

1 and 2 Timothy

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The Apostle Paul

1 Timothy

- Author** Paul.
- Written to** Timothy.
- Date** About 62-63 AD.
- Place** Probably written in Macedonia.
- Type** Personal letter from Paul to Timothy.
- Theme** Christian leadership. Effective leadership comes from the character qualities of righteousness, selflessness, endurance, discipline and love.
- Purposes** To give Timothy instructions on leadership and to encourage him to be a godly leader. To counter the effects of false teachers and those who focus on building riches.

Key verses

I am writing you these instructions so that 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. 3:14,15

Set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, in purity. 4:12

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. 6:11,12

Outline

Greeting 1:1-1.2

Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ writes to Timothy, *my true son in the faith.* 1:2

Warning against false teachers 1:3-11

Paul urges Timothy to stay in Ephesus and stop teachers of the law devoting themselves to false doctrines that just cause controversy. *The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.* 1:5

Teaching of the law is good only if the law is used properly. The law is relevant for the unrighteous, not for those who are righteous in Christ according to the glorious gospel that God had entrusted to Paul.

God's grace towards Paul 1:12-20

God had abundantly poured out His grace on Paul. Paul was the worst of sinners but *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.* 1:15. God had shown him mercy so that he could be an example of God's saving power.

Others may have been shipwrecked in their faith, but Paul instructs Timothy to *fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience.* 1:18,19

Historical context

The first Christians were converted from Judaism, and retained many of their Jewish customs and ideas.

As the Gospel spread out to Gentiles in other parts of the Roman empire, the new converts had no background of Judaism.

Some 'teachers of the law' tried to teach that Christians were still under the Jewish law. Paul and the early Church leaders had to deal with this issue regularly so that new converts who had been set free in Christ did not come back under bondage to irrelevant laws. We are under grace, not law!

See Acts 13:38, 15:1-29, Romans (whole book!), Galatians (whole book), Ephesians Chapter 2,3 etc.

Instructions regarding worship 2:1-15

Paul gives Timothy a number of instructions regarding worship:

- Everyone is to pray for others, especially national leaders, so that all can live *peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness*. 2:2
- Men are to pray, lifting up their hands without anger or disputes.
- Women are to dress modestly and continue in *faith, love, and holiness, with propriety*. 2:14

Comment on verses 11-13

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.

These verses (together with similar ones in 1 Corinthians 14:34,35) have caused lots of controversy over the years and have been interpreted in many ways. A basic principle for interpretation of New Testament letters is to always look for the meaning of a passage in its original context, and as it would have been understood by those the letter was written to. Paul is not 'bashing' women here! He is addressing a particular problem in the churches at the time.

Women were segregated and silent in Judaistic worship. In the early church there was much freedom by comparison to the legalistic Jewish ways, and people in some churches were abusing this freedom. Paul re-emphasises God's order for the family in which the husband is the head of the family and the wife willingly submits to his authority. (Submission means to willingly give in to overwhelming love. It is not about power or domination. See Ephesians 5:22-33). Women can learn better in the meetings by keeping quiet and not being dominating or controlling.

These verses should not be used to bring 21st Century women into a legalistic bondage where they are silent in church meetings and never allowed to teach or exercise their ministries. That is exactly what the verses were written to prevent!

Instructions regarding leadership 3:1-16

Paul instructs Timothy about the requirements for leadership in the church. He explains that he is writing this so Timothy would *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*. 3:15.

Overseers

The greek word for an overseer (or bishop) is *episkopos*. It means *one who looks or watches over*. The word is also used in Acts 20:28, Philippians 1:1, Titus 1:7, 1 Peter 2:25. Overseers need to be spiritually mature so they are also described as elders. The greek word for elder is *presbuteros*. It means *one who is older, more mature*. In the New Testament there are always a number of elders in each church. Acts 14:23, 20:17; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:5.

Overseers must:

- be above reproach
- have only one wife
- be temperate
- be self-controlled
- be respectable
- be hospitable
- be able to teach
- not be drunkards
- be gentle
- not be violent
- not be quarrelsome
- not love money
- manage their household well
- get obedience and respect from their children
- not be a recent convert
- have a good reputation

Deacons

The greek word for deacon is *diakonos*. It means a *servant* and is sometimes translated *minister*. In the New Testament *diakonos* is used of domestic servants, John 2:5,9; civil rulers, Romans 13:4; Christ, Romans 15:8; followers of Christ, Matthew 20:26; 23:11; Mark 9:35, 10:43; preachers, 1 Corinthians 3:5; 2 Corinthians 3:6, 6:4, 11:23; Ephesians 3:7; Colossians 1:23, 25; 1 Thessalonians 3:2; 1 Timothy 4:6; servants of the church, Romans 16:1, Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8,12. The word is sometimes used of men, women, false apostles, servants of satan, and angels! Obviously there are many different ways one can be a servant!

Deacons (or servants of the church) must:

- be worthy of respect
- be sincere
- not indulge in much wine
- not pursue dishonest gain
- keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience
- first be tested and only serve once nothing has been brought against them
- have wives that are worthy of respect, temperate and trustworthy, not malicious talkers
- have only one wife
- manage their children and household well

Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus. 3:13

Personal instructions for Timothy 4:1-16

The Holy Spirit had clearly said that *some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons* 4:1 eg. forbidding people to marry and abstaining from certain foods. (But everything God created is good and can be eaten if it is received with thanksgiving because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer).

Timothy should:

- command and teach the truths of the gospel and have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives tales. In doing this he will show himself to be a good minister (*diakonos*) of Christ Jesus.
- train himself to be a godly person. Physical training is valuable but training in godliness is valuable now and in the life to come.
- not let anyone look down on him because he is young.
- set an example for the believers in speech, life, love, faith, purity.
- devote himself to the public reading of scripture, to preaching and to teaching.
- not neglect his spiritual gift that was given through a prophetic message when the elders laid hands on him.

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. 4:15,16

Instructions regarding widows, elders and slaves 5:1- 6:2

Paul now gives instructions for how Timothy should relate to different groups of people in the church.

- Don't rebuke older men harshly, but exhort them as if they were his father.
- Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

These instructions recognise Timothy's youth and his need for credibility as he works with different age groups.

- The church should provide personalised support for eligible widows. Only widows who are over 60, living on their own and really in need should receive this support. Younger widows, those living with their children or grandchildren, or those living for 'pleasure' should not be put on the 'list' and should provide for themselves, be looked after by their family, or marry. A widow who is eligible for support must be *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. 5:9,10.*

- Church elders are worthy of double honour, especially those who preach and teach. *The worker deserves his wages.* 5:18. Accusations against them can only be brought if there are 2 or 3 witnesses, and those who sin are to be publicly rebuked as a warning to the others.
- Don't show partiality or favouritism.
- Don't be hasty in the laying on of hands.
- Don't share the sins of others, rather keep pure.
- Use a little wine for the health of his stomach.
- Slaves should respect their masters so they don't slander God's name. Those with believers as their masters should be especially respectful and serve 'even better' because Christians are receiving the benefit of their service.

These instructions give us an insight into how people in the early church related to each other. Notice Paul's continual insistence on the highest of standards in the way all groups are to behave towards each other and before God. He uses words like 'absolute purity', 'proper recognition', 'pleasing to God', 'no-one open to blame', 'dedication to Christ', 'full respect'.

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. 5:24,25

Instructions about godliness 6:3-10

Paul gives Timothy further instructions to counter the false teachers who don't agree with the *sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and godly teaching.* 6:3. The false teachers create lots of problems in the church and are focused on their own financial gain. *But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world and we can take nothing out of it.* 6:6,7 People who focus on getting rich can easily fall into a trap that can be very destructive *for the love of money is the root of all evil.* 6:10

Final instructions 6:11-21

Paul encourages Timothy to endure right through until Jesus comes again. *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.* 6:11,12

He is to command the rich to *put their hope in God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment* 6:17 and to be generous so they have reality in life and create a good foundation for the future.

Timothy is to guard what has been entrusted to him and not be sidetracked by godless chatter or opposing ideas.

Grace be with you!

God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in approachable light, whom no-one has seen or can see. To Him be honour and might forever. Amen. 6:15,16

2 Timothy

Author	Paul.
Written to	Timothy.
Date	About 67 AD (just before Paul's death).
Place	Written while in prison in Rome.
Type	Personal letter from Paul to Timothy.
Theme	Faithful endurance.
Purpose	2 Timothy is a letter written to encourage Timothy in his difficult task and to ask him to come to Rome. Timothy was one of Paul's best friends and already knew his theology, so the letter is very personal and not a theological treatise (unlike 1 Timothy which was written to a Church that knew Paul's theology but was choosing to ignore it).



Paul and Timothy

Key verses

Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 2:1-3

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. 2:15

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that all God's people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 3:16,17

Outline

1.1-1.2 Greeting

Paul greets Timothy, his *dear son*.

1.3-2:13 Encouragement to endure

Paul thanks God for Timothy and longs to see him. He remembers Timothy's sincere faith and encourages him to *fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. 1:6,7*

Timothy is encouraged to:

- not be ashamed to testify about the Lord.
- accept suffering for the Gospel.
- keep to the pattern of sound teaching he received from Paul ie. faith and love in Christ Jesus.
- guard what he has received with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- be strong in God's grace.
- entrust the message to others who will, in turn, pass it on to others.
- endure hardship like a good soldier for Jesus Christ.
- keep focused on Jesus and not get sidetracked into things which don't please Him.

The Gospel: Good News!

God has saved us and called us to a holy life - not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light. 1:9,10

For if we died with Him we will also live with Him; if we endure we will also reign with Him. If we disown Him He will also disown us; if we are faithless, He will remain faithful, for He cannot disown Himself. 2:12,13

2:14-26 God's approval

Timothy is encouraged to seek God's approval:

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. 2:15

This means he is to:

- Avoid godless chatter which tends to spread like gangrene.
- Stand firm in the truth.
- Cleanse himself so he will be an *instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. 2:21*
- Flee youthful desires
- Pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace.
- Keep away from arguments and quarrels.
- Gently instruct those who oppose him so they can repent, escape the devil's trap and come to a knowledge of the truth.

3:1-11 Godlessness in the last days

There will be terrible times in the last days.

- *People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God - having a form of godliness but denying its power. Sounds familiar!! The folly of such people will be clear to everyone.*
- Timothy is to have nothing to do with these people.

3:10-4:8 Paul's charge to Timothy

Timothy knows Paul's example, including his teaching, way of life, purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions and sufferings. He endured and the Lord rescued him from all of them. *In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. 3:12.*

Evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse but Timothy is to:

- Continue in what he has learned.
- Hold true to the Scriptures. *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that all God's people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 3:16,17*
- Preach the Word.
- Be prepared to correct, rebuke, instruct and encourage others with patience and integrity.
- Be calm in all situations.
- Endure hardship.
- Fulfill his calling as an evangelist (just as Paul did).

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. 4:7,8

4:9-18 Personal remarks

Paul encourages Timothy to come to him quickly and gives instructions regarding situations in the Church. From his prison cell Paul is able to say *The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen. 4:18*

4:19-22 Final greetings

Paul greets a number of the Christians and completes his letter with a blessing:
The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all. 4:22

Lessons from 2 Timothy

For a lasting and effective ministry.....

Focus all you do on accomplishing God's sovereign will, and recognise that you can only do it in God's power and by God's grace. 1:1, 8-12

- Be strong in God's grace. 2:1
- Train and empower others who can continue the ministry. 2:2, Ephesians 4:12
- Endure in times of hardship. 2:3, 10-13
- Be single-minded and disciplined in carrying out your ministry. 2:4-7
- Keep Jesus as the focus. 2:8,9,14
- Set and maintain high standards. 2:15
- Have the Word of God as your foundation. 2:15, 3:16,17
- Avoid time-wasting and useless activities. 2:16-23
- Stay holy, and pure in heart. 2:21, 22
- Be wise in the way you deal with people. Don't be argumentative or resentful; rather be gentle, kind and teachable; trusting God's and not your own strength. 2:23-26
- Don't force your ministry on others. Rather let God do His sovereign work through you. 2:25,26
- Minister in the power of the Holy Spirit, not your own power. 1:6,7,14
- Be well prepared, energetic, sensitive and wise. 4:2,5

Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 2: 1-3

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. 2:15

Discussion questions

In 1 and 2 Timothy the experienced leader, Paul, is mentoring the developing leader, Timothy. What can we learn about mentoring from Paul and Timothy's relationship? What lessons does Paul pass on to Timothy about being an effective leader? How are these lessons relevant for you and for your Church?

Important issues addressed by Paul in 1 and 2 Timothy are dealing with false teachers; use of power; godliness, and endurance. Comment on each of these as they relate to leaders of Churches today. What are some of the pitfalls leaders face in these areas? How are Paul's writings to Timothy relevant in these areas?

List the qualities required for being a leader of a Church, as described in 1 and 2 Timothy. Should someone be a leader if they don't demonstrate all of these qualities? How can Churches allow for growth and development in these qualities of their young leaders (as Paul did for Timothy)?

Paul obviously cared for Timothy and spent a lot of time investing in his development. What did that do for Paul? What did it do for Timothy? How can you invest in future generations?

What have you learned from your study of 1 and 2 Timothy? How will you apply this in your life?

