



THE BOOK OF 1 TIMOTHY



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INTRODUCTION

Paul wanted to encourage Timothy to help with his work in Ephesus, where he was to stay as an evangelist. Paul's waiting for the result of his trial, 2 Timothy and makes some requests to Timothy to come and see him before he was put to death, 2 Timothy 4:6.

In 1 Timothy, Paul gave him clear guidelines for choosing church leaders. In his letter to Titus, Paul appears to be dealing with the same issue, and so, he encourages him to use similar guidelines for choosing church leaders in Crete. So, in both cases, Paul's letters of encouragement would have helped them in their demanding tasks.

AUTHOR

The letter itself, along with other letters which Paul wrote, especially 2 Timothy and Titus, has brought about some criticism as to whether Paul actually wrote them or not, mainly for four reasons.

1. The historical problem. 2. The ecclesiastical problem. 3. The doctrinal problem. 4. The linguistic problem.

It's difficult to understand where the confusion comes from, as Paul clearly tells us it was he, himself, who wrote the letter, 1 Timothy 1:1 / 2 Timothy 2:1 / Titus 1:1.

DATE

Paul was arrested and placed in prison the first time around A.D. 61 to 63, and it was either immediately before or during this imprisonment that he wrote this letter to Timothy. From statements that he made in 1 and 2 Timothy and his letter to Titus, it's clear that he was released from this first imprisonment.

Upon his release, he travelled to Crete, Titus 1:5, Corinth, 2 Timothy 4:20, Dalmatia, 2 Timothy 4:10, Nicopolis, Titus 3:12, Troas, 2 Timothy 4:13, Miletus, 2 Timothy 4:20, possibly Ephesus, 1 Timothy 1:3, and possibly Spain, Romans 15:24 / Romans 15:28.

Paul was then arrested and placed in prison a second time by Roman authorities. Immediately before this imprisonment, he wrote a letter to Titus, Titus 3 / Titus 1:2, and then, whilst he was in prison, he wrote 2 Timothy, 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

It was during his final imprisonment around A.D. 66/67 that he suffered death at the hands of Nero after Nero had launched his personal battle against Christians.

BACKGROUND

Paul warns the leaders at the church in Ephesus of the many dangers that they were facing, Acts 20:17-31. Problems had obviously happened at the church; some teachers were not following sound doctrine, 1 Timothy 6:3.

Paul loved Timothy dearly as a friend and as a companion, and he says of him, 'I have no one else like him,' Philippians 2:20, and calls Timothy his 'son in the gospel,' 1 Timothy 1:2.

Paul wrote this letter to advise Timothy who was very young, 1 Timothy 4:12, on how to deal with these issues, and also encouraged him in his duties as an evangelist.

TIMOTHY

His name means, ‘honouring God’, and his mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, are mentioned as eminent for their piety, 2 Timothy 1:5. We know nothing of his father but that he was a Greek, Acts 16:1.

Timothy became a new convert of Paul the apostle on his first missionary journey, 1 Timothy 1:2 / 1 Timothy 1:18 / Acts 14:6-23, and Timothy became a devoted travelling companion of Paul.

Timothy was a native of Lystra, and he was with Paul when he was imprisoned in Rome. Paul mentions that Timothy made the journey from Rome to Philippi, Philippians 2:19-23. Sometime later, he became the minister of the church at Ephesus, and Paul the apostle addresses his letter to Timothy as a minister at Ephesus.

He’s first brought into notice at the time of Paul’s second visit to Lystra, Acts 16:2, where he probably resided, and where it seems he was converted during Paul’s first visit to that place, 1 Timothy 1:2 / 2 Timothy 3:11.

Paul, having formed a high opinion of his ‘own son in the faith,’ arranged that he should become his companion, Acts 16:3, and took and circumcised him, so that he might conciliate the Jews.

He was designated to the office of an evangelist, 1 Timothy 4:14, and went with Paul in his journey through Phrygia, Galatia, and Mysia, also to Troas and Philippi and Berea, Acts 17:14. He followed Paul to Athens, and was sent by him with Silas on a mission to Thessalonica, Acts 17:15 / 1 Thessalonians 3:2.

We next find him at Corinth with Paul, 1 Thessalonians 1:1 / 2 Thessalonians 1:1. He passes now out of sight for a few years and is again noticed as with the apostle at Ephesus, Acts 19:22, and he is sent on a mission into Macedonia. He accompanied Paul afterwards into Asia, Acts 20:4, where he was with him for some time. When the apostle was a prisoner in Rome, Timothy joined him, Philippians 1:1, where it appears he also suffered imprisonment, Hebrews 13:23.

During Paul’s second imprisonment, he wrote to Timothy, asking him to re-join him as soon as possible, and to bring with him certain things which he had left at Troas, his cloak and parchments, 2 Timothy 4:13. According to tradition, after Paul’s death, he settled in Ephesus as his sphere of labour and there found a martyr’s grave.

OUTLINE

Instruction And Sound Doctrine. 1 Timothy 1
 Instruction And Public Prayer And Worship. 1 Timothy 2
 Instruction And The Local Church. 1 Timothy 3
 Instruction And Pastoral Ministry. 1 Timothy 4

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

‘Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Saviour and of Christ Jesus our hope, To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.’ 1 Timothy 1:1-2

When the apostle Paul was on the road to Damascus, his encounter with the Lord Jesus changed his life completely. The Lord gave him a command to preach to the Gentiles, [1 Timothy 1:1](#) / [Acts 9:11-15](#), and from that moment onwards, he began his service working with God, [1 Timothy 1:12](#).

He gave up everything he had in order to preach the Gospel, [Romans 1:1](#) / [Acts 13:2](#) / [Philippians 3:4-9](#), and became a prisoner of Christ Jesus, [Ephesians 3:1](#). It’s God, the Father, who is our Saviour, [1 Timothy 1:1](#), because it’s against Him we sin, [Deuteronomy 32:15](#) / [Psalm 24:5](#), and He is the only One who could save us from our sins, [2 Corinthians 5:19](#) / [Luke 1:46-47](#).

Bailey, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Only fifteen times was God referred to as the Father in the Old Testament. Where it does occur, it is used of the nation Israel or to the king of Israel. Never was God called the Father of an individual or of human beings in general (though isolated instances occur in second temple Judaism, [Sirach 51:10](#)). In the New Testament, numerous references to God as Father can be found.’

Christ Jesus is our hope, [1 Timothy 1:1](#), because He was the One who was raised from the dead, never to die again, because of this we have hope, [Psalm 43:5](#) / [Colossians 1:27](#) / [1 John 3:2-3](#) / [1 Corinthians 15:20-22](#).

With Paul’s greeting, he affirms the standing of Jesus with God, the Father, and His authority. In other words, Paul has attributed his authority in writing this letter to the church to be from God, both the Father and the Son, [2 John 3](#). Timothy was Paul’s true son in the faith, [1 Timothy 1:2](#), which implies that Paul himself had converted Timothy, [2 Timothy 2:1](#). Timothy travelled everywhere with Paul before he gained a lot of experience from his travels and from being with Paul, [Acts 16:1-3](#) / [Acts 20:4](#) / [Colossians 1:1](#) / [Philemon 1](#) / [1 Corinthians 16:10-11](#) / [Philippians 2:19](#) / [Titus 1:4](#).

Paul basically trained him up as an evangelist for him to carry on preaching and teaching God’s Word to others, [1 Timothy 2:2](#). Someone once said, ‘grace is the favour of God, mercy is the compassion of God, and peace is the result when God removes guilt and misery’, [1 Timothy 1:2](#).

There’s a lot in this statement because as the Christian walks each day, some days are better, far better, than other days. When we remind ourselves of God’s grace, mercy and peace, we remind ourselves of how much God loves us, [Romans 8:37-39](#) / [Ephesians 3:18](#).

TIMOTHY CHARGED TO OPPOSE FALSE TEACHERS

‘As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God’s work, which is by faith.’ 1 Timothy 1:3-4

When Paul went into Macedonia, he had been driven away by the excitement caused by Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen, [Acts 20:1](#). And it’s clear, that Paul and Timothy had been working together at Ephesus, [1 Timothy 1:3](#), but Paul had been obliged to leave before he had completed what he had intended to do there.

One reason Timothy was left behind in Ephesus was to confront those who were teaching false doctrines, [1 Timothy 1:3](#). These were the Jews who taught from the Old Testament laws but totally misapplied them, [1 Timothy 1:7-8](#). They used the law to try to legally justify themselves before God, but as with all legalists, they couldn’t perfectly keep the law, [James 2:10](#), in order to receive God’s grace, [Galatians 2:16](#).

This is another example of Judaizer teachers trying to bind circumcision and other laws on the Gentiles, Acts 15:1-2 / Romans 16:17 / 2 Corinthians 11:4 / Galatians 1:6-7 / 1 Timothy 6:3.

Another reason Timothy was left behind in Ephesus was to confront those who were devoting themselves to myths, 1 Timothy 1:4 / 2 Timothy 4:4. The ‘myths’ here were probably the idle and childish superstitions and self-satisfactions of the Jewish rabbis.

The Greeks, as well as some Jews, had a mixture of speculative beliefs concerning gods, and it’s easy to understand that what started as a myth has now become a legend and that legend becomes a matter of fact, therefore it must be true, Titus 1:14 / 2 Peter 1:16.

Another reason Timothy was left behind in Ephesus was to confront those who were devoting themselves to endless genealogies, 1 Timothy 1:4. The Jews kept careful genealogical records, which were necessary so that they could make the distinctions between their tribes.

It’s not difficult to imagine how numerous, complicated, and extended these records became over the centuries, hence why the genealogies are called ‘endless’, 1 Timothy 1:4.

The legalistic teachers and the obsession with myths and genealogies were obviously causing some problems for the church. Rather than advancing the work of God by faith, they were ‘promoting controversial speculations’, 1 Timothy 1:4.

It never ceases to amaze me when sitting in a Bible study how much time gets spent speaking about things the Scriptures never mention. Sadly, it often ends in disputes over opinions. Paul is later going to call these useless and unnecessary, 1 Timothy 4:7 / 1 Timothy 6:3-4 / 1 Timothy 6:20 / Titus 3:9-11.

‘The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.’ 1 Timothy 1:5

In order for Timothy to fulfil his role as an evangelist, it was necessary for him to have the correct view of the purpose of the law. The commandment is given on the foundation of love, John 3:16 / 1 John 4:19. In other words, God’s law was supposed to produce love in the Christian’s heart, Romans 13:8 / 1 Corinthians 13:1 / Galatians 5:14 / Galatians 5:22-23.

A genuine pure heart, Matthew 15:18-20 / Ephesians 6:24 / 2 Timothy 2:21-26, a good conscience, free from guilt, Romans 8:1 / 2 Timothy 1:5, and sincere faith, Hebrews 11:6 / James 1:6-8, can only come when we love God and His people, 1 John 4:19. Jesus says by our love for Him, others will know we truly belong to Him, John 13:34-35.

‘Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.’ 1 Timothy 1:6-7

Because of those legalistic teachers and those who were obsessed with myths and genealogies, some Christians departed from the commandment of love. The proof of this is seen in that they would rather speak about ‘controversial speculations’, 1 Timothy 1:4 / 1 Timothy 6:4 / 1 Timothy 6:20.

Instead of focusing on the commandment of love, they turned to ‘meaningless talk’, 1 Timothy 1:6. In other words, everything they spoke about was useless and didn’t benefit or edify the church, 2 Timothy 4:4 / Titus 3:9-11. They wanted to be teachers of the law, but what they really wanted was to be respected; they wanted the glory and honour, 1 Timothy 6:4 / Revelation 2:9.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The ‘Law’ is the Mosaic Code, but also the Scriptures of Paul’s day, the Old Testament, particularly the legal parts of it. Paul probably did not mean that these erring teachers failed to understand the letter of their content, though this may have been true of some of them. He probably meant that they did not understand what they were really saying and not saying by their emphasis. They missed the point of the Law.’

They didn't have a clue what they were talking about, 1 Timothy 1:7, because they didn't understand that the Old Testament law was supposed to lead people to Christ, Galatians 3:23-25, hence, why they couldn't communicate confidently the things they affirmed, 1 Timothy 1:7.

Not everyone should be a teacher of God's Word, James 3:1. To teach others means a lot of time in prayer and a lot of time studying and preparing a lesson, 2 Timothy 2:15. It also means practising what we preach, Matthew 23:2-3.

'We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral, for those practising homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.' 1 Timothy 1:8-11

Christians know that the law is good if it's used properly, 1 Timothy 1:8; however, if anyone doesn't understand the purpose of the Old Testament law, then they will obviously not be able to interpret the law and apply it correctly to their lives.

The law could never save anyone, but it was given to the nation of Israel until the Messiah, that is, Jesus, came into the world, Matthew 5:17-18 / Galatians 3:23-25. The law is no longer in force to bind people who have been made free from the law by their obedience to the Gospel, Romans 7:1-4.

The Old Testament and its laws are now used for our learning, Romans 7:12 / Romans 7:16 / Romans 15:4 / 1 Corinthians 10:11. The lesson here is simple: if anyone binds God's Old Testament laws on Christians today, they haven't used it properly, Acts 15:1 / Acts 15:10 / 1 Corinthians 4:6.

Christians also know that the law isn't made for the righteous, 1 Timothy 1:9; that's because the righteous understand that the whole law hangs on the commandments to love God with everything we've got and love our neighbours as ourselves, Matthew 22:37-40.

We demonstrate our love for God by obeying His commands, and we help our neighbours because we love them, Luke 10:25-37 / Galatians 5:22-23. The difference between a legalist and a love-filled Christian is simply this: the legalist will do things because they feel they have to, but the love-filled Christian will do things because they want to, James 4:17.

Fee, in his commentary, says the following.

'Healthy teaching leads to proper Christian behaviour, love and good works; the diseased teaching of the heretics leads to controversies, arrogance, abusiveness, and strife, 1 Timothy 6:4.'

LAWBREAKERS

Therefore, the law was made for the 'lawbreakers', 1 Timothy 1:9. In other words, it was made to bind and restrain them. The word 'lawbreakers' means those who have no law, and then those who are transgressors, Matthew 15:28 / Luke 22:37 / Acts 2:23 / 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

REBELS

The law was also made for the 'rebels', 1 Timothy 1:9, that is, those who are insubordinate, lawless. The word 'rebels' means those who are under no subjection or authority. This word is only used four times in the New Testament: Titus 1:6 / Titus 1:10 / Hebrews 2:8.

UNGODLY

The law was also made for the ‘ungodly’, 1 Timothy 1:9, that is, those who have no religion, those who don’t worship or honour God. In other words, the law is against all who don’t worship or honour God, Romans 4:5 / Romans 5:6 / 1 Timothy 1:9 / 1 Peter 4:18 / 2 Peter 2:5 / 2 Peter 3:7 / Jude 1:15.

SINFUL

The law was also made for the ‘sinful’, 1 Timothy 1:9, that is, sinners. This would include all kinds of sin in general, Romans 3:23.

UNHOLY

The law was also made for the ‘unholy’, 1 Timothy 1:9, that is, those who fail of their duty toward God, and means those who have no respect, those who are irreligious, 2 Timothy 3:2.

IRRELIGIOUS

The law was also made for the ‘irreligious’, 1 Timothy 1:9, that is, those who treat religion with contempt, mockery, or scorn, Hebrews 12:16 / 1 Timothy 1:9 / 1 Timothy 4:7 / 1 Timothy 6:20 / 2 Timothy 2:16 / Hebrews 12:16.

THOSE WHO KILL THEIR FATHERS OR MOTHERS

The law was also made for ‘those who kill their fathers or mothers’, 1 Timothy 1:9. This was expressly forbidden by God, Genesis 9:5-6, and later in the law of Moses, it was a crime punishable by death, Exodus 20:12 / Exodus 21:15 / Deuteronomy 5:16.

MURDERERS

The law was also made for ‘murderers’, 1 Timothy 1:9, that is, those who commit murder. It’s interesting to note that the word used for ‘murderers’ isn’t used anywhere else in the New Testament. This crime is expressly forbidden by God, Genesis 9:5-6, and later in the law of Moses, Exodus 20:13 / Deuteronomy 5:17.

THE SEXUALLY IMMORAL AND THOSE PRACTISING HOMOSEXUALITY

The law was also made for ‘the sexually immoral’, and ‘those practising homosexuality’, 1 Timothy 1:10, that is, those who defile themselves with mankind, Leviticus 19:29 / Leviticus 20:5 / Romans 1:27. This too was forbidden by the law of Moses, and was punishable with death, Exodus 20:14 / Leviticus 20:13 / Deuteronomy 5:18.

SLAVE TRADERS

The law was also made for ‘slave traders’, 1 Timothy 1:10, that is, those who steal another for the purpose of making them a slave, kidnapping others. The Greek word for ‘slave traders’ is ‘andrapodistes’ and is the only time it’s used in the New Testament.

This crime was also expressly forbidden by the law of God and was made punishable with death, Exodus 20:15 / Exodus 21:16 / Deuteronomy 5:19 / Deuteronomy 24:7.

LIARS

The law was also made for ‘liars’, 1 Timothy 1:10, that is, all people who lie, Leviticus 6:2-4 / Leviticus 19:11. We must remember there is no such thing as a ‘little white lie’, a lie is a lie, and those who practice lying will not be accepted into heaven, Revelation 22:15.

PERJURERS

The law was also made for ‘perjurers’, 1 Timothy 1:10, that is, those who swear falsely, Exodus 20:7 / Exodus 20:16 / Leviticus 6:3 / Leviticus 19:12 / Deuteronomy 5:20.

By highlighting all these sins, it’s clear that Paul is describing the sinful behaviour of all those who have no respect for God, His laws or their neighbours.

Paul could have easily continued with a long list of other sinful behaviours, Galatians 5:19-21, but what he wrote is enough for Timothy to get the point. The sinful behaviour of these people is contrary to ‘sound doctrine’, 1 Timothy 1:10, that enhances our lives in our relationship with our fellow man, 2 Timothy 4:3 / Titus 1:9.

Remember the Gospel isn’t only a teaching but an event, 1 Timothy 1:11; it’s the greatest event in human history. It’s the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, and people are called through the Gospel, 2 Thessalonians 2:14.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The gospel is a system of divine revelation. It makes known the will of God. It states what duty is, and accords in its great principles with the law, or is in harmony with it. The law, in principle, forbids all which the gospel forbids, and in publishing the requirements of the gospel, therefore, Paul says that the law really forbade all which was prohibited in the gospel and was designed to restrain all who would act contrary to that gospel. There is no contradiction

between the law and the gospel. They forbid the same things, and in regard to morals and true piety, the clearer revelations of the gospel are but carrying out the principles stated in the law.’

The Gospel was revealed by the blessed God, that is, the same God who was the author of the law, and it was God who entrusted Paul to share that Gospel message with others, [1 Timothy 1:11](#) / [Acts 9:11-15](#) / [1 Corinthians 9:17](#) / [Galatians 1:1](#).

THE LORD’S GRACE TO PAUL

‘I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.’ [1 Timothy 1:12-14](#)

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Did God save Paul because He foresaw that Paul would be faithful, [1 Timothy 1:12](#)? No, but God entrusted him with the ministry he had received at least in part for that reason.’

Paul here gives thanks to Christ for giving him the strength to be an apostle of Christ, [1 Timothy 1:12](#) / [1 Corinthians 15:10](#). Jesus counted him as ‘trustworthy’, [1 Timothy 1:12](#), that is, although Paul went all out to persecute the Lord’s church, he actually thought he was doing God’s work, [1 Corinthians 15:9](#) / [Philippians 3:5-6](#).

He was also ‘trustworthy’ in the sense that he would be responsible for carrying out God’s commissions to preach to the Gentiles, hence he became an apostle of Christ, [1 Timothy 1:12](#) / [Romans 1:1](#) / [Ephesians 3:1](#) / [Colossians 1:25](#), and he was thankful for that commission, [2 Corinthians 12:9](#) / [Philippians 4:13](#).

Paul continues to explain what he was like when he was against the Lord’s church, [Acts 7:58-8:3](#) / [Acts 9:1-4](#) / [Galatians 1:13-14](#) / [Philippians 3:6](#). He sincerely believed that Christianity was a sect against Judaism. He was a violent man, [1 Timothy 1:13](#) / [Romans 1:30](#), who persecuted Christians throughout Judea, he was a blasphemer, [1 Timothy 1:13](#) / [Acts 8:3](#) / [1 Corinthians 15:9](#). He said that ‘blasphemy’ was the unforgivable sin! [Matthew 12:31-32](#). The good news is, he knew he was acting in ignorance and unbelief, [1 Timothy 1:13](#) / [Luke 23:34](#), and as a result, he was shown mercy by God, and it was this mercy that kept Paul humble, [1 Timothy 1:14](#) / [Acts 9:11-15](#) / [2 Corinthians 12:7-9](#).

All Christians must remind themselves of who they were and where they came from before they became Christians; this, too, will keep us humble, [Ephesians 2:1-10](#) / [James 4:10](#).

Paul received an abundance of God’s grace in his life, [1 Timothy 1:14](#), and the life he now lives for Christ is the proof that God’s grace is abundant for anyone who will repent and turn to God for forgiveness, [Romans 5:20](#) // [1 Corinthians 3:10](#) / [2 Corinthians 4:15](#) / [Galatians 1:13-16](#) / [Ephesians 3:20](#).

Paul received God’s grace along with faith and love, which are in Christ Jesus, [1 Timothy 1:14](#). The grace which was imparted to him was seen in the faith and love which is produced, [1 Corinthians 15:10](#).

God’s grace can only be obtained by those who are ‘in Christ’, [Romans 6:3-6](#) / [Ephesians 1:3](#) / [Ephesians 1:7](#). Yes, grace is a gift, but the only way to receive that gift is through obedience, [Romans 3:31](#) / [Ephesians 2:8-9](#).

‘Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason, I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.’ [1 Timothy 1:15-17](#)

What a wonderful, trustworthy saying this is, Christ Jesus came to save sinners like you and me, [1 Timothy 1:15](#) / [Isaiah 53:5](#) / [Isaiah 61:1](#) / [Hosea 6:1-3](#) / [Matthew 1:21](#) / [Matthew 9:13](#) / [Luke 19:10](#).

Paul recognised his sinfulness and saw himself as the worst of sinners, [1 Timothy 1:15](#). This is a man who truly appreciates the grace of God and hasn't forgotten his past, [Luke 7:47](#) / [Acts 8:3](#) / [Acts 9:1-2](#) / [1 Corinthians 15:9](#) / [Philippians 3:5-6](#).

Because Paul saw himself as the worst of sinners, he realised that the reason he was shown mercy was so that others would know that they too can receive mercy, [1 Timothy 1:16](#).

If God can forgive a sinner like him, God can forgive anyone. If God can give a sinner like him peace beyond understanding, God can give that peace to anyone, [Philippians 4:7](#).

Paul absolutely believed that the grace he was given by God would be extended to others, [1 Corinthians 9:16-17](#), and if God could save him, then God could save anyone, [2 Corinthians 4:15](#). If Paul, the 'blasphemer and persecutor and a violent man', [1 Timothy 1:13](#), can be saved, then anyone can be saved if they repent as Paul did.

God's immense patience is shown in Paul's conversion, [Acts 9:17-18](#). That same patience is offered to everyone today, [Acts 17:30](#) / [2 Peter 3:9](#). God patiently waits for people to come to Him to receive eternal life.

Please note that believing by itself won't save anyone, we must hear God's Word, [Romans 10:17](#), we must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, [John 3:36](#). We must confess His Name before men, [Romans 10:9-10](#), we must repent of whatever sin that is in our lives, [Luke 13:3](#), and we must be baptised for the forgiveness of our sins, [Acts 2:38](#).

Because of the grace which God had shown Paul, Paul bursts out with praise for God, who is the only One who deserves our honour and glory. God is called King, [1 Timothy 1:17](#), as He is often called in the Scriptures, to signify that He always has and always will rule over the universe.

The Greek text literally reads 'King of the ages,' [Psalm 10:16](#) / [Psalm 22:28](#) / [Psalm 24:10](#) / [Psalm 44:4](#) / [Psalm 103:9](#) / [Isaiah 37:16](#) / [Daniel 4:3](#) / [1 Chronicles 29:9-11](#) / [Matthew 6:13](#) / [Matthew 11:11](#).

The word 'immortal', [1 Timothy 1:17](#), refers to God Himself, not to His reign, [John 4:24](#). It means that He doesn't die, and it's given to Him to distinguish Him from other sovereigns, [Romans 1:23](#) / [Hebrews 11:27](#).

God is also 'invisible', [1 Timothy 1:17](#) / [1 Timothy 6:16](#), but Christ is the image of the invisible God, [John 1:18](#) / [Colossians 1:13-20](#). Paul tells us in [Romans 1:18-20](#) that 'invisible things are clearly seen', which almost sounds like a paradox, but that actually means 'are clearly understood', [Romans 1:201](#).

In what way? 'By the things that are made', [Romans 1:21](#). Man understands that there is a God by looking at the things which He created. Experience and observation clearly tell us that every made thing has a maker.

Every effect demands a cause. The thing made demands a maker. Design demands a designer. Every law demands a lawgiver. Writings demand an author. Life comes from life.

The N.I.V uses the words, 'the only God', [1 Timothy 1:17](#), while other translations use the words, 'the only wise God'. This makes no difference to our understanding of the text.

It's true that Yahweh is the only God, and it's also true that He is the only wise God, [Proverbs 3:19](#) / [Job 12:13](#) / [Romans 16:27](#). This is why all the honour and glory go to Him, amen, [1 Timothy 1:17](#)

THE CHARGE TO TIMOTHY RENEWED

'Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well, holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.' [1 Timothy 1:18-20](#)

Timothy is commanded by Paul to carry on his work as an evangelist and teach and correct all the false teaching which has been going on, [1 Timothy 1:18](#) / [1 Timothy 1:3-4](#) / [1 Timothy 1:8](#).

The prophecies may have been prophecies in general in reference to the work of an evangelist, or they may have been specific prophecies of New Testament prophets that were made in reference to Timothy at the beginning of his ministry, [1 Timothy 1:18](#) / [Acts 13:2](#) / [Acts 21:8-14](#).

Paul is basically reminding Timothy that the Holy Spirit had blessed his ministry through inspired preaching that was prophesied through Joel in the Old Testament, [Joel 2:28](#) / [Acts 2:17-18](#) / [2 Timothy 1:6](#) / [2 Timothy 4:14](#).

When Timothy recalls these prophecies, it will remind him of his faith, which is essential for the Christian soldier, [1 Timothy 1:18](#). He shouldn't betray his trust in God, and he should hold on to the cause of His master with unwavering steadfastness.

Christians are involved in spiritual warfare, [Ephesians 6:10-18](#), and when Christians are fully equipped in trying to win over souls for Christ, our spiritual armour helps us fight 'the battle well', [1 Timothy 1:18](#) / [2 Timothy 2:3](#) / [1 Timothy 4:7](#) / [2 Corinthians 10:3-5](#).

Timothy had been taught what was right from God's Word, and so, he knows what God's will is; he must labour in God's kingdom with 'a good conscience', [1 Timothy 1:19](#) / [Acts 23:1](#).

In other words, he mustn't teach or practice anything that he knows is wrong, so as not to create a guilty conscience. He must remain honest to God and honest to himself.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

'A conscience, like a computer, programmed with the will of God, can be a great asset to the Christian soldier. However, if one violates his or her conscience so programmed, that person ignores a warning signal. The results can be disastrous. The conscience is the umpire of the soul. Someone has described it as the capacity to feel guilt. One's conscience enables him or her to feel dishonour, shame, and guilt.'

Sadly, some Christians haven't fought the battle well; they haven't held on to the faith and acted in good conscience. It's those people who have made a shipwreck of their faith by not keeping a good conscience, [1 Timothy 1:19](#).

These are the people who love sin and choose to indulge in sensual inclinations. These people are unfaithful to God, and they reject the whole system of the Gospel, [1 Timothy 1:19](#).

By compromising what they knew was right, they had destroyed their own faith, [1 Timothy 1:19](#). As a ship is totally ruined when it strikes a rock and sinks, their entire faith is destroyed. We must note that they didn't give up being 'religious', they simply accepted different doctrines that were contrary to God's Word, [1 Timothy 1:3-4](#).

Paul now gives two brothers, Hymenaeus and Alexander, as examples of those who compromised their conscience and, as a result, they lost their faith, [1 Timothy 1:20](#).

The reason Paul mentioned these two men is that he has the right to do so as an apostle of Christ, [1 Corinthians 5:1-5](#), but more importantly, he didn't want them to influence others with their false teachings, [2 Timothy 2:3](#) / [2 Timothy 4:7](#).

We don't know exactly what it was they were teaching, but we do know that Hymenaeus is mentioned in [2 Timothy 2:17](#), in connection with Philetus. The text tells us that their teaching was 'spreading like gangrene.'

We also know that one of the false teachings which Hymenaeus held was that the 'resurrection had already taken place', [2 Timothy 2:18](#), and so it's possible that Alexander held the same view.

The identity of Alexander is uncertain; it could be the one mentioned in [Acts 19:33](#), but we do know in [2 Timothy 4:14](#), Alexander the coppersmith is mentioned as one who had done the apostle 'a great deal of harm.'

Notice that Paul, as an apostle, handed them over to Satan, [1 Timothy 1:20](#). This was done for the purpose of disciplining, [Acts 5:1-11](#) / [1 Corinthians 4:19-21](#) / [1 Corinthians 5:5](#) / [2 Corinthians 12:14-13:10](#).

What Paul orders is, effectively, the excommunication of the guilty men, and he describes this course of action as ‘delivering the man to Satan,’ 1 Timothy 1:20. Outside of the church, which is the kingdom of the darkness, Colossians 1:13, these men are cut off from the people of God, will again be in the domain of Satan, and, consequently, in grave spiritual danger.

You will notice that the whole purpose of them being handed over to Satan is that they might repent and learn not to blaspheme, that is, to speak against God or the truth, 1 Timothy 1:20.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Such evil teaching as that of denying the resurrection was equivalent in every way to ‘speaking against God’. It’s absurd to suppose that Paul here refers to a railing disparagement of his own apostolic claims. We are not told here of the exact nature of their ‘blasphemy’, but something far more serious than opposition to Paul is indicated. The two sinners singled out in this verse were gross offenders whom Paul punished for the sake of checking the damage which their example might otherwise have wrought in the church. If the denial of any future resurrection was involved in their behaviour, along with the teaching that ‘the resurrection was passed already’, this would have led to the exercise of all kinds of sins in the church. That suggests that they were antinomians, teaching that believers should continue in sin that grace may abound.’

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

‘I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.’ 1 Timothy 2:1-2

INSTRUCTIONS ON WORSHIP

This chapter begins with Paul speaking about the conduct of Christians in prayer, Philippians 4:6. Christians have the privilege of continually speaking to God in prayer, anytime, anywhere, and prayer is an essential part of our spiritual armour, Ephesians 6:18.

He urges them to pray in different ways, and we should pray often, 1 Thessalonians 6:17. Petitions, 1 Timothy 2:1, are simply asking God for something; however, we must remember it’s more than just asking, we must have confidence that God will answer our prayers, James 1:6-8.

Prayers, 1 Timothy 2:1, is a broad word which refers to all communication with the Lord, including daily prayers.

Intercession, 1 Timothy 2:1, refers to the requests we make on behalf of others.

It’s very important that we not only pray for ourselves but also for others, Matthew 5:44 / 2 Corinthians

1:11 / Philippians 1:4 / Colossians 4:3-4. Paul is emphasising the importance of drawing closer to our relationship with God through prayer.

Thanksgiving, 1 Timothy 2:1, is an essential part of our walk with God, Philippians 4:6. We must always take the time to thank God for everything He’s done for us.

Paul says that we should pray for all people and kings, and all those in authority, 1 Timothy 2:2. This would include praying for Caesar and everyone who was in authority.

We should give thanks for all those who are in authority because God has placed the idea of government in our societies to help keep the peace, Ezra 6:10 / Romans 13:1-7.

Bailey, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The church’s prayers for the world and recognition of the authority of the state are fundamental to the church’s evangelistic mission.’

It’s very easy for the gospel to be proclaimed throughout a country where peace prevails, hence why we should pray for our leaders that peace will remain, 1 Timothy 2:2.

Lenski, in his commentary, says the following.

‘If such praying were useless, the apostle would not write what he does write.’

‘This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.’ 1 Timothy 2:3-4

It’s good that Christians communicate with God, and God loves to hear us speaking to Him, Matthew 6:5-15. When we pray to Him, we admit that we need Him in our lives and we can’t live without Him. God wants all people to be saved and doesn’t want anyone to perish, Ezekiel 18:23-32 / John 3:17 / 1 Timothy 4:10 / Titus 2:11 / 2 Peter 3:9. God also wants all people to come to a knowledge of the truth, 1 Timothy 2:4 / Ephesians 4:21, that is the truth of the Gospel, the death burial and resurrection of Christ, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 / Galatians 5:2 / Ephesians 1:13 / Colossians 1:5. It’s through the message of the Gospel that a person is saved, Romans 1:16 / Romans 6:3-6. Christians should want what God wants. We must pray for others who aren’t Christians before we preach the saving Gospel message to them, Colossians 4:2-6 / Ephesians 6:19.

‘For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles.’ 1 Timothy 2:5-7

We should pray for all people to be saved because there is only one God who wants all people to be saved, 1 Timothy 2:5 / Ephesians 4:6 / Romans 3:30. It is Jesus who is our one and only mediator, 1 Timothy 2:5, who stands as the intercessor between the Christian and the one true and living God, Romans 8:34 / 1 Corinthians 8:6 / Galatians 3:20 / Hebrews 9:15.

He intercedes on behalf of those who are walking in the light, 1 John 1:7-9. God is near to us all because of the work of the mediator Jesus, who works on behalf of all men as the justifier of all sin, John 14:6 / Hebrews 4:8-9 / Hebrews 8:1-13 / 1 John 2:1-2.

Notice Paul says, ‘the man’, 1 Timothy 2:5, Christ Jesus, we must remember that Jesus didn’t lose His deity when He became man, Philippians 2:5-11. Was Jesus God, or was He a man? Just who was He? He was both. He was the God-man.

When the Bible says, ‘he emptied himself’, Philippians 2:7, that doesn’t mean He became less than God; when He was on earth, it means He became more than God.

He was God, but now He was also a man. He didn’t get rid of deity; he emptied deity into humanity. He could never stop being God because God’s His nature, He relinquished His glory, He concealed it in human flesh. Now and then, we got a glimpse of it.

He was up on a mountain one time, with three disciples, and He was transfigured, and they saw his glory, Mark 9:2-8. Paul saw it on the Damascus road, Acts 9:1-8, and John saw it in Revelation 1, in his vision.

And someday we’re going to see the bright, brilliant glory of Jesus, but when He was on earth as a man, He concealed that glory. Do you know why? So that we can approach Him, so that He could come near to us and serve

us and meet our needs, heal the sick, wash our feet and tell us about God. And so He humbled Himself or emptied Himself in order to serve us, Philippians 2:5-7.

We should pray for all people to be saved because Jesus gave Himself as a ransom for all people, 1 Timothy 2:6. He put Himself in our place and received the punishment and wrath from God the Father that we deserved, Matthew 20:28 / Mark 10:45 / 1 Corinthians 1:6.

The general definition of the word ‘ransom’, 1 Timothy 1:6, is to buy back or to free by paying the release price. Certainly, this is involved in it, because the root of the word ‘ransom’ is the word ‘luo’, which, in New Testament times, was used in numerous ways.

1. Of a soldier unbuckling his armour.
2. Of the removal of a harness from a horse.
3. Of the freeing of a prisoner or slave by paying a price.

It does appear to be logical, as a ransom is normally paid to the person who has captured the one kidnapped, so there is a kind of logic to this belief of the ransom being paid to the devil, but I don’t agree that this is a correct understanding of the idea of Jesus paying a ransom. The one to whom we owe a debt because of our sin is God, not Satan. Jesus paid the debt, or perhaps, put even better, he paid the penalty for our sins.

Romans 6:23 says the ‘wages’ of sin is death. We earned the death penalty, spiritually, for our sin, and Jesus paid that ‘debt’ when he died on the cross for our sins, Matthew 20:28 / Romans 3:25 / 2 Corinthians 5:14. Jesus was the ransom price to be paid in order to deliver us from the bondage of sin and death, Titus 2:14.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘In Paul’s day, the Jews looked to Moses, Galatians 3:19, or angels, Hebrews 2:5, as mediators, and the Gnostics looked to intermediary deities (aeons). In our own day, Roman Catholics and others look to dead “saints” for mediatorial benefits, and Buddhists look to their ancestors. Nevertheless, the teaching of 1 Timothy 2:5 is clear: the only mediator between God and people is Jesus Christ, John 14:6.’

Notice that this was ‘witnessed at the proper time’, 1 Timothy 2:6, in other words, the plan that Jesus be incarnate and ransomed for humanity was conceived and planned before the creation of the world, Romans 5:6 / Galatians 4:4 / Ephesians 1:9-10 / Revelation 13:8.

Paul was a herald, that is, a preacher, an apostle and a teacher, 1 Timothy 2:7. He was a preacher of the Gospel message that Jesus died, was buried and rose again, Romans 1:1 / Ephesians 3:1 / Ephesians 3:7-8 / 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 / 1 Timothy 1:11 / 2 Timothy 1:11.

As an apostle, he was sent into the world by the commission of Jesus to bear witness to the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead, Acts 9:11-15, and as a ‘faithful teacher, who was telling the truth, 1 Timothy 2:7, he worked to edify and strengthen those who had obeyed the Gospel which he preached, Acts 22:21 / Romans 11:13 / Galatians 1:16 / Galatians 2:7.

It’s worth noting that the words ‘preacher’ and ‘apostle’ refer to those who deliver the Gospel message to unbelievers, but the word ‘teacher’ refers to those who manage and teach God’s Word to the saved.

‘Therefore, I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing. I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.’ 1 Timothy 2:8-15

This is one of these passages in the New Testament that deal with the role of women in worship, but begins by addressing the men, 1 Timothy 2:8. The broader context of the book speaks about the proper behaviour in the life of the church, 1 Timothy 3:15, and the immediate context of chapter two speaks about worship, specifically prayer, 1 Timothy 2:1 / 1 Timothy 2:8.

Earle, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The use of the definite article with men and not with women, 1 Timothy 2:10, may suggest that the apostle was laying down the pattern that public worship should be conducted by the men.’

Paul says that adult males are to lead prayers anywhere people meet for worship, 1 Timothy 2:8. ‘The lifting up of holy hands’ is generally accepted as a figure of speech in which a posture of prayer is put in place of prayer itself, Psalms 63:4 / Psalms 134:2 / Psalms 141:2 / Nehemiah 8:6 / Lamentations 3:41.

The emphasis is on the ‘holy hands’, not so much the lifting up. These prayers are to come from a heart of holy living. Prayers shouldn’t be uttered out of a condemning spirit of brothers who are in disunity, Romans 14:1. On the other hand, women are warned to focus on appropriate clothing with a submissive attitude, 1 Peter 3:1-6. There’s a clear contrast in these verses.

We have men who need to be ‘holy’, they are the spiritual leaders in worship, while women need to be modest, with good deeds, 1 Timothy 2:9-10 / 1 Timothy 5:10-14 / Titus 2:3-5 / 1 Peter 3:4.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘A Christian woman should be remarkable for her Christ-like behaviour more than for her clothes, hairstyle, and the other externals that are of primary importance to unbelievers, 1 Peter 3:3.’

Earle, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The Christian woman is not to adorn herself with ‘gold or pearls or expensive clothes’ so as to draw attention to herself. 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. Such dress is especially unbecoming in church.’

‘Quietness’ and ‘submission’, 1 Timothy 2:11, in this passage relate specifically to the exercise of spiritual authority over adult males in the church, 1 Corinthians 14:33-35.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Some people see red when they read ‘submissiveness’, 1 Timothy 2:11 / Ephesians 5:21-22 / Colossians 3:18. The Greek word ‘hypotage’ means to rank under. It is clear in military life that a private, for example, who ranks under a colonel is not necessarily of less value or possesses less ability than his or her superior officer. Rank has to do with order and authority, not personal superiority and inferiority.’

The words ‘to assume authority’, 1 Timothy 2:12, is the Greek word ‘authenteo’, and so, Paul is instructing women not to teach nor in any other way to have authority over men in worship, Titus 2:3-4.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Paul approved of women teaching women and children, Titus 2:3-5 / 2 Timothy 1:5, and instructing men privately, Acts 18:26. Reading a book that a woman has written is one example of private instruction.’

Notice also that Paul instructs the woman to ‘be quiet’, 1 Timothy 1:12. Paul told the women in Corinth to remain absolutely silent in the church, 1 Corinthians 14:34.

However, in 1 Corinthians 14:34, Paul uses a different Greek word ‘sigatosan’ than what we have here in Timothy, which is the Greek word ‘hesychia’, translated ‘quiet’, 1 Timothy 1:12 / 1 Timothy 2:2.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Hesychia does not mean absolutely silent but settled down, not unruly. Paul wanted the women to express appropriate deference to the teacher or leader.’

Towner, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Paul does not mean that women are to be absolutely silent during the service, compare [1 Corinthians 11:5](#). Rather, he instructs them to exhibit quietness (in spirit) instead of taking the lead, or to ‘be silent’ in the sense of not teaching.’ Paul says that women are not to exercise spiritual authority over men because ‘Adam was created before Eve’, [1 Timothy 2:13](#). Paul is saying that God’s original design for mankind involved the creation of the male first as a sign of his responsibility to be the spiritual leader, the head of the home in the church.

Eve was formed from Adam’s side, [Genesis 2:21](#), to be his helper, and so she was equal to him. When sin came into the world, she was to take on a submissive role, [1 Timothy 2:14](#) / [Genesis 3:16](#).

God could have easily created the woman first, but He didn’t. He could have easily created both male and female at the same time, but He didn’t. God’s action was intended to express His will with regard to gender as it relates to the relationship between man and woman.

This explains why God gave spiritual teaching to Adam before Eve was created, implying that Adam had the responsibility to teach his wife, [Genesis 2:15-17](#). It also explains why the female is twice stated to have been created as a ‘helper suitable for him,’ [Genesis 2:18](#) / [Genesis 2:20](#).

This also explains why the Genesis account clearly indicates that the woman was created for the man, not vice versa, and it also explains why God brought the woman ‘to the man’, [Genesis 2:22](#), as if she was made ‘for him’, not vice versa. Adam verified this understanding by saying, ‘The woman YOU put here with me, [Genesis 3:12](#).

It also explains why Paul argued based on this very distinction in [1 Corinthians 11:9](#). It further explains the implied authority of the man over the woman in his act of naming the woman, [Genesis 2:23](#) / [Genesis 3:20](#).

Because the Jews demonstrated the importance of the firstborn male, this tells us that they understood God’s will concerning man. God’s creation of the man first was specifically intended to convey the authority, submission, and order of the human race, [1 Corinthians 11:8](#).

Notice that Paul elaborated upon this principle in [1 Timothy 2:14](#) by giving an example of what can happen when men and women mess around with God’s original intentions.

When Eve took the spiritual lead above her husband, and Adam failed to take the lead and exercise spiritual authority over his wife, the devil was able to create mayhem in the home and cause the introduction of sin into the world, [Genesis 3:1-14](#).

When Paul said, ‘the woman was deceived’, [1 Timothy 2:14](#), he was not suggesting that women are more gullible than men. He is saying that when men or women do not stick to God’s original plan and take on roles they were never intended to take on in the first place, then this will naturally lead to sin.

In the church which met in Ephesus, some of the women were being led astray by false teachers, [1 Timothy 5:15](#), who were themselves misled by Satan, [1 Timothy 4:1](#).

God’s judgment of the matter was seen when He confronted the pair. He spoke first to the head of the home, the man, [Genesis 3:9](#). His following words to Eve confirmed the fact that she wasn’t to yield to the inclination to take the lead in spiritual matters. Rather, she was to submit to the rule of her husband, [Genesis 3:16](#).

When God said to Adam, ‘because you listened to your wife’, [Genesis 3:17](#), He was calling attention to the fact that Adam had failed to exercise spiritual leadership and thereby bypassed the divine arrangement of male and female relations.

Paul finished his instructions by stating how women may be preserved from falling into the same trap of assuming unauthorised authority, [1 Timothy 2:15](#). But what does this mean?

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Perhaps the best explanation of this difficult verse is this. God promised women a life of fulfilment as mothers in the home, provided they walk with the Lord, rather than as teachers and leaders in the church.’

Paul is not saying that she will not be saved if she does not have children. Everyone knows that childbearing is not a part of the conditions for salvation. The expression ‘childbearing’ is a figure of speech, known as ‘the synecdoche’, in which the part stands for the whole.

Lea, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Paul employed the term ‘childbirth’ as a synecdoche for that part of the woman’s work that describes the whole.’

Let me give you an example, if I were to say to you, ‘come outside and see my new wheels’, you know I’m not really trying to get you to look at tyres. ‘Wheels’ is the part that stands for the whole car.

Paul uses the term ‘childbearing’ in the same way. ‘Childbearing’ represents the whole of the woman’s domestic role, which God placed within her, Titus 2:4-5. Paul is saying that the woman will be delivered from the tendency of overstepping the divinely ordained order of authority, provided certain conditions are met.

Women must maintain their God-appointed ministry in life and respect God’s design and order of authority, 1 Corinthians 11:3, in order to be saved. This will happen if she maintains faith, love, and holiness with propriety in her life, 1 Timothy 2:15.

The Scriptures speak of salvation in three ways concerning our salvation.

1. As Christians, we have ‘been saved’, past tense, 2 Timothy 1:9.
2. As Christians, we are ‘being saved’, present tense, 1 Corinthians 1:18.
3. As Christians, we ‘will be saved’, future tense, Romans 5:9-10.

Paul is addressing Christian women who have already been saved, but speaking about the woman’s continued salvation. It is often argued by some that a Christian cannot lose their salvation, but notice that Paul uses the word ‘if’, 1 Timothy 2:15, which clearly implies terms and conditions.

Jesus uses the word ‘if’ in the same manner when it comes to remaining in Him, John 15:5-10. John uses the word ‘if’ in the same manner when it comes to confessing our sins, 1 John 1:5-10.

Many passages suggest that a person can lose their salvation, 1 Corinthians 10:6-12 / Galatians 5:4 / Hebrews 6:4-9 / 2 Peter 2:20-22 / Revelation 2:10. Look at what Jesus clearly says, ‘the one who stands firm to the end will be saved,’ Matthew 24:13.

It’s important to note that for every positive statement like this one, there is also an implied ‘opposite’ which would also be just as true, ‘the one who DOESN’T stand firm to the end will NOT be saved’.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we find the apostle Paul speaking about the need and qualifications of elders and deacons. Before we get into the text, let’s remind ourselves of Paul’s letter to Titus.

When Paul wrote to Titus, he reminded him of why he left Titus in the first place, he left him there to edify and equip the church, 1 Timothy 4:11-12 / 2 Timothy 4:2, he also had to put right, that which was left unfinished in every town, elders were to be appointed, Titus 1:5.

Because his task of appointing elders wasn't complete yet, there seems to be a sense of urgency to get the appointing done. Yes, the church in Crete had problems, which included false teachers, [Titus 1:10-11](#), and immoral behaviour among young converts, [Titus 2:1-10](#), but we don't know what was causing the delay in appointing elders. We must remember that up to this point in time, they didn't have any guidelines, but if we look today at the problems some churches have in appointing elders, even with the qualities and guidelines given within God's Word, maybe we can get a glimpse of what the problem was.

Paul had obviously started the process of appointing elders with Titus when he was in Crete, but Titus failed to finish what they started. Maybe Titus needed more information to finish the task, [Titus 1:6-9](#) / [1 Timothy 3:1-7](#) / [1 Corinthians 11:34](#).

Titus himself wasn't to appoint the elders; he was given the responsibility of teaching the church what qualities men needed to serve as an elder, and the church would choose men who were qualified from within themselves, [Acts 15:22](#).

To begin with, the apostles appointed elders, [Acts 14:23](#) / [2 Corinthians 8:19](#). Then, Paul delegated Titus to appoint elders in Crete, [Titus 1:5](#). But ultimately, it's the Holy Spirit who actually appoints an elder because it's the Spirit who sets out the qualities needed in order for them to serve, [Acts 20:28](#).

HOW MANY ELDERS ARE REQUIRED?

In every example we have in the New Testament, there is a plurality of elders in each congregation, never just one elder, [Acts 20:17](#) / [Acts 21:18](#) / [Titus 1:5](#). When Paul told Titus to 'appoint elders in every city,' this didn't mean one elder could be over several churches or the churches in several cities. In the early days, there would only be one congregation in a city. Therefore, that congregation should have elders appointed to be over it.

WHY SHOULD A CONGREGATION HAVE ELDERS?

1. Unscripturally organised.

This means it is governed by something other than elders and deacons.

2. Scripturally unorganised.

This means something that is expedient, useful or helps us. Business meetings, men's meetings, the church commits men to lead, but this isn't right because the men aren't qualified.

They have no scriptural authority, which means they can't carry out scriptural discipline. Men need to be spiritually mature enough to do this.

3. Scripturally organised.

This means God governs the church, and elders are what God wants in place, [Acts 14:21-23](#).

Each church, in pagan cities where there were no Jews, no synagogues. We can't say that these elders had a Jewish background and were already familiar with God.

Also, these elders were in place in ‘Antioch of Pisidia’, ‘Lystra’, ‘Iconium’, and ‘Derbe’ just three months after the churches in these places had been planted. Were these men novices? They had the gift of supernatural faith, 1 Corinthians 12:9.

Elders were required in every town; this task was unfinished and not complete until elders were in place, Titus 1:5. There is a sense of urgency. He saw elders as necessary in every town. Appointing elders in every town is the same as telling them to ‘appoint elders in every church,’ just as we see him doing from the beginning.

This was his pattern throughout the book of Acts as well, where we read that after preaching the gospel and planting churches, Paul ‘appointed elders for them in every church,’ Acts 14:23. There were likely house churches in each ‘town,’ though not necessarily every small village. The office of an Elder is one that is approved by the Godhead.

1. The Elder is described as God’s Steward. Titus 1:7
2. The Pastor is an office held with the Son’s approval. Ephesians 4:11
3. The Bishop, ‘overseer’, is appointed through the work of the Holy Spirit. Acts 20:28

WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF THE ELDERS?

Their role is described in the Bible names.

1. Elder, ‘presbuteros’.
2. Bishop, ‘episkopos’.
3. Pastors, ‘poimen’.

These words describe a man who is older and experienced in the faith, i.e., ‘an elder’, a person who is a decisionmaker, manager of church affairs, and leader, i.e., ‘bishop’, and one who maintains a careful watch for the spiritual needs of all the members of the flock, i.e., ‘pastor’.

Ultimately, the role of an elder is to feed, tend, protect and lead the church. Acts 20:28. They have a specific role in the work of the church, Ephesians 4:11-13. The gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:11 are the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

They are gifts given by the Lord Jesus, Ephesians 4:7-10. Spiritual gifts are only mentioned indirectly because the apostles and prophets of the early church had these gifts.

The apostles were direct witnesses of Christ who then laid the foundation for the church. Accomplishing their duty, they remain with us through their writings in the New Testament.

The prophets existed to fill the gap between the establishment of the church and the recording of Christ’s law. They too continue with us today through their writings, but as Paul stated, there would not be new prophets once their work was completed, 1 Corinthians 13:8-11.

Evangelists, ‘preachers, ministers,’ pastors, ‘elders, bishops, overseers,’ and teachers continue to exist in the church, teaching the things recorded by the apostles and prophets to build up the church. They are meant to provide leadership for the congregation according to the will of God, 1 Peter 5:1-3.

THE CHURCH’S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE ELDERS

The congregation has a responsibility to ‘recognise’ the elders, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13. In other words, if a congregation had elders, do you know who they are? Does the church recognise the elders as the leaders of the congregation?

The congregation has a responsibility to ‘esteem’ the elders, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13. In other words, the congregation must give them respect. We need to look up to them. And the reason we look up to them is because of the work they are doing, and make no mistake about it, the role of an elder can be very stressful, so an elder needs to be shown respect.

The congregation has a responsibility to ‘trust’ the elders, 1 Timothy 5:17-20. That’s why Paul says that accusations should not be allowed to stand against the elders except with the testimony of two or three witnesses.

The congregation has a responsibility to ‘correct’ the elders, 1 Timothy 5:17-20. Paul says if it has been shown that an elder is in sin, he is to be publicly corrected.

Now, remember, elders are not exempt from sinning, and they need to be corrected from time to time as well. But this doesn’t mean that any time an elder sins, we have to publicly expose it because it might just be something between him and God.

But if an elder commits a sin that can bring reproach on the Lord and His church, that elder needs to be corrected publicly, ‘in the congregation’. If the elder is sinning and will not repent, he is to be publicly corrected. This passage also tells us that the congregation has the responsibility to treat the elders ‘equally’, 1 Timothy 5:17-20.

We cannot act as if one of the elders is better, higher, or preferred above the others. There is no such thing as a ‘senior pastor’. Again, if an elder sins, he is to be corrected publicly, it does not matter which elder it is.

We cannot let our friendships come between the need to help them get to heaven. We need to remember that the goal of a Christian is to get to heaven, and we need to help other Christians get there, and that includes the elders.

The congregation has a responsibility to ‘remember’ the elders, Hebrews 13:17. So, a congregation needs to be mindful of them and the role that they are fulfilling in the Lord’s church. We are to remember their leadership and the things which they have said we must do.

The congregation has a responsibility to ‘obey’ the elders, Hebrews 13:17. We obey the elders because they are looking out for our own souls’ best interests. They are trying to get us to heaven, and we should obey them because they will help us get there. They are also trying to help others get to heaven, so we should obey them to give an example to others as well.

As the sheep, we go where the shepherds lead us, and so this passage also tells us that the congregation has a responsibility to make the elders’ job as ‘easy as possible’. When the congregation willingly obeys the elders, it makes their job an easy one, and they will be much happier in their role as elders.

When the congregation, ‘usually just a few members,’ causes problems, it can make the elders’ lives miserable. Many elders have been so disheartened because of the reaction of the congregation that they simply quit, and I know of some elders who have been so depressed by the actions of the congregation that they have left the church altogether.

A congregation should make it a point to make the elders’ job as easy as possible so that the whole congregation can be happier. The congregation has a responsibility to ‘imitate the elders’ example’, Hebrews 13:17.

The elders should be living their lives in a way that others should follow. And yes, this should be true of all Christians as 1 John 1:7 reminds us, but this should be especially true of the elders because the other Christians are to follow their example.

The congregation has a responsibility to follow their ‘example of faith’, Hebrews 13:17. Elders should be those who are not novices, but instead, mature Christians and all Christians should make it their goal to become more mature in Christ.

The elders are supposed to be the example on earth for us to follow in order to get to heaven. Their goal is first and foremost to get to heaven, and if we follow their example, it should be because we want to get to heaven as well.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR OVERSEERS

‘Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap.’ 1 Timothy 3:1-7

As we go through these qualifications for elders, we will refer to the qualifications found in Titus in an effort to bring them together, Titus 1:6-9. First and foremost, a man must ‘desire’, want to become an elder; we can’t force this on anyone.

Now notice that they are broken down into three categories.

1. Physical. 2. Mental. 3. Spiritual.

PHYSICAL – HOME LIFE

1. Male elder, spiritually mature, a man with experience. Knowledge and wisdom. Titus 2:2 older men.
2. Married means experience of marriage, this would include a widower, one wife, not two, in other words, not a polygamist.
3. Children who believe, are faithful, and show respect for their father. Titus 1:6 unruly, respect for their father says. Children means one or more. If you have five children and four have faith in God, but one doesn’t, does this stop a man from serving as an elder? That doesn’t make sense. It’s the experience that’s important. Children are your responsibility whilst they are living under your roof, not after they leave home, Ezekiel 18:20.

MENTAL

1. Knowledge means being able to teach, being able to reason, hence wisdom.
2. Knows the Word and can handle it properly.
3. Influence people by his use of the Word.

SPIRITUAL

1. Applies to all Christians.

BREAKDOWN OF THE QUALIFICATIONS

PHYSICAL – HOME LIFE

1. 1 Timothy 3:2 / Titus 1:6. Male / Husband of one wife / Male / Faithful to his wife.

Obviously, an elder has to be a male; otherwise, the text would say the wife of one husband, and he needs to be faithful to his wife, in other words, not cheat, etc.

There are some ideas about the husband of one wife. Some people believe that this means that the man can only have been married once, and so someone who has been divorced or whose wife has died wouldn't qualify. But we need to remember not to put words in Paul's mouth because the text doesn't say that.

If a man has been divorced through no fault of his own and then remarries, why should he be disqualified from being an elder if he wasn't responsible for the marriage break-up? Or if his wife dies, does this then disqualify him from being or continuing to be an elder?

If divorce is legal and dissolves the marriage so that the one divorced can marry another, or his wife dies, and he marries another woman, is the one remarried considered now to be 'the husband of one wife'?

It seems evident that legally, such a remarried person is the husband of only one wife. He is not considered to have two wives. I believe this is speaking about a man who is not a 'polygamist', someone who has many wives; after all, this was the practice of many in New Testament times.

The text doesn't say that the man only has to have been married once, but it does say that he has to have only one wife. Remember, it's all about having the experience of marriage.

We should always try to get to the highest ideal, someone who has not been divorced, but we must never forget that what we did 'before' we were Christians or 'during' our Christian walk has been forgiven, and we should also remember that circumstances change in all our lives, which may well be out of our control.

POLYGAMY, BIGAMY, AND 'THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE'

Several writers have concluded that the phrase 'the husband of one wife' means that the man in view is not a bigamist or polygamist but is married to 'only' one wife. They stress that the force of the instruction lies in the concept of 'only' one and not multiple wives.

It would seem prudent to argue, then, that the phrase is not inserted solely to exclude polygamists or bigamists from the eldership. To clarify, however, the condition would exclude polygamists but would carry as much positive force for a man to be married to one wife as it would negative force not to have more than one.

As McGarvey stated: 'That he should be the husband of one wife, forbids having less than one as clearly as it forbids having more than one' (p. 56).

ONLY ONE WIFE HIS WHOLE LIFE!

We have established, then, that the candidate for the eldership must be a man who is literally ‘the husband of one wife.’ Our work is not done, however, because questions still remain concerning the qualification.

Does ‘the husband of one wife’ mean that the candidate must currently be married to the only wife that he has had his entire life? If his wife dies and he remains single, is he still the ‘husband of one wife,’ since he was only married to one woman in his life? Or, if his wife dies and he remarries, is he no longer the ‘husband of one wife,’ since he has now been married twice to two different women?

First, let us state that the ideal situation is one in which a man has been married to one woman for his whole life and they are still together during the time of his eldership.

This situation would meet every conceivable challenge of the phrase ‘the husband of one wife.’ Of course, stating the ideal does not exclude other possibilities that might be less than ideal but still potentially viable.

Let us then deal with the situation in which a man has been married, his spouse has died, and he is currently in his second marriage. Is this man a candidate for the eldership?

Those who suggest that he is not often refer to 1 Timothy 5:9, where Paul discussed widows who were to be ‘taken into the number’ of the church. In that verse, Paul stated that only a widow who ‘has been the wife of one man’ should be taken in.

In light of this, some believe that having only been married to one person in one’s life has some type of spiritual significance, or at least offers a person some type of life circumstance that would be desirable for one who is an elder.

Such an understanding seems to leave something to be desired based on the actual wording of 1 Timothy 3:2. The qualification in 1 Timothy 3:2 states that a bishop ‘must be’ in the present tense.

The Greek words ‘dei’ and ‘eivai’ combine to form the ‘must’ and ‘be’ so that each of the qualifications is one that must at the present be a part of the potential elder’s life or character.

For instance, it would do no good to have an elder who, at one time, was hospitable but is no longer such. Nor would it be good for a congregation to have an elder who, in the past, was able to teach but currently is not able to do so.

Ironically, the present tense force is conspicuously absent from 1 Timothy 5:9, and a widow could not be taken into the number of the church if she were married to a man who was living (for she would not be a widow).

Yet the ideal for an elder is for him to be currently married. Thus, it seems an unnatural and tenuous stretch to force the ‘parallel’ between 1 Timothy 3:2 and 1 Timothy 5:9 to mean that an elder cannot be remarried after the death of a spouse.

As Glasscock wrote: ‘First Timothy 3:2 does not say ‘an elder must be married only once’ nor does it say, ‘an elder cannot remarry’ (140:247).

He further stated that if Paul had wanted to insist that an elder must be married to one woman his whole life, the inspired writer could have written, ‘having had only one wife.’ Since Paul did not make such a statement when it was in his power to do so, it goes beyond the bounds of the phrase ‘the husband of one wife’ to insist that it means ‘having had only one wife’ (140:247).

An understanding of the biblical teaching of marriage adds weight to the idea that a man can be qualified for the eldership, even if he has been married after the death of a spouse, 1 Corinthians 7:39.

Marriage is a covenant that holds sway only as long as a person lives on this Earth in a physical, mortal body. Once a person’s spouse dies, he or she is no longer married to that person.

Jesus elucidated this fact in His discussion with the Sadducees. This particular Jewish sect did not believe in the resurrection of the soul. In order to trap Jesus, the Sadducees concocted a situation that they thought rendered the idea of the resurrection absurd.

They presented to Jesus the situation in which a woman married a man, he died, so she married his brother. Subsequently, his brother died, and she married the third brother. Eventually, she lived through seven marriages to seven brothers and finally died.

The Sadducees then asked Jesus, ‘Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife will she be? For they all had her,’ Matthew 22:23-28. Jesus explained to the Sadducees that they did not understand the resurrection or the Scriptures. He stated that ‘in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God in heaven,’ Matthew 22:30.

From Jesus’ teachings, we learn that a marriage contracted on Earth has no force in the resurrection. Thus, a person who was married to one wife on Earth, when she dies, is no longer married to that person. While she was his wife in the past, she cannot rightly be called his wife now, since the covenant of marriage is over at the point of the death of a spouse.

Glasscock summarised this idea when he wrote the following.

‘Surely no one seriously believes that if a man’s wife dies that he is still bound to her in marriage; thus, if he marries a second time, he still has only one wife, that is, he is truly still ‘the husband of one wife’ (140:247).

As J. W. McGarvey stated, the following.

‘It may be well to add that one living wife is clearly meant and that there is no allusion to the number of deceased wives a man may have had. If my wife is dead, I am not now her husband’ (1950, p. 57).

Therefore, if a man’s wife dies and he becomes a widower, the present tense force of being the ‘husband of one wife’ would seem to exclude him from being qualified for the eldership.

We must be careful to insist that such a situation does not make him any less of a Christian, any less spiritual, or any less valuable to the Lord’s cause. It simply is the case that a circumstance in his life has arisen that renders him no longer qualified to serve as an elder at a particular time.

To illustrate further, suppose a man was an exceptional teacher, but was in a tragic accident and lost his voice and his ability to communicate his thoughts properly. Could it be that such an accident would render him unable to teach? Certainly.

Since he is no longer ‘apt to teach,’ and would most likely not be in the physical condition to serve as an elder, would it be the best course for him to no longer be an elder? Yes. Is he less valuable to God, less spiritual, or in any way less ‘Christian’? Absolutely not.

It is simply the case that a circumstance in his life has rendered him unable to serve as an elder at a particular time in his life. Eldership is a functional role that requires a person to maintain the qualifications throughout their tenure as an elder.

On the other hand, if a widower were to remarry after the death of his wife and the woman he remarried met the qualifications detailed for the wives of elders, 1 Timothy 3:11, the present tense force of being the ‘husband of one wife’ would allow him to be considered for the eldership.

CAN A MAN WHO HAS BEEN DIVORCED AND REMARRIED BE AN ELDER?

If a man who loses his spouse to death and remarries can be considered for the eldership, the natural question arises: What about a man who is divorced and remarried?

If the phrase ‘the husband of one wife’ does not mean ‘having been married only once in his life,’ that would seem to admit the possibility that a man who has been divorced and is remarried to ‘one wife’ could be eligible.

Before delving into this, let us restate the ideal. The perfect situation is one in which there is a man who has been married once to the same woman, and she is living during the time he serves as an elder. Is it possible, however, that a divorced man who is remarried may still be an elder?

If a man can be married to a second wife, because he divorced his first wife scripturally, and not be considered by God to be committing adultery, then it follows that God must view the first marriage as dissolved and the covenant broken.

Therefore, it would still be the case that a man who divorced his wife scripturally and married another woman would/could be ‘the husband of one wife.’

It would appear logical that a man’s condition upon the death of a wife, or due to a scriptural divorce, would be the same, and a subsequent marriage would not disqualify him from being the ‘husband of one wife.’

LIKE OR UNLIKE THE OTHER QUALIFICATIONS?

To me, the central question is this: is the ‘husband of one wife’ qualification a reference only to the present or does it stretch back to the remote past, including the pre-Christian past?

I think the presumption should be that this question would be fundamentally like, as opposed to unlike, all the other qualifications listed, since the text does not set it apart as being essentially different. And all the other qualifications, I think, of necessity apply to the present (which inevitably includes the recent past), not to the distant past.

Do we believe ‘husband of one wife’ means he must always, even as an unbeliever, have had no more than a total of one wife in his lifetime? If so, then wouldn’t we also need to extend the same understanding to the other qualifications, so they include his distant or pre-Christian past?

Let’s test it, adding that same interpretive phrase to all the other qualifications, and see what it would mean. This would mean that any elder must: Have always, even as an unbeliever, been above reproach. Have always, even as an unbeliever, always been sober-minded.

Have always, even as an unbeliever, always been self-controlled. Have always, even as an unbeliever, been respectable. Have always, even as an unbeliever, been hospitable.

Have always, even as an unbeliever, not been a drunkard. Have always, even as an unbeliever, not been violent or quarrelsome. Have always, even as an unbeliever, not been a lover of money. Have always, even as an unbeliever, managed his household well. This would make no sense.

Don’t we agree that a man can be an elder who once was: a drunk, a murderer, a violent man, lacking self-control, etc.? Of course, we believe he must have demonstrated clear change, and this change, by implication, must have been borne out over a significant period of time.

In the same sense that an elder should not be a recent convert, no matter how genuine his conversion, so he should not be, regardless of how long he's been a Christian, a recently transformed drunkard, murderer, fornicator, etc., no matter how genuine his transformation.

2. 1 Timothy 3:11. His wife / Worthy of respect / Not gossips / Temperate / Trustworthy.

An elder's wife has at least four requirements.

1. 'Semnos'. This means honourable, honest or grave.

a. The word here means the same as with reference to the elders.

It means to be prudent, appropriate, dignified, quiet, of sound judgment, not giddy. Some versions translate the word 'worthy of respect'. This can especially be shown by her dress, 1 Timothy 2:9-10.

b. A grave person is not one who is severe, stern, or unhappy.

She is admired by all. The wives of elders must not be foolish, unconcerned, and indifferent to the work of their husbands, but instead be serious about their husbands' progress and be a good helper and companion.

2. 'Me Diabolos'. This means not gossips, not slanderers or false accusers.

a. No form of slandering is pleasing to God.

Wives of elders, as well as all Christians, must be able to control their tongue and not be busybodies or tale-bearers of idle gossip.

b. The wives of elders may at times know sensitive information about members of the congregation, and one can imagine the kind of damage that it would do if it were told to members of the congregation.

c. Backbiters and talebearers are dangerous both to themselves and to the church, Proverbs 18:8 / Proverbs 26:20.

3. 'Nephalios'. This means temperate, vigilant, and sober. Someone who is trustworthy. On an even keel.

a. This word means the same as with reference to the elders and deacons.

The wives of these men must be temperate, self-controlled, and self-possessed. They must 'hold themselves in' and not be frivolous and irresponsible, 1 Peter 1:13 / 1 Peter 4:7.

b. A lack of sobriety on the part of the wives will be a bad influence upon their husbands, their children, and their congregation.

4. 'Pistos'. This means trustworthy or faithful.

1 Timothy 3:11 Faithful in all things.

a. The wives of elders must be faithful to God in all relations as Christians.

She must be faithful in worship, faithful in Christian living, faithful to her husband, faithful to her children and faithful to all others in the church.

b. A faithful wife can be a great blessing to an elder.

An elder's wife must learn to share with her husband the duties of his work. Her willingness to serve will help him with his willingness to serve. She must be hospitable, and her home should be available. Also, notice that every qualification actually applies to all Christian women seeking to achieve their role in God's plan.

3. 1 Timothy 3:4 / Titus 1:6. Manage his family well / Children that are not open to charge and believe.

‘Epimeleomai’ means to manage, rule or be in charge, [Ephesians 5:25-28](#). His wife has a specific role too, [Ephesians 5:22-24](#). His child or children have a specific role too, [Ephesians 6:1-3](#). Children who are not open to charge and believe.

Remember, the use of the word children means it’s not a matter of age, it’s a matter of character, [Proverbs 22:6](#). How many children does an elder require? If I were to ask everyone in this room who has children to leave, who would go? Everyone who had either one child or a few children would go. So, it doesn’t matter if the man only has one child. Do the children have to be Christians? Elders don’t necessarily have to have Christian children. ‘Pistos’ means trustworthy, faithful or believe. ‘Pistis’ means faith, religious conviction.

Notice the wife is to be ‘faithful in all things’, [1 Timothy 3:11](#); this is not asked of the children. Remember, we’re dealing with the physical, the home, and the whole context points towards being faithful to their father, not God. Note again [Titus 1:6](#) and [1 Timothy 3:4](#). His children behave well and show the proper respect. How does the parent deal with their kids when their kids misbehave or are involved in a sin?

According to Barrick, when the adjective pistos is used to modify a noun, as it does in [Titus 1:6](#), it always carries the meaning ‘faithful’ or ‘trustworthy/credible.’ In contrast, when the adjective is independent and functions as a substantive, it means ‘believing one’ or ‘believer’ (Barrick, ‘[Titus 1:6](#)’).

Therefore, the meaning ‘faithful’ in [Titus 1:6](#) would be more consistent with the use of the word elsewhere in the New Testament. Against this view, it has been argued that every time pistos is translated ‘faithful’ in the New Testament, it refers to believers who are faithful, and never unbelievers.

Therefore, it is said, ‘pistos’ must refer to children who believe regardless of the precise way it is translated. In response, the fact that pistos is not used elsewhere in the New Testament in reference to unbelievers does not mean that the adjective cannot be used in reference to unbelievers (which is what this argument needs to show in order to be compelling).

To the best of my knowledge, there is nothing inherent in the word itself that precludes it from being used to describe an unbeliever. Used in this way, it would describe an unbeliever who, though unregenerate, is faithful and obedient to the one in authority over him (e.g., the soldiers described in [Matthew 8:9](#)).

The view that ‘pistos’ means ‘believing’ raises some practical difficulties as well. For example, if a man has a two-year-old daughter who has not repented of her sins and believed in Christ, is that man unqualified to serve as an elder? Most interpreters who say that ‘pistos’ means ‘believing’ in [Titus 1:6](#) would answer No, but on what basis? If pistos means ‘believing,’ wouldn’t a child who has not exercised saving faith disqualify the father (since ‘believing’ does mean ‘believing’)? Some would respond by saying that only an unbelieving child who has reached the age of accountability would disqualify the father. Aside from the fact that [Titus 1:6](#) says nothing about such an age, what exactly is that age?

Many believers give testimony to having believed at a very young age, even as young as five, so is five the age of accountability? If not, why wouldn’t it be, since children seem capable of believing at such an early age?

In addition, it seems possible that identifying an age as the cut-off might establish something of a high-pressure countdown for an elder whose unbelieving child is approaching that age (i.e., ‘If my child doesn’t profess Christ by this March, I’ll need to step down from serving as an elder!’).

These difficulties are only compounded by the fact that so many children profess faith but do not truly possess it. It is often difficult to know for certain whether or not a child, especially one raised in a Christian home, is truly regenerated.

In many cases, elders would be deemed qualified because their children seem to be saved even though they are not regenerated. On the other hand, it is much easier to observe whether or not a child is obedient to his or her father.

These kinds of practical considerations, of course, are secondary to the exegetical ones discussed above, but they are worthy of our consideration.

Overall, then, it seems to me that Paul's intention in Titus 1:6 is to communicate not that an elder's children must be saved for him to serve as an elder, but rather that his children must be faithful and obedient to their father, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.

Indeed, as Barrick notes, a believing child is far better dispositioned to be obedient and submissive to the authority of his parents than an unbelieving child, and in this way, the two views may end up overlapping to a great extent—but saving faith per se is no more in view in Titus 1:6 than it is in 1 Timothy 3:4 (Barrick, 'Titus 1:6').

What do we make of an elder who has several believing children, walking faithfully with the Lord, but one who is not? If most of his children are believers, is he not a good manager of his household? Or does the one unbelieving child call into question his overall managerial ability? If it does, then why did any of his children turn out to be believers?

We need to let Paul himself explain what he means by faithfulness and obedience, and he explains it negatively in terms of public behaviour, 'not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient' rather than spiritual faithfulness to the Gospel.

Paul says that an elder's children 'must be' believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.' At first glance, the answer looks obvious. Paul says that an elder's kids must be believers. But note the footnote in the E.S.V, 'believers' can also be translated as 'faithful'.

It's important to pay attention to footnotes in the translations of biblical texts, as they alert us when there are other equally valid translation options. The Greek word here is 'pistos', which can mean either 'believing' or 'faithful' in the pastoral epistles.

For example, see 'believing masters' in 1 Timothy 6:2 and 'faithful men' in 2 Timothy 2:2. Word studies alone can't solve this; it depends on the context. But let's be clear on the two big options.

Paul either meant that 1. an elder's children have to be 'believers', or 2. an elder's children must at least be 'faithful, submissive, and obedient'. How do we decide? The Reformers rightly insisted that we allow Scripture to interpret Scripture. Here we have one author, Paul, writing separately to two young church planters, Timothy and Titus, talking about the same subject, elder qualifications.

How do the two passages about family life compare? When we look at the Greek, we see how similar the language is between 1 Timothy 3:4 and Titus 1:6. You can see the similarities even if you don't know Greek.

While 1 Timothy 3:4 says that an elder must 'manage his own household well...keeping his children submissive,' Titus 1:6 seems to go even further when it says that an elder's children must be 'pistos and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.'

While some translations, like the King James Version, translate 'pistos' as 'faithful,' most major English translations translate it as 'believing.' Because of this, some people argue that the New Testament teaches that an elder's children must be Christians.

There are several problems with this view.

1. Considering how closely the two passages parallel one another, it is reasonable to suppose that the phrase 'having faithful/believing 'pistos' children' in Titus 1:6 means the same thing as 'keeping his children submissive' in 1 Timothy 3:4.

This would mean that the final part of Titus 1:6, ‘not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination’, is an explanation of what ‘pistos’ means, faithful in their behaviour, submitting to their parents, and not being unruly, 1 Timothy 3:4. In other words, ‘pistos’ in Titus 1:6 probably means ‘faithful in behaviour,’ not ‘believing.’

2. 1 Timothy 3:5 explicitly grounds an elder’s qualification on the man’s managerial ability as displayed in how he runs his household, 1 Timothy 3:4.

Yet, saving faith cannot be produced by any amount of godly parenting. Obedience and submission, generally speaking, can. The man’s qualification as an elder rests on his ability to govern his home, of which his children’s behaviour is a reliable measure, not his children’s salvation, which he cannot bring about. Ezekiel 18:20.

3. All of the requirements for eldership listed in these passages, ‘being a one-woman man, being temperate, sensible, respectable, and so on,’ are matters of personal responsibility.

To require that an elder’s children have genuine, saving faith is to hold one person responsible for the salvation of another, which is nowhere taught in Scripture. This would assign humans a role in salvation that belongs only to God.

4. The grounding question of 1 Timothy 3:5 explicitly connects the elder’s qualifications with his managerial skills in 1 Timothy 3:4.

There is something sanctifying about being the child of a believing parent, 1 Corinthians 7:14. It doesn’t guarantee salvation, but this relational reality sets the child apart in some way. A godly home with the Gospel at the centre doesn’t automatically produce a believing child, but God has designed things such that this is often the case.

In God’s providence, the modelling of belief and the aroma of the Gospel in the home are often the means of producing salvation by grace. None of this means, however, that there is a one-to-one correspondence between saving faith and good spiritual housekeeping. We see from both Scripture and experience that good and godly leadership doesn’t always prevent children, whether spiritual or natural, from falling away.

5. Even the best pastoral managers have unbelievers within their church or under their sphere of influence, Galatians 1:6!

It’s possible for a pastor to manage the church, ‘household of God’, well, even though not everyone in it is a believer. If this is so, then it seems that one can manage his family, ‘the smaller household’, well, even though not all within it genuinely believe.

6. Insisting that having believing children is a requirement of eldership leads to some uncomfortable questions.

What do we make of an elder who has several believing children, walking faithfully with the Lord, but one who is not? If most of his children are believers, is he not a good manager of his household? Or does the one unbelieving child call into question his overall managerial ability? If it does, then why did any of his children turn out to be believers?

7. All of the requirements for eldership listed in this passage, ‘being a one-woman man, being temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, a good teacher, not a drunkard, not a lover of money, and not a recent convert’, are actions of personal responsibility.

We would expect the requirement regarding his children to be in the same category. Requiring that his children have genuine saving faith is to require personal responsibility for the salvation of another, something I don’t see taught in Scripture. The whole point of these qualifications in this first section is found in 1 Timothy 3:4-5.

1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 refer to the general submission and behaviour of the elder’s children. God has so designed the universe that the parental role of disciplinarian, model, authority, and servant-leader generally has a profound effect upon the behaviour of the children.

Paul doesn't spell out what this looks like in every case, nor does he spell out all of the specifics of what will disqualify an elder. The general case, however, is clear. What mustn't characterise the children of an elder is immorality and undisciplined rebelliousness if the children are still at home and under his authority.

Paul is not asking any more of the elder and his children than is expected of every Christian father and his children. However, only if a man exercises such proper control over his children may he be an elder.

MENTAL – BIBLE KNOWLEDGE AND USE

1. 1 Timothy 3:2 / Titus 1:9. Able to teach / Encourage with sound doctrine.

'Didaktikos' means being able to give instruction; they must have knowledge of the truth. He has to have the ability to share it with others, 1 Thessalonians 5:12. Those who 'have charge over you' would certainly include the elders, Hebrews 13:7 / 1 Timothy 5:17.

It can be seen here that, 'at least some' elders were 'teaching and preaching.' Therefore, it is evident that the elders who were presently serving in this work were doing both 'teaching and preaching' within the body.

A man who has already shown to possess the other qualifications for the work of an elder, and also possesses this ability, and 'desire' to teach, would certainly be a man who would be reliable when it comes to teaching and living the word, 'holding fast the faithful word'.

A saint in the congregation in which he serves would certainly be able to approach him with problems and questions about God's truth. Could he ever make a mistake? Certainly!

Some of the most scripturally knowledgeable men in the church will tell you that they have been incorrect in some of the things that they once taught, but having studied these things further, they have come to a different understanding. But there is a vast difference between studying out of error and never knowing the Word.

2. Titus 1:9. Keep hold of the truth.

'Antechomai' means to hold oneself to, to care. The phrase 'hold fast' literally means to 'hold on to,' or to 'cleave to.' The word implies 'support,' therefore representing a man who rests his support upon the Word of God.

All Christians are to rest upon the Word of God, but it seems that Paul is simply instructing Titus to be certain that it is a faithful, godly soundman who is set apart for this work.

The overseer must be a man who 'rests his entire faith and hope upon God's Word,' and therefore will not allow any false doctrine or false practices to happen, Titus 1:9.

'Parakaleo' means to encourage, to call near 'as to receive or give help', to implore, entreat, 'to urgently ask for mercy or help', to exhort, 'to urgently counsel, encourage or admonish', to comfort. Encouraging involves more than just 'speaking' or 'teaching'.

Exhortation involves a special urging or even imploring for someone to behave in such a way. I might encourage someone to pay more attention to Bible study and prayer, while not teaching you anything that you don't already know.

Perhaps exhortation is done most frequently from the 'pulpit' as the evangelist 'exhorts' the congregation to remain steadfast in what they have already been taught.

The overseer is to be a man who is able to 'exhort in sound doctrine,' therefore relying on the written Word for his source of exhortation. Therefore, it is essential that he hold fast to the Word of God!

‘Refute those who contradict’. The King James Version translates the word ‘convict,’ while holding to the context of ‘convincing’ one of error. It seems from the context that the ‘convicting’ or ‘convincing’ would involve both those who were doing the contradicting as well as those who were witnesses to the false teaching.

One who aspires to the work of the elder must be equipped and prepared to ‘refute’ any false teaching that may arise from within ‘or without’ the church. Therefore, it is essential that he hold fast to the Word of God!

3. 1 Timothy 3:6. Not a recent convert.

‘Neophytos’ means a novice, young convert. This is common sense. In the Book of Acts, some were converted from Judaism, and so they were familiar with the law and the scriptures and were brought up in the Lord. They will be able to teach and oppose error, 1 Timothy 3:6.

A lot of Christians have dealt with the problem of their pride, 1 John 2:16-17. Yes, sin is often the result of worldly pride. It seems that even the devil was perhaps led into sin by his pride. So, the warning given to Timothy regarding the eldership deals with the temptation of pride.

A new Christian often holds on to his pride. A more mature Christian has often found a reason not to be so proud. A new Christian has much to learn in this area.

This is very true concerning the trials and hardships that we face in our Christian lives. Mature Christians teach us that it is the Lord upon whom we should rely, not ourselves, 1 Corinthians 10:12. Pride comes before the fall, and pride was the devil’s problem, and it was his downfall.

SPIRITUAL – REQUIRED OF ALL CHRISTIANS

1. 1 Timothy 3:2 / Titus 1:6. Blameless / Blameless / above reproach / free from accusation.

‘Anegkletos’ means subject to blame. It doesn’t mean they have to be sinless, but someone who is seen to be righteous, 1 Timothy 3:10. Deacons are to be tested; is there anything to worry about?

Those who are leading spiritual lives, 1 Peter 5:3 / Philippians 3:6. What about past sins? 2 Corinthians 5:17. How are you above reproach? Follow the rest of the qualifications.

2. 1 Timothy 3:2 / Titus 1:7. Temperate / Not quick-tempered.

‘Nephalios’ means temperate or vigilant, someone who is trustworthy. On an even keel. Me Orgilos means not quick-tempered, slow to anger, James 1:19-20.

3. 1 Timothy 3:2 / Titus 1:8. Self-control / Self-control.

‘Egkrateia’ means self-control, sober-minded, someone who can think clearly, someone who can balance judgement, 2 Peter 1:5-7.

4. 1 Timothy 3:2. Respectable.

‘Kosmios’ means respectable, orderly, well-behaved, always considerate.

5. 1 Timothy 3:3 / Titus 1:8. Hospitable / Hospitable.

‘Philoxenos’ means hospitable, a lover of guests, given to hospitality, loving strangers. To care for and protect a guest, Romans 12:13 / Hebrews 13:1-2.

6. 1 Timothy 3:3 / Titus 1:7. Not given to drunkenness / Not given to drunkenness.

‘Me Paroinos’ means not staying near wine, the behaviour that wine would lead to, not near wine. It is more than obvious that an elder is not to be given to drunkenness, as is evident from the fact that drunkards will not even inherit the kingdom of heaven, 1 Corinthians 6:10 / Galatians 5:19-21.

7. 1 Timothy 3:3 / Titus 1:7. Not violent / Not violent.

‘Me Amachos’ and ‘Me Plektes’ mean not to be a brawler but peaceable. Not violent but in control of his temper, he doesn’t settle problems with his fists. ‘Me Pugnacious’ means not quarrelsome but peaceable. Violent in public or privately. ‘Me Orgilos’ means not quarrelsome, not easily angered, 2 Timothy 2:24.

8. 1 Timothy 3:3. Gentle.

‘Epieikes’ means gentle, able to endure ill-treatment, forbearing, long-suffering, appropriate, considerate, modest, mild, Ephesians 4:2.

9. 1 Timothy 3:3 / Titus 1:7. Not to love money / Not pursuing dishonest gain.

‘Me Aischrokerdes’ means disgraceful gain, Hebrews 13:5 / Colossians 3:5 / 1 Timothy 6:8-10 / 1 Corinthians 5:11.

A man who wants to be an overseer is not to be greedy, money-grubbing, money-hungry and miserly, but is instead to be generous, unselfish, charitable, giving and considerate, 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

Therefore, the instruction isn’t that a man seeking the work of overseer cannot be ‘rich,’ but that he is not one who makes riches his guide or purpose in life. As we read in 1 Timothy 6, he is to fix his hope on God. A man who desires this work must possess this characteristic, which will be evident in the works of his life, Matthew 6:19-21.

10. Titus 1:7. Not overbearing.

‘Me Authades’ means not self-pleasing, not arrogant, self-willed, imposing your will on others, Matthew 20:25-28.

11. 1 Timothy 3:7 / Titus 1:8. Good reputation with outsiders / Good reputation with outsiders.

‘Marturia’ means reputation, evidence needed. ‘Philagathos’ means promoter of good, love what is good. Well thought of by those who aren’t in the church. The way they dealt with things they did wrong in their lives. His primary function will be ‘shepherding’ those who are of the flock; he will also be dealing with those who are not Christians.

It is of great importance that the church can reach those who are outside of the church. Every single non-Christian is a prospective convert. Every lost soul is a potential saint.

Leaders that don’t have a good reputation, i.e. ‘good character, an example of Christ-like behaviour’ with those whom the church is attempting to reach will have little or no success in soul-winning. However, one who exemplifies the nature of Christ and His church will have much greater success in reaching those who are seeking the Lord.

Another reason that this man’s ‘reputation with those outside the church’ is important is that this characteristic shows his consistent behaviour as a saint, whether among saints or sinners.

One who lives the devoted Christian life lives his life for God at all times. An elder is judged by Christians by the word of God, but judged by the world by his conduct. ‘Lagios’ means holy, separated. This person is separate from sin, Matthew 5:16 / Acts 2:47 / Acts 5:13.

12. Titus 1:8. Upright.

‘Dikaios’ means good character, just, equitable, even-handed, a fair-minded man. Basically, one who is ‘just’ is one who ‘obeys the rules.’ He can be said to be a man who ‘observes what is right.’

Of course, this would be true in the context of ‘right conduct,’ as it relates to obedience to God. An elder who is ‘just’ and ‘impartial’ will certainly do everything in his power to see that righteousness is observed and the flock obeys their Lord.

13. Titus 1:8. Disciplined.

‘Egkrates’ means strongly in control of himself, or self-controlled, 1 Corinthians 6:12 / 1 Peter 4:7.

WHY ARE ELDERS NEEDED IN THE CHURCH?

To protect the flock from the enemies of the Gospel, false teachers. These were mainly Jewish Christians who demanded that all Christians should be circumcised; they believed in the Gospel of Christ but wanted to add circumcision to it, [Acts 15:5](#) / [Galatians 5:2-6](#).

Paul says they are rebellious, which is against the Gospel teaching, they are full of meaningless talk, and deceptive, in other words, they taught lies and their motives were all wrong, [Titus 1:10-11](#).

Paul says they need to be stopped, hence why the church needed elders, [Titus 1:6](#) / [Ephesians 4:11-16](#). These people were ruining whole households. Why did they do it? Dishonest gain, financially and emotionally.

These false teachers were busy gathering some support from other Christians so that they could continue to divide the church, [1 Timothy 6:5](#). They went from house to house, burdening their own doctrine upon young Christians and as a result, they were splitting the church, [Romans 16:17-18](#) / [2 John 1:10](#).

QUALIFICATIONS FOR DEACONS

‘In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.’ [1 Timothy 3:8-13](#)

Deacons, too, have a crucial role in the life and the health of the local church, but their role is different from that of the elders. The Biblical role of deacons is to take care of the physical and logistical needs of the church so that the elders can concentrate on their primary calling.

This distinction is based on the pattern found in [Acts 6:1-6](#). The apostles were devoted ‘to prayer and to the ministry of the word’ [Acts 6:4](#). Since this was their primary calling, seven men were chosen to handle more practical matters in order to allow the apostles the freedom to continue with their work.

This division of labour is similar to what we see with the offices of elders and deacons. Like the apostles, the elders’ primary role is one of preaching the Word of God. Like the seven, deacons serve the congregation in whatever practical needs may arise.

For a man to serve as a deacon in the Lord’s church, he must meet the qualifications given by the Holy Spirit. These qualifications are found in [1 Timothy 3:8-13](#).

Deacons are important to our congregations; they are a distinct group of men who serve the congregation. This is seen in Paul’s letter to the Philippians, which he addresses to the saints, including the elders and deacons, [Philippians 1:1](#).

Yet this qualification doesn’t merely involve one’s beliefs, for he must also hold these beliefs ‘with a clear conscience.’ That is, the behaviour of a deacon must be consistent with his beliefs.

Deacons are to be ‘tested’, [1 Timothy 1:10](#), in Greek it’s the word ‘dokimazo’, which means to test or prove. In other words, is there anything to worry about? Although Paul doesn’t specify what type of testing is to take place, at a minimum, the candidate’s personal background, reputation, and theological positions should be examined. Moreover, the congregation shouldn’t only examine a potential deacon’s moral, spiritual, and doctrinal maturity, but should also consider the person’s track record of service in the church.

Deacons are to have ‘nothing against them’, [1 Timothy 3:10](#), in Greek is the word, ‘anegkletos’ which means free from accusation, [1 Peter 5:3](#). Elders require this qualification too, [1 Timothy 3:2](#) and [Titus 1:6](#). ‘Anegkletos’ means

subject to blame; it doesn't mean they have to be sinless, but someone who is seen to be righteous, Philippians 3:6 / 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Deacons are to be 'the husband of one wife', 1 Timothy 3:12. Obviously, a deacon has to be a male; otherwise, the text would say the wife of one husband, and he needs to be faithful to his wife, in other words, not a cheat, etc. The same thoughts for an elder being 'the husband of one wife', would apply to deacons too, 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6. The qualifications for the wife of a deacon are very similar to those of her husband, hence the word 'likewise'. 1 Timothy 3:11. The qualifications of the deacon's wife need to be considered as seriously as those of her husband. A man cannot take on the task of serving as a deacon without the support and encouragement of his wife and family. The deacon's wife must also meet qualifications which enable her to help her husband rather than hinder him. According to Paul, deacons' wives must 'be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things'.

Deacon's wives are to be 'worthy of respect', 1 Timothy 3:11 / 1 Timothy 3:8. In Greek, the word 'kosmios'. 'Kosmios' means respectable, orderly, well-behaved, always considerate.

This is closely related to respectable, which is given as a qualification for elders, 1 Timothy 3:2. She must be a woman who conducts herself in a manner that is worthy of respect and honour.

Deacon's wives are not to be 'malicious talkers' 1 Timothy 3:11, in Greek are the words, 'Me Diabolos'. This means not a gossip or false accuser. No form of slandering is pleasing to God.

Wives of deacons, as well as all Christians, must be able to control their tongues and not be busybodies or talebearers of idle gossip. Backbiters and talebearers are dangerous both to themselves and to the church.

Because of his work, a deacon can become aware of matters that need to be concealed. If his wife has trouble keeping her mouth shut, and even worse, blowing things out of proportion, she will be a hindrance to her husband, the elders, and the entire church. They're not malicious gossip or slanderous.

A gossip habitually reveals personal or sensational facts to hurt others. Slanderers utter false charges or misrepresentations to defame and malign others. A wife who gossips and slanders is not only sinning but hurting her husband and his work, Proverbs 18:8 / Proverbs 26:20.

Deacon's wives are to be 'temperate', 1 Timothy 3:11, in Greek is the word 'Nephalios'. This means temperate, vigilant, and sober. Someone who is trustworthy. On an even keel.

This word means the same as with reference to the elders and deacons. The wives of these men must be temperate, self-controlled, and self-possessed. They must 'hold themselves in' and not be frivolous and irresponsible, 1 Peter 1:13.

A lack of sobriety on the part of the wives will be a bad influence upon their husbands, their children, and their congregation. She must be able to make good judgments and mustn't be involved in things that might hinder such judgment, 1 Peter 4:7.

She has a well-balanced life. She abstains from those things that would be harmful and uses those things that are good in moderation. She practices self-control and self-restraint. Rather than gossiping and slandering, the deacon's wives are temperate and sober. They're in full control of themselves.

Deacon's wives are to be 'trustworthy in everything', 1 Timothy 3:11, in Greek is the word 'Pistos', which means trustworthy or faithful. The wives of deacons must be faithful to God in all their relations as Christians.

She must be faithful in worship, faithful in Christian living, faithful to her husband, faithful to her children and faithful to all others in the church. A faithful wife can be a great blessing to a deacon.

A deacon's wife must learn to share her husband with the duties of his work. Her willingness to serve will help him with his willingness to serve, Ephesians 5:22-24.

Also, notice that every qualification actually applies to all Christian women seeking to achieve their role in God's plan. 1 Timothy 5:10 is a general requirement that functions similarly to the requirement for elders to be 'above reproach', 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6 and for deacons to be 'blameless'. 1 Timothy 3:10.

Deacons 'must manage his children and his household well,' 1 Timothy 3:12, in Greek that's the word, 'epimeleomai', which means manage, rule or be in charge. A deacon must be the spiritual leader of his wife and children, Ephesians 5:25-28 / Ephesians 6:1-3.

Remember, the use of the word children means it's not a matter of age, it's a matter of character, Proverbs 22:6. How many children does a deacon require? If I were to ask everyone in this room who has children to leave, who would go? Everyone who had either one child or a few children would go. So, it doesn't matter if the man only has one child.

A deacon's reward will be 'an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus,' 1 Timothy 3:13. This means that they have confidence in the reward the Lord will give, Matthew 23:11-12.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEACONS

Whereas the office of the elder is often ignored in the modern church, the office of the deacon is often misunderstood. Based on the New Testament, the role of the deacon is mainly to be a servant. The church needs deacons to provide logistical and material support so that the elders can focus on the Word of God and prayer.

The New Testament doesn't provide much information concerning the role of deacons. The requirements are given in 1 Timothy 3:8-12, focusing on the deacon's character and family life.

There are, however, some clues as to the function of deacons when their requirements are compared with those of the elders. Although many of the qualifications are the same or very similar, there are some notable differences.

Perhaps the most noticeable distinction between elders and deacons is that deacons do not need to be 'able to teach' 1 Timothy 3:2. Deacons are called to 'hold' to the faith with a clear conscience, but they are not called to 'teach' that faith, 1 Timothy 3:9. This suggests that the deacons don't have an official teaching role in the church.

Like elders, deacons must manage their house and children well, 1 Timothy 3:4 and 1 Timothy 3:12. But when referring to deacons, Paul omits the section where he compares managing one's household to taking care of God's church. 1 Timothy 3:5.

The reason for this omission is most likely due to the fact that deacons aren't given a ruling or leading position in the church; that function belongs to the elders.

Although Paul indicates that a person must be tested before he can hold the office of deacon, 1 Timothy 3:10, the requirement that he cannot be a new convert isn't included. Paul notes that if an elder is a recent convert, 'he may become puffed up with conceit', 1 Timothy 3:6.

One implication concerning this distinction could be that those who hold the office of elder are more susceptible to pride because they possess leadership over the church. On the contrary, it's not as likely for a deacon, who is in more of a servant role, to fall into this same sin.

Finally, the title 'overseer', 1 Timothy 3:2, implies general oversight over the spiritual well-being of the congregation, whereas the title 'deacon' implies one who has a service-oriented ministry.

Beyond what we can glean from these differences in qualifications, the Bible doesn't clearly indicate the function of deacons. Yet based on the pattern established in Acts 6:1-6 with the apostles and the seven, it seems best to view

deacons as servants who do whatever is necessary to allow the elders to accomplish their God-given calling of shepherding and teaching the church.

Just as the apostles delegated administrative responsibilities to the seven, so the elders are to delegate certain responsibilities to the deacons so that the elders can focus their efforts elsewhere. As a result, each local church is free to define the tasks of deacons based on its particular needs.

REASONS FOR PAUL'S INSTRUCTIONS

‘Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great: He appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.’ 1 Timothy 3:14-16

Paul was probably released from his first imprisonment in late A.D. 62, or possibly early A.D. 63. He then travelled to Crete and then on to several other locations. This letter could have been written in A.D. 65, while he was on his way to Ephesus.

Paul wrote of coming to Ephesus, [1 Timothy 3:14](#), because of some serious problems that evidently affected the ministry of Timothy. He writes to encourage Timothy in his ministry and to correct problems concerning the designation of overseers and deacons.

Lenski, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Did Paul return to Timothy in Ephesus? We have no means of knowing. He wrote to Titus about the same time and told Titus to come to Nicopolis for the coming winter, which was probably a few months hence, so that before going to Nicopolis, Paul hoped to visit Timothy in Ephesus.’

Here, Paul ends by highlighting the fact that Christians must have the instructions of God in order to walk according to the will of God, [1 Timothy 3:15](#) / [Jeremiah 10:23](#) / [Proverbs 16:1](#) / [Proverbs 20:24](#).

This is how Christians should conduct themselves in ‘God’s household’, which is the church of the living God, [1 Timothy 3:15](#) / [Mark 12:27](#) / [Luke 17:20-21](#) / [Ephesians 1:22](#) / [Philippians 1:27-30](#).

The church is ‘the pillar and foundation of the truth’, [1 Timothy 3:15](#), which means that the church is the manifestation of those who have obeyed the truth of the Gospel. Those who have the responsibility of preaching that truth to others, [Matthew 28:19-20](#) / [Mark 16:15](#).

Paul says, ‘beyond all question’, [1 Timothy 3:16](#), in other words, there’s no disputing ‘the mystery’, something which was once hidden, [1 Corinthians 2:7](#). It was Jesus who came in the flesh, [1 Timothy 3:16](#), who was the revelation of the mystery of God, [John 1:1-2](#) / [John 1:14](#) / [Romans 16:25](#) / [Ephesians 1:9](#) / [Ephesians 3:4-6](#) / [Ephesians 5:32](#) / [Ephesians 6:19](#) / [Colossians 2:2](#) / [1 Peter 1:20](#) / [1 John 1:2](#) / [1 John 3:5](#).

The mystery of the Gospel could be made known only through the revelation of God, [Ephesians 1:3-14](#) / [Ephesians 3:8-13](#). Jesus was ‘vindicated by the Spirit’, [1 Timothy 3:16](#), that is, He was proved to be the Son of God, by the Holy Spirit, [Matthew 3:16](#) / [Romans 1:4](#).

He was ‘seen by angels’, [1 Timothy 3:16](#), that is, His Deity was recognised by the angels who worshipped Him, [Matthew 28:2](#) / [Philippians 2:9-10](#) / [Hebrews 1:6](#). It was Jesus who was ‘preached among the nations’, [1 Timothy 3:16](#), that is, those who preached, preached that Jesus was the Son of God, [Matthew 28:19-20](#) / [Mark 16:15](#) / [Acts 2:22-36](#) / [Acts 10:34](#) / [Romans 10:18](#).

As a result of that preaching, Jesus was ‘believed on in the world’, 1 Timothy 3:16. Their belief in Christ led them to obey the Gospel, Romans 16:26 / 2 Corinthians 1:19 / Colossians 1:6 / Colossians 1:23.

After His resurrection, Jesus was ‘taken up to glory’, 1 Timothy 3:16, to the right hand of the Father in order to reign over all things, Daniel 7:13-14 / Acts 1:9-11 / Ephesians 1:20-22 / Philippians 2:8-11.

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION

‘The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.

They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.’ 1 Timothy 4:1-3

The Holy Spirit had moved inspired men, 1 Peter 1:20-21 / 1 Peter 2:1-2, to foretell the ‘abandoning of the faith’ mentioned here by Paul, 1 Timothy 4:1 / 2 Thessalonians 2:5 / 1 John 2:18 / Revelation 20:1-15.

However, it’s not certain whether Paul means to say that this was a revelation ‘then’ made to him, or whether it was a well-understood thing as taught by the Holy Spirit.

Some believe this ‘abandoning of the faith’ is a reference to Jesus’ prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, Matthew 24:23-24. Others believe this ‘abandoning of the faith’ is a reference to Paul’s warning to the Ephesians elders, Acts 20:23-30. Still, others believe this ‘abandoning of the faith’ is a reference to Paul’s warnings in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12.

Please note the words, ‘the faith’, 1 Timothy 4:1. This isn’t referring to people abandoning their ‘belief’ in God, rather they are abandoning God’s Word, Acts 6:7 / Acts 4:22 / Colossians 1:23 / 1 Timothy 1:19 / Jude 1:3.

The abandoning of the faith will take place in ‘later times’, 1 Timothy 4:1 / Hebrews 1:2, that is, sometime after Paul had written these words to Timothy, Acts 20:29 / 2 Thessalonians 2:3 / 2 Timothy 3:1.

Lipscomb, in his commentary, says the following.

‘From the time at which he was writing and forward in all periods of the church, men have apostatised from the faith.’

In the context of the letter, this falling away will take place sometime during the first-century church. It’s during this time that many will not only abandon their faith, and be led astray, 1 Timothy 4:13 / 1 John 4:1-3 / Revelation 16:14 / Romans 16:17-18, but also ‘follow deceitful spirits’, 1 Timothy 4:1.

These spirits are working in and through the false teachers, 1 John 4:2 / 1 John 4:3 / 1 John 4:6, as they teach error instead of truth, 1 Kings 22:22. It’s during this time that many will not only abandon their faith, and be led astray, ‘follow deceitful spirits’ but also they will follow ‘things taught by demons,’ 1 Timothy 4:1 / James 3:15 / 2 Corinthians 11:15.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Most scholars accept ‘doctrines of demons’ in this passage subjectively, that is, doctrines taught by demons (through men); but there is a very possible interpretation which construes this as meaning ‘doctrines regarding demons’, and, as every Roman emperor upon his death became a demon to be prayed to, the historical church herself finally began

offering prayers ‘to’ its dead saints, which most certainly fulfils the definition of ‘doctrines of demons’ understood objectively.’

The false teaching was done ‘through hypocritical liars’, 1 Timothy 4:2. In other words, they were sheep in wolves’ clothing, they were false teachers within the church, Matthew 7:15-20 / Acts 20:29-20.

Their consciences had been seared with a hot iron, 1 Timothy 4:2. In other words, they would teach one thing but live contrary to what they were taught. Paul is referring to the ancient practice of branding a criminal on the forehead with a distinguishing mark. Here, though, it wasn’t their forehead that was branded with a hot iron, but their conscience instead.

Paul gives two examples of the false teacher’s teaching, ‘they forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods,’ 1 Timothy 4:3. As with most false teaching, at first glance, it sounds right as there are elements of truth within it.

The Scriptures do speak of the benefits of being single, 1 Corinthians 7:25-35, and the Scriptures do speak of fasting, Matthew 6:16-17 / Matthew 9:14-15, and abstaining from certain foods, Acts 15:20.

The problem with what they were teaching was that they were implying that a person couldn’t be saved unless they practised these things, Ephesians 2:8. They taught that Christians could be justified in God’s eyes, and they would be more holy if they didn’t marry, and if they didn’t eat certain foods, Philippians 3:9.

‘For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.’ 1 Timothy 4:4-5

All food created by God is good, and He produces the food so that we can sustain our lives in our bodies, Mark 7:18-19 / Acts 10:9-16 / James 1:17. No food is to be ‘rejected’, 1 Timothy 4:4, which means we’re not restricted in our diets.

Notice that our food is ‘consecrated by the word of God’, 1 Timothy 4:5. In other words, the reason for food is revealed through His Word. The food is ‘consecrated’, that is, set apart for our benefit, Genesis 1:29-30 / Genesis 9:3 / Psalms 104:14.

It’s through prayer, 1 Timothy 4:5, that we give thanks to God, and we must always give thanks to the One who provides our food, Deuteronomy 8:7-10 / Matthew 14:19 / Matthew 15:36 / Matthew 26:26-27 / Luke 22:17-18 / Acts 27:35.

‘If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.’ 1 Timothy 4:6

Paul wants Timothy to be a ‘good minister’ and to do so, he would have to inform the brethren about these false teachers, who would cause many to abandon their faith, 1 Timothy 4:1-3. The reason for telling the brethren now is so that when it did happen, it wouldn’t come as a surprise to them.

Timothy now had the responsibility as an evangelist to build up the church and guard the church against any kind of false teaching which would come from within, Acts 20:32 / 2 Timothy 3:13 / 1 Peter 2:2 / Revelation 16:14.

Timothy had been taught ‘the truths of the faith’. Notice again, the text says, ‘the faith’, that is, God’s Word, 1 Timothy 4:1 / Acts 6:7 / Acts 4:22 / Colossians 1:23 / 1 Timothy 1:19 / Jude 1:3, and he was to continue to teach others the ‘good teaching’ he had received.

‘Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.’
1 Timothy 4:7-8

Paul tells Timothy to have nothing to do with ‘godless myths’ and ‘old wives’ tales’, 1 Timothy 4:7 / 1 Timothy 1:6. Ward, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Invented stories and untrue fables have no place in Christian proclamation. The faith is rooted in history.’

In other words, he wasn't to waste his time discussing them, [2 Timothy 2:16](#) / [Titus 1:14](#). He should focus his time on teaching God's Word, not people's thoughts and theories, [2 Timothy 4:4](#) / [Titus 3:9-11](#). Instead, he was to train himself to be godly, [1 Timothy 4:7](#), that is, to have a godly character.

Notice Paul uses the benefits of physical training as a metaphor for spiritual training, [1 Timothy 4:8](#) / [1 Corinthians 8:8](#) / [1 Corinthians 9:24-27](#). Physical training is of some value, but spiritual training in 'godliness', is good for the here and now and for eternity.

If we want to have strong physical muscles, we must work out and eat healthily, and if we want to have strong spiritual muscles, we must work out spiritually on a strong diet of God's Word, [Matthew 6:11](#) / [1 Corinthians 3:2](#) / [Hebrews 5:13-14](#) / [2 Peter 3:18](#).

When we grow in our understanding of God's Word, the less chance there will be of getting tossed all over the place by every wind of false teaching which comes along, [Ephesians 4:11-16](#).

‘This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. That is why we labour and strive because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Saviour of all people, and especially of those who believe.’ [1 Timothy 4:9-10](#)

The ‘trustworthy saying’, [1 Timothy 4:9](#), is in relation to what Paul has just written. When we focus our attention on God's Word, we enjoy the benefits of God not only in this life but also in the life to come, [John 10:10](#).

Paul says the reason he labours so hard and strives so hard is because of the hope he has in the living God, [1 Timothy 4:10](#) / [1 Samuel 17:26](#) / [1 Samuel 17:36](#) / [Psalm 36:6](#) / [Mark 12:26-27](#).

Notice that Paul says that the living God is the Saviour of all people, [1 Timothy 4:10](#) / [1 John 2:2](#) / [Hebrews 2:9](#). He's not teaching that all people will be saved in the spiritual and eternal sense, [Matthew 25:41](#) / [Matthew 25:46](#) / [Revelation 20:11-15](#).

So, the word ‘especially’ must mean that all people enjoy God's salvation in some way, like those who believe in His salvation. In other words, Jesus' work is adequate to save all, but only effective in saving those who come to Him by faith, [Matthew 28:19-20](#) / [Mark 16:15-16](#) / [Romans 8:1](#).

‘Command and teach these things. Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.’ [1 Timothy 4:11-12](#)

Paul commands Timothy not to preach the speculative opinions and theories of men, [1 Timothy 1:3-4](#), but he was simply to preach God's Word, [1 Timothy 4:11](#). Remember, the authority to command anyone to do anything comes from God's Word, not any man, [Mark 7:1-9](#) / [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#).

It's very easy to be intimidated when you are around older people, especially when you're young. He was probably between thirty and forty years old at this point in time, but no one really knows. What we do know is that Paul wants him to be so godly that no one could look down on him, [1 Timothy 4:12](#).

He's reminding Timothy that the authority of what he says wasn't in him as a man; the authority that was in him was from God. Because Timothy was young, he was vulnerable to the errors of youth, which often bring justified criticism of those who are older.

The older Christians within our congregations mustn't look down on the younger Christians just because they are young. There may be times when the younger Christians amongst us have some deep truths to share with us, [Psalm 8:2](#) / [Matthew 21:16](#).

White, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Assert the dignity of your office even though men may think you young to hold it. Let no one push you aside as a boy.’

Paul wants to encourage Timothy, 2 Timothy 1:6, and he tells him to be ‘an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity,’ 1 Timothy 4:12.

It’s so important for preachers and teachers to practice what they preach; their lifestyles must reflect what they proclaim, Philippians 3:17 / Titus 2:7 / 1 Peter 5:3.

Paul is encouraging Timothy to show an example in his speech, that is, his manner of conversation, 2 Timothy 1:13 / Titus 2:1, his conduct, 1 Timothy 3:15 / Ephesians 4:22 / Philippians 1:27 / Philippians 3:20.

In his love towards others, 1 Timothy 1:5 / 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, his faith, 2 Timothy 1:5 / Titus 2:10, and in purity, 1 Timothy 5:2 / 1 Timothy 5:22 / Galatians 5:19-20.

‘Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.’ 1 Timothy 4:13-14

Until Paul arrived, 1 Timothy 3:14-15, Timothy was to devote himself to the public reading of the Scripture, 1 Timothy 4:13 / Acts 13:15 / 2 Corinthians 3:14. The purpose of the reading was to continually remind the church that they must listen directly to what God says through preaching and teaching, Hebrews 3:13 / Hebrews 10:24-25.

Timothy was warned not to neglect the gift that God has given him, 1 Timothy 4:14. God gave Timothy supernatural gifts, and he should trust that God will do great things through him. This shows that there was definitely the possibility that their gifts and abilities in him could be wasted for eternity, Matthew 25:18.

The miraculous gifts were given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, Acts 8:18 / Romans 1:11. Paul also mentions that the elders laid their hands on him, Acts 13:1-3, which means they approved and recognised the work Timothy was going to be doing. Apparently, whilst the elders were publicly approving Timothy, the apostle Paul bestowed a miraculous gift at the same time, 1 Timothy 4:14 / 2 Timothy 1:6.

‘Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.’ 1 Timothy 4:15-16

Timothy was to be diligent and focus totally on God’s Word, 1 Timothy 4:15 / 2 Timothy 2:4. He was to devote his life wholly to this work; he was to have no other purpose for living.

His time, attention, and talents were to be absorbed in the proper duties of the work. He was to do this so that everyone would see his progress, 1 Timothy 4:15. In other words, if a man really makes progress, it will be seen and appreciated by others, but if he doesn’t, that will be seen by his hearers.

Timothy was also warned to watch his life, 1 Timothy 4:16, that is, if he’s careful what he teaches, he will save both himself and those he teaches, 1 Timothy 1:19. He is also warned to watch his doctrine closely, that is, he should hold onto and teach only the truth, 1 Timothy 4:16 / 1 Corinthians 4:6.

The point is simply this: every preacher and teacher of God’s Word must watch how they live and watch what they teach because anyone can fall from grace either by how we live or what we teach, Acts 20:28 / 1 Corinthians 10:12 / Colossians 3:14 / 2 Timothy 4:10.

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION

‘Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.’ 1 Timothy 5:1-2

OLDER MEMBERS

This chapter goes into detail about how respect should be shown and taught to all members of the Lord’s church. The Greek word for rebuke used here, 1 Timothy 5:1, isn’t the normal word used for ‘rebuke’.

Here, the word used is ‘epiplesso’, which literally means to strike at. In other words, Timothy was told not to lash out at older men but to treat them with respect.

Later in the chapter, we find the normal Greek word for ‘rebuke’ used, which is ‘elegcho’; this tells us that Timothy could rebuke, but not in the same sense as the word used here, 1 Timothy 5:20 / Titus 2:15.

Younger men and women must respect all their older brothers and sisters as they would respect their mother and father, 1 Timothy 5:1 / Leviticus 19:32 / Proverbs 16:31. The reason for this is simply to prevent the younger members from becoming arrogant and full of pride.

Notice respect must be shown to the younger women with absolute purity, 1 Timothy 5:2, which means the older men weren’t to lust after them, Matthew 5:28.

WIDOWS

‘Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.’ 1 Timothy 5:3-4

After being told to respect those who are older within our congregations, Paul now moves on to widows, where he asks Timothy to honour them, 1 Timothy 5:3.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This construction of the word ‘honour’ goes back to our Lord’s command that ‘honour thy father and mother’ forbade use of the device of Corban to avoid their financial assistance,’ Matthew 15:4-6. The same word occurs again in 1 Timothy 5:17, below, where likewise the meaning includes financial remuneration.’

Paul emphasises here the widows who are in real, genuine need, those who have no children or relatives to look after them, 1 Timothy 5:4 / Exodus 22:2-24 / Deuteronomy 24:17-19 / Acts 6:1-2.

These are the widows whom the church as a whole has a responsibility for, James 1:27. If a widow has either children or grandchildren, then it’s their responsibility to take care of her, 1 Timothy 5:4.

When the children or grandchildren look after their mother or grandmother, the children learn to be thankful, 1 Timothy 5:4. Their thankfulness is demonstrated when they repay their parents or grandparents, for everything they sacrificed in order to raise them properly, Matthew 15:4 / Ephesians 6:1-2 / Genesis 45:10.

‘The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.’ 1 Timothy 5:5-6

Those who should be legitimately helped by the church should serve the church in some way. It’s the genuine widow who is entitled to be supported by the church because she put her hope in God, 1 Timothy 5:5. Although she may not

be physically able to work and support herself, she is given the job of praying for the church, 1 Timothy 5:5 / Luke 2:36-38.

If she has no children or grandchildren to look after her and her needs, the church is responsible for taking care of her and meeting her needs. However, she mustn't live for the pleasures of this world; if she does, she is classed as being dead, 1 Timothy 5:6 / 1 John 5:16-17.

In other words, if she just lives for the pleasures the world has to offer, she's as good as dead, and the church would have no responsibility for taking care of her or meeting her needs.

‘Give the people these instructions, so that no one may be open to blame. Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.’ 1 Timothy 5:7-8

Paul here instructs Timothy to instruct the children or grandchildren to take care of their believing parents and grandparents. By doing so, they fulfil God's commands and will stand blameless before God, 1 Timothy 5:7. God's normal way of providing for the needy isn't through the church but through our own hard work.

Notice also if these children or grandchildren don't fulfil their responsibilities to their relatives, Paul says, they have ‘denied the faith’, 1 Timothy 5:8 / Matthew 18:17 / 2 Timothy 3:5.

In other words, the church in this situation wouldn't have any responsibility for any widow because they have children or grandchildren to do so, Isaiah 58:7 / 2 Corinthians 12:14.

Spence, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The circle of those whose support and sustenance were the responsibility of the Christian is here enlarged. Not merely parents and grandparents, but ‘he must assist those of his own house.’ Even dependents connected with the family who may have fallen into poverty and neglect are included.’

Paul clearly teaches here that anyone who doesn't care for their parents or grandparents has actually sinned against God. In fact, he says, they are ‘worse than an unbeliever’, 1 Timothy 5:8.

The reason they are worse is simply that the unbeliever has enough moral values to take care of their parents or grandparents. God clearly tells us that we all have a responsibility to work and look after our own families, Romans 12:17 / 2 Corinthians 8:21.

‘No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the Lord's people, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.’ 1 Timothy 5:9-10

In this part of Paul's letter, he now turns the responsibility of caring for widows over to the church as a whole. If a widow didn't have any children or grandchildren to look after them, and if they are sixty years of age or older, they were entitled to receive regular support from the church, 1 Timothy 5:9.

If a widow was under sixty years of age, it was believed that she could still support herself or even get married again. The widow also would need to have been ‘faithful to her husband’, 1 Timothy 5:9. In other words, a one-man woman, who hasn't cheated on her husband, 1 Timothy 3:2.

This doesn't necessarily mean that she only ever had one husband; she may have divorced and remarried, but since her husband died, she decided to remain a widow. Interestingly, Paul places six spiritual qualifications on those widows who are to receive regular support from the church.

1. They must be well known for their good deeds, 1 Timothy 5:10 / 1 Timothy 3:7.
2. They must have brought up children properly, either her own or others, 1 Timothy 5:10.
3. They must be hospitable to strangers, 1 Timothy 5:10 / 1 Timothy 3:2.
4. They must have washed the saints' feet, that is, practised hospitality, 1 Timothy 5:10 / Genesis 18:4 / John 13:1-10.

5. They must have helped those in trouble, 1 Timothy 5:10.

6. They must be devoted to all kinds of good deeds, 1 Timothy 5:10.

The widows must meet all those requirements to be entitled to receive support from the church.

YOUNGER WIDOWS

‘As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge.’ 1 Timothy 5:11-12

The younger widows, that is, widows under the age of sixty years old, weren’t entitled to any regular support from the church if they followed their ‘sensual desires’, 1 Timothy 5:11, that is, lust after the flesh, or they remarried. Paul isn’t condemning young widows for wanting to get married, 1 Timothy 5:14 / 1 Corinthians 7:39; he’s only observing that many unmarried women are so hungry for marriage and companionship that they don’t conduct themselves in a godly way in regard to relationships.

It’s possible that the church in Ephesus had some problems with younger widows, who, after receiving support from the church, became unfaithful or remarried; the support from the church would come to an end. Paul is basically saying that they would contract guilt if they had been admitted among this class of widows, and then married again, 1 Timothy 5:12.

‘Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to.’ 1 Timothy 5:13

It appears as though these young widows were becoming lazy and busybodies. Remember, there were no church buildings back then, so they met in people’s homes. These widows appear to go from house to house, taking advantage of the fellowship being offered by other saints but doing nothing but gossiping.

As a result of the ‘talking nonsense’, talking about things they shouldn’t talk about, and so, they were obviously creating divisions within the church, John 3:10 / 2 Thessalonians 3:11.

Clarke, in his commentary says the following.

‘It is no sin, in any case, to marry, bear children, and take care of a family, but it is a sin in every case to be idle persons, gadders about, tattlers, busybodies, sifting out and detailing family secrets.’

‘So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. Some have, in fact, already turned away to follow Satan. If any woman who is a believer has widows in her care, she should continue to help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.’ 1 Timothy 5:14-16

Here, Paul desires that younger widows should get married, have children and manage their homes, 1 Timothy 5:14. This would help them be directed by the headship of the husband.

Zer, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The Bible does not contradict itself, and it teaches that the husband is to have the rulership over his wife and household.’

In other words, they could exercise and occupy themselves with the duties of a wife, instead of allowing Satan to use them to gossip, 1 Timothy 5:14 / 1 Corinthians 7:9 / 1 Timothy 5:13.

They would be so busy raising their children that they wouldn't have time to be idle and go from one house to another, Titus 2:4-5. Sadly, some of the younger widows had already turned away to follow Satan, 1 Timothy 5:15. The reason Paul mentions this is that he's highlighting the reason why they shouldn't be admitted into the number of the widows who were to be supported at the expense of the church, and to whom the care of the younger female members was to be committed.

Although the N.I.V. uses the words, 'woman,' it should read, 'men and women', 1 Timothy 5:16. Paul is encouraging all Christian men or women to continue to take care of those widows in their own households.

These would be the widows with unbelieving children who refused to care for their Christian mothers. The first responsibility for support is at the home, and the church is to support the truly in need and who are godly, 1 Timothy 5:16 / 1 Timothy 5:4-5 / 1 Timothy 5:8.

ELDERS

'The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For Scripture says, 'Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,' and 'The worker deserves his wages.' 1 Timothy 5:17-18

Paul had earlier given the full qualifications for elders, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, deacons, 1 Timothy 3:8-13, and widows, 1 Timothy 5:3-16, and now he begins to explain the congregation's responsibility towards the elders.

Those elders who are actively working among the church members need to be given a double honour, especially those elders who are actively preaching and teaching, 1 Timothy 5:17 / Acts 20:28 / Romans 12:7 / 1 Corinthians 12:28 / 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 / 1 Peter 5:1-6. Because they are constantly involved with the physical and spiritual lives of the church, they should receive an income, 1 Timothy 5:18.

As God took care to make provision for the labouring ox, much more due attention should be paid to those who labour for the welfare of the church, Leviticus 19:13 / Deuteronomy 24:15 / Deuteronomy 25:4 / 1 Corinthians 9:8-10. That's why Paul says the worker deserves his wages, 1 Timothy 5:18 / Matthew 10:10 / Luke 10:7.

'Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. But those elders who are sinning you are to reprove before everyone, so that the others may take warning.' 1 Timothy 5:19-20

To help prevent false accusations against an elder, there should always be two or three witnesses who can prove the accusation to be either true or false, 1 Timothy 5:19 / Deuteronomy 25:4 / 1 Corinthians 9:7-9. The reason for the two or three witnesses also stopped any individual who wanted to slander the character of an elder they didn't like.

However, if an elder has been proven that he is sinning, then they must be rebuked in front of the church, in this way the public rebuking serves as a warning to any other Christian who is involved in sin, 1 Timothy 5:20. This is all about church discipline and it brings to mind the saying, 'prevention is better than cure', 1 Peter 2:14.

Lipscomb, in his commentary, says the following.

'When we cover up sins in the church, we corrupt the morality and virtue of the church and destroy its efficacy to honour God or to save men. Evil teachers and evil men must be exposed and purged out of the church, or the church becomes corrupt and becomes a synagogue of Satan instead of a church of Jesus Christ.'

'I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favouritism.' 1 Timothy 5:21

Paul here charges Timothy. The word ‘charge’ means to call to witness, then to affirm with solemn proofs, and then to admonish solemnly, to urge earnestly, Luke 16:28 / Acts 2:20. It’s a word that implies that the subject is of great importance.

Notice Paul gives this charge in the presence of God, Christ and of the elect angels, and wishes to secure that sense of its seriousness which must arise from the presence of such holy witnesses, Hebrews 1:14 / Hebrews 12:1.

There’s no doubt that Paul’s charge to Timothy was serious, as it is with all church leaders. There’s no room for partiality or favouritism within the Lord’s church, as they are described as sinful, James 2:1-9 / Galatians 3:26-29.

‘Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure. Stop drinking only water and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.’ 1 Timothy 5:22-23

The ‘laying on of hands’ mentioned here, 1 Timothy 5:22, isn’t referring to imparting of the miraculous gifts as this was done only by the apostles, Acts 8:18 / Romans 1:11 / 2 Timothy 1:6.

The laying on of hands mentioned here is in reference to Timothy giving his hands-on approval of someone, 1 Timothy 4:14 / Acts 6:6 / Acts 8:17, especially those who would be elders or to those who might bring accusations against existing elders, 1 Timothy 3:6 / 1 Timothy 3:10.

Lenski, in his commentary, says the following concerning the ‘laying on of hands, 1 Timothy 5:22.

‘It is only symbolical, confers no divine power or gift of the church of God that would bless a person; but it accompanied the prayers of the church that God would bless the person with all that he needs for his Christian life, or in the case of the minister, for his holy office and work.’

He wasn’t to be too hasty in doing this, because he would share in the sins of others, 1 Timothy 5:20. In other words, Timothy wasn’t to become a participant in the sins of another by introducing him to the sacred office of eldership.

He was also to ‘keep himself pure’, 1 Timothy 5:20, which may imply that Timothy wasn’t married. Paul encourages him to stay clear of anything or anyone which may cause him to become unholy. As an evangelist, he needs to stay clear of anything or anyone which might jeopardise his reputation for character as an evangelist.

No one is really sure why Paul asks him to stop drinking only water, 1 Timothy 5:21. There are health benefits which come from drinking water, but it’s possible that Timothy had stopped drinking wine, 1 Timothy 3:3. But here Paul encourages him to drink a little wine for medicinal reasons only, not for pleasure. It’s probably the idea of adding a little wine to the water.

We don’t know what the actual illnesses Timothy was struggling with were, but they were affecting his stomach, 1 Timothy 5:23. It’s worth noting that the miraculous gift of healing was already beginning to cease at this time; otherwise, Paul would have simply healed him, Acts 19:11-12 / Philippians 2:27 / 2 Timothy 4:20.

‘The sins of some are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them. In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not obvious cannot remain hidden forever.’ 1 Timothy 5:24-25

Paul ends this chapter by reminding Timothy that some sins are obvious, 1 Timothy 5:24. These are the sins of people who boldly and arrogantly behave sinfully in front of others, Galatians 5:19-21. Paul says there’s no need to wait for the day of judgment to know what they are; their sinful behaviour is obvious, 1 Timothy 5:24.

Just as some sins are obvious, so are good deeds, 1 Timothy 5:25; their good deeds are a reflection of what’s in people’s hearts, Matthew 7:15-23 / James 3:10-12. All our good deeds will eventually be revealed, but sins are sometimes hidden and will be evident only at the judgment, Matthew 25:31-40 / 2 Corinthians 5:10.

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION

‘All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God’s name and our teaching may not be slandered. Those who have believing masters should not show them disrespect just because they are fellow believers. Instead, they should serve them even better because their masters are dear to them as fellow believers and are devoted to the welfare of their slaves.’ 1 Timothy 6:1-2

SLAVES AND MASTERS

In this chapter, Paul deals with the sensitive issue of slaves and masters. It would be useful to understand how a person became a slave in the first place. This could happen in one of three ways.

1. If your father was a slave and if your mother was a slave and you were born into that family, you became the owner’s property. The owner could sell you and do whatever he wants with you.
2. Maybe the person was a thief who stole money, and under Jewish or even Roman law, if you stole and couldn’t pay it back, then they could take you as a slave.
3. Maybe they were murderers, but instead of killing him, they would decide to give him to the victim’s family and the family could take him, sell him or do whatever they liked.

For whatever reason, for a person becoming a slave, the point is that the slave had no rights whatsoever; they were a piece of property, and their masters owned them.

In New Testament times, at the slave market, they would auction slaves off for shekels. Then someone would buy them for so many shekels, and now the slave belongs to the person who bought them.

Remember, the slave has nothing, no bedding, no clothes, no food, and so the slave’s master is the one who is going to take care of them and all their needs. The slave depended completely on the master for their life, and they had nothing if the master didn’t provide it for them.

However, that also meant that the slaves didn’t worry about anything because they simply depended on the master. We know that Paul is speaking about slaves here as he’s addressing those who are ‘under the yoke of slavery,’ 1 Timothy 6:1 / Matthew 11:29.

Barakman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It is estimated that there were sixty million slaves in the Roman Empire at the time of the writing of this letter; and it is hardly necessary to detail the facts concerning their miserable lot.’

In Paul’s day, it was very common for the wealthy to have slaves within their household, Ephesians 6:5-8 / Colossians 3:11 / Colossians 3:22-24 / Titus 2:9 / 1 Peter 2:18.

Paul first begins by addressing those Christian slaves who have Christian masters, 1 Timothy 6:1. Of course, all slaves wanted to be free, and they could earn that freedom, Deuteronomy 15:12-17 / 1 Corinthians 7:21 / Ephesians 6:5-8 / 1 Peter 2:18.

However, while they were still slaves, they were to treat their masters with total respect and not do anything which would dishonour their own faith in Christ. The reason for showing respect to their master was to prevent God’s name and our teaching from being slandered, 1 Timothy 6:1.

Spence, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Any action on the part of professed servants of God which gives the enemies of the Lord an excuse to blaspheme, is ever reckoned in the Scripture as a sin of the deepest dye. Compare Nathan’s words to King David, 2 Samuel 12:14, and Paul’s reproach to the Jews, Romans 2:24.’

This is all about practising what we preach and not giving anyone an excuse to find fault in our faith in Christ or His teaching, by what we say or how we conduct ourselves, Matthew 5:39-41 / 1 Corinthians 6:7 / Romans 13:1-7.

People will often judge Christianity based on how we conduct ourselves, Colossians 3:22-24.

Paul now addresses the slaves who have Christian masters, and he tells the slaves not to show any disrespect to their masters just because they are Christians, 1 Timothy 6:2 / Matthew 6:24 / Luke 16:13.

I guess the slave may have thought he could take some liberties because his master was also his brother in Christ, Ephesians 6:6, but Paul reminds them that they still have responsibilities to their master, despite them being their brother in Christ, Philemon 8-20.

Instead of treating their master with disrespect, they were to serve their masters even better, 1 Timothy 6:2. This gives us the idea of a totally different attitude of the slave toward their master.

We can imagine how the slave didn’t want to really serve their master before they became Christians, but now that the slave has been converted, they want to please their masters more than ever because their master, also a Christian, wants to devote himself to the slave’s welfare, 1 Timothy 6:2.

Slaves should obey their masters with a sincere heart, Colossians 3:23-25. If they give grudging service, they will bring harshness upon themselves from their masters. Their service should be motivated by a heart that fears God. In the Old Testament, the fear of God was in reference to our obedience to God. Those who feared God obeyed His commandments. In this context, when we fear God, we will be the best employees we can possibly be in response to the will of God.

‘Work at it with all your heart’, Colossians 3:23, should be the attitude of all Christians who serve either masters or employers, Colossians 3:23 / Ecclesiastes 9:10 / Romans 12:11.

Paul’s point is that Christianity changes the nature of our service to others. Those employees who are in the world may give grudging service to their employers, but not so with Christians. Their attitude toward their masters and employers should be based on their fear of God, 1 Peter 2:18-25.

The service of the Christian is given to others as if they were working for the Lord, and not a master or employer, Colossians 3:24. When the Christian is working for their living, therefore, they are working on behalf of the Lord.

When we become a Christian, our attitude changes concerning our work in making a living. As Christians, they go to work every day for the Lord. By working to earn a living to support our own necessities, we earn in order to help the poor and to support the Gospel being spread throughout the world, Romans 10:15 / Philippians 4:17.

Those servants and employees who do wrong to their masters and employers will reap what they sow. Both servants and masters, employees and employers should work because all men will stand in judgment before God, 2 Corinthians 5:10. As Christians, we must remember that all our service in this world to others is because God served our sin problem through Jesus.

Masters must deal fairly with their servants, Colossians 1:4. Christian masters must understand that they will also give an account before their Master in heaven.

Therefore, they should deal with their servants or today’s employees, because they will stand in judgment for their own behaviour. There must be mutual respect between believing masters and slaves so that both spiritually benefit, Philemon 8-20. It’s an encouragement that’s based on the concept that they should do to others as they would want the Lord to do to them, Matthew 7:12.

We all have to remember, whether slave or master, that on Judgement Day, the only people that will walk through the pearly gates are those who respond to the words, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant!’ Matthew 25:21.

FALSE TEACHERS AND THE LOVE OF MONEY

‘These are the things you are to teach and insist on. If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree with the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.’ 1 Timothy 6:2-5

Paul insists that Timothy teaches those slaves who were possibly showing disrespect to their masters to maintain their civil respect for their masters, 1 Timothy 6:2 / 2 Timothy 1:13 / Titus 1:9.

Paul says that he’s teaching the very words which Jesus taught concerning this matter, 1 Timothy 6:3. That is, his words carry the same authority as Christ’s, Matthew 5:38 / Matthew 22:21 / 2 Timothy 3:16-17 / 2 Peter 2:20-21. The sound instruction and godly teaching all point to obedience to God’s Word, 1 Timothy 6:3. Those who don’t agree with Christ’s words are conceited, 1 Timothy 3:6, and don’t understand anything, 1 Timothy 6:4 / 1 Corinthians 8:2.

It’s these same people who have an ‘unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words’, 1 Timothy 6:4. In other words, they will argue about anything and with anyone, because they think they know God’s will better than anyone else, Acts 18:15 / Titus 3:9-11.

Weymouth, in his commentary, says the following.

‘He is blinded with conceit and really knows nothing, but is crazy with discussions and controversies about words.’

Notice they have ‘corrupt minds’, 1 Timothy 6:5. This is the spiritual mental state of those who love nothing better than to argue over opinions and things that aren’t salvational issues because they think they know better.

No wonder all they end up with is ‘envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction,’ 1 Timothy 6:4 / Romans 1:29. It’s clear that Paul recognises that these so-called Christians who love nothing but arguing with the saints want some kind of status with the church.

They want to be popular to such an extent that they see the Gospel as a way of making an income, and so they want not only the general support of the church, but also the financial support of the church, 1 Timothy 6:5 / Luke 16:14 / 2 Peter 2:1-3. You will notice that the N.I.V. and most other translations have left out the words, ‘withdraw yourself from such’, as is found in the K.J.V.

I believe this is important to the context because Paul is telling Timothy the same as he told the Christians in Rome, Romans 16:17, to stay away from those people who want to do nothing but cause division within the Lord’s church. Those people who want to argue over opinions and issues which have no relevance to the salvation of our souls, 1 Corinthians 1:10 / 2 Timothy 3:5.

‘But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.’ 1 Timothy 6:6-8

If I could summarise today’s generation, I would use the Rolling Stones song, ‘I can’t get no satisfaction’. Paul says that ‘godliness with contentment is great gain’, 1 Timothy 6:6.

In other words, Christians should be content with God and His Word to help us live right for Him in this world, John 10:10 / Philippians 4:12-13. Christians should be content with the blessings they have in this life because they have eternal benefits too, 1 Timothy 6:6 / Psalm 37:17 / Philippians 4:11 / Hebrews 13:5 / James 4:14.

We indeed brought nothing into this world when we were born, 1 Timothy 6:7 / Job 1:21, and it’s certainly true we can’t take anything with us when we die, Psalm 49:17.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘There are no pockets in shrouds’ is one of the oldest proverbs, and Paul, by these stern words, warns against the temptation to make any kind of worldly gain the sum and all of one’s life. ‘A man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he hath,’ said the Saviour, **Luke 12:15.**

However, God supplies us with everything we need in this life, **1 Timothy 6:8**, that is, all the basic necessities we need to live on, like food and clothing, **Genesis 28:20-22 / Hebrews 13:5.**

When we understand that God really does take care of His people, then we should find contentment in this, **Matthew 6:25-34 / 2 Corinthians 9:8 / Philippians 4:11.**

‘Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.’ **1 Timothy 6:9-10**

After speaking about being content with what we have in life, Paul now addresses those who want to get rich. Most people who desire to be rich often forget what it means to be content.

The great temptation and the trap, **1 Timothy 6:9**, are simply that they believe if they can surround themselves with wealth, then they will be happy, **Job 18:8-9 / Proverbs 15:27 / Proverbs 28:20.**

Hervey, in his commentary, says the following, concerning the words ‘ruin and destruction’, **1 Timothy 6:9.**

‘The two words taken together imply the utter ruin and destruction of body and soul.’

Remember, there’s nothing wrong with being wealthy; the problem comes when we start to rely on our wealth more than we do on God to get by in life. As a result, we may end up losing our salvation because of it, **Proverbs 30:8-9 / James 2:6 / James 5:1-5.**

Notice that money itself isn’t evil, **1 Timothy 6:10**; it’s the heart of those who are totally obsessed with having money, which is evil, **Deuteronomy 16:19.** Paul says some in Ephesus were so ‘eager for money’, **1 Timothy 6:10**, they lost everything they had, they traded in their eternal riches for the temporary riches of this world, **Matthew 6:19-34 / 2 Timothy 4:10.**

As a result of their eagerness for money, they ‘pierced themselves with many griefs’, **1 Timothy 6:10**, in other words, they lost everything, their faith, their family and their friends.

FINAL CHARGE TO TIMOTHY

‘But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.’ **1 Timothy 6:11-12**

Paul calls Timothy ‘man of God’, **1 Timothy 6:11 / 2 Timothy 3:17.**

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The word ‘man’ is not that distinguishing the male from the female, but the word which encompasses all. It means the person worshipping and serving God, as contrasted with the money-lovers just denounced.’

Paul tells him ‘to flee’, **1 Timothy 6:11**, from all this worldly thinking he’s just spoken about, **1 Corinthians 6:18 / 2 Timothy 2:22.** As Timothy is fleeing he must start pursuing, ‘godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness’, **1 Timothy 6:11.** There are the things which characterise a righteous person, **Romans 9:30-31 / Galatians 5:22-23 / 1 John 2:29 / 1 John 3:7.**

Paul urges him to ‘fight the good fight of the faith’, **1 Timothy 6:12.** Notice again the words, ‘the faith’, in other words, Timothy must defend or contend for ‘the faith’, the doctrine taught in the Scriptures, which was ‘delivered

once for all', 1 Corinthians 9:26-27 / 1 Timothy 1:18 / Jude 3 / Colossians 1:28-29 / Ephesians 6:10-17 / Colossians 3:1.

Timothy is to 'take hold of the eternal life to which he was called', 1 Timothy 6:12, that is, he is to hang on to the hope of eternal life. Surely the promise of eternal life is one of the biggest reasons people are Christians, and if we truly believe that we have eternal life, 1 John 5:13, then surely we would want to share that good news with others, 1 Corinthians 9:25 / Philippians 3:12 / Hebrews 6:18-19.

At some point in time, Timothy openly declared in 'the presence of many witnesses', his 'good confession', 1 Timothy 6:12. Confessing that 'Jesus is Lord' is the same 'good confession' all Christians made when they were called by the Gospel, Matthew 10:32-33 / Romans 10:9-10 / Philippians 2:11 / Hebrews 13:23 / 2 Thessalonians 2:14. Harvey, in his commentary, says the following concerning the good confession.

'This seems to point clearly to his baptism. The good confession in view here is that of Christ himself confessing himself the Son of God, Mark 14:62, which is analogous to the baptismal confession of Acts 8:37, (KJV and ASV margin).'

'In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might forever. Amen.' 1 Timothy 6:13-16

Paul 'charges' Timothy again, 1 Timothy 5:21, 'in the sight of God who gives life to everything and of Christ Jesus', 1 Timothy 6:13 / Ephesians 2:1 / 2 Timothy 2:8-10. Paul is telling Timothy that it's God that he is accountable to.

As Timothy was to remember his 'good confession', 1 Timothy 6:12, Paul reminded him of the 'good confession' which Christ made before Pontius Pilate, 1 Timothy 6:13 / Matthew 27:11 / Mark 14:61-62 / Luke 23:2-3 / John 18:37 / John 19:11.

Paul charges Timothy 'to keep this command,' 1 Timothy 6:14, that is the command to 'fight the good fight of the faith', 1 Timothy 6:12. He was to keep this command 'without spot or blame', 1 Timothy 6:14 / James 1:27 / 1 Peter 1:19 / 2 Peter 3:14. This means he should so keep the command in the sense that there should be no stain on his moral character, Philippians 2:15.

Timothy was to keep the command and stay spotless and pure until the final coming of Christ, 1 Timothy 6:14 / 1 Thessalonians 2:19 / 1 Thessalonians 4:16 / 1 Thessalonians 5:23. No one knows when Christ will return, only the Father in heaven, 1 Timothy 6:15 / Acts 1:7.

When Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father, He began His reign over all things, and now Jesus is the King of all kings, 1 Timothy 6:15 / Daniel 7:13-14 / Ephesians 1:20-22 / 1 Peter 3:22 / 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 / Revelation 7:14.

He is also Lord of all lords, 1 Timothy 6:15 / Isaiah 9:6-7 / Zechariah 9:9-10 / Matthew 2:1-2 / Matthew 27:37 / Matthew 28:18 / Luke 22:29-30 / Luke 23:37-38 / John 1:49 / John 13:3 / John 17:2 / 1 Peter 3:22.

Although at the present moment we don't see all things in subjection to Him, He still reigns over all things, Hebrews 2:8. He is the head of the church, Ephesians 1:21-23.

Jesus, as God, was in eternity with God, but here the word 'immortality', 1 Timothy 6:16, refers to the resurrected body of Christ, He will never die again, John 5:26 / Romans 6:9 / Philippians 3:21 / Philippians 4:10 / 1 John 3:2. It's because of the resurrection of Christ that Christians have the promise of immortality, John 5:21 / John 5:26 / 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9 / 2 Timothy 1:10 / 1 John 5:11-12 / 1 John 5:20.

The 'light', 1 Timothy 6:16, where Christ dwells, is so brilliant and dazzling that no human eyes can endure it, 1 John 1:5 / 1 John 2:1. Heaven is constantly described as a place of the purest and brilliant light, needing not the light of the sun, or the moon, or the stars, Revelation 21:23-24 / Revelation 22:5.

God is represented as dwelling in that light, surrounded by amazing and unapproachable glory, 1 Timothy 6:16 / Revelation 4:6 / Ezekiel 1:4 / Hebrews 1:3. No one has seen or can approach the light, 1 Timothy 6:16, because God is Spirit, John 1:18 / John 4:24 / John 6:46 / Romans 8:34 / Colossians 1:15 / 1 Timothy 1:17 / 1 John 2:1. However, when Christ returns, we shall see Him as He is, 1 John 3:2. Because of what Christ did, He receives all the honour and might forever, 1 Timothy 6:16 / Romans 11:36.

'Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way, they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.' 1 Timothy 6:17-19

Paul now commands the Christians in Ephesus who are rich not to value themselves on account of their wealth or look down with pride and arrogance on their inferiors, 1 Timothy 6:17.

The rich often separate themselves from those who are poor, thinking they are better people or nearer heaven, because they are wealthy, Romans 12:16 / James 2:1-9.

Very often it's the rich who put their hope in wealth, rather than putting their hope in God, 1 Timothy 6:17 / Proverbs 23:5 / Jeremiah 9:23 / Jeremiah 48:7 / Matthew 6:19-34 / Luke 12:21 / Romans 11:20 / Romans 12:16 / 1 Corinthians 1:26.

When we put our hope in God, we put our trust in God that He is more than able to supply all our needs, 1 Timothy 6:17 / Ecclesiastes 5:18-19 / Philippians 4:11-13 / Philippians 4:19, and to do for us what riches cannot do.

Unlike riches, which can be 'so uncertain', 1 Timothy 6:17, they can be gone in a moment, God never changes, Hebrews 13:8, or leaves those who put their trust in Him, Hebrews 13:5.

Those who are rich have clearly got a gift for earning money, and so Paul commands them to use their wealth to do the following four things.

1. To do good, 1 Timothy 6:18 / Galatians 6:10 / Hebrews 13:10 / Hebrews 13:16.
2. To be rich in good deeds, that is, their deeds should be as abundant as their riches, 1 Timothy 6:18 / Acts 20:34-35.
3. To be generous, 1 Timothy 6:18 / Acts 4:34.
4. To be willing to share, 1 Timothy 6:18 / Hebrews 13:16 / 2 Corinthians 8:13-15.

By doing these things, they would 'lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation', 1 Timothy 6:19, that is, it would contribute to their eternal welfare, Matthew 6:20 / Luke 16:9. The idea is that their wealth would provide an opportunity for them to learn the character of giving.

'Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith. Grace be with you all.' 1 Timothy 6:20-21

Paul ends his letter by telling Timothy to 'guard what has been entrusted to his care', 1 Timothy 6:20. This would be the message of the Gospel and the faith, that is, the doctrine of the church, Galatians 1:6-9 / 2 Timothy 1:14 / Jude 3 / Revelation 22:18-19.

He is to turn away from 'godless chatter', 1 Timothy 6:20, that is, any controversy or teachings which only result in dividing the church rather than edifying the church, 1 Timothy 1:4 / 1 Timothy 4:7.

He is also to turn away from 'the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge', 1 Timothy 6:20, that is, he was to avoid everything which falsely laid claim to being 'knowledge' or 'science', as the K.J.V. uses.

It appears as though some Christians were attracted to the ‘meaningless talk’ and ‘false knowledge’, and as a result, they departed from the faith, that is, they departed from the teachings of the church, 1 Timothy 6:21 / 1 Timothy 1:6-7 / 1 Timothy 6:10.

Paul understood the importance of God’s grace, 1 Timothy 6:21 / Ephesians 2:8-9 / Romans 16:20. He’s basically saying, may God continue to bestow His favour on all who love Jesus Christ, 1 Corinthians 16:23 / 2 Corinthians 13:13 / Galatians 6:18 / Philippians 4:23 / 1 Thessalonians 5:28 / 2 Thessalonians 3:18 / Philemon 25.