contract to the best of your ability, that is, in a manner that glorifies God and brings unbelievers closer to the kingdom” (Webb 2001: 54).

2. The context of this passage indicates that to “honor” the master (or employer) means that the slave (or employee) should show him respect. In the context of employment “honor” or “respect” would include: showing up to work on time; working hard and being a good employee; not stealing from the employer; not talking against the employer behind his back, etc. That is indicated in **6:2** which mentions “*not being disrespectful*” and “*servicing them all the more.*” Note that Christian employees are to honor their employers whether those employers are nonbelievers (**6:1**) or believers (**6:2**). Some Christian employees think that, because their employer is also a Christian, the employee can spend his time at work reading his Bible and talking to other employees about the Lord. Paul is saying that Christian employees should *not* do that on working time. Employees are expected, and are being paid, to work. Christian employers have the same expectation of their employees as do non-Christian employers. Paul is saying that a Christian employee shows *love* for his Christian employer by being a good worker. Ultimately, it is Paul’s concern for the gospel, i.e., “*the name of God and our*

doctrine,” that is paramount. Everything Paul does, and urges us to do or not do, is based on whether it will advance or hinder the gospel.

6:2b-16: ^{2b}*Teach and preach these principles.* ³*If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness,* ⁴*he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions,* ⁵*and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.* ⁶*But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.* ⁷*For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.* ⁸*If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.* ⁹*But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.* ¹⁰*For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.* ¹¹*But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.* ¹²*Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.* ¹³*I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate,* ¹⁴*that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,* ¹⁵*which He will bring about at the proper time--He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,* ¹⁶*who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.*

Teach and preach these principles. If anyone advocates a different doctrine . . . men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth: 1. Here Paul again discusses false teachers, false teachings, and their results. He has begun the book that way (1:3-4, 19-20), returned to it in the middle of the book (4:1-7a), and now is ending the book on the same note. As noted earlier, this three-fold repetition, at beginning, middle, and end, shows the importance of the subject.

2. In these three verses Paul gives a very detailed description of the character of false teachers, just as he gave a very detailed description of false godliness and apostasy in 4:1-7a. Paul describes the following aspects of false teachers: (A) *Their doctrine (6:3)*—it is not orthodox; does not agree with the teachings of Christ; and does not conform to godliness. (B) *Their nature (6:4a, 5b)*—they are conceited; lack understanding; have depraved minds; and are deprived of the truth. (C) *Their interests (6:4b)*—they are interested in controversial questions; and disputes about words. (D) *Their results (6:4c-5a)*—they cause envy; strife; abusive language; evil suspicions; and constant friction. (E) *Their motivation (6:5b)*—they are primarily interested in personal, financial gain. In discussing “false prophets” who will come in his name, Jesus said, “*You will know them by their fruits*” (Matt 7:16). In these verses Paul is describing the fruits of such false prophets. Note how all of the aspects of false teachers that Paul describes point in the opposite direction from the “*goal of [true] instruction [which] is love*” (1:5).

3. The description of the false teachers as having a “depraved mind and deprived of the truth” is particularly important, because it is so harsh. The Greek word translated “depraved” is *diaphtheiro*. It is a very strong term meaning “morally corrupt, depraved, ruined” (Danker 2001: 239), “corrupt throughout,” “corrupt wholly, pervert” (Zodhiates 1993: 445-46), or “utterly perverted” (Mounce 1993: 143). It is the type of word one would use for a sexual pervert. It is an intensified form of the word used in Rev 19:2 concerning “*the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality.*” “*Deprived of the truth*” “creates a picture of people who have no participation in the gospel whatsoever. They do not teach an altered gospel; what they teach is wholly different (cf. 1 Tim 1:3). In the PE [Pastoral Epistles] *alētheia*, ‘truth,’ is almost a technical term for the orthodox gospel (cf. 1 Tim 2:4). The opponents are often pictured as opposing the truth of the gospel (2 Tim 2:18; 3:7, 8; 4:4).” (Mounce 2000: 340) Both “*depraved mind*” and “*deprived of the truth*” are in passive form, “possibly suggesting Satan as the agent, who elsewhere in the PE is recognized as active in the Ephesian church” (Ibid.).

Who suppose that godliness is a means of gain: 1. The last description of the false teachers, “men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth,” is significant in that it leads directly to Paul’s description of their motivation: they are in the religion business for the purpose of making money. Paul’s discussion in 6:6-10 demonstrates that the love of money is their prime motivation. The connection between the depravity of their minds, the fact that they are not preaching the truth at all, and their motive of making money is seen grammatically. “*Depraved mind,*” “*deprived of the truth,*” and “*who suppose that godliness is a means of gain*” are “three attributive

participial phrases describing these people who are the source of constant irritation. The first two contain perfect participles describing what these people have become (continuing the use of the perfect from v 4), and the third participle is linear in aspect, emphasizing the ongoing motivation for their teaching.” (Mounce 2000: 340)

2. These false teachers are exemplified today by the teachers of the so-called “prosperity gospel”—i.e., those who claim that it is God’s will that all believers be materially rich and physically healthy. Frequent concepts among prosperity teachers are ideas such as: faith is a “force” that is activated as we speak it; we need to “name it and claim it” (i.e., name what we want and then claim it by faith); we need to “sow a seed of faith” (i.e., donate money to a particular ministry to show our faith); there is a “law of compensation” that God is bound by (i.e., the “sowing and reaping” principle and the “hundredfold return”) whereby if we “sow a seed” to a particular ministry by giving a certain amount of money, if we have enough faith God will give us back one hundred times as much money as we have “sown.” In essence, the prosperity gospel attempts to “baptize” materialism and a secular, world-centered message, and turn it into the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is no sin to be rich and healthy instead of being poor and sick. It is no sin to work to improve your economic and physical wellbeing. However, it is wrong to distort the gospel. Prosperity teachers, originated in the United States, then spread to the U.K., South Africa, Nigeria, and now to East Africa and the rest of the world. They are heretics who are preaching a “different gospel” (see Adeleye 1999). It is an “alien gospel” that exploits the poor (see Fee 1984: 39-43; Editorial 2001: 1-2). It is “deceitful and deadly” (see Piper 2007). A detailed critique of the prosperity gospel is contained in ECLEA’s course book on “Biblical Stewardship,” which are available for free on ECLEA’s website: www.eclea.net.

3. Prosperity teachers are repeatedly and harshly condemned throughout Scripture and face a dreadful judgment. Jesus harshly condemned the Pharisees for their swearing by the gold of the temple (**Matt 23:16-20**). He specifically accused them of “*robbery and self-indulgence*” (**Matt 23:25**). He called them “*serpents*” and a “*brood of vipers*” (**Matt 23:33**) and said that as a result of their sins they would not “*escape the sentence of hell*” (**Matt 23:33**). Peter says that one should shepherd the flock of God “*not for sordid gain*” (**1 Pet 5:2**). In **2 Pet 2:3** he says that false teachers “*in their greed*” will “*exploit you,*” but “*their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep*” (see also **2 Pet 2:14**). Paul attacks those who are “*peddling the word of God*” (**2 Cor 2:17**) and who come to speak “*with a pretext for greed*” (**1 Thess 2:5**). Such teachers face a judgment worse than the people Paul discusses in **Rom 1:18-32**. In that passage people knew that God exists but chose to ignore him and worship created things. As a result, God “*gave them over*” to their evil (**Rom 1:24, 26, 28**), and they were “*worthy of death*” (**Rom 1:32**). If God’s judgment was so harsh for those who knew about God but ignored him, how much worse will be the judgment for those who don’t ignore God but try to *use and manipulate* him and his Word in order to satisfy their lust for money?

But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content: 1. Paul has just said that those who believe, are motivated by, and teach the idea that “godliness is a means of gain” have a “depraved mind” and are “deprived of the truth” (6:5). Now he says, “But godliness actually is a means of great gain” (6:6). Is he contradicting himself? The answer is, “No, he is not contradicting himself.” In **6:6** Paul adds the word “great” to gain. That word, like his use of “indeed” in **5:3**, indicates that Paul is making a distinction, or is defining his terms carefully. In **6:5** the “gain” he talks about clearly is money and material possessions. However, “gain” does not have to be defined in material terms. In **6:6** the “great gain” he is speaking about is the gospel—i.e., Christ himself, the forgiveness of all of our sins forever, a new life, eternal life, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, adoption into God’s family, access to the Father at all times through Christ, hearts of stone that have been changed to hearts of flesh, and all the other attributes and benefits of our new lives in Christ. Compared to that, all the money and material possessions in the world are as nothing. As Jesus said, “*What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?*” (**Matt 16:26; Mark 8:36**; see also **Luke 12:13-21**)

2. Paul’s use of “contentment” in 6:6 and “content” in 6:8 show that the “great gain” he is referring to cannot be money and material possessions. In **6:8** Paul talks about “*food and covering.*” In doing that he is echoing what Christ said in **Matt 6:25 (Luke 12:22-23)**: “*I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?*” Jesus’ own life demonstrated this. He said, “*The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head*” (**Matt 8:20**). The only thing that Jesus owned was the clothes he wore. The soldiers even took those away from him before they crucified him (see **Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34**). Jesus died naked. That graphically shows that he kept nothing back for himself—even his shame (his own mother was a witness to his crucifixion, **John 19:25-27**). Nevertheless, the Father was always with him, and he lacked for nothing. Paul is challenging us. When Jesus taught us to pray, he

taught us to pray for our *basic necessities* (“*Give us this day our daily bread*”) (**Matt 6:11; Luke 11:3**). We all have more than merely something to eat and something to wear. We all have more money and material possessions than Jesus had. Yet, even though we have more than our Lord had, are we content? Jesus did not go around crying to the Father about how poor he was and spending his whole life just trying to make a lot of money. Yet, many church leaders do exactly that. Paul himself had to learn—but did learn—“*to be content in whatever circumstances I am*” (**Phil 4:11-13**). “Paul has learned to be content not because he has an inner, Stoic, superhuman strength or because circumstances have been good to him. Paul’s contentment is rooted in a faith that denies his own ability to perform his tasks and asserts the need for total reliance on the all-powerful God. The contentment that is of great profit is one that seeks its security not in worldly riches but in God.” (Mounce 2000: 341) That shows us that Paul was not a hypocrite. He “practiced what he preached.” Can we say the same thing about ourselves? When it comes to the area of money, practicing what we preach is *vital*. People detect hypocrisy in this area more quickly than in almost any other area of life. One reason that Paul was so powerfully used by God was that he was not a hypocrite when it came to money (see **Acts 20:31-38; 1 Cor 4:11-16; 9:11-23; 1 Thess 2:9-12; 2 Thess 3:6-10**).

3. Paul’s entire argument in 6:6-8 demonstrates that the “great gain” he is referring to cannot be money and material possessions. Paul’s argument is that “since we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of the world, then the significance of our lives cannot be based on the amount of money and things we are able to accumulate during the few years we are in this world.” The fact that life does *not end* at the grave is the key to his argument—and the resurrection of Christ is the guarantee of that fact. Thus, Paul, not the “prosperity teachers” or those who only look to this world, is correct. Paul made essentially the same argument in **1 Cor 15:32**: “*If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.*” His point is that if Christ is not Lord, if he has not risen from the dead, and if we will not rise from the dead in Christ, then life is only about getting as much pleasure, money, and possessions for the few years that we exist on this earth; after that is nothing. However, Christ *is* Lord, he *has risen* from the dead, and *we will rise* from the dead in Him. Therefore, we must have an eternal view of things. What we do during our lives on this earth does matter for all eternity. In fact, what we do with our money and possessions affects us spiritually now and in eternity (**Pss 41:1-3; 112:5-6; Prov 19:17; 22:9; Matt 6:3-4; 19-21; 19:21; 25:19-30; Luke 12:33-48; 16:9, 19-31; 19:15-26; Acts 10:4; 1 Tim 6:18-19**). Therefore, Christ said, “*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth . . . but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven*” (**Matt 6:19-20**). Money and material possessions are good and necessary things. However, anyone in Christian ministry who is *motivated* by money and material rewards is acting just like the false teachers and just like those who say that there is no resurrection. This is a spiritual issue of the highest order. It is a matter of our *character* (see **Heb 13:5**).

But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare . . . and pierced themselves with many griefs:

1. This is the second time Paul has used the word “snare” (or, “trap”). In **3:7** he talked about falling into the devil’s snare (see also **2 Tim 2:26**). Paul is warning us in **6:9-10** in very pointed ways about the dangers of the love of money. Those warnings, again, prove that the “*great gain*” of godliness (**6:6**) cannot possibly be money. Paul has already told us that the love of money disqualifies a person from being a leader of the church (**3:3, 8**). Now he is saying that it can destroy one’s faith. “The word translated ‘plunge’ [**6:9**] is the same one used in Luke 5:7 to describe sinking boats” (Ngewa 2009: 154). This echoes what Paul said in **1:19** about those, like Hymenaeus and Alexander, who did not remain faithful, but have “*suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.*” Our attitude towards money and material possessions is probably the best indicator of the true state of our heart. That is why, again and again, Jesus warned about the dangers of the love of money, said that you cannot serve two masters, and said that what we really treasure shows where our hearts really are (see **Matt 6:19-34; 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 12:13-34; 16:10-13, 19-31; 18:18-27**). Are we really His disciples, or is there a golden idol that has come between us and Jesus?

2. Although wealth itself can be a good thing, Paul and the rest of the Bible make clear that wealth carries with it increased spiritual risk. “Paul is not implying that believers should remain poor. Rather, he is pointing out that those who are content with what they have are happier than those who are never satisfied. Those who constantly crave more will fall prey to many sins (**6:9-10**).” (Andria 2006: 1476) Jesus warned that riches are “deceitful” and can choke the word of God in a person’s life (**Mark 4:18-19**). In Colossians Paul said that greed amounts to idolatry and warned that the wrath of God will come against a greedy person (**Col 3:5-6**). John said that the love of the Father is not in anyone who loves the world or the things of the world (**1 John 2:15-16**). Similarly in the OT, the writers of the Proverbs warned that the one who trusts in riches will fall (**Prov 11:28**), and the person who has riches will tend to deny the Lord (**Prov 30:8-9**). Job knew that to trust in riches is a sin that calls for judgment because it amounts to denying God (**Job 31:24-28**). The examples of Gehazi (2

Kgs 5:15-27), Ananias and Sapphira (**Acts 5:1-11**), the rich young ruler (**Mark 10:17-25**), and the rich man who neglected Lazarus (**Luke 16:19-26**), all point out the spiritual risks that having and desiring wealth may bring. As Adeleye concludes, “As an end in itself money has the tendency to compete for our loyalty which belongs to God. It has the tendency to become an idol that ruins our lives. That is why Jesus warns us against relating to money as we relate to God” (Adeleye 1999: 97).

But flee from these things . . . and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness:

1. The immediate context of “these things” from which Timothy must flee is the love of money, the desire to get rich, and all the vices that go along with them. In a more general sense, of course, Timothy (and any church leader) must flee from all of the vices, sins, temptations, false godliness, and false teachings discussed in this letter. They all harm our relationships with God and with those whom we are called to serve. However, the harm of greed is especially dangerous because it often is subtle and unseen. We all know when we have lied or committed adultery. Greed is not like that. We all know people who have much more than we do and who obviously are greedy. We tend to compare ourselves to them (instead of to those who have much less than we do). We therefore conclude, “I am not like that person. He is greedy. I am not.” That is why being very open with your spouse about money matters, having an accountability partner or accountability group, and regularly thinking about these things and evaluating ourselves is so important. The lure of money is just like Potiphar’s wife, whispering in our ear “*lie with me*” (**Gen 39:1-12**). We must flee from it, just as Joseph fled from Potiphar’s wife (**Gen 39:13**). Money is a temptation that is physically pleasurable, but just as spiritually deadly, as illicit sex.

2. We must flee one thing and pursue something else. Paul not only says what we should run away from (the love of money). He also tells us what we should run to (righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness). That tells us that *we cannot have both*. The “prosperity teachers” say that we *can* have the love of money and *also* be leaders of the church, righteous, godly, faithful, loving, etc. Paul is saying, “No, you must choose. It is one or the other.” We must decide whom we believe: the “prosperity teachers” or the Apostle Paul? Notice how all of these virtues—righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness—go together? They are like the “fruit of the Spirit” in **Gal 5:22-23**. They, too, all go together (indeed, in **Gal 5:22** “fruit” is singular, not plural). These are matters of our character which will determine how we live our lives. So is the love of money. It is a matter of our character (**Heb 13:5**) which will determine how we live our lives.

Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called: 1. This is the second time Paul has used the expression “fight the good fight.” The first time was in **1:18**. There he was telling Timothy to remain faithful. Here he is saying the same thing, but in the context of resisting the love of money and instead pursuing a godly character. Here Paul adds to “*the good fight*” the words “*of faith*.” In the Greek, there is the definite article “the” before “faith,” i.e., “*fight the good fight of the faith*.” This emphasizes that our faith, by its very nature, requires effort on the part of the believer. The struggle is against the lusts and temptations of the world and the flesh (**1 John 2:15-17**). Ultimately, however, “*our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places*” (**Eph 6:12**). Because this “fight of the faith” is so important, we must “*take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm*” (**Eph 6:13**). Again, there is a paradox: Christ will never leave us or forsake us (**Heb 13:5**); we are “*kept for Jesus Christ*” (**Jude 1**); nevertheless, we must persevere in keeping faithful (**1 Tim 1:18-19; 5:12; Rev 3:10**)—not as we “work for our salvation” but as we “work out our salvation” (**Phil 2:12-13**).

2. “Taking hold” of eternal life implies grabbing it tightly and holding on to it. There is certainly a past aspect to this: we take hold of eternal life when we repent of our sins and confess Christ as our savior and Lord (i.e., “*the good confession in the presence of many witnesses*” [**6:12**] which we have made). However, there is a daily and ongoing aspect to “taking hold of eternal life.” Jesus said, “*This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent*” (**John 17:3**). When the Bible uses the word “know” with respect to salvation, it means more than just “know about” or “understand some facts about” God and Christ. Instead, the Bible often uses “know” in a deeply personal, intimate, and relational sense. For example, it is used for sexual intercourse between a husband and wife (“*Adam knew his wife*”—**Gen 4:1**). When God is said to “know” us, it implies his choosing and setting his favor upon us (see **Gen 18:17-19; Amos 3:1-2; Matt 7:23; Rom 8:29**). Similarly, to “know” God and Christ is to be in right relationship with them (see **Hos 13:3-5; 1 Cor 8:3; Gal 4:8-9**). Every close relationship (husband-wife; parent-child; close friends) needs to be nurtured and strengthened by regular interaction, fellowship, and commitment, that show the value of the relationship. As we do that with Christ, we “*take hold of eternal life*” since he is “*the life*” (**John 14:6**).

3. “Taking hold of eternal life” also points us to the “already but not yet” nature of the kingdom of God

and our salvation. We are saved now but have not yet been glorified. The kingdom is present now, but not yet in all of its fullness and glory. We hold onto the promises of God, and our fellowship with Christ, even though our lives may be very difficult now, because “holding firmly to the fellowship that is eternal life gives one a foretaste of the fullness of fellowship we shall enjoy in heaven, when we ‘shall see him [Christ] as he is’ (1 John 3:2)” (Ngewa 2009: 159).

You made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses . . . and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate: Verses 12-13 are parallel in certain ways. In **6:12** Timothy is said to have “made” (the Greek word *homologeō* actually is “confessed”) “*the good confession.*” In **6:13** Christ “testified” (a different word, but used synonymously with “confessed”) “*the good confession.*” Some commentators think that Timothy’s “confession” refers to the vow he made at his ordination. However, “the verse shows that the call to eternal life occurred at the same time as Timothy’s confession. A commission/ordination can hardly be termed a call to eternal life, but the conversion/baptism experience is precisely that: God’s call on Timothy’s life and Timothy’s accompanying confession at his baptism.” (Mounce 2000: 356) With respect to Jesus’ “confession,” some scholars “identify this confession as Christ’s declaration that he was the king of the Jews (Matt 27:11; Mark 15:2; Luke 23:3; John 18:37). However, the words translated ‘before Pontius Pilate’ can also be translated as ‘in the time of Pontius Pilate’. If this translation is correct, Jesus’ ‘confession’ was all that he said and did throughout his entire ministry.” (Ngewa 2009: 162) “It seems more likely in this context that Paul is referring to Jesus’ perseverance in his mission, not only in this life . . . but especially in his death. This example of perseverance should inspire Timothy to continue in his own tasks and to be true to his commitment to Christ.” (Mounce 2000: 358) The link between Jesus’ and Timothy’s “confessions” is represented by Pontius Pilate, who “found no fault in Jesus and publicly declared his innocence (John 18:38; 19:4, 6). Timothy should take this life *without spot or blame* as the model for his own ministry. It will not be easy, and will require a constant struggle that will end only at *the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ (6:14).*” (Andria 2006: 1476)

Keep the commandment without stain or reproach: 1. “The commandment” is not specifically defined. Some view it as what Paul specifically charged Timothy in **6:11-12**. Others (probably the better view) look at “the commandment” more generally. For example, Mounce observes: “The context of the command is serious, having summoned God, Christ, and those witnessing Timothy’s confession, and therefore the commandment must be worthy of this degree of solemnity. [The use of the definite article ‘the’ before ‘commandment’] suggests something of independent existence that is well known. These considerations suggest that the commandment is more general, encompassing Timothy’s commitment to Christ and his ministry, a commitment to preach the gospel that included righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and meekness in contrast to the opponents’ teachings, and a commitment that demanded perseverance until the Lord returned. The commandment includes more than any one part of the immediate context and in fact encompasses it all.” (Mounce 2000: 359)

2. “Without stain or reproach” indicates that how we live our lives is a reflection of the gospel we say we believe. The words translated in the NASB “*without stain or reproach*” are typically applied in the NT to the conduct of people. Being “*above reproach*” is the primary requirement of an elder (**3:2**) and is required of families with widows (**5:7**). In **6:14** the Greek places these words closest to “*the commandment,*” suggesting that they describe the commandment as being “*without stain or reproach.*” Since the context is a charge to Timothy, the best approach is to combine the two ideas: if Timothy keeps himself and his own conduct “*without stain or reproach,*” then “*the commandment*” will be kept, and will be seen by others, to itself be “*the perfect law*” (**Jas 1:25**), flawless, “*without stain or reproach.*”

Until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen: 1. Here Paul specifically refers to the Second Coming of Christ. Paul has been charging Timothy to “*fight the good fight*” and persevere in his faithfulness. This reference to the Second Coming amounts to the fourth reason why Timothy (and we) should persevere: (A) Persevere because God has called you (**6:12**); (B) Persevere because of “the good confession” you made in the presence of many witnesses (**6:12**); (C) Persevere because of Christ and the gospel, who themselves are pure and need to be kept pure (**6:13-14**); (D) Persevere because Christ is coming again (**6:14**).

2. This is the third detailed description or doxology of the person and work of Christ. The others were **1:17** and **3:16**. Thus, Jesus is at the beginning, the middle, and the end of this book. Paul is telling us that it is all about Jesus. As was true with **1:17**, the reference here to “*He [who] will bring [it] about at the proper time*” (**6:15-16**) fits the Father. However, it also fits Christ. The context is talking about the Second Coming of Christ

(6:14). The phrase “*King of kings and Lord of lords*” is applied to Christ in **Rev 17:14** and **19:16**. Christ is God the Son, to whom has been given “*all authority . . . in heaven and on earth*” (**Matt 28:18**). If we truly understand this in the depths of our being, it will help us and empower us to “*fight the good fight of faith*” and persevere until the end.

6:17-19: ¹⁷*Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.* ¹⁸*Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,* ¹⁹*storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.*

1. Who are “those who are rich in this present world” (6:17)? When it comes to money and material possessions, most people tend to compare themselves to people who have more than they have rather than with those who have less. As a result, most people tend to look at those who have more and think, “He is rich; I am not.” However, that is not the biblical standard of comparison. In **6:6-8** Paul argued, “*If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.*” He went on to strongly warn against the love of money and the desire to get rich (**6:9-10**). Our standard is Jesus. Jesus had “*nowhere to lay his head*” (**Matt 8:20**). He taught us to pray for our *basic necessities* (“*Give us this day our daily bread*”) (**Matt 6:11; Luke 11:3**). Jesus did not store up vast treasures on earth, and told us not to do so, but to store up treasure in heaven (**Matt 6:20**). Since “*a slave is not greater than his master*” (**John 13:16; 15:20**), when we look through biblical eyes—Jesus’ eyes—the “rich” are those who have *more than “food and covering”* (i.e., more than Jesus had). In other words, anyone is “rich” if he has more than he needs to meet his basic needs. It is true that there are degrees of “richness”: some may be only a little rich (they have only a little more than they need to meet their basic needs), whereas others may be a lot rich (they have a lot more than they need to meet their basic needs). Nevertheless, even in those cultures that are the poorest, most people are “rich.”

2. This is the third time Paul has mentioned “hope.” In **1:1** Paul told us who is the object and source of our hope: Jesus Christ. In **4:10** Paul said that “*we have fixed our hope on the living God.*” Now, Paul is telling us to instruct the rich not “*to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God*” (**6:17**). This is an important sequence and lesson for all those in public ministry: only if you first know who the object and source of your hope is, and have in fact fixed your own hope on Jesus Christ, are you qualified to instruct others to fix their hope on Christ. “To fix one’s hope on” is the translation of a single Greek word, *elpizō*, which implies “confidence” in the thing hoped on, or “putting one’s confidence in someone or something,” or a confident “expectation” of something (see Danker 2000: 319). Riches, by their very nature, are “uncertain”: there is no certainty that you will get material wealth; or if you get it, that you can keep it [either because of personal factors, or government policies, or economic conditions]; or if you have it, that you will be able to maintain your health or life so as to be able to use it. Only Christ gives us solid ground for confidence and hope.

3. In many respects 6:17-19 is the counterpart to 6:6-12. In **6:6-8** Paul was telling us to be content if we had only as much as something to eat and something to wear; now he is telling us what do in case we have more than something to eat and something to wear. In **6:9** he was warning the rich; now he is instructing the rich. In **6:10** he was warning about the love of money; now he is giving us a test for us to see whether or not we have the love of money. In **6:11** he was telling us to flee from the wrong attitude and lifestyle and pursue the right attitude and lifestyle; now he is showing us what the right attitude and lifestyle lead to. In **6:12** he exhorted, “*fight the good fight of faith*”; now (**6:18**) he is showing what faithfulness looks like. In **6:12** he told us to “*take hold*” of eternal life; now (**6:19**) he again uses the same verb “*take hold*,” and shows us how we do that.

4. Those who have more than they need to meet their basic needs (i.e., “the rich”) are to be generous givers, not in order to earn God’s favor but because they have already received God’s favor. As Paul indicated in the beginning of the book (see **1:2, 13-16**) we are only saved on the basis of God’s mercy and grace toward us. Everything we do in life is to be an *outworking* of that grace: i.e., a demonstration by the way we live that we realize we could not change ourselves, but God has changed us. He has given us new hearts and the “mind of Christ.” We are no longer the unregenerate people (“dead in our trespasses and sins”) that we used to be. An important aspect of how we live is what we do with our money and possessions. In **6:17, 19** he contrasts those who fix their hope on the “*uncertainties*” of “*this present world*” with those who have laid “*a good foundation*” for “*the future.*” In **6:17-19** his use of the word “*rich*” shows us what true riches are and how truly rich people act. He says that “*riches*,” looked at only as material objects and only from the standpoint of this present world, are “uncertain” (**6:17**). On the other hand, God gives to us “*richly*” (**6:17**). His riches include a bountiful earth, our bodies and minds, material wealth which we earn and create (see **Deut 8:18; Eph 4:28**), our new lives, the Holy Spirit who lives in us, the church (our family) whom we should be able to go to for material as well as spiritual help, etc. All of these things are good and are to be enjoyed. This is just as Paul had said in

4:3-5. Therefore, since God has so “*richly*” given so much to us, we should be “*rich*” in good works and generosity toward others (**6:18**).

5. Even though we are not to be generous givers in order to earn God’s favor, we will be rewarded for our giving. Those who have need benefit from the generosity of those who share. However, that is not the thrust of Paul’s argument. “The basic thrust is clear. By being generous, the rich are not losing their wealth. Rather, they are laying it away in heaven, and by doing so, they are establishing a firm foundation for eternity, for life that is truly life.” (Mounce 2000: 368) Jesus told us not to store up our treasure on the earth but to store it up in heaven where it will be secure (**Matt 6:20**). In these verses Paul is telling us *how* to store up our treasure in heaven. Further, he is giving us a tremendous *incentive* to be generous givers: what we give now is not lost to us but is part of the foundation we are laying for our eternal future. In other words, what we do with our money and possessions here will bring us everlasting rewards and benefits on the new earth where we will live. Even the smallest gift given to help someone because the giver loves Jesus will be rewarded (**Matt 10:42**). Those rewards will last forever (see **Matt 25:19-30**). We would be fools *not* to be generous givers. Paul is telling us here that we will be blessed beyond measure if we are generous givers.

6. Whether or not we understand and follow Paul’s teaching in 6:17-19 is a matter of fundamental importance for Christians, both for this life and for the eternal judgment. (A) *With respect to the Judgment:* Wealth carries with it increased obligation. The reason why God blesses us with money is “*so that he will have something to share with one who has need*” (**Eph 4:28**). The increased obligation that comes with having material wealth carries with it increased accountability. Everyone faces God’s judgment for what he does, or fails to do, in this life (**Heb 9:27**; see **Rev. 20:11-15**). A basic principle of God’s judgment is, “*From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more*” (**Luke 12:48b**; see **1 Cor 3:10-15**). Because their wealth carries with it greater obligations and, thereby, greater accountability, those who are wealthy in this life face a potentially more strict judgment than those who are not wealthy. Thus, **Prov 11:4** warns that riches will fail the wealthy person at the judgment. To amass great amounts of wealth and not use it for the purposes for which God gives it to us violates the law of Christ and is sin. Jesus said that moth and rust destroy treasures stored up on earth (**Matt 6:19**). The apostle James used Christ’s language to warn the wealthy people who have not used their wealth as they are supposed to (i.e., have allowed it to “rust”), “*Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire*” (**Jas 5:3**). He adds that because of the judgment the wealthy face, they should “*weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you*” (**Jas 5:1**). He concludes that those who have “*lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure*” face a judgment like sheep or cows or pigs who have “*fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter*” (**Jas 5:5**). (B) *With respect to this life:* One way we can determine whether we are lovers of money (**6:9-10**) is to see what kind of givers we are (**6:18**). The early church understood that the gospel implied how we should treat our money and possessions. They knew that “*who has been forgiven much, loves much*” (see **Luke 7:36-50**). As a result, the early church was characterized by a *radical generosity*. Zaccheus voluntarily decided to give half of his possessions to the poor (**Luke 19:1-10**). The early church in Jerusalem (**Acts 2:44-47** and **Acts 4:32-37**) “*began selling their property and possessions and were sharing with them all, as anyone might have need.*” The church in Antioch, “*in proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea*” (**Acts 11:29**). The church in Macedonia gave generously even though they themselves were suffering from “*deep poverty*” and “*a great ordeal of affliction*” (**2 Cor 8:1-5**). God blessed all of those individuals and churches: he poured out his grace (**Acts 4:33**; **2 Cor 8:1**); he gave them great joy (**Acts 2:46**; **2 Cor 8:2**); he took care of their needs (**Acts 4:34**); he knit them together (**Acts 2:44, 46; 4:32**); they found favor with the people (**Acts 2:47**); he caused their witness to be powerful (**Acts 2:43; 4:33**); and he caused them to grow (**Acts 2:47**). What we do with our money and possessions is a practical, outward and visible sign of our inward and spiritual state.

6:20-21: ²⁰*O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge”—²¹which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you.*

O Timothy: Even little words are important. Paul did not conclude by saying “Guard what has been entrusted to you.” He did not even say, “Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you.” Instead, he said “‘*O*’ Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you.” That little word “O” is a word of passion. We say “O” when we are speaking to people who mean a lot to us and when we are saying things that are very important to us. Paul is exposing his heart here. He knows that he is getting close to the end of his earthly life. He wants to make sure that what he has said, and the life he has lived, have not been in vain, but will be carried on by the faithful lives

of Timothy and, through him, us.

Guard what has been entrusted to you: We “guard” the things that are most important to us. In this case, it is the gospel. This is the third time Paul has talked about “entrusted.” in **1:11** he said that “*the glorious gospel*” had been entrusted to him. In **1:18-19** he entrusted “*this command . . . that you fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience*” to Timothy. Now Paul is telling Timothy to “guard” what has been entrusted to him. We guard the gospel by knowing it, understanding it, living it, proclaiming it, teaching it, and “*entrusting [it] to faithful men who will be able to teach others also*” (**2 Tim 2:2**).

Avoiding worldly and empty chatter . . . and thus gone astray from the faith: Paul ends his letter the same way he began it, by exhorting Timothy to remain faithful and by warning about falling away. The problem of false doctrine is almost ironic. On the one hand, false doctrine itself amounts to nothing but “*fruitless discussion*” (**1:6**), “*worldly fables fit only for old women*” (**4:7a**), and “*worldly and empty chatter*” (**6:20**). On the other hand, false doctrine has “*deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons*” as its source (**4:1**), is characterized by controversy and disputes (**6:4**), results in a “*seared conscience*” (**4:2**) and a “*depraved mind*” (**6:5**) for those who adhere to it, “*shipwrecks*” (**1:19**) or causes one to “*go astray*” (**6:21**) from the faith, and causes all kinds of “*speculation*” (**1:4**), “*envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction*” (**6:4-5**) within the church. The issue is one of eternal life and death. Therefore, Paul begins with it, discusses it in detail throughout the book, and ends with it.

Grace be with you: Paul began his letter by saying “*grace, mercy, and peace*” (**1:2**). He ends on the same note. By saying “*grace be with you,*” Paul is reminding us that, although remaining faithful is difficult (hence, “*fight the good fight*”), we are not alone. The battle we wage against the world, the flesh, and the devil is the greatest battle in the world. But we do not wage it on our own. The Lord is with us: “*for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure*” (**Phil 2:13**). He himself said, “*I will never leave you nor will I ever forsake you*” (**Heb 13:5**). That should encourage and strengthen us, because the Greek for “*you*” in **6:21** is in the plural, not the singular. God not only was with Timothy, he is with us. Therefore, let us “*fight the good fight of faith, taking hold of the eternal life to which we were called*” (**6:12**).

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1 TIMOTHY: INDUCTIVE TRAINING MANUAL

1 Timothy 1:1-7

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope, ²to Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. ³As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, ⁴nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith. ⁵But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. ⁶For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, ⁷wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.

1:1-2—Paul the Apostle, Our Hope, Timothy, Paul’s “true child in the faith”

Paul begins this epistle by pointing out two facts of great importance:

(1) Paul was writing to Timothy in his special authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Paul had been specifically chosen and miraculously converted by God (**Acts 9:1-31**); Paul had personally seen the Lord Jesus Christ (**1 Cor 9:1, 15:8-9**); Paul had been set apart by God for his apostolic ministry and had been personally taught by God (**Gal 1:11-24**); Paul was granted special revelations by God and performed signs of true apostleship (**2 Cor 12:1-12**); Paul’s apostleship was by the commandment of God, and his teaching is equivalent to the teaching of Jesus Christ himself (**1 Tim 1:1, 6:3**).

(2) Behind Paul stands God himself and “Christ Jesus, who is our hope.” Most people place their hopes, and dreams, and all of their energies into this world, and this life; they think that this world and this life is all that there is. Thus, Paul said in **1 Cor 15:19**, “If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most to be pitied.” However, Paul recognized that this world and this life are not all that there is. Instead, there is eternity: there will be a new heavens and a new earth, and there is eternal life, which begins now, for people who have received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Jesus Christ in fact is reigning now over all of creation and will make those who are his into his own image (**Acts 2:22-36; Rom 8:26-39; 1 Cor 15**). Thus, Paul’s authority as an apostle, and Jesus Christ, the ultimate authority and Lord of the universe, make what is said in this book of tremendous importance.

1) When people want to know how they should live—in order to realize their hopes and find meaning and satisfaction—where do they look, what authorities do they seek out to show them the way?

A) What about you?

2) What is an “Apostle,” and what is the importance of the Apostles?

A) What qualifications do we tend to admire?

B) What unique qualifications did Paul have as an apostle?

C) Timothy was not an “apostle” like Paul. He did not have the unique training that Paul had.

Nevertheless, he was a faithful teacher of God’s word. What “qualifications” did Timothy have, and how does this encourage you?

D) What should be some of the signs of true apostleship in our generation?

1) What signs should young and developing Christians follow to demonstrate true, apostolic teaching today?

2) How are we as church leaders falling short in demonstrating that we are true successors of the apostles?

3) What should we do about it?

3) What do people hope for the most?

A) What do the people in your church hope for the most?

B) What do you hope for the most?

4) What does Paul tell us is (or should be) our real hope?

A) What does he mean by this—In what ways and why is Christ Jesus our hope?

- 5) How much is this hope that is found in Christ Jesus worth to the people in the church whom you know?
- A) How can you tell?
 - B) How much is He worth to you? And why?
 - C) How do you *show in your life* that Christ Jesus is your hope?
- 6) What problems do you see in African culture in developing leaders in the church?
- A) How can we correct these problems in order to develop mature Christian leaders?
- 7) Sometimes existing leaders see new or potential leaders as competition or a threat.
- A) How have you seen this happen in the African church?
 - B) What steps can we take to develop new leaders within the church without threatening the existing leaders?
- 8) Paul called Timothy his “true child in the faith.” (In **1 Cor 4:17** Paul also called Timothy “my beloved and faithful child in the Lord.”)
- A) How would African culture view the relationship between Paul and Timothy?
 - B) Do pastors in Africa have someone they can view as a “Timothy”—i.e., as a child in the faith” whom they can mentor and train as a leader in the church?
 - C) What difference would it make within our church if we actively sought to develop “true children in the faith” to assume positions of leadership?
 - D) What steps can we take to *develop* new leaders in the church to make sure that they are our “true children in the faith”?
- 9) In Paul’s second missionary journey, he met Timothy (who already was a disciple), and circumcised him because of the Jews in the area where they would be working together (**Acts 16:1-5**). Later in that same journey, Timothy continued to work in Berea after Paul was sent to Athens. However, Timothy was so important to Paul that Paul sent a special command to the church in Berea for Timothy to come to him as soon as possible (**Acts 17:10-15**). So Paul started to develop new leaders right from the beginning. Paul sees this as an important task.
- A) If the African church did this, what difference would it make?
 - B) If we did this, what difference would it make for our own ministries?

1:2—Grace, mercy, and peace

Paul usually begins his epistles with the greeting “grace and peace.” Only in 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy does he add the term “mercy” to his greeting (verse 2). “Mercy” normally conveys the idea of compassion to the unfortunate and needy. One commentator distinguished the ideas of “mercy” and “grace” this way: “[Mercy] always deals with what we see of pain, misery and distress, these results of sin, and [grace] always deals with the sin and guilt itself. The one extends relief, the other pardon; the one cures, heals, helps, the other cleanses and reinstates.” (George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992], 66)

- 1) In his prayer of greeting to Timothy in verse 2, Paul is the *agent* of “grace, mercy, and peace.” However, he states that grace, mercy, and peace are “from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord”—i.e., God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord are the *source* of grace mercy and peace.
- A) Why would Paul pray that Timothy receive these three things from God the Father and Christ Jesus the Lord?
 - B) Why do people today need “grace, mercy, and peace” from God and Christ?
 - C) From what sources do people today try to find grace, mercy, and peace in their lives?
 - D) What results occur in people’s lives when they seek grace, mercy, and peace from sources other than God through Christ (and what rationalizations do people use to avoid seeking grace, mercy, and peace from God through Christ)?
 - E) To what level do Christians today understand grace and mercy from Jesus Christ?
- 2) Regarding church leaders as agents through which Christ expresses his grace, mercy, and peace, consider the following:
- A) Sometimes leaders have a hard time showing mercy to those under their authority. What has been your experience?
 - B) Why do the people you are developing as leaders in the church need mercy?

C) How have you been shown mercy by someone? How did it affect you? How did it affect your subsequent behavior?

D) If you were a person known for showing mercy to others, how do you think that might affect the church?

1:3-4—Strange doctrines, myths and genealogies

The word translated above as “strange doctrines” is used again in **1 Tim 6:3** (where it is translated as “a different doctrine”). In context, it means “to teach doctrine that is essentially different from Paul’s gospel.” Although the false teaching Paul is referring to is not specifically defined, it appears to relate to: an interest in myths and genealogies [i.e., traditions about peoples’ origins] (**1 Tim 1:4, 4:7; 2 Tim 4:4; Titus 1:14, 3:9**); concern with the Jewish law (**1 Tim 1:7; Titus 1:10, 14, 3:9**); a tendency toward speculation, controversy and argumentation (**1 Tim 1:4, 6; 6:4; 2 Tim 2:14, 16, 23; Titus 1:10; 3:9**); deceptiveness (**1 Tim 4:1-3; 2 Tim 3:6-13; Titus 1:10-13**); immorality (**1 Tim 1:19-20; 2 Tim 2:16, 19 and 2 Tim 3:2-8; Titus 1:15-16**); and a desire to get material gain by means of their teaching (**1 Tim 6:5; 2 Tim 3:2, 4; Titus 1:11**). The false teaching may also have included a harsh asceticism and forbidding marriage and eating of meat (**1 Tim 4:1-5**) and a teaching that the resurrection had already taken place (**2 Tim 2:18**). As one commentator summarized, the false teaching “mixed in portions of aberrant Judaism, speculative superstition, and possibly magic” (William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* [Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46] (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000), lxxv).

The importance of this is seen in the word Paul chose to tell Timothy to “instruct” certain men not to teach strange doctrines (verse 3). The term could be translated “command.” As Mounce adds, the term “is both a military and a legal term, describing a military command or an official summons to court.” (Ibid.: 18)

1) Leaders need to understand the Bible but also be able to detect strange doctrines.

- A) What strange doctrines are there in our community that we need to be able to confront?
- B) What strange doctrines do we have in our church that younger leaders need to be able to confront?
- C) What effects are such strange doctrines having in the church?
- D) What steps should we take to confront such strange doctrines?

2) How do false teachings affect the young and developing Christians in the church today?

- A) How can young, developing Christians identify and isolate true doctrine from false doctrine?

3) Paul tells us not to pay attention to “myths and endless genealogies.” Myths are fables or stories that are designed to show us how to live or find meaning and satisfaction; genealogies have to do with our ancestors, blood lines, and the tribes we came from.

- A) What myths are important to people you know (and to you)?
- B) What rituals do people you know perform in order to gain favor from their ancestors?

4) Read **Phil 3:1-11** and note what Paul said about his own genealogy in **Phil 3:4-5**.

- A) Why did Paul discuss his own genealogy when he told Timothy to pay no attention to endless genealogies?
- B) What was Paul’s opinion about genealogies compared to knowing Christ?
- C) If Paul were talking to you today, what issues would he be talking about?
- D) How can we help our people deal with those issues?

1:5—The goal of our instruction

1) What are the most important goals that people have?

- A) What are your most important goals?
- B) What are our most important goals *as instructors* when we stand up to preach and teach?
- C) *Why* do we want to preach and teach?
- D) How can I tell that my motive for teaching and preaching is not just a deceitful desire of my heart for power, acclaim, status, money, or some other unworthy motive?

2) The goal of Paul’s instruction was more than just getting “head knowledge” or a diploma (i.e., “paper credentials”).

- A) How does Paul describe the most important goal of his instruction [v. 5]?
- B) Why should this be the most important goal?
- C) Why do we tend to emphasize “paper credentials”?

D) What steps can we take to help develop the “inner” qualities of our leaders?

3) In verse 5 Paul establishes a relationship between what we do on the outside (demonstrate love) and what we are on the inside (pure of heart, good of conscience and sincere in faith).

A) Why can real love only come from a person who has a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith?

B) What keeps the hearts of people in the church from being pure?

C) How would Paul deal with this?

D) What keeps the consciences of people in the church from being good?

E) How would Paul deal with this?

F) What keeps the faith of people in the church from being sincere?

G) How would Paul deal with this?

H) What steps can we take to deal with these issues like Paul would?

I) Many Christians have professed faith without showing any love or other actions to demonstrate their faith. What could be the repercussions or effects of this to the church?

4) Read **Mark 12:28-34** concerning what Jesus said was the greatest commandment.

A) In light of what Jesus says, and what Paul says, why do you think this is not peoples’ goal?

B) If there is a difference between the primary goal of your life and what Paul says is the goal of his instruction, do you think you need to change your primary goal?

C) How will you go about this—What are some practical steps you can [you will] take this week to demonstrate love?

D) How can you help people in the church reassess their lives in order to bring their primary goals in line with what Jesus and Paul say?

1:6-7—Straying from the goal

1) Paul says that some men have strayed from these things (i.e., from Paul’s instruction and the goal of his instruction). Their talk had become “fruitless.” They don’t even understand what they are talking about.

A) What are the different ways that a person can learn sound Christian doctrine and how to live the Christian life?

B) What is the best sign that someone truly understands what Christianity is all about—that he has truly learned Paul’s instruction?

2) Why is it that some Christians today think that when you keep the Law of Moses you are in a correct relationship with the Lord?

A) How can we deal with that idea in a correct way, so as to not lead people to think that they are free to live sinful lives?

1 Timothy 1:8-20

⁸But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ⁹realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers ¹⁰and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, ¹¹according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

¹²I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, ¹³even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; ¹⁴and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

¹⁶Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. ¹⁷Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

¹⁸This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight, ¹⁹keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. ²⁰Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.

1:8-11—The right use of the Law

1) What is Law?

- A) What is God's Law?
- B) Who does Paul say the Law was made for?
- C) Why is it necessary to have laws?

2) When we are convicted of breaking laws what happens?

- A) Do we bring honor or shame to our fathers and our families when we break the law?
- B) What about God's Law—Do we bring honor or shame to our Heavenly Father and the family of God when we break his law?
- C) What does the Bible tell us about the consequences of breaking God's Law?
- D) Do you know anyone who has ever kept God's law perfectly—all the time, in every way for all the right reasons?
- E) Have you done this?
- F) Why don't people ever keep the Law—fully and completely, all of the time and for all of the right reasons?

3) Because people do not perfectly keep God's law, they do all kinds of rites and rituals and other things to try to make themselves "clean" or holy—to try to get rid of their sin and get right with God.

- A) What kinds of rites, rituals, and other such things do people do?
- B) Why don't such rites and rituals succeed in making them clean and holy?
- C) Is this a true way to become holy or is it a "myth"?
- D) If we are trying to follow ways other than what God said, why does that not bring honor to him?
- E) How can we help the people we know break their habits of doing rites and rituals that do not help them (and that also dishonor God)?

1:12-20—The Example of Paul

1) In 1:12-17 Paul tells us that he found the answer of how to get right with God.

- A) Was Paul able to keep God's Law? If not, what kind of a person was he?
- B) How was Paul able to find acceptance by God even though he did not keep God's Law?
- C) How do we find acceptance with God?
- D) What does this suggest is one of the true purposes of the Law?

2) What is God's "grace"?

- A) What is stronger, your sin or Christ's grace?
- B) How do you receive this grace?
- C) What does "believing in Him" (v.16) mean and imply for our lives? What does it "look like?" Is it a one time thing a life-long thing?

3) 1 Timothy is not limited to just instructing Timothy. It is also for our instruction.

- A) How do we know this?

1 Timothy 2:1-7

¹First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. ³This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time. ⁷For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

2:1-7—Pray for all, especially for our leaders

1) People often complain about things that are wrong with the government, with the leaders, and with other people.

- A) What does Paul say we should do?
- B) How big of a priority to Paul is praying for others? How can you tell?
- C) Why do you think prayer is such a priority for Paul?

D) How can we make prayer more of a priority in our church?

2) Verse 1 lists different types of prayers, including: requests or supplications on behalf of others; earnest prayers and intercessions on behalf of others; and prayers of thanksgiving on behalf of others.

A) Why is it important to pray different types of prayer on behalf of other people?

3) In verse 2 Paul says that all of these prayers should be made “for kings and all who are in authority.”

A) What reason does Paul give in verse 2 for praying for those who are in authority?

B) Why is it important to live “a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity?” Is this an end in itself, or is it important for other reasons?

C) In verse 4 Paul gives another reason why we should pray for those in authority. What is it?

D) Why is praying for those who are in authority important?

E) How is living “a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity” related to our spreading the gospel, so that those with whom we deal may “be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth?”

F) How can we be “thankful” for “kings and all who are in authority” if we *disagree* with their policies? Why should we be thankful for such leaders?

1 Timothy 2:8-15

⁸Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.⁹Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments,¹⁰but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.¹¹A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness.¹²But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.¹³For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve.¹⁴And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.¹⁵But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.

Walter Liefeld in *The NIV Application Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy/Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 95-96, says this about these verses: “The main goal of the instruction in 1 Timothy 2:8-10 is not to command the *act* of prayer (the specific command to pray having already been given in vv. 1-2) but the *demeanor* of both men and women *while* praying and worshipping . . . Paul is dealing with expressions of morality in connection with the religious practices of men and women. He insists that their outward appearance should not be in conflict with their inner character. In verses 9-10 the example is that women’s inner piety should be expressed in good deeds. In ancient Greece, and to some extent still in Paul’s day, lavish dress, hair style, and jewelry were considered inconsistent with moral uprightness and true piety. Thus, Christian women were to dress ‘modestly.’

The description of the clothing, hairstyle, and jewelry suggests two reasons why they were improper.

(1) One is inordinate expense. The mention of gold speaks for itself, and the adjective used to describe the inappropriate clothing is ‘expensive.’ (2) The other is traditional association with immoral behavior.”

2:8—Men’s prayers should arise out of a holy life

1) In verse 8 Paul focuses on the *men*. He says that men are to pray “without wrath and dissension.”

A) Why is praying “without wrath and dissension” important for our prayers?

B) Since Paul is speaking here specifically to men, what does this verse suggest are sins that men especially are prone to commit?

C) Why do you think that men are particularly likely to be “wrathful” (angry) and subject to “dissension” (argumentative)?

D) What can we do to help the men of our church to overcome these sins and, instead, live “tranquil and quiet lives in all godliness and dignity?”

2) The great purpose that Paul states in these verses is that people would “be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.” He has twice mentioned our *lifestyle* in connection with our prayers (vv. 2 and 8).

A) How and why is our lifestyle connected with other people’s coming to the saving knowledge of Christ?

B) As a church, what can we do to make these verses more a part of our church’s life?

2:9-15—Women’s prayers should arise out of a holy life

1) The “likewise” in verse 9 continues Paul’s main thought—i.e., that prayer for others (especially for our leaders) should arise out of a holy life. He now applies that thought particularly to women.

- A) If men are particularly prone to the sins of anger and argumentativeness, what sins do these verses suggest that women are particularly prone to?
- B) What can we do to help the women of our church to overcome these sins and, instead, live “tranquil and quiet lives in all godliness and dignity?”
- C) The references to “braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments” in verse 9 suggests that Paul may have had wealthy women particularly in mind here. However, since the context of this discussion arises out of *prayer*, if the women could afford to wear gold, pearls and costly garments, why should it matter what they are wearing?
- D) Are there any external adornments in our culture that might give a wrong impression to people about what Christianity and true godliness are all about?
- E) How are “good works” (v.10) and “quietly receiving instruction” (v.11) related to how a woman adorns herself? Is there some deeper point or principle that Paul is making here?

1 Timothy 3:1-13

¹*It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.*

²*An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. ⁴He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity ⁵(but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), ⁶and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. ⁷And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*

⁸*Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, ⁹but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. ¹¹Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. ¹²Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. ¹³For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.*

Walter Liefeld in *The NIV Application Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy/Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 116, says this about these verses: “It is noteworthy that here in 1 Timothy 3:1 Paul defines being an overseer in terms of function (‘a noble task’), not of status or office. He is not encouraging people to seek status but responsibility.”

3:1-13—Qualifications for Leaders in the Church

1) Look at the list of qualifications for overseers (i.e., elders, bishops) in vv. 1-7:

- A) Which of the qualifications do men seem to have the most trouble with? Why is that the case?
- B) What can we do as a church to help our men become qualified in each of the areas that Paul lists?

2) Look at the list of qualifications for deacons in verses 8-12:

- A) Which of the qualifications do men seem to have the most trouble with? Why is that the case?
- B) What can we do as a church to help our men become qualified in each of the areas that Paul lists?

3) The qualifications for elders (vv.1-7) and for deacons (vv.8-12) are probably *illustrative*, not *exhaustive*, of the types of qualities church leaders should have. We can see this in that **Titus 1:5-11** contains a similar (although not identical) list of qualifications for elders. Compare 1 Timothy’s and Titus’ lists of qualifications with each other and consider the following:

- A) According to the two lists of qualifications:
 - 1) What *skills and abilities* should a church leader have?
 - 2) Why are those *skills and abilities* important?
 - 3) How can we as a church assess whether someone who aspires to leadership has those *skills and abilities*?
- B) According to the two lists of qualifications:
 - 1) What *behavior and personal characteristics* should a church leader have?

- 2) Why are those *behavior and personal characteristics* important?
- 3) How can we as a church assess whether someone who aspires to leadership has those *behavior and personal characteristics*?

C) According to the two lists of qualifications:

- 1) What *reputation and relationship with non-Christians* should a church leader have?
- 2) Why is such a *reputation and relationship with non-Christians* important?
- 3) How can we as a church assess whether someone who aspires to leadership has such a *reputation and relationship with non-Christians*?

4) Different cultures and societies tend to value and promote different qualities and character traits. Some societies tend to emphasize such things as individualism and individual achievement, often at the expense of family and group relationships. Other societies tend to emphasize group consensus, sometimes at the expense of individual initiative and achievement. We need to be aware of the things our own culture and society values, because our culture may not value or promote all of the same things that Paul sees as important characteristics of church leaders.

- A) Which of the leadership qualities that Paul discusses in **1 Tim 3:1-13** does our society do a good job of instilling?
- B) Which of the leadership qualities that Paul discusses in **1 Tim 3:1-13** does our society *not* do a good job of instilling?
- C) For those leadership qualities that our society does not do a good job of instilling, what can we do as a church to help our potential leaders conform to all of the qualities that Paul says a church leader should have?

5) Note that the only word that is common to the lists of qualification for elders (v.4), deacons (v.8), and women (v.11) is “dignity” “dignified” (the verbal form of the Greek word is used in v.4; the noun form in vv. 8, 11). The same word occurs at the end of **1 Tim 2:2**. The word means “a manner or mode of behavior that indicates one is above what is ordinary and therefore is *worthy of special respect*.” Such things as “above reproach,” “integrity,” “honor,” and “holiness” go into making a person of “dignity/worthy of special respect.” This qualification is clearly of great importance to Paul.

- A) How important is this quality of dignity in the teaching, training, and preaching ministries of our church?
- B) What can we do to help insure that our people—especially our leaders and potential leaders—understand the importance of living a life “worthy of special respect”?

6) In verse 2, where it says that an elder or overseer is to be “husband of one wife,” in the Greek it literally says that he is to be a “one woman man.” The same expression is used in verse 12 regarding deacons (and the converse, a “one man woman” is used in **1 Tim 5:9**). The Bible does not prohibit people engaged in polygamous marriage from being members of the church, although the Biblical ideal is monogamy. It may be here that a monogamous standard is being required for people who are church leaders, if they are married (marriage itself is not required to be a church leader). The real emphasis of this qualification is the faithfulness that a man shows to his wife.

- A) Why is faithfulness in marriage such an important qualification that Paul repeats it for both elders and deacons?
- B) Although polygamy was practiced in ancient Israel, by the time Paul wrote it was very rare. Is polygamy an issue that exists and needs to be addressed in our culture, especially as it relates to church leadership?
- C) If verses 2 and 12 would not permit a man who is in a polygamous marriage to be an elder or deacon, why should that be the case—and how would we explain this to someone, who otherwise would make a good elder or deacon, but who is in a polygamous marriage?

7) Note that the last three qualifications for elders (managing his household well; not being a new convert; and having a good reputation with those outside the church [vv.4-7]) are important to Paul, because they are the only qualities that include *explanations* of why they are important.

- A) What would be likely reasons why Paul included the *other* qualifications for elders and deacons in verses 2-12?
- B) When our church has made someone an elder or a deacon, what qualifications have we required, and what have been the *reasons* for those qualifications?

C) What, if anything, do we have to do as a church to make our requirements for elders and deacons line up with Paul's requirements?

8) One requirement to be an elder that is *not* a part of the requirement to be a deacon is the *ability to teach* (v.2). This is because the role of deacons is very practically-oriented: it is a ministry of helps, or service, of meeting people's needs (see **Acts 6:1-6**). The role of a deacon is an important spiritual ministry. Walter Liefeld in *The NIV Application Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy/Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 138-39, says this about deacons: "To fulfill the goals of the early deacons, three things are necessary: (1) Churches must take initiative to seek men and women who have the moral and spiritual integrity described in 1 Timothy 3. (2) Such people need to have the vision, heart, and will to serve, already demonstrating this before their public appointment in acts of practical kindness. They need to *be* deacons before they are *named* deacons. (3) The church should make this an intentional ministry on behalf of the whole body. It should be visible to the community at large, so that the community may not only *experience* but also *perceive* the loving ministry of the church."

A) How well do we as a church meet this calling with respect to our deacons?

B) How do our deacons understand and appreciate the important spiritual role they play?

C) What should we do as a church to recover the important Biblical role that should be played by our deacons?

1 Timothy 3:14-16

¹⁴I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; ¹⁵but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth. ¹⁶By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness:

*He who was revealed in the flesh,
Was vindicated in the Spirit,
Seen by angels,
Proclaimed among the nations,
Believed on in the world,
Taken up in glory.*

In verse 15 Paul gives three descriptions of where Timothy serves: (1) The house(hold) of God; (2) The church of the living God; and (3) The pillar and support of the truth. The word in Greek for household can mean both a dwelling place ("house") and everything within it ("household"). This suggests at least two things: (1) God's permanent residence (his "house") is the church, his people; and (2) the people of God are not just a formal institution, but are like a family (God's "household")—and we must make no mistake: it is *God's* family, not ours.

The "church ["assembly" in the Greek] of the living God" suggests that the church, when it assembles together, manifests the living presence of God in a special way. Remember that Jesus called it "my church": he is the founder of the church (**Matt 16:18**); he is the head over the church (**Eph 1:18-23**); and he said that "where two or three have gathered together in my name, there am I in their midst" (**Matt 18:20**).

The "pillar and support of the truth" suggests at least two things: (1) There is "the truth." Jesus is the truth (**John 14:6**); God's word is truth (**John 17:17; 2 Tim 2:15**). (2) The church is vitally important in upholding the truth and making it known.

1) With respect to the "household of God":

A) Do people outside of our church see us as a family?

1) If not, why not?

2) If so, do they see us as a good, well-adjusted family, or as a dysfunctional family?

B) Do we see ourselves as a family, and do we act as loving family members toward each other?

C) What can we do as a church to make sure that all of the people in our church are treated like they are beloved members of our family?

2) With respect to "the church of the living God":

A) Does the word "church" have a good or bad connotation in the community? Why is that so?

B) Since the church is so special to Christ, are there things that we can do to make the church more special to us?

- 3) With respect to the church as “pillar and support of the truth”:
- A) Do non-Christians in our community believe that there is “the truth?” If so, what do they think that truth is?
 - B) Are we equipping our people to be able to “support the truth” of Christ and his word when they interact with non-Christians? If not, what should we be doing to properly equip our people?
 - C) The church can and does serve many functions, and play many roles, in people’s lives.
 - 1) What are the main functions and roles that our church is playing in people’s lives?
 - 2) How can we make sure that one of the primary functions of our church is that of being a “pillar and support of the truth?”
- 4) As we look at all the aspects mentioned by Paul of what the church is:
- A) Are we doing some things that we shouldn’t be doing to conform to Paul’s descriptions of the church?
 - B) Are we not doing some things that we should be doing to conform to Paul’s descriptions of the church?
- 5) The great truths about Jesus Christ—his incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and glorification—are set forth in verse 16. With respect to those truths:
- A) Do our people really understand the truths about Jesus and the uniqueness and importance of his incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and glorification? If not, what should we be doing to make sure that they do understand these central matters?
 - B) How are we “proclaiming Christ” among the unbelievers in our own nation?
 - C) Are there things that we should be doing differently so that Christ is proclaimed truly—both in word and in deed?
- 6) Notice that in vv. 2, 4, 5, 12, and 15 there are connections drawn between the family/household and the church:
- A) How are today’s families similar to the church of Christ?
 - B) How *should* today’s families be like the church of Christ?
 - C) What should we do to help our families become better models of the church of Christ?

1 Timothy 4:1-7a

¹But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, ²by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, ³men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; ⁵for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer. ⁶In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following. ⁷But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women.

4:1-7a—The problem of heresy in the church

Paul has previously indicated that there was a problem in the church in Ephesus (where Timothy was pastor), involving false teaching by certain men (**1 Tim 1:3-4, 18-20**). He has discussed the important aspects of the church: the necessity of prayer arising out of holy lives, so that people may come to the saving knowledge of Christ (**2:1-15**); the importance of good and properly qualified people to lead the church (**3:1-13**); the nature of the church itself (**3:15**); and the great “mystery of godliness” concerning Jesus Christ, which the church believes and proclaims (**3:16**). Now Paul turns specifically to the false teachings in the church and how Timothy is to combat them.

People sometimes think that *abstaining* from good things that God has ordained and created (e.g., marriage, certain foods) makes them “holier” than others. Walter Liefeld in *The NIV Application Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy/Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 151, comments about this, as follows: “In some way the heretics were imagining an altered or heightened spiritual environment, in which marriage and certain foods were unnecessary, even wrong. Paul indicates that such ideas are false when he says that people who ‘believe and . . . know the truth’ receive the food that God created with thanksgiving. We may assume by analogy that Paul would say the same thing about marriage, but as the passage goes on it deals only with food. . . . To reject food is to negate God’s creative work. To receive it and be thankful are to acknowledge that work

and our dependence on God. . . . The false teachers were clearly thankless, a sin that lay at the core of human rebellion against God (Rom. 1:21).”

1) There is an overlap between false *beliefs* (v.1) and wrong *actions* (v.3); what people believe determines how they will live (and what people do is probably the best indicator of what they really believe). False beliefs and wrongs actions are often linked by hypocrisy and lies (v.2). Consider the following:

- A) What does Paul say the ultimate *source* of heretical beliefs is? What does this suggest about the importance of correcting wrong doctrinal beliefs?
- B) Are there specific beliefs or practices among people in our church or community that really are contrary to the word of God?
- C) Why do people believe and do such things?
- D) What can we do to help these people no longer believe and do such things?

2) When people do or abstain from certain things in order to become “holier,” even though such things are not required by the Bible, they usually end up in bondage to those very things.

- A) How is “forbidding marriage,” “abstaining from foods,” or doing/abstaining from other things (that are not required by the Bible), contrary to the “grace, mercy, and peace” that are found in Jesus Christ?
- B) If God’s word does not forbid something, but people say it should be forbidden, what does that say about their view of: 1) the authority of the Bible; 2) God’s grace; 3) faith and works?
- C) Trying to break unbiblical habits can be very difficult. How can we as a church help people break their unbiblical habits and thereby experience the grace, mercy, and peace that comes from a right relationship with Jesus Christ?

3) In verse 6 Paul says that false doctrine and wrong practice need to be “pointed out” to the people of the church.

- A) Are we doing this for our own people?
- B) If not, what are the things that need to be “pointed out,” and how can we do it most effectively?

1 Timothy 4:7b-16

^{7b}On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; ⁸for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. ⁹It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. ¹⁰For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers. ¹¹Prescribe and teach these things. ¹²Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe. ¹³Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. ¹⁴Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. ¹⁵Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. ¹⁶Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

4:7b-10—How the servant of God prepares himself

1) Verses 7b-10 state a number of things that Timothy (and, by extension, the leaders of our church) should do in order to prepare himself to combat false teaching and wrong practice in the church):

- A) What are those things that the church leaders should do?
- B) How well are we doing them?
- C) If we need to improve in any of the areas Paul mentions, how can we improve so that we can best serve the congregations?

2) “Discipline” (vv.7b-8) implies a *regularity* of doing something (like the regular physical training necessary to compete as an athlete). Since disciplining for godliness is more important than physical discipline, how can we hold ourselves *accountable* to “discipline” ourselves “for the purpose of godliness?”

4:11-16—The marks of a successful servant

1) There are 10 imperatives (commands) in these six verses.

- A) What are they?
- B) How can we, as leaders of the church, be held accountable for doing all the things Paul says a good

minister of God's word should do?

2) In **3:2** one of the qualifications to be an elder was to have the ability to teach. The importance of teaching is *vital* to the church. This is shown by how often Paul repeats it. Thus, in **4:11** the leader is to “prescribe and teach these things” [i.e., the word of God]; in **4:13** he is to “give attention to . . . exhortation and teaching”; in **4:16** he is to “pay close attention . . . to [his] teaching”; in **5:17** elders who rule well are considered worthy of “double honor,” especially those who work hard at “preaching and teaching”; in **6:2** he is to “teach and preach”; in **6:17** he is to “instruct the rich [regarding how to rightly use their money].”

In this regard it should be remembered that “the whole counsel of God” (**Acts 20:27**) should be taught. The reason, of course, is that, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (**2 Tim 3:16-17**).

- A) Why is sound teaching of the word of God so important for the life of the church?
- B) Are there some areas of Scripture that either are being *neglected* or are being *overemphasized*?
- C) Do our church members' lives indicate that greater teaching is necessary on particular subjects or in particular areas?
- D) Do the influences of our culture and society indicate that greater teaching is necessary on particular subjects or in particular areas?

3) In these verses Paul clearly shows that the *personal life* of the church leader cannot be divorced from his teaching; they must go hand-in-hand.

- A) What personal characteristics of the church leader's personal life does Paul emphasize in **1 Tim 4:11-16**?
- B) Why is it necessary for the church leader's personal life to conform to his teaching?
- C) What procedures, if any, do we have (or should we develop) to hold our leaders accountable for:
 - 1) Their personal lives?
 - 2) Their teaching?

4) In verse 12 Paul says, “Let no one look down on your youthfulness.” The verse thus implies that, as long as a person is “not a new convert” (**3:6**), church elders can be from among the “youthful,” if they meet the other qualifications Paul has stated.

- A) Are there any cultural factors that we need to address to make sure that our church leaders are not being looked down on because of their youthfulness?
- B) On the other hand, are we *excluding* “youthful” members from being leaders merely because of their youthfulness? If so, what should we do about this?

5) Verse 13 says that attention should be given to “the public reading of Scripture.”

- A) Why is this important?
- B) Is this being done adequately in our church now?
- C) Is there any problem with illiteracy in our community, such that the public reading and clear teaching of Scripture are the only ways that people can learn the Scriptures?
- D) If illiteracy is an issue, is there anything that we as a church can (or should) do about this, so that the people can be able to read the Scriptures on their own?

6) Verse 15 says that the leaders are to, “Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all.”

- A) When people look at us, would they likely say that we “take pains with these things” and are “absorbed in them,” such that our “progress [is] evident to all?”
- B) If not, what do we have to do about this?

1 Timothy 5:1-2

¹*Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity.*

Paul now transitions to the subject of how to deal with different types of people within the church.

5:1-2—Dealing with church members as with fathers, brothers, mothers, and sisters

1) What do verses 1-2 tell us about the nature of the church (or what it *should*) be like?

A) How does this relate to or reinforce what Paul said in **3:15**?

2) Church leaders are to correct older men as they would a father.

A) What does correcting an older man *as a father* imply for how we are to deal with older men?

B) Are there any cultural customs or expectations that we need to take into account when dealing with older men?

C) Are there things we need to change in the way we deal with the older men of the church?

3) Church leaders are to correct younger men as they would a brother.

A) What does correcting a younger man *as a brother* imply for how we are to deal with younger men?

B) Are there any cultural customs or expectations that we need to take into account when dealing with younger men?

C) Are there things we need to change in the way we deal with the younger men of the church?

4) Church leaders are to correct older women as they would a mother.

A) What does correcting an older woman *as a mother* imply for how we are to deal with older women?

B) Are there any cultural customs or expectations that we need to take into account when dealing with older women?

C) Are there things we need to change in the way we deal with the older women of the church?

5) Church leaders are to correct younger women as they would a sister.

A) What does correcting a younger woman *as a sister* imply for how we are to deal with younger women?

B) Are there any cultural customs or expectations that we need to take into account when dealing with younger women?

C) Are there things we need to change in the way we deal with the younger women of the church?

6) Probably one of the greatest sources of temptation for a church leader is his dealing with younger women.

Paul therefore adds the words “in all purity” at the end of verse 2.

A) What policies or procedures do (or should) we have to make sure that temptation is minimized, and the purity of the church leader and the purity of the younger woman are maintained?

1 Timothy 5:3-16

³*Honor widows who are widows indeed; ⁴but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God. ⁵Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope on God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day. ⁶But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives. ⁷Prescribe these things as well, so that they may be above reproach. ⁸But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. ⁹A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man, ¹⁰having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work. ¹¹But refuse to put younger widows on the list, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married, ¹²thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge. ¹³At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention. ¹⁴Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach; ¹⁵for some have already turned aside to follow Satan. ¹⁶If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, she must assist them and the church must not be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed.*

5:3-16—Dealing with widows

William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* [Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46] (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 299, states the overall substance of this section of Paul's epistle to Timothy: “Paul's primary concern in this passage is to help Timothy distinguish between widows whom the church should support and

those whom it should not. . . . Paul teaches that the true widow, the widow who should be cared for, must be totally alone, unable to receive any family support, and unwilling to remarry. She must be a godly woman who has set her hope on God, a godliness made evident by her behavior, such as being diligent in her prayers, being faithful to her husband, raising children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping the afflicted, and being truly devoted to a life of good deeds. Also, because the problem in Ephesus involved the younger widows, Paul says that the widow should be at least sixty years old if she is to be enrolled. This does not mean that the church could ignore widows who did not fit these qualifications. It means that the church was not supposed to enter into a formal, lifelong relationship with widows who were not this type of person.”

- 1) How do Paul’s requirements to receive support act as incentives to develop good Christian behavior?
 - A) How are providing incentives to develop good Christian behavior consistent with Christian charity, and our obligation to deal compassionately and charitably with those in need?
- 2) What system do we as a church have for dealing with people in need, such as widows?
 - A) Are we able to *refuse* (and give) financial assistance to widows (or other needy people) on some *principled* basis, such as Paul indicates?
 - B) If we do not have such a system, should we develop one and, if so, what should it be?
- 3) What customs and institutions within our culture provide assistance to needy widows and others?
 - A) How do (or should) such customs and institutions affect our responsibilities as a church?
- 4) What government assistance to needy widows and others is there?
 - A) How does (or should) such government assistance affect our responsibilities as a church?
- 5) As our people age do we need to do any planning so that we will be ready to provide assistance for the “truly needy” when the time comes?
- 6) Paul distinguished between godly older widows who were alone and widows who had families and other means of support.
 - A) How do (or should) we respond to requests for assistance from widows who have families, when the families refuse (or are unable) to support them?
- 7) Regarding the more general issue of people seeking financial assistance from the church:
 - A) Are there circumstances unique to our church or community, which are different from, but analogous to, the specific situation in Ephesus which Paul discussed?
 - B) What are the general *principles* of Paul’s advice to Timothy that we can adapt to our own unique circumstances?

1 Timothy 5:17-25

¹⁷The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. ¹⁸For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages." ¹⁹Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. ²⁰Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning. ²¹I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality. ²²Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin. ²³No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments. ²⁴The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after. ²⁵Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.

William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* [Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46] (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 322, notes that, “The issue of church discipline has always been a difficult subject, not only to understand but especially to carry out. The history of the church, both ancient and modern, has been plagued by a refusal to follow the admonitions of Scripture.” He goes on to discuss the principles set forth in **1 Tim 5:17-25**: “In 1 Tim 5:17-25 there are many principles governing the issue of church discipline, principles paralleling similar discussions elsewhere, such as in Matt 18. (1) Sin must be confronted. (2) Accusations must be

supported by multiple witnesses. (3) It is not the occasional but the persistent sin that requires action. (4) Public rebuke should be preceded by personal confrontation. But when the confrontation is ineffective, the public rebuke must be carried out. (5) The purpose of public rebuke is not so much for punishment as it is to instill a healthy fear. (6) A person executing judgment, even someone of Timothy's stature, must strive to be as fair and pure in the process as possible. (7) The commissioning of elders is serious business, and there is a responsibility assumed by the one commissioning for the ones commissioned. (8) There is no substitute for caution and time. A person's true character and deeds are not always immediately visible." (Ibid.)

- 1) Do we as a church have a system in place for dealing with:
 - A) Financially compensating our own church leaders, "especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching [vv.17-18]?"
 - B) Accusations against elders [v.19]?
 - C) Elders who sin and continue in that sin [v.20]?
 - 1) If so, does our system properly distinguish between private and public sin, and private and public rebuke?
- 2) If we do not have any such systems in place, should we develop them and, if so, what should they be?
- 3) If we do not or cannot financially compensate any of our church leaders, do we have a system for showing those who "rule well" honor or recognition in some other way?
 - A) If not, should we develop such a system and, if so, what should it be?

1 Timothy 6:1-2a

¹All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against. ²Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved.

6:1-2a—Admonitions to slaves

Every political, economic, educational, and other social system draws distinctions between people. Some are leaders; some are followers. Some are rich; some are poor. Some are employers; some are employees. Some are well-educated; some are poorly-educated. Sometimes those in the lower, subordinate or worse position can overcome their obstacles and change things; sometimes they can't. Slavery formed the basis of the Roman economic system. Slavery has been abolished in much of the world today. Nevertheless, most people who work for a living work for other people. Therefore, Paul's comments to slaves—and his comments concerning the rich later in this chapter—have much to teach us.

- 1) Do most people regard those for whom they work as "worthy of all honor [v.1]?"
 - A) Why or why not?
 - B) How can one show "honor" to one's employer?
 - 1) Even if the employer is not a Christian?
 - 2) Even if the employer is hostile to Christianity?
 - 3) Even if the employer is not a "good" employer?
- 2) What is Paul's *motive* or *reason* for telling slaves to regard their masters as "worthy of all honor?"
 - A) Why does this motive or reason still apply today, even though slavery no longer exists?
- 3) Verse 2 deals with the situation where the master as well as the slave is a Christian. Consequently, our equality in Christ may be different from our socially-defined roles. Indeed, it is possible that a slave or employee could have a position of greater authority within the church than his master or employer.
 - A) Are there circumstances in which employees have greater authority in the church than their employers?
 - 1) If so, has that led to conflicts between them, either within the church or outside the church?
 - 2) If there have been such conflicts, how should we as a church help people deal with such conflicts?
 - B) Are there circumstances in which either the employer or the employee take advantage of the other person *because* they are both Christians?

- 1) If so, how should we as a church help them overcome such advantage-taking?
- C) In these verses, what are the things that Paul considers to be of overriding importance?
 - 1) How can we use what Paul considers to be of overriding importance to help people deal with disputes that arise in connection with their work?

1 Timothy 6:2b-19

^{2b}Teach and preach these principles. ³If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, ⁴he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, ⁵and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

⁶But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. ⁷For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. ⁸If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. ⁹But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. ¹¹But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. ¹²Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, ¹⁴that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵which He will bring about at the proper time—He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.

¹⁷Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. ¹⁸Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

6:2b-5—The effects of false doctrine

- 1) In verses 2b-5 Paul returns to the theme of those who are spreading false doctrine in the church and what that brings.
 - A) Is there “envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction” within our church or among Christians in our community?
 - B) If so, what are the reasons for those problems?
 - C) What can we as a church do about that situation?
 - D) How can we distinguish between legitimate theological debate, as opposed to what Paul is talking about in these verses?

6:6-19—The love of riches, instructions for the church leader, and instructions for the rich

William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* [Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46] (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 341, states that: “Godliness is of great value if it is accompanied by contentment. This means realizing that people will die as they were born: without any material goods. Is it not then irrational for them to pursue wealth? The godliness that is of great value . . . means being satisfied with food and clothing. But the godliness that the opponents pursued was not one of contentment. Rather, they wanted to be rich, and because of their desire they fell into snares that . . . destroyed them, and they had abandoned the gospel. This is one of the most powerful condemnations in Scripture of the destructive lure of possessions. . . . Paul has learned to be content not because he has an inner, Stoic, superhuman strength or because circumstances have been good to him. Paul’s contentment is rooted in a faith that denies his own ability to perform his tasks and asserts the need for total reliance on the all-powerful God. The contentment that is of great profit is one that seeks its security not in worldly riches but in God.”

- 1) How important of an issue does the desire to get rich seem to be in our church and in our community?
 - A) How does this desire to get rich manifest itself?
 - B) According to Paul, the main problem is an inner one—i.e., the *desire* to get rich and the *love* of money. Why are these inner craving so dangerous?
 - C) Are we aware of people who have fallen because of these desires (or who are, even now, in danger of

falling)?

D) How can we as a church address these issues of the desire to get rich and the love of money to help our people?

1) How do we deal with these desires within ourselves?

2) Paul urges Timothy to “flee from these things” (i.e., all of the wrong teaching, the wrong behavior, and the wrong desires Paul has just discussed in vv.3-10).

A) It is one thing to physically flee from a temptation to sin like Joseph fled from Potiphar’s wife in **Gen 39:7-12**. How can we “flee” from the things that Paul has been discussing—especially from the wrong desires to be rich (which is something within our mind)?

B) How can we teach and help our people to “flee from these things?”

3) In verses 11-14 Paul gives Timothy five imperatives—things he is commanded to do.

A) What are they?

B) How well are we doing them?

C) If we need to improve in any of the areas Paul mentions, how can we improve so that we can best serve the congregations?

D) How can we, as leaders of the church, be held accountable for doing all the things Paul says a good minister of God’s word should do?

4) Compare the doxology in verses 15-16 with those in **1:17** and **3:16**.

A) How do most people tend to view or conceptualize Jesus?

B) Do we and our people really have a conception of Jesus Christ like that pictured by these verses?

C) If we and our people really conceived of Christ as Paul describes him, how might (or should) this affect our lives?

D) How can we develop and teach Christ like he is described by Paul?

5) Verses 17-19 deal with people who are wealthy.

A) Sometimes church leaders downplay the sins of the rich, or defer to the rich, or put the rich in positions of authority simply because of their wealth, or not criticize the behavior of the rich, because the church leaders want the rich to give money to the church.

1) Are we guilty of doing any of those things?

2) What is Paul’s attitude of how church leaders should deal with the rich?

3) What, if anything, do we need to do in order to properly deal with those who are wealthy?

B) On the other hand, sometimes people envy the rich for their wealth.

1) Have we detected envy of the rich within ourselves or by people within the church?

2) How should we deal with the sin of envy?

1 Timothy 6:20-21

²⁰O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge”—²¹which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you.

6:20-21—Concluding admonitions to Timothy

1) How can we, as leaders of the church, best “guard what has been entrusted to us?”

A) Are there people we are aware of who have “gone astray from the faith?”

1) Why did that happen?

2) What can we learn from their example?

B) What steps do we need to take to make sure that we do not “go astray from the faith?”

2) In what ways did Paul’s teaching resemble Jesus’ teachings?

A) In what ways should church leaders teach to be in line with Paul’s teachings in this book?

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