



Cities Church

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All Scripture quotations are in ESV unless otherwise noted.

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# Week One

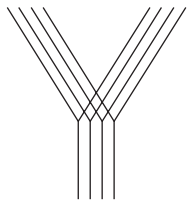
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Don't Forget  
About Me!

Dan Nichols

# Don't Forget About Me!

## Dan Nichols



You know it is true. Your first impulse whenever you read through any of Paul's letters in the New Testament is to skip right over the introduction. You treat it like the genealogies in Numbers; just a series of meaningless words put there to test your sanctification before you get to the more intriguing parts of the story.

For similar reasons, I no longer pay attention to the intro to my favorite tv show. No matter how engaging it is, and how much I enjoy the various facets of each character highlighted in it, endless repetition has caused me

to fail in giving it more than a passing thought. I have relegated the combination of flashing credits and peppy music to something that simply occurs before the conflict is introduced, so that it has become meaningless to my experience of the episode.

But no more! My aim in this article is to help you value Paul's message in the first two verses of this letter, as well as to every other epistle in the New Testament, to such an extent that each time you see them you feel a pull to let their beauty wash over you.

*Disclaimer: I have no desire to reignite your love for the introduction to that show you binge. You will have to figure that one out on your own.*

To this end I will attempt to draw out the depth and riches of three words that are at the heart of Paul's hope for Timothy by highlighting and responding to four questions that pertain to Paul's introduction to 1 Timothy. Systematizing the thirteen greetings will help to distill answers to these queries, and in doing so will lead us towards the meaning behind why Paul chooses to

begin this letter (and all of his letters) in this manner.

"Grace, Mercy, and Peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."

### Four Questions

**What does Paul mean by "grace," "mercy," and "peace"?**

Here is a quick definition for each:

- "Grace" is the favor that God pours out according to his own sovereign will. To receive it is to experience the benefits of having been made a full participant in God's family.
- "Mercy" is recognizing a person's weakness and choosing to provide for that weakness out of compassion.
- "Peace" is, essentially, harmony with God and with man. Or to state it a different way, peace occurs when the barriers that divide are removed.

So, in these three words Paul has communicated a longing to see God shower Timothy with favor, provide for all of his deepest needs, and create harmony in and around Timothy by removing the barriers in his relationships with both God and with, as we find out later in the book, the sheep his congregation.

It is important to note that the word, “mercy” only occurs in this introduction. It does not show up at the opening of any other epistle. My best guess as to why Paul decides to include it here is because Timothy is keenly aware of his own shortcomings. It seems that the writer has tipped his hat towards this young pastor; that he recognizes Timothy’s insecurities and purposes to highlight God’s ability to meet every felt need.

### **What is the source of “grace,” “mercy,” and “peace”?**

Where do these things come from? In the third verse of his letter to the Christians in Galatia Paul asserts that grace and peace come from “the Lord Jesus Christ, *who gave himself up for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father*”.

Two realities are addressed in this text. The first is that grace and peace flow out of the gospel; that they find their originating power in Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection. The message of what Christ has done to make atonement for sin becomes the waters to which Timothy must run in order to receive all that he needs.

The second reality is that the gospel of Jesus Christ and, consequently, the grace that runs through it have both

been willed by the Father. Thus, Timothy, as well as you and I, can know and receive from Jesus Christ only because of the Father’s magnificent purposes.

### **To what end does God provide “grace,” “mercy,” and “peace”?**

At this point the answer is somewhat intuitive. Why would Paul point Timothy to his son Jesus as the provision for all of his weaknesses and insecurities? So that the young man would see Christ and treasure him above all else. Loving Jesus is inherent to receiving from him. One does not get things from God so that he could then turn his affections toward someone else. He obtains provisions from God so that he is then able to live for God, “to whom be the glory forever and ever” (Galatians 1:5).

### **How will Timothy come to experience “grace,” “mercy,” and “peace”?**

Or, how do these things “get to” Timothy. How will they invade his heart?

These questions tie the letter’s opening to the rest of the book. They provide us with context for why Paul writes anything at all. He believes that his written words are the means by which God will bring Timothy into a deeper experience of the grace, mercy, and peace that are found in Jesus Christ.

And that is delightfully interesting, because later on in the letter the author pens a very clear statement about his purpose for Timothy: “I am writing these things to you so that if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God” (1 Timothy 3:15). In other words, Paul wants Timothy, and the rest of the church, to know how

live in relationship with one another. He feels that they must know how to act rightly towards one another.

What in the world do these three words have to do with how the God’s people are to act towards each other?

Everything.

Because all good motives and deeds are found in the grace, mercy, and peace that we receive through the mystery of Jesus Christ, who was “manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, and taken up in glory” (1 Timothy 3:16).

Do you desire holiness in your life? Do you wish to live with love for all who are around you? Look to the Jesus. He will shower you with the Father’s favor, meet all of your deepest needs, and create harmony in and through your relationship with him.

# Day 1 – Introduction to 1 Timothy

- ① The two letters to Timothy and that to Titus are usually grouped together under the title “Pastoral Epistles”. Read all three letters and note major themes or points that Paul is making. What topics do all three cover and which topics are unique to which epistle?
  
- ② Read the introduction to First Timothy in a study bible or commentary. Did Paul write this epistle, and what reasons do some scholars give to argue against Paul being the author? Where is Timothy and what is he up to when he receives the letter? Why did Paul write the letter?
  
- ③ What is “false teaching”? What false teaching does Paul deal with in this epistle? What false teaching exists in contemporary Christianity? How do you internalize or process false teaching in today’s world and what do you do about it?

## Day 2 – Introduction to 1 Timothy

- 1 Write out an outline of the epistle. Which section of the letter are you most looking forward to studying and why?
- 2 Who is Paul writing to? Is this epistle more of a private letter or public? What relationship does Paul have with the recipient? List out everything you know or can find about this recipient. See 1 Corinthians 4:17, Acts 16:1-5, and 2 Timothy 1:5.
- 3 What instructions or guidance does Paul offer in this epistle that is encouraging for you? Which instructions or guidance are convicting? What does Paul say that inspires you to grow in a certain area in your life?

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 1:1-2

- ① How does Paul describe himself and what implications does this have? How does Paul describe Jesus? Who is Paul writing to and how does he describe him? Define “hope” and explain how it is used here
- ② Define grace, mercy, and peace. What does Paul mean when he says “grace, mercy, and peace” to Timothy? What makes this greeting powerful? Typically, Paul uses only “grace and peace”. Why do you think he added “mercy” in this greeting?
- ③ How is true “hope, grace, mercy, and peace” possible? Where do people often go to or to what things do people go to for “hope, grace, mercy, and peace”? In your life, what causes you to lose hope and thus lose peace in your heart? How can the gospel restore hope and peace in your heart and what impacts does this have on your daily life?

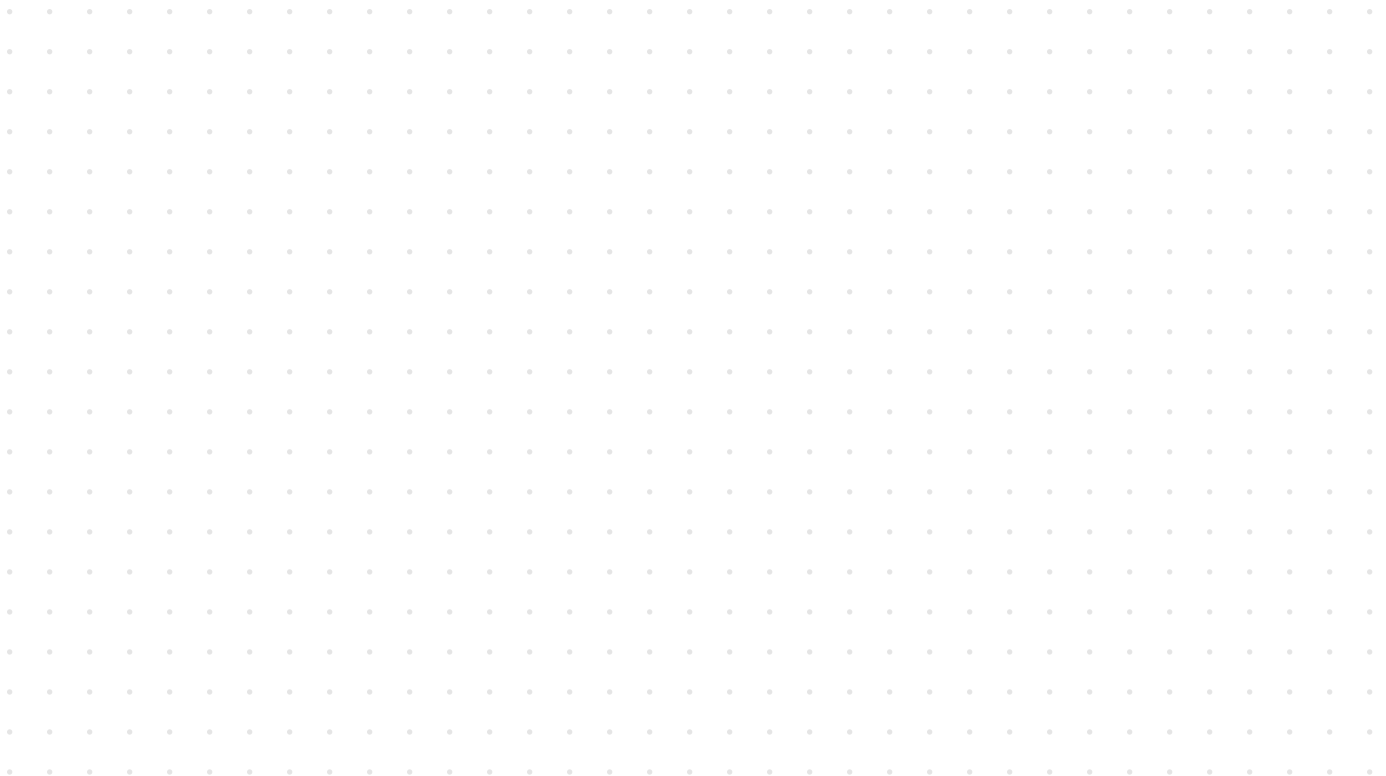


# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Study Philippians 2:19-24

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel. I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.

## Notes

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Two

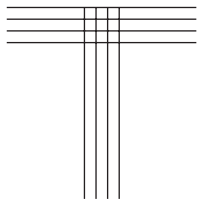
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If You Want  
to Love, Have  
Faith First

Zach Krych

# If You Want to Love, Have Faith First

## Zach Krych



The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

1 TIMOTHY 1:5

The goal of all of Paul's instructions is love. How do we get to love? Apparently, trying to teach the law will not get us to love, because that is what these false teachers were doing. Paul doesn't point to rule following as the path to love, instead, he points deep inside the person. We only arrive at love when we have "a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." How do

we get these wonderful things inside of us? Not from our power and skill but from Christ's. As Acts 15:9 says, God "cleansed their hearts by faith."

Faith, not the law, is what cleanses our hearts leading us to a life of love. The law is good, but before we can truly understand and obey the law we must be given a new clean heart from God. Paul commands Timothy to rebuke teachers who have strayed from this pure heart of faith, yet are still trying to confidently teach the law. How useless. To paraphrase the puritan John Owen, a man may easier see without eyes, speak without a tongue, than obey the law without faith in God. This faithless approach to God's law is what led the Pharisee's to strain out a gnat while swallowing a camel. We should all de-

sire to understand God's law, as well as teach true doctrine to those under our influence, but we must daily look inward to ensure *the aim of our charge is love*, and this love flows from a heart cleansed by God.

For example, when I am frustrated that my 18 month old son keeps opening the cupboard door and pulling out all the Tupperware, I could desire to be a teacher of the Law, and angrily read him the 5th commandment: "Honor your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12). I could then confidently assert that my son is not obeying this clear law of the Lord, and it is up to me to teach him a lesson. But it will be a worthless lesson due to his age and lack of actual defiance. If I check my heart and ask, "Is it pure, is my conscience clear, and

We should all desire to understand God's law, as well as teach true doctrine to those under our influence, but we must daily look inward to ensure the aim of our charge is love, and this love flows from a heart cleansed by God.

am I acting in faith?" it becomes clear pretty quickly that the answers are "No, no and no". I am annoyed at him and at myself for not properly preparing the kitchen for a mobile, curious, energetic child who cannot yet understand instructions. Yes, there is a lawful lesson for me to teach him here, but my annoyed and selfish heart is currently without understanding as to the true lesson. The lawful lesson is not, "How to leave Tupperware alone", but it's actually, "How to stay patient with people".

With the eye of faith I can look into the future and see my child as an adult with his own children. How will he learn to be patient in the face of constant frustration? I will show him. Through "a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" I will demonstrate how to be a parent to an gleefully ignorant toddler by calmly picking up the Tupperware again, moving him out of the room, and giving him something appropriate to play with (and maybe baby proofing the kitchen cabinets).

Before we can lawfully obey, which, in this 1st Timothy example, looks like teaching true doctrine and avoiding myths and endless genealogies, we need our hearts cleansed by God through faith. We must daily aim at Jesus, who is love (1st John 4:8), otherwise we will be without understanding and end up swerving away and wandering into vain and worthless things.

# Day 1 – 1 Timothy 1:3-4

- ① First Timothy Chapter One is an opening section commissioning Timothy. What is Paul urging Timothy to do? Why is Paul passionate about this? What strange teachings were these false teachers spreading? What was the effect of their teaching?
- ② What is a “myth”? What are these “myths” that the false teachers were talking about? See 2 Timothy 4:3-4 and Titus 1:13-14. What is Paul referring to with the misuse of “genealogies”. Why is this teaching harmful? How is this teaching contrary to the gospel?
- ③ Paul contrasts the activity of false teaching with the activity of devoting ourselves to the “stewardship from God that is by faith”. What does Paul mean by this “stewardship”? For you, what stewardship did God give you? By faith, what steps can you take in this area? See 1 Corinthians 9:17 and Ephesians 3:2 on “stewardship”.



## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 1:5

- ① What is the purpose and aim of sound gospel teaching about Jesus? How is faithful teaching about Jesus possible? Is it reasonable to think of daily for the Christian to have all of its aims and purposes be love towards others? Explain.
  
- ② Compare and contrast the results of the false teaching that Paul describes versus gospel teaching. Describe the effects of love from 1 Corinthians 13. Study Galatians 5:13-15.
  
- ③ Describe/define the three fold source of love: “pure heart” (Matthew 5:8), “good conscience”, and “sincere faith”. Why are these necessary in order to love others? Now, describe the opposite of those. In what areas have you seen by God’s grace improvement and growth in your inner self? And in what areas do you want to focus on, and by faith, improve?

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 1:6-7

- ① Describe the negative impact one person can have on a church? What specific things did Paul see in Ephesus? What does it mean or what does it look like for a person to “swerve” or “wander away”? What Christian bearings do you think are important to keep and how do you, by faith, keep them? In what ways have you wandered away or are tempted to wander away?
- ② Describe/define “vain discussion”. See also Titus 1:10-11. What point is Paul making about the life the false teachers are leading?
- ③ Describe/define “confidence”. What does it look like to have misplaced desires? This may be the heart of the problem. Why is arrogance or pride a bad thing? Instead of being over-confident, what is Jesus calling you to be like? Read John 13:1-20, what point does Jesus make with Peter? See Colossians 2:16-19 and Galatians 6:2-3.

# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Study Galatians 1:6-9

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

### Notes

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Three

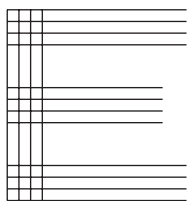
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How to Get  
Your Theology  
in Shape

David Mathis

# How to Get Your Theology in Shape

## David Mathis



Even as lost as many of us feel about training our bodies, we might be even more clueless about training in godliness. It's one thing to be a physically fit human. It's quite another thing to think and feel act like God! Getting our bodies in shape may be "of some value," but godliness, says 1 Timothy 4:8, "is of value in every way." What, if anything, can we do to train ourselves to live in ways more like God himself would live in our skin?

A surprising answer throughout the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus) is that what we believe — or

our theology — has a much greater effect on our everyday lives than many of us might first expect. For the apostle Paul, what we believe about God is deeply connected with how we live in his world. And getting our theology in shape can go a long way in training us to live with godliness.

### Is Your Theology Unhealthy?

In particular, 1 Timothy 1:8–11 helps us think about the shape of our theology. And it begins with the heart.

The heart of Christianity is not good advice but good news. What comes first is not God's rules but God's rescue. What is central is not the law but "the gospel"— the good news that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15).

Law, then, plays a secondary or supportive role. It is derivative, not original. It serves a protective function. God lays down his law, Paul says, not for law-abiders but for law-breakers — "not for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners" (verse 9). And then, at the end of verse

10, he makes this insightful statement: God's law legislates against "whatever is contrary to sound doctrine." In other words, beneath the do's and don'ts of law is sound or "healthy" doctrine. Healthy (true) beliefs about God will, in time, produce healthy (godly) lives. So, more fundamental than law, for Christians, is doctrine — truths we believe about God, his grace, and his world — and we have laws, or ethics, to protect against conduct that is "contrary to sound doctrine."

### Heart of Good Theology

But Paul's not done there. Not only must law take its cues from our doctrine, but Christian doctrine get its bearings from a particular message. "Sound doctrine" or good theology is "in accordance with the gospel" (verse 11). In other words, good theology has the gospel of Jesus Christ at its center. It explains and upholds and expresses and is shaped by Jesus's person and work.

Healthy theology is gospel theology. Christian doctrine is good-news doctrine. Every truth and every teaching is



“in accordance with the gospel” rather than “contrary to” or “out of step with the truth of the gospel” (Galatians 2:14). So, first, we have the good news about what Christ has done for us. Then we have “sound doctrine” or good theology that is consistent with the truth of the gospel. And then we have law that guards against conduct that is contrary to good theology.

GOSPEL → GOOD THEOLOGY ← LAW

That Jesus died to save sinners changes everything, beginning with our doctrine. But doctrine isn't supposed to sit there on the shelf. God means for us to do something with it.

## Vital Role of Teaching

But the picture's not complete yet. Two other texts in the Pastoral Epistles help contribute to this “shape” for how our living relates to what we believe, and both verses contribute an important point that's implicit in 1 Timothy 1:8–11 — the vital place of teaching.

First is Titus 2:1: “teach what accords with sound doctrine.” The missing link between good theology and godly living is faithful teaching. And so God gives his church pastor-teachers for this (Ephesians 4:11). Second is 1 Timothy 6:3, which comes at it the other way, as Paul warns against anyone who “teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the *teaching that accords with godliness*.” Sound doctrine, communicated through faithful teaching, not only agrees with the teaching of Christ but produces godly living. And bad living, over time, proves to be a tell for unhealthy doctrine.

Now, let's put it all together like this:

GOSPEL → GOOD THEOLOGY →  
FAITHFUL TEACHING → GODLY  
LIVING ← LAW

The Christian gospel is at the heart and center of Christian theology. That Jesus died to save sinners changes everything, beginning with our doctrine. But doctrine isn't supposed to sit there on the shelf. God means for us to do something with it. First, for pastors and teachers in the church to teach true theology, and then for us to live out what we believe, with all its ambiguities and challenges, in our daily lives.

## Gospel, Glory, Blessed

But we haven't yet come to the best part of 1 Timothy 1:8–11. Paul doesn't end on “gospel.” He says the heart of what Christians believe is “the gospel of the glory of the blessed God.” At first glance, this phrase may not seem all that extraordinary to us, but these are not throwaway words for the apostle Paul, even if two thousand years later we have to dig below the surface and shake off the dirt from three Christian buzzwords.

Here we find, piled on top of each other, three of the most important words in the Bible, and three words Christians can be prone to hear and say so often we miss the depth of their meaning. *Gospel. Glory. Blessed.* “The *gospel of the glory of the blessed God.*”

*Gospel*, as we've seen, is the good news that God himself, in the person of his Son, has made a way to rescue us, by faith, from our sins and the eternal death we justly deserve. The heart of our faith is gospel, not law.

*Glory* is the beauty of God's perfections, or the visible display of God's infinite value and worth. “God made us for his glory” means he designed us to show his greatness in the world. And what is God doing in all of history in this visible, tangible world? Showing us his glory. And what is the height of his glory? Ephesians 1:6 says it's “the glory of his grace.” Jesus and his rescue, called the gospel, is where God's glory shines its brightest.

*Blessed* may be the trickiest of all. What does it mean that God is “the blessed God”? *Blessed* here doesn't simply mean he's worthy of worship, that

we should “bless” him in praise. That’s true, but as an adjective for God, it’s deeper than that. He is worthy of our worship, but his being “the blessed God” means, in essence, he is “the happy God.” And his happiness, in all its glory, is the ground of the possibility of our being truly, deeply, enduringly happy in him.

# It All Begins with God’s Happiness

Now, let’s put it all back together, and remember where we are. We’re talking about the center, the gospel heart of Christian theology. Beneath our conduct and what do and don’t do, and beneath faithful teaching, and beneath sound doctrine (which is the content of our teaching) is “the gospel of the glory of the happy God.” God is not the cosmic killjoy so many of us have feared. He is not frustrated and sad. He is not grumpy and sour. No, he is *blessed*. He is infinitely happy. “Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases” (Psalm 115:3).

And this infinitely happy God, in his fullness, has gone public in creation and redemption with his infinite value and worth, called his glory. And the height of his glory is the demonstration of his fullness in the sacrifice of his Son for the eternal happiness of his people, called the gospel. And what good news it is for born law-breakers like us.

Do you want to get your theology in shape? Go right to the heart, and build it around the gospel of the glory of the happy God.



# Day 1 – 1 Timothy 1:8

- ① What prompts Paul to talk about the law (see verse 7)? What is Paul referring to when he says the “law”? Define/describe what the “law” means. Read Romans 2:12-29, what do you learn about the law?
- ② In what ways is the “law” good and in what ways bad? What is the purpose of the law? See Romans 7:12. Why is it important to use the law lawfully (properly)? Study Galatians 2:15-16.
- ③ Read Romans 7 and Psalm 119 and note what you learn about the law. Jot down again what the law is. How is the law a grace and gift to your life?

## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 1:9-10

- ① Who is the law intended for and what does that tell us about the purpose of the law? Who is the law NOT intended for and what does that tell us about the law? See Romans 7:6.
- ② What specific examples does Paul give for actions that violate the law? Why does Paul list these, or why do you think these came to Paul's mind? See Exodus 20:1-17.
- ③ What is sound doctrine? Study 1 Corinthians 9:19-27, what does Paul mean by the "law of Christ"? How should one align their life to sound doctrine? How are you doing to specifically align yourself to sound doctrine?

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 1:11


- 1 Define “accordance”. Sound doctrine is in “accordance” with what? How does verse 11 sum up verses 8-10? See Romans 2:14-16. Why is the gospel critical for sound doctrine?
- 2 Define “glory”. Why is the gospel glorious? What are things that you naturally think are glorious? How do they compare to Jesus? Study 2 Corinthians 4:4-6.
- 3 What does it mean that Paul was entrusted with the gospel? See 1 Corinthians 9:16-18 and Galatians 2:6-10. What has God entrusted you with? In what ways are you entrusted with the gospel? How do you feel about that?

# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Study 2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

### Notes

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Four

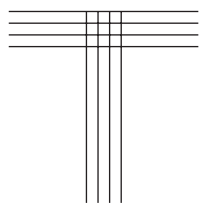
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The Perfect  
Patience of  
Christ

Matt  
Sundquist

# The Perfect Patience of Christ

## Matt Sundquist



### The gospel transforms lives

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?”

ROMANS 11:33-34

What an amazing God we serve - who can comprehend His ways and who can

understand His actions? It is God who transforms our lives - no one and nothing else. Paul is an incredible example of God’s transforming power. A man who was once persecuting the church with all his might was saved by grace and became a steward of the gospel. This gospel makes possible total life change and contrast in our lives - being dead in our sins and now alive to God. In 1 Timothy, Paul very clearly sees this contrast and praises the Lord in his letter. He was living in ignorance, the chief of sinners, and now he is judged faithful and entrusted with the gospel. How great is God’s grace! Let’s take a moment to let the passage sink in:

I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me

with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.”

1 TIMOTHY 1:12-14

Paul begins this portion of his letter to Timothy by thanking and praising the Lord. Why does he do that? In verse 10, Paul describes the gospel as “the gospel of the glory of the blessed God” of which Paul was entrusted. Paul immediately after gives thanks to him who gives him strength because the Lord judged him faithful, appointing him and entrusting him with His gospel. What an amazing contrast from Paul’s prior life!

Paul describes himself as a “blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent.” He sought to destroy Christians in the early church with much zeal. Because of Christ, the church’s largest opponent became one of its most prolific missionaries and ministers. This life change can only happen by the grace of God. Paul is a new man. More than this, despite his past and his murder of Christ’s brothers and sisters, he is now judged as faithful and entrusted with gospel - the most precious treasure.

## God's mercy toward sinners

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost."

1 TIMOTHY 1:15

This type of dramatic life change can only be because the Lord took out a dead, stone heart and put in living, new heart. Paul describes this amazing truth in Ephesians 2:1-7. We were dead in our sins but God made us alive together with Christ. Imagine what a testimony this was to the early church and to those who knew Saul before his complete and total life change.

God's mercy is amazing. Even while Paul acted with ignorance in how he was living his life, God showed him mercy. God opened his eyes so he could see. The mercy received was not of anything Paul did or deserved. It was only because of the grace, faith, and love in Christ. This is such an important reminder for us.

Jesus did not come into this world to save the strong or those who already had their lives figured out. He didn't come to save righteous people. He came to seek and save the lost. Paul makes it very clear that this is a strong rock and foundational truth upon which we can stand.

## Christ's example of patience

What amazes me about this passage is the answer Paul gives for why he re-

ceived mercy from God. Why did God choose to save Paul and transform his life? How should we respond to this? What impact does this have on our faith?

In 1 Timothy 1:16 Paul explains, "I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life."

To put in context what it meant for Paul to receive this mercy, I recommend you read Acts 6 and 7. This passage tells the story of Stephen, one of the first deacons of the early church, who was described as full of grace and power, working many wonders among the people (Acts 6:8). Stephen was accused and brought before the council where false witnesses were brought against him. After speaking with power from the Holy Spirit to make clear that the spiritual leaders of that generation were just like their fathers - resisting the Holy Spirit and betraying and murdering the Righteous One - Stephen is stoned and his garments are laid at the feet of a young man named Saul.

This event was only the beginning of much more violent persecution of the early church. The poetic irony of this story is hard to comprehend. Many of the early Christians may have seen Stephen as one of their future leaders. And yet, one of the men behind his murder and the man persecuting the early Church with all zeal was the man who would eventually become one of the most prolific ministers of God's gospel. This is amazing.

Paul received mercy so that the early church and Christians throughout all ages would be able to see and behold Jesus Christ's perfect patience. Let that sink in. What does that mean for us? Jesus wants those who believe to see this. Why? How should we respond?

I believe that there are three key responses to Christ's patience: 1) we have hope, 2) it leads us to repentance, and 3) we should praise Christ and bring Him glory.

It gives us hope: No matter what our background, no matter what we have done in the past, no matter what sins we committed in our former life before Christ, no sin is too great for Christ's love.

It leads us to repentance: Another passage where Paul refers to Christ's patience is in Romans 2:4. Here he states that we should not take his kindness and patience for granted but know that this is meant to lead us to repentance. When we look at Christ's patience toward us, toward our rebellious hearts and our sin toward the creator of the universe, we should be led to deep repentance.

We ought to praise Him: Paul ends this passage with our proper response to Christ's patience - giving God glory. 1 Timothy 1:17, "To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." Our savior is faithful. This grace, love, and patience is something we should call to mind every day and should lead us to exalt His name with our whole hearts.

# Day 1 – 1 Timothy 1:12-14

- 1 In the midst of Paul directing Timothy regarding false teaching, why does Paul have this digression in verses 12-17? Describe Paul's personal background. Why is he thankful to God, and for what? How might Paul's story bring hope to the situation with these trouble makers in Ephesus? Describe the amazing grace of God to bring Paul from his past state to being an apostle.
- 2 What strength is Paul referring to? Where does he turn to get it? What strength do you want in life and where should you turn to get it? In what wrong places do people often go for strength? Study Philippians 4:10-13.
- 3 Describe the contrast in verses 13-14 as denoted with "but". What were you like formerly before knowing Christ? What mercy have you received in your life and how has the gospel changed your life?

## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 1:15

- ① What “saying” is Paul referring to and why is it trustworthy? What does it mean that a saying should have “full acceptance”? Why is Paul’s saying deserving of full acceptance? What are some “sayings” that do not deserve full acceptance?
  
- ② What does Paul mean when he describes Jesus as “Christ”? Where did Jesus come from before he was born into this world? What do you think it was like for Jesus to subject himself to our human world? Why did he do it? See Matthew 9:13, John 3:17, Luke 19:10.
  
- ③ What is Paul’s viewpoint of himself? He is an apostle, why does he think of himself like this? Does Paul mean that he sins “now” more than anyone else in the world? What does he mean? See Romans 3:9-20 and 1 Corinthians 15:3-11. How would you describe yourself?

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 1:16-17

- ① Why does Paul think that Jesus saved a sinner like him? Define “patience”. Describe how Jesus was patient with Paul. Has God been patient with you? How so? How is Paul an example for people in your neighborhood?
  
- ② How does Paul describe God? What does “King of ages” mean? Define “immortal”. Why does Paul include the reality that God is “invisible”? In what ways is God invisible and in what ways he is not invisible? How does Jesus play into this since he was visible (see Colossians 1:15-16, Romans 1:18-23)?
  
- ③ Contrast these characteristics of God with the fact that Jesus (God) was patient to save a specific person like Paul. How is that helpful for you in your daily life? See Romans 5:6-11.



# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Study Philippians 2:3-8

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

## Notes

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Five

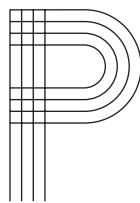
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# Remembering the Fight

Todd Mathison

# Remembering the Fight

## Todd Mathison



Paul begins the book of 1 Timothy by laying out his charge for Timothy to remain in Ephesus and deal with the false teaching taking place. These false teachers have devoted themselves to “myths and endless genealogies,” which promote “speculations rather than the stewardship from God.” Paul contrasts that to the aim of his charge to Timothy, which is “love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” In verse 15 Paul clearly establishes the foundation of this faith, “The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus

came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.” In light of that truth, the truth that God shows mercy and grace to undeserving sinners in order that Christ may be glorified, Paul restates his charge once more in verse 18 for Timothy to deal with false teachers.

### This is War

In his final charge to Timothy, Paul encourages him to “wage the good warfare.” As in any battle, we see two opposing forces on display: Truth and Falsehood. A “different doctrine” (v. 3) and a “sound doctrine, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God” (v.11). This is certainly not a war reserved for Timothy and the church of Ephesus, but one that continues to be waged today. We live in a constant battle between the promises of this world and the promises of God. The “different doctrine” that preaches joy, contentment, peace and satisfaction apart from Christ; and the “sound doctrine” that preaches all things as loss and rubbish compared to the sur-

passing worth of knowing Christ Jesus as Lord. The desire to make much of ourselves, our jobs, our hobbies, our families; and the desire to make much of Christ. The desire to enjoy the creation apart from the creator; and the desire to enjoy the creator through enjoying His creation. Just as Timothy is charged to wage the good warfare, so are we charged to share the same fight.

### Fully Armored Soldiers

Fortunately, we have a loving and gracious God that gives us everything we need to win the battle. Timothy is encouraged to wage the good warfare by “holding faith and good conscience.” He is encouraged to remember the power of the gospel, and to fight against the false doctrine of those that have wandered away. Likewise, God has given us all the resources we need to hold fast to His promises and stand firm against the false doctrines of this world.

Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and

as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

EPHESIANS 6:13-18.

The bible is clear that this side of eternity, there is going to be a war. There is going to be persecution and trials, and the crosshairs of the evil one's flaming darts will always be upon us. But we can rejoice, knowing God has given us everything we need to stand firm.

### Sin's Deceitfulness

Unfortunately, if you are anything like me, sin can be deceitful, and it is easy to forget that a war is even taking place. War results in pain. War requires sacrifice. Where does that fit in to the American dream? I thought the whole point of working hard was so that we could rest. I thought we worked hard during the week so we could rest on the weekend. Don't we work hard during our careers so we can rest in retirement? Doesn't the American recipe say work hard, get ahead in life, and enjoy the fruits that come from comfort? Unless we are watchful, the deceit of contentment in comfort can slowly creep in. Who needs to long for a heaven when it is already here? Before you know it, decisions can be shaped not by asking, "what will magnify Christ most?" but rather "what will be most convenient

for me, and lead to the greatest ease for myself and those I care about?"

### It's a Group Fight

In the final verse of the chapter, Paul tells Timothy that some have rejected the truth of God and made shipwreck of their faith. Those individuals have been handed over to Satan, which in the context of this passage, means they have been removed from the body of the church. How grateful we should be that one of the resources God has given us to fight this battle is access to a body of believers. We can take comfort in knowing that we are surrounded by brothers and sisters in Christ who care more about Christ's glory than their, or our, comfort. Let us be willing to point one another back to the promises of God, and remind one another to take advantage of the resources God has made available to us.

Take care brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

HEBREWS 3:12-13

In all my sorrows, Jesus  
is better – make my  
heart believe;

In all my victories, Jesus  
is better – make my  
heart believe;

Than any comfort, Jesus  
is better – make my  
heart believe;

More than all riches,  
Jesus is better – make  
my heart believe;

Our souls declaring,  
Jesus is better – make  
my heart believe;

Our song eternal, Jesus  
is better – make my  
heart believe.

# Day 1 – 1 Timothy 1:18

- ① Define “charge” and note its uses thus far in the letter. Paul seems to now go back to his original points from 1 Timothy 1:3-5, thus 1:18-20 and 1:3-5 bookend this section on false teachers. What charge is Paul giving to Timothy?
  
- ② Define “entrust”. What is the significance of Paul entrusting Timothy with this charge? How does Paul view Timothy? In what sense is Timothy a child of Paul? What were the prophecies (callings) originally made about Timothy and why does Paul bring this up? How are these prophecies supposed to help Timothy?
  
- ③ How might remembering God’s calling on your life encourage you to persevere? What is this “good warfare” that Timothy is supposed to fight in? What “good warfare” are you supposed to fight in? See 2 Corinthians 10:3-6.



## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 1:19

- ① Looking over the 1 Timothy 1:18-20 passage, what is the purpose of Paul writing Timothy? What does it mean to “hold faith” and why is this important? What does it mean to hold a “good conscience” and why is this important? See Ephesians 6:10-20.
  
- ② What is Paul thinking these folks have rejected? What is your “conscience” and why is it so important? Why is faith inseparable from a good conscience (morals)?
  
- ③ How does this act of rejection then make shipwreck of their faith? Describe the metaphor “make shipwreck of their faith”. Have you seen people make “shipwreck of their faith”? What do you need be vigilant of and focus on daily, as means of graces, to not make shipwreck of your faith? In what ways are you encouraged by your growth and in what areas would you like to improve? See 1 John 2:19.

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 1:20

- ① Who does Paul call out by name? Why does Paul do this? Define “blaspheme”. What were they blaspheming? See 2 Timothy 2:15-29, 4:14-15.
- ② What does Paul mean that he handed them over to Satan? What does he not mean by this? See 1 Corinthians 5:3-5.
- ③ Why does Paul do this with these people? How is being handed over to Satan a way for these people to learn to not blaspheme? So, in the end, what is Paul’s motivation (see 1 Timothy 1:5)? What should our motivation be with church discipline? What is the point?

# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Study 2 Timothy 2:1-3

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

## Notes

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Six

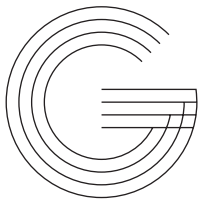
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# The Privilege of Prayer

Rebecca  
Mathison

# The Privilege of Prayer

## Rebecca Mathison



### God's Mercy Magnified Through Sin

Paul's letter to Timothy is jam-packed with real-life application and reminders of who once were apart from God. Paul's letters have always been my favorite books of the Bible, as he is so transparent with his sin, weakness and past, and displays God's mercy so beautifully through his testimony. In so many ways, I read Paul's words and think: *This is me. I feel so incredibly undeserving of God's grace. I am a horrible person. I have a horrible past. But I have been given grace freely and not because of what*

*I have done. If He can save me, He can save anyone. What a merciful and good God we have. And I think that's the point.*

Paul starts off his letter to Timothy with a warning against false teachers (1 Tim 1:1-11) and proceeds to acknowledge his past and hostility towards God. God's patience, magnified through Paul's own weakness, is foundational to Paul's mission to represent God's love and patience to those who will come to believe in Him. As Paul claimed himself, "The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost." (1 Tim 1:15). This truth is fundamental to his message in 1 Tim 2:1-4. He doesn't say Jesus came to save "certain sinners." He says "sinners," as in *everyone*. As believers, where do we start with this message? Paul's answer is simple: prayer.

### Order Matters

Order is so important. You don't tie your shoes before you put them on, you don't condition your hair before you shampoo, and you certainly don't start

your day before coffee. It comes as no surprise that order matters here, too. In Chapter 2, Paul is clear and straightforward with order. "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way." (1 Tim 2:1-2). Paul covers a myriad of topics in 1 Timothy: modesty, teaching, qualifications for overseers and deacons, training in godliness, specific instruction for the church, contentment and fighting the good fight. These are all good and honorable things that believers are called to do to wage "good warfare," as Paul mentions at the beginning of his letter. But before any of those topics are covered, Paul urges us to pray, and not just generic prayers. Furthermore, Chapter 2 is unique in that the charge to believers to pray is specifically *for* the salvation of others.



## More than Prayer

Supplication, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings are all seen in multiple places throughout the Bible. While each kind of communication to God is unique, all are purposeful. We see Jesus demonstrate supplication and prayer in Hebrew 5:7, when Jesus offered up “prayer and supplication, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.” We have a perfect example of supplication and prayer through Jesus. Not only that, but we see a beautiful picture of how God the Father responded to His Son’s cry to Him. It’s sometimes easy to forget that Jesus didn’t *have* to pray. But Jesus, fully God and fully human, came down to Earth in the flesh and perfectly modeled the same kind of prayer and supplication we are called to continue out today. Let us not forget that Jesus cried out humbly to his father through supplication and prayer to be saved from death. How can we exclude ourselves from this act of obedience and faith?

Intercessions remind us of the Spirit, as in Romans 8 where we see how the Spirit intercedes for us when do not know how to pray as we ought. Even further in Romans 8 it is plainly explained that Jesus is the great interceder for us. And in Hebrews 7:25, we so clearly see the good news, that Jesus “is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.” Jesus also sets the ultimate example of intercession.

Finally, thanksgiving. The act of humility towards our God for the mercy

he has given us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Thanksgiving flows out of an understanding of the gravity of our sin, and the fact that the Lord is patient towards us despite what we truly deserve. It is an outflow of thankfulness for the intercession Jesus makes on our behalf. And it’s not just thanksgiving for the mercy we’ve been given, but for the gift of communication with our God. Jesus even gave thanks to His Father for being heard in John 11:21. How much more should we be overflowing with thanksgiving that our Father hears *us*?

## The Vastness of God’s Grace

As I studied and reflected on this passage, I was struck by what an amazing privilege we’re given to be active participants in the salvation of others. The freedom in prayer is that it reaches the ends of the Earth. Kings and rulers are not so distant that our prayers are ineffective for them. There is no distance that separates those who are praying, and those who are prayed for. And Jesus sets a perfect example for us in every way. The similarities between how Jesus prayed, offered supplication, intervened and thanked God and how we are to do the same for all people is an incredible reality. As believers, we get to join the body as imitators of Christ, and collectively carry out the Great Commission together.

*All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*

ROMANS 3:23

For the grace of God appeared, bringing salvation for *all* people,

TITUS 2:11

And in this passage, our prayers are intended for *all* people. Why? *All* have sinned. Salvation is for *all*. Because God desires for *all* people to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth.

But we know that not all will come to know Jesus as their Savior. God’s glory is displayed through the freedom of His mercy. But the vastness of God’s love is evident in the vastness of his grace. And we’ve been called to shout the good news to the ends of the Earth. God’s design for salvation involves the very people He has saved, and He *chooses* to use believers to carry out His perfect plan. Let’s not waste the gifts we’ve been given. Let’s be active participants in God’s plan for the world.

Roughly six years ago, I was at the peak of my rebellion against God. I had taken every road to avoid Him and continued towards the path of destruction. I was living in and for the world. Had I continued, my life would look so differently today. But I had an army of believers who consistently and constantly prayed for my salvation, making intercessions and supplications on my behalf: my parents, family, friends and even strangers.

Today, I have no doubt that those prayers were part of how God chose to save me. I’m so incredibly thankful for that. I’m so thankful for life. And not just on this Earth, but true, real and everlasting life with the one who saved me.

# Day 1 – 1 Timothy 2:1

- ① Define “urge”. What is the first thing that Paul urges Timothy to do? What else has Paul urged Timothy to do in this letter (1:3)? Since in 2:1, this urge isn’t technically the “first” thing that Paul urged Timothy to do, what does Paul mean when he says, “first of all”?
  
- ② Define these prayers of “supplications”, “prayers”, “intercessions”, and “thanksgivings”. How are they different? What does Paul have in mind with “all people”?
  
- ③ Do you think prayer is “of first importance”? Why or why not? Do you pray? Why or why not? What is happening when you pray? How did Jesus teach us to pray (Matthew 6:5-15)? If the Bible instructs us that prayer should be “of first importance”, what do you want to do to make some changes to your daily routine to build in prayer time?

## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 2:2

- ① Who does Paul specifically have on the list as part of praying for “all people”? Why does Paul think it is important to pray for civic leaders? What does the Bible say about local authorities (Romans 13:1-7)?
- ② What does Paul mean by a peaceful and quiet life? How does praying for authorities impact our daily life? What does Paul mean by godly and dignified? How does praying for authorities that leads to calm bring about godliness?
- ③ Have you ever prayed for your leaders and authorities? Why or why not? Do you want to? The Bible is calling us to pray for those in high positions. How can you start to do this on a more regular basis?

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 2:3-4

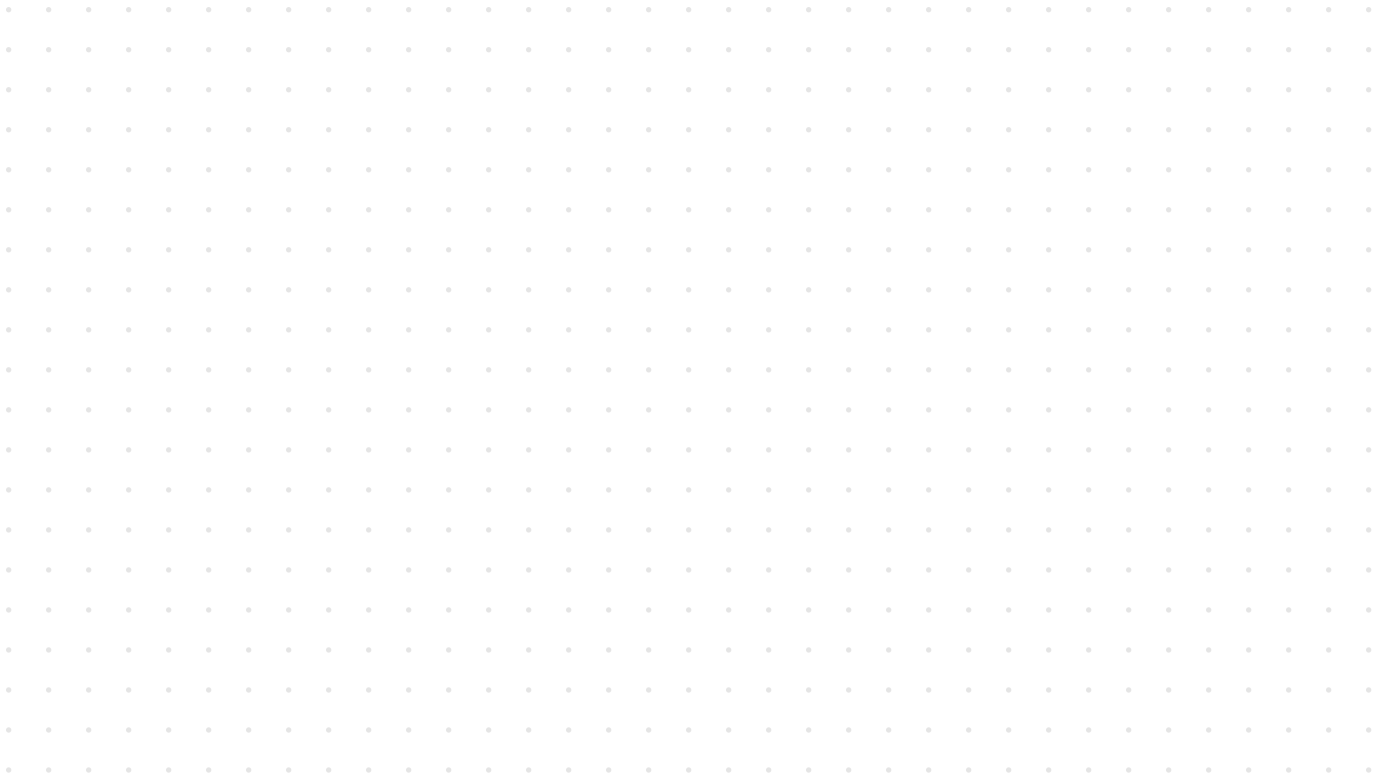
- ① What is Paul saying that is “good and pleasing in the sight of God”? Why is it “good”? Why does Paul add “Savior” to describe God, and what does this tell us about God’s character?
- ② Define “desire”. What does God desire? If God is God, and if he desires something, why does it not come to pass? What does Paul mean with “all people”? Does this passage teach that all people will be saved? Explain. See Romans 9:15-24.
- ③ How does God accomplish that which he desires? How might you be involved? How is this desire of God’s linked to evangelistic prayer? Describe how you might be able to pray more evangelistically.

# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Study Romans 10:14-17

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

## Notes



# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Seven

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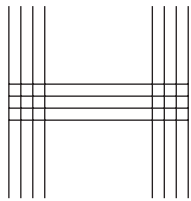


In Between  
the Infinite  
and Finite

Jon Fuehrer

# In Between the Infinite and Finite

## Jon Fuehrer



How would you describe God? The writers in the Bible describe God as a consuming fire (Deut. 4:24); The God of gods, Lord of lords, great, mighty... and awesome (Deut. 10:17). We are told the heavens declare his righteousness (Psalm 50:6) and God himself, so absolutely certain of his own supremacy in all things, states that, “I am who I am.” (Exodus 3:14). The truth is there are not enough words in all the languages in all the countries in all the world that can fully describe God. He is supreme, ultimate, righteous, holy and thousands of other glorious attributes that find their

definition in Him. How, then, would you describe yourself? On your best days do you define yourself as supreme? How about on your worst? Of course, we strive to be merciful, just, kind, loving and a host of other God-honoring characteristics. At the end of the day though God is so eternal and preeminent that He defines the very characteristics that we hope would describe us.

Now repeat this exercise with your ability to make or create. You tried to “make” brownies but you read the directions wrong, put too much water in and now the brownies are spongy and don’t taste right. Even that doesn’t really count as creation because you were simply rearranging items that were already there. None of us can conjure something from nothing, regardless of our effort or desire but God simply says, “Let there be light,” and there was light

(Genesis 1:3). No matter the situation or circumstance God seems to be infinitely beyond us. How can we even begin to relate to one another when such an eternal gap is separating us? Left on our own we would be consumed by our finiteness. Our outlooks would range from resignation in the fact that life must be pointless to hellbent to eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we might die but that eternal gap would stay eternal.

We can’t come for God so God came for us. 1 Timothy 2:5-6 tells us there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. If you look up the definition to mediate, you’ll find descriptions like occupying a middle position and reconciling differences.

How can we even begin to relate to one another when such an eternal gap is separating us? Left on our own we would be consumed by our finiteness.

Christ occupied the middle position between our finite and God's infinite so that he could reconcile the differences between God's righteousness and our sin through his death and resurrection. Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men (Philippians 2:6-7). Eternal became mortal, God became man and now we don't need to wonder how we to relate to him anymore. Jesus was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3), he slept (Mark 4:38), he ate (Matthew 26:26) and he cried (John 11:35). He has felt the sting of betrayal, the loss of a friend, the joys of good food and good company and the celebration of a wedding. Yet he was there when God spoke creation into existence and has been given a name that is above every name so that every knee on heaven and on earth should bow. God sent Jesus to know us and through him for us to know God.

Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.

John 17:24-26

# Day 1 – 1 Timothy 2:5

- ① “For” is a preposition that links us to a foundational clause, meaning what follows explains or supports the previous statement. In 2:5, what does Paul say that supports his claims in 2:1-4? What truth is Paul saying in 2:5 that makes 2:1-4 all the more important? See Romans 3:29-30
  
- ② Define “mediator”. What are the implications of the Biblical objective truth that there is one mediator between God and man? Why does Paul specifically reference Jesus as being a “man”? Is it ok to have an intermediary between people and Jesus? Explain.
  
- ③ Study Acts 4:11-12. What do we learn about Jesus?

## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 2:6

- 1 Define “ransom” and “deliver”. What does it mean that Jesus gave himself as a ransom? See Ephesians 5:2, Hebrews 9:12, 1 Peter 1:17-19 and Revelation 5:9-10.
- 2 Look at Galatians 1:3-5, what does it mean that we are delivered from this present evil age, and why do we need this deliverance? When Paul says that the ransom is for all, what does mean, and what does he not mean?
- 3 What things do you feel you need Jesus to deliver you from? Apply the gospel - What does the gospel say about your situation?

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 2:7


- ① Review 2:1-6. What mission does Paul have on his mind that he feels appointed to fulfill? See Ephesians 3:7-10.
- ② What specific tasks or roles was Paul appointed and called to do? Why does Paul feel the need to defend himself to Timothy? See 2 Timothy 1:8-12 and Acts 9:14-16.
- ③ As you review 2:1-7, what do you feel called and appointed to do as a Christian? How is that calling playing itself out? What steps do you feel you want or need to take to more closely follow that calling?

# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Study Matthew 20:26-28

It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

## Notes

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Eight

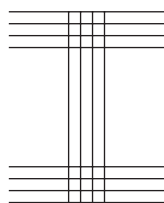
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# Captive to Conscience

Sara Krych

# Captive to Conscience

Sara Krych



If you are ever looking to instigate a fight on social media, at your next holiday gathering, or even within your community group, 1 Timothy 2:8-13 might be a good place to start. In today's cultural environment of #MeToo, rage against the patriarchy, and feminist revolution, I can think of few passages that would incite as much protest (although Colossians 3:18 and 1 Peter 3:1-6 might elicit a similar response). So in looking at this passage, I had two goals: one, to not simply fall in with the party line of my conservative Evangelical upbringing for no other reason than be-

cause that's how I was raised; and two, to not allow the deafening voices of today's feminist movement to influence my perspective and lessen the power of inspired, inerrant scripture. It was just as hard as I anticipated.

This is a dense passage, as is typical of Paul's writing, so I will try to narrow the focus to two verses, 11 and 12: "11 Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet." As a woman who has a full time, supervisory role in a male-dominated field where physical strength and prowess is idolized, this statement doesn't seem to mesh with my daily life. (To clarify, I manage and coach at a CrossFit gym.) I'm not shrinking violet; is that in conflict with God's design for the church? Doesn't Paul know that women can be great leaders and teachers, maybe even better than the men standing next to them?

It's easy to look at passages like this and take offense. "Paul is a misogynist." "Paul is just reacting to what was going on in the culture at the time." "Paul

only said this because women weren't as well educated back then." (I am saying "Paul" instead of "God" because while those who make these statements usually consider the Bible to be God's Word, this particular passage often gets credited to Paul personally. Interesting...) But it is helpful to zoom out a little bit to get a bigger picture. These are not the only verses that address the relationship between men and women. It goes all the way back to the Garden, when God creates woman to be a helper for man (lest you think that is a derogatory label, the same term is used to describe God in relation to His people throughout the Psalms). God did not create different roles for men and women when sin entered the world; rather, the different roles of and relationship between the sexes were designed to be illustrations of a greater truth, namely, the relationship between Christ and the Church. When sin entered the world, it tainted everything, including and perhaps especially the God-ordained roles of men and women. We see this powerfully every day in marriag-

es and society around us, and we are deceiving ourselves if we think this is unique to this generation. If marriage is supposed to be a picture of Christ and the Church, so also the structure of authority in the Church should be illustrative of God's design for men and

Not even close to all has been heard, but I must come to my conclusion of the matter. Fear God and keep His commands.

women. So what does Paul mean when he says that women shouldn't teach or exercise authority over a man, but remain quiet and submissive?

You don't have to look far in the Bible to see examples of women having influence. Deborah was a prophet and judge who was respected enough that the commander of Israel's army wouldn't go into battle without her. (The glory of the victory was given to another woman, Jael, as a result of his cowardice.) Abigail stepped in when her fool husband's actions almost cost him his life, and was praised for her wisdom. Esther swayed the opinion of an emperor, saving her people from annihilation. In the New Testament, Mary demonstrated greater faith than Zechariah by believing Gabriel's message when he appeared to her. Both Priscilla and Aquila counseled Apollos; Eunice and Lois are credited with teaching Timothy the scripture; and in Titus, Paul encourages older women to teach the younger. There is no indication that the limits set on women teaching is either completely prohibitive or in any way due to women being lesser qualified (R.C.

Sproul once said that growing up with an older sister gave him an inferiority complex, and just by glancing around the average church one could easily see that women are in many ways more qualified for leadership than their male counterparts.) But if the limitations ar-

en't based on qualifications, why bother with the boundaries at all?

Although I came across a variety of perspectives on these verses, most had one thing in common, and that was that the limit on women teaching men had to do with authority. In 1 Timothy, when Paul outlines the attributes and responsibilities of elders, he includes being the husband of one wife (and thereby male), able to manage his household, and able to teach. In regard to authority, it appears that Paul is saying women should not hold the office of elder. This is in keeping with the structure God ordained in the family, which is a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church. It may be helpful to think of women's submission in the church as another way of playing out the submission of a wife to her husband. Does she have influence? Most definitely. Does she have value? Undeniably. Does she have tremendous responsibility in the running of her household, the training of her children, and the equipping of her home and family to serve others? It is her calling! But by God's perfect design, the church, the family, and, dare

I say it, both women and men individually function and thrive best when submitting to God's designated roles for each gender. By His mysterious wisdom, those roles mean that the man is most fulfilled by being the servant leader and the woman by being his submissive helpmate. However, even if we can agree on that, there is still some vagueness in how that plays out practically. Let's say a woman can't be an elder. Can she preach on a Sunday morning? Teach an adult Sunday school class? Write an article for *The Quarterly*...? One well-known Evangelical leader said the he believed women could preach on Sunday morning but not in an "authoritative" (decision-making) manner. (I think that is even more confusing, especially since despite his relatively liberal view on women preachers, he didn't think they should be able to vote in membership meetings!) The story is told of Elisabeth Elliot being invited to speak at a church on a Sunday morning. She declined, saying she was not willing to usurp the pastor's authority by taking his spot. So she spoke on Wednesday evening instead.

These seeming splitting-of-hairs only make passages like these more difficult. I am left with more to study and a burden to be captive to my conscience. Not even close to all has been heard, but I must come to my conclusion of the matter. Fear God and keep His commands. And when those commands are less than clear, be submissive to the authority of the elders in my church.

## Day 1 – 1 Timothy 2:8-10

- ① What is Paul desiring or what is he after with these verses, meaning what is his point in making these requests? What specific instructions does he give to the men? What specific instructions does he give to the women?
- ② Paul returns to the topic of prayer. What have we learned so far about prayer and what else do we learn here? What does it mean to have holy hands? How do we get these? Why is it important to have “holy hands” prior to praying?
- ③ In 2:9-10 what is Paul after as the important characteristics of a godly woman? Review Proverbs 31:10-31. What do you agree with Paul and what parts do you struggle with?

## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 2:11-12

- ① This is a tough passage. See also 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. What is the context of these churches in which Paul is giving these instructions? What specific actions or heart issues might Paul be getting at with these instructions?
  
- ② What does Paul mean by his instructions? And, what is Paul not saying in these instructions? See Romans 16:3-16 and Philippians 4:2-3.
  
- ③ If you are talking with a co-worker about the Bible and they say “The apostle Paul hated women. The Bible supports male chauvinism.” How would you defend Paul and explain the context of these verses? How might you also bring in the gospel into the conversation?

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 2:13-15

- ① What instruction did Paul give in 2:12? What reasons does Paul give in 2:13-14 for this instruction? See 1 Corinthians 11:8-9. Of the two reasons that Paul gives, which one is based pre-fall and which one is based post-fall (review the fall, see Genesis 3)?
  
- ② Review Genesis 3. Though Eve sinned first, is Adam responsible for his sin? See Romans 5:12-14. Define “continue”. Is Paul saying that some can be saved through works, such as child-bearing? Explain. See Ephesians 2:8-10. Is there a way that salvation can be progressive or ongoing (see Philippians 2:12-13 and Matthew 24:13 – note the use of the word “continue”)?
  
- ③ Read and review 1 Timothy 2:1-15. What questions do you have about the passage? Write them out in prayer-form to God. What clarity and peace would you like to have on the content we’ve been studying?

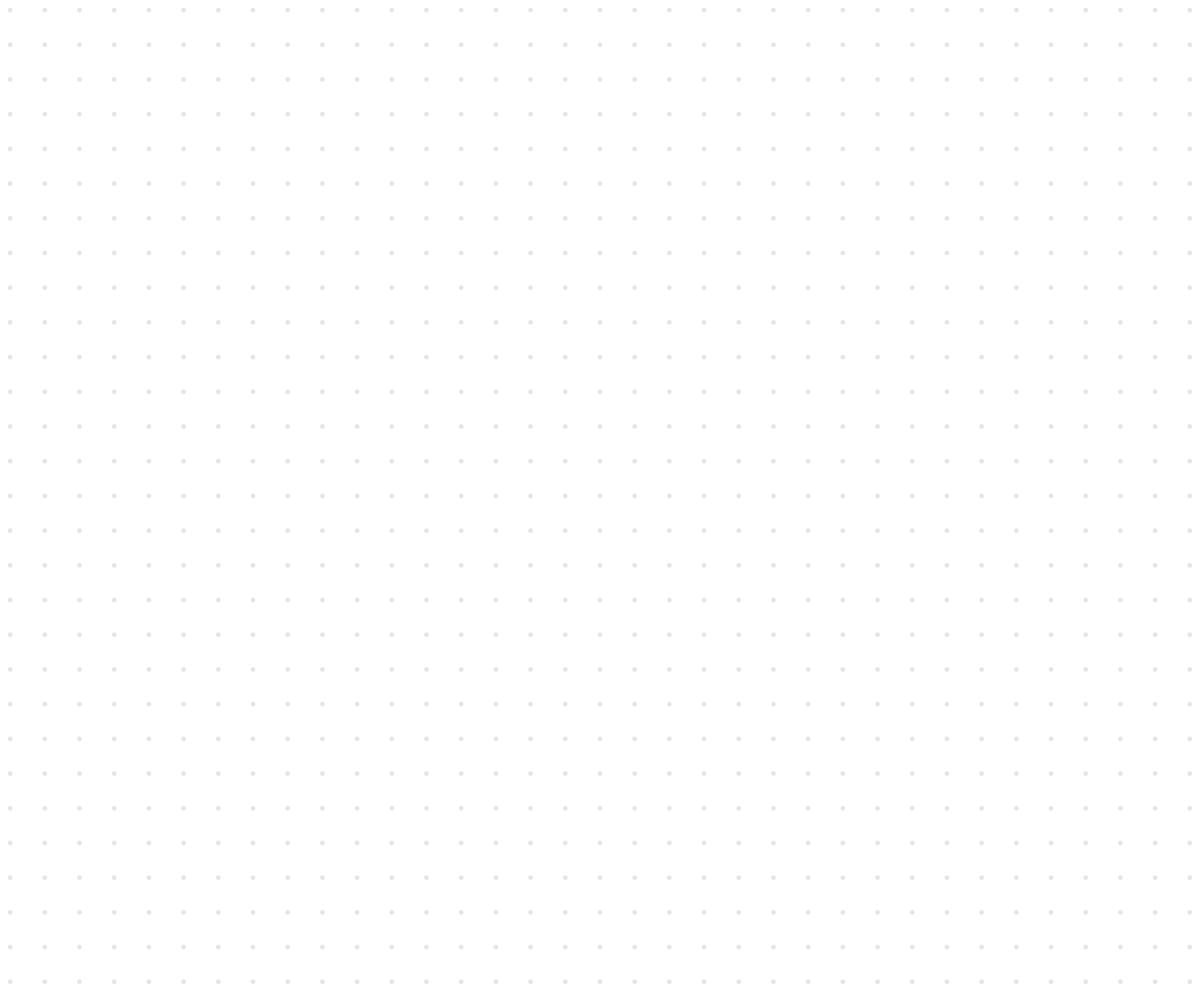


# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Study Galatians 5:1

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

## Notes

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Nine

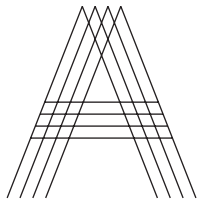
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An Aspiration  
Worthy of  
All Men

Mike  
Schumann

# An Aspiration Worthy of All Men

## Mike Schumann



Above reproach. Could any man earn such a title? It feels otherworldly — like a term not fit for the fallen. And yet, amazingly, it is. Paul, the one who etched the phrase across a scroll two thousand years ago, assumed there were, and would continue to be, men deserving of such words.

These men would not need to stand out amongst the crowd in their level of charisma, looks, education, or accomplishments. Nor would their amount of strength or aptitude have to rise above the masses. They could be ordinary, common, run-of-the-mill type men —

at least in the eye of the passerby. But inside, in the hidden recesses of the heart and mind, there would have to be something quite remarkable. Here would dwell the treasures of the man above reproach.

Seven character traits for the man above reproach can be derived from Paul's words in 1 Timothy. Though the context focuses on men who desire the office of overseer, the lay-level, Jesus-worshipping congregant is by no means excluded. Above reproach, no matter if we desire an office in the church or not, is a title for which every man should aspire to.

### 1. ***One-Woman Man (3:2)***

In the heart of a man above reproach is an unrelenting commitment to be wholly devoted, in thought, word, and deed, to his current (if married) or future (if unmarried) wife. This means his eyes, as well as his thoughts, need to develop the habit of dumping sin-filled soirees. Pornography cannot be in his list of options, nor

can any other habit that would betray his bride or his Lord. He will not attain perfection in this area, but he will strive to grow toward it throughout his days.

### 2. ***Sober-Minded***

In the mind of a man above reproach is a sobered, focused, and awakened sense of the world and his place within it. He doesn't allow Satan to lure him into a barrage of busied activity. Nor does he slip into long seasons of quite indifference or apathy. Instead, he fixes his mind on things above (Colossians 3:2) and allows his view from above to motivate his life below. His eyes are open to the harvest field around him and every day is lived with the expectation that Jesus will save souls through his words as he shares of gospel glories.

### 3. ***Self-Controlled***

A man above reproach is noticeably self-controlled. He is slow to anger,

gentle where others prefer violence, not quarrelsome, but bent toward love and peace. His ears are open and his tongue is kept on a tight leash. He does speak, and his truth is not always appreciated, but the warmth of his tone and the kindness in his eyes communicates that his words are tethered to a heart that desires to do good.

4. ***Respectable***

Outsiders think well of him, though they may disagree with him. Others may dislike his beliefs, or think his lifestyle foolish, but they admire his consistency and trust his character. He is dependable, caring, truthful, and forgiving, even in the presence of his enemies. When he errs, he confesses it and asks forgiveness of those whom he has hurt.

5. ***Hospitable***

In the house of a man above reproach is welcoming warmth and comfort. Those who come inside

feel as if they are in their second home, where food is offered, chairs are pulled up, and the residents are more focused on the words of their guest than the buzz of their cell phones. This “house on a hill” may not be large or extravagant but it shines brightly as a lighthouse for neighbors in need.

6. ***Not a Lover of Money***

The wallet of a man above reproach is held with an open-hand. He doesn't spend his money foolishly, nor does he hoard it away under lock and key. Instead, his dollars are purposeful, whether they form college funds for his kids, flower funds for his wife, or lunch funds for those in need. Money is one of the means he uses to bless others, especially his church, and he accumulates it for this very purpose. He will take none of it with him upon entrance into glory, therefore he seeks to glorify the God who has entrusted it to him.

7. ***Family Man***

The family of a man above reproach is well-loved and well-taught. His kids know the joy of his laughter, his wife knows the tenderness of his touch, his siblings know the truthfulness of his speech, and his parents know the kindness of his heart. More importantly, however, all in the family know the greatness of this man's God, for it God to whom he points, not himself. He is no super-hero or savior, but a faithful ambassador of the one who is.

**Above reproach.**

It encapsulates the heart of a man qualified to serve as overseer (i.e. pastor) of God's people. It also epitomizes the character traits worthy of pursuit by every man, regardless of whether or not he pursues an office within the church. May we, the men of Cities Church, strive to be known by these two precious words. May we call one another higher and higher in our fight to be men above reproach.

## Day 1 – 1 Timothy 3:1-3

- ① What saying is trustworthy? Why do you think Paul says that it is trustworthy? Define “aspire”. Why is the office of overseer a noble task? What does Acts 20:28, Hebrews 13:17, and 1 Peter 5:1-5 teach us about overseers?
- ② What is the “therefore” there for? What does it mean to be above approach and is this a specific hard and fast rule? What does the literal phrase “one-woman man” mean? Write out and define the remaining characteristics of a leader in the church.
- ③ Of the characteristics in the list, which is the only one specific to a leader? This means the rest of the list is character traits/marks of every Christian. In light of this, assess your own spiritual maturity against this list. What areas has God grown you in this year, and which items do you want to confess weakness and then grow in?



## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 3:4-5

- ① What do you think God wants when it says, “manage your household well”? What does it not mean? Define ‘dignity’. What aspect of this about children does Paul add, and what do you think that looked like in Paul’s opinion?
  
- ② What reason does Paul give for the importance of a leader to manage his household well? How important is it for you that your leaders have a well-managed household? What do you think you have included in this category? Do you think you have accurately or fairly done this?
  
- ③ Growing up, what did you like about your household and what did you hate? Why? How have you addressed these things in your current household by applying the gospel? What areas of your household do you want to see change and how might you be able to do that?

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 3:6-7

- 1 Read 2 Timothy 3:1-7 about types of people that may try to become leaders. That passage along with 1 Timothy 3:6 – why is time a factor when selecting a leader? Define “conceit”. How might conceit produce a hard fall for a person? See Philippians 2:3-4.
- 2 How and why does Paul bring in the devil in these verses? What condemnation (i.e. judgment) exists for the devil and how might arrogance and conceit lead to the same condemnation? What warning does this offer us?
- 3 Why does Paul add that a leader should be well thought of by outsiders? Who are the outsiders? How might this characteristic of a leader advance the gospel (see 2 Timothy 2:24-26)? What perception do your neighbors have of you? If we interviewed your neighbors, how would they answer this question of you: “what does he/she focus their time and energy/passion on? What does he/she value? Do you find them warm and friendly?”

# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Study 1 Peter 4:7-10

The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:

## Notes

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Ten

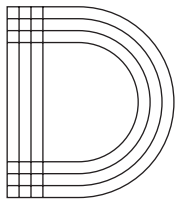
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Deacon Jones

Jeff Waldron

# Deacon Jones

## Jeff Waldron



### Deacon Jones: Doing the Dirty Work, Sacking Quarterbacks

Deacon Jones is one of the greatest defensive players in the history of the NFL. He was a fierce defensive end, always in relentless pursuit of opposing quarterbacks. He set record upon record for sack totals, and is even said to have originally coined the phrase “sack.”<sup>1</sup> His name is actually David Jones, but he is known by all as “Deacon.”

In his first epistle to Timothy, the Apostle Paul provides wisdom and guidance as to the life of the church,

including the qualifications for certain persons known as deacons. The Greek word for deacon (*diakonos*) means one who serves. Perhaps Deacon Jones was given his nickname by some teammate who was a theology nerd and who noticed that Mr. Jones got in there and did the dirty work of pursuing the enemy quarterback, continually serving his teammates by putting them in a position to win. Just as a deacon in the church does. Sort of.

### Deacons in the Church: A Christian with a Specific Task

If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task (1 Tim. 3:1). But if anyone aspires to the office of deacon, he is a Christian. Being an overseer requires certain giftings and desires; not all Christians should or can aspire to it. Being a deacon is different. A deacon has no notable skills, no notable ambitions. Rather, a deacon is someone who is willing and able to sacrifice for others and who takes Jesus seriously - i.e., a Christian.

In verses 8 through 10 of chapter 3, Paul sets forth certain qualifications for a deacon, which can be boiled down to two concepts: (a) deacons must have a heart that has been changed by and is in pursuit of Jesus, and (b) deacons must love and apply the Gospel.

### Qualification 1: Deacons Must Be Pursuing Jesus (They Must Be Dignified)

Paul tells Timothy that Deacons must be dignified.<sup>2</sup> My initial thought is of the Monopoly Man - someone who is well put together, perhaps wears a monocle, always uses the correct spoon for his soup, and does not get his hands too dirty. Paul explains what he actually means with three examples of what is not dignified:

- Being double-tongued (or insincere, per the NIV) is not dignified.
- Being addicted to much wine is not dignified.
- Being greedy for dishonest gain is not dignified.



Being dignified is not about understanding social norms or being externally presentable, it is about integrity, it is about a heart has been changed and is pursuing Jesus. The dignified person's "yes" means "yes." The dignified person is not a slave to external forces, such as alcohol. The dignified person does not lust for wealth or power. To be sure, the dignified person is not perfect, but he has integrity, he repents of sins, and he relies on the Holy Spirit to effect change in his life.

### **Qualification 2: Deacons Must Love and Apply the Gospel (They Must Hold the Mystery of the Faith with a Clear Conscience)**

Paul says that a deacon must "hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience." The Gospel is often referred to as a "mystery," and surely this is what Paul is referring to here. A deacon must sincerely believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A deacon must apply the Gospel to his own life, so that he lives as a redeemed man with a clear conscience,

knowing that his sins have been finally and fully dealt with.

### **Deacon or Not, You, Christian, Must Strive to Be Dignified and Must Love the Gospel and Must Live the Gospel.**

You are called to be dignified. You are called to hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

A Christian is to live as Jesus, sacrificially meeting the needs of others in love. A deacon is to live as Jesus, sacrificially meeting certain specifically identified needs of others in love. A deacon is merely a follower of Jesus whose energies have been focused due to a specific need in the church. Indeed, a deacon is a gift to the church because they meet an identified need, but that says more about the need than it does about the deacon. If there is no need, there is no deacon.

Whether or not you are formally dubbed a servant with a serious-sounding moniker, you are called to be a servant. You are called to strive to meet these qualifications and you are called

to serve one another in a way that costs you. Whether you are formally assigned to a specific duty is of little consequence: move out of your comfort and seek to serve. "Deacon" is not a title, it is a job. It is not an honor, it is an assignment. Perhaps the only difference between a Christian who is a deacon and a Christian who is not is that a deacon must meet these qualifications, whereas a Christian ought to do so.

### **Be Tested; Prove Blameless**

To be a deacon, Paul says in verse 10 that a person must be tested and prove themselves blameless (per the NIV, there must be nothing against them).<sup>3</sup> Testing is either a period of time or an examination of the person, to see if they are pursuing a godly life and if they treasure the Gospel. If they do, there is nothing against them. Blameless in this context does not mean perfect, it means that there is nothing known against them as relates to the foregoing criteria. They are representatives of the church and their conduct will be scrutinized in a new way.

Christian, you are a representative of Jesus, surely this is of exceeding gravity, and your conduct will be scrutinized by the world and it will be associated with him. As such, do not leave the testing to the deacons - you should test yourself in this way on a regular basis, and seek testing from others. This should be a function of our Life Groups. Identify sins and undignified behaviors and desires, and then fight them. Pursue them with the focus of Deacon Jones when he sets his eyes upon an opposing quarterback and then pursues without mercy.

Paul encourages us in saying that a benefit of being a deacon is gaining

“great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”<sup>3</sup> That benefit flows from living like Jesus in service of others. We can all gain that benefit, deacon or not, by living in manner worthy of our Lord.

### **Deacon Jones: The Real Story**

Apparently Deacon Jones gave himself the nickname “Deacon” because there were too many David Joneses out there. “Football is a violent world and Deacon has a religious connotation,” he told the Los Angeles Times in 1980. “I thought a name like that would be remembered.”<sup>5</sup> He was right - it is a pretty sweet name.

Not only is football a violent world, the world is a violent world. It is a place of struggle and strife, sorrow and disappointment; life is challenging, even for the Christian. Especially for the Christian. That is why there are deacons and that is why each Christian must pursue these qualifications with vigor. Pray that the Lord would show you needs around you, and then commit yourself to being an unofficial deacon to serve others and meet those needs. Our earthly comfort is nothing compared to the eternal inheritance that awaits, let us live like we believe it to be true.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2013/06/04/us/sport-deacon-jones-death/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> 1 Timothy 3:8-10 (ESV).

<sup>3</sup> 1 Timothy 3:8-10 (ESV).

<sup>4</sup> 1 Timothy 3:13 (ESV).

<sup>5</sup> Thursby, Keith. “David ‘Deacon’ Jones dies at 74; Fearsome L.A. Rams lineman”. The Los Angeles Times.



# Day 1 – 1 Timothy 3:8

- ① Compare the description of “overseer” (3:1-7) and that of a “deacon” (3:8-13). What are similarities and what are differences? Summarize by answering someone if they’d ask: what’s the difference between a pastor and a deacon?
- ② Define “dignified” and “double-tongued”. What did Paul mean when he said that deacons should not be addicted to much wine? Why is a heart that is greedy for money an issue with being a Christian?
- ③ Are deacons considered officers of the church (see Philippians 1:1)? Note the use of the “likewise” between the list for “overseer” and the list for “deacons” – what does this tell us? How would you summarize how pastors and deacons should live their lives? How does that compare with the way you want to live your life?

## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 3:9

- ① Describe and define your conscience. Note the uses in Acts 24:16; Romans 2:15-16, 9:1, 13:5; 1 Corinthians 8:7-12, 10:25-29; 2 Corinthians 1:12, 4:2, 5:11; 2 Timothy 1:3; Titus 1:15; Hebrews 9:8-14, 10:22, 13:18; 1 Peter 3:16, 21.
  
- ② What is the “mystery” that Paul is talking about and why is it important to hold this mystery of faith? What does it look like to “hold the mystery of the faith”? Why is this important for a deacon? See 1 Corinthians 2:7, 4:1; Ephesians 3:4-13; Colossians 1:26-27.
  
- ③ Why is your conscience such a powerful gift from God? Do any animals have consciences? Describe your level of submission and commitment to your conscience. Describe a time you have not listened to your conscience. Describe a time you have.

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 3:10

- ① What “testing” does Paul have in mind do you think? Why is it important for a Christian to have some testing prior to leadership in a deacon role?
- ② What does it look like to be “blameless” in going through testing? What can testing cause in your life when you go through it? What types of behavior are ok and what types are not?
- ③ Study James 1:2-4 and 1 Peter 1:6-9. Have you gone through trials or testing? What was the outcome? Describe your process. How does that match the verses you studied?

# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Study Hebrews 13:5-7

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we can confidently say,

“The Lord is my helper;  
I will not fear;  
what can man do to me?”

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

## Notes

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Eleven

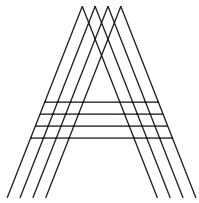
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A Call to All  
Women

Amelia  
Schumann

# A Call to All Women

## Amelia Schumann



A man can be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain, holding the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience, and even be tested and proven blameless as a deacon (1 Tim. 3:9-10)... all while being unqualified for that office. Paul is pointing something out in 1 Timothy 3:11-13 that it might be tempting to overlook when placing men in church leadership roles: it is not enough for a man to be mature. He must be helping the people around him to mature as well, and the best litmus test for this quality is the spiritual

health of his family. The logic goes like this: if he can't care for his own family, how can he care for the church (1 Timothy 3:5)?

I could say more about the responsibility that men have, but I'd like to take a different angle. I want to ask a question about the implications of the man's role: Does his weighty responsibility give women an excuse for being gossips or slanderers, not holding their thoughts captive, or shirking their God-given responsibilities (the opposite of the character a deacon's wife ought to display in verse 11)? Can women hide behind the men who are leading them (whether it be pastors, deacons, fathers, or husbands) and claim that their own

immaturity is the man's fault for not leading them well?

The answer is a simple and resounding "no," but if you need convincing, read through Titus 2 and see that women are called to a high standard regardless of how they are shepherded. Women are called to this standard so that the word of God would not be reviled (Titus 2:5). Yet women, myself included, are often tempted to fall into the trap of blaming, just as Adam and Eve tried to shift the responsibility for their own sin in Genesis 3. Let's look at how this blame-shifting might play out in our daily lives, regardless of our stage of life or marital status.<sup>1</sup>

Women are called to this standard so that the word of God would not be reviled (Titus 2:5). Yet women, myself included, are often tempted to fall into the trap of blaming, just as Adam and Eve tried to shift the responsibility for their own sin in Genesis 3

Symptom	Excuses <sup>2</sup>
A woman is not reading the Bible regularly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My pastors aren't providing me with material relevant to my situation to help me grow.</li> <li>• My husband isn't leading us daily in devotions.</li> <li>• Some Christian men are prideful and trample over people with biblical arguments. That's a turn-off to me that makes me not want to read the Bible.</li> </ul>
A woman spends more time talking about or focusing on her home, job, or family than Jesus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My father never encouraged or helped me and my mother to focus on Jesus.</li> <li>• If my husband helped out around the house more, I'd have more time and energy to focus on Jesus.</li> <li>• That's what my pastors are for.</li> </ul>
A woman chooses not to serve the church.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a woman can't preach or teach men, there's nothing else for her to do.</li> <li>• Men in leadership haven't specifically asked her to serve in a certain way.</li> </ul>

So, instead of making excuses, let's tackle the first symptom (reading the Bible regularly). I believe that by addressing this first symptom the rest will fall into place. You might ask, where do I begin? Here are some ideas:

- The First Principles course offered to women at Cities is a great help in learning how to read the Bible and apply it accurately to your life, alongside other women. Talk to Erica Foster or Kassie Cossette if you are interested!
- There are excellent Bible apps out there with reading plans available that even track your progress for you. You can even invite friends via the app to do the plan with you for accountability.
- Talk to your Life Group about your struggles. Ask them to regularly check in with you about how you're doing in the area of reading and meditating on Scripture and submitting your heart to God as you do it.

I pray that as you read this, you feel conviction wherever it applies to you. And as you feel conviction, I pray that you turn to Jesus and find freedom from condemnation and from sin. He alone is the man who can and will always lead you perfectly. He is the one to whom you must turn when you've sinned by doing wrong or by refraining from doing what is right. And that's because he alone has done what is right in your place and died in your place. Read about this regularly in the Bible, not just because you should but because your soul NEEDS it like your body needs food!

Be exhorted and encouraged!

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<sup>1</sup> Now, I am NOT saying that men in leadership are not responsible for the spiritual health and maturity of the people in their care, including women. They are, to an extent. I AM saying that women can tend to look at passages like this and hide our sin behind our male leadership rather than recognizing that we, too, have responsibility for our spiritual growth. We cannot sit back and expect others to do the work for us, for even if they could, that would rob us of the joy we reap when we dive into Scripture on our own.

<sup>2</sup> I'm not attempting to include every possible excuse here. I believe that behind almost every indulgence in sin lurks a variety of excuses that we use to try to justify our behavior. The following are just the excuses that are relevant to this passage and my point.

## Day 1 – 1 Timothy 3:11

- ① “Their wives” can be translated “wives too”, “women deacons”, “deaconesses”, “women”, “the women”, and “wife”. Read a study bible(s) and commentary(s) to describe which you think is most accurate that fits the context.
  
- ② If “their wives” means “deaconesses”, what requirements are there for deaconesses? How do the requirements for deaconesses compare to those of deacons? Why might Paul not included anything about the deaconesses’ spouse?
  
- ③ Since the deacon role does not involve teaching or ruling, some believe the role could be filled by men or women. What functions or roles do you think women can play in the church?

## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 3:12

- 1 Paul shifts back to “deacons”. What additional requirements does Paul mention for deacons? Explain what each requirement means.
- 2 Verse 3:12 corresponds with 3:2b,4-5 about overseers. Describe why these requirements are important for leaders in the church, both overseers and deacons.
- 3 Study Acts 6:1-6. What is the nature of the deacon role? What are some differences between deacons and overseers? Do you aspire to be a leader in the church, why or why not? What ways can you be helpful in the church?

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 3:13

- ① What are some benefits to serving as a deacon or deaconess in the church?
- ② Define and describe servant leadership. See 1 Peter 5:1-3. What are some different ways deacons can serve in the church? What is the goal of having deacon?
- ③ Why would someone want to be a deacon? What rewards should a deacon be pursuing and what types of rewards should a deacon not be pursuing?



# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Study Titus 2:2-6

Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled.

## Notes

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Twelve

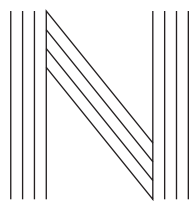
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Live Holy

Kenny Ortiz

# Live Holy

## Kenny Ortiz



Not too long ago I was helping a friend prepare a big holiday meal. It was a daunting task, but the process was much easier because his wife had spent a significant chunk of time the night before prepping the meal. She had peeled the potatoes, measured and set aside the ingredients for the casseroles, and left detailed instructions for him to follow. Furthermore, my friend and his wife corresponded by phone several times throughout the day where she gave him specific directions as well as lots of encouragement. She had gone

out of her way to ensure that he could be successful in her absence.

This is somewhat like what we see with the Apostle Paul and his commitment to the church in Ephesus (and of course, the stakes are much higher).

The Apostle Paul loved the church at Ephesus. He had spent a significant portion of time preaching and ministering in that city and he longed to see that spiritual community flourish. One of the greatest demonstrations of this commitment was Paul's willingness to be parted from his dear friend and protégé Timothy so that Timothy could remain in Ephesus to care for the people.

Paul had an amazing entourage of young men that he mentored and effectively trained for ministry leadership. Timothy was one of these men. Timothy had been a partner in ministry with Paul for several years. Upon Paul's departure from Ephesus, he left Timothy in the city to ensure that no one in Ephesus would "teach any different doctrine" than what Paul had taught (1

Tim 1:3). Timothy would serve as one of the primary leaders in Ephesus for several years.

Paul loved Timothy dearly. Multiple times in the New Testament Paul refers to Timothy as a son. In his letter to the church in Corinth Paul describes Timothy as his "beloved and faithful child in the Lord" (1 Cor 4:17). Paul and Timothy had developed an incredible friendship. Leaving Timothy behind in Ephesus must have been very difficult for Paul.

If Paul was willing to be separated from his dear friend and partner in ministry for the sake of the Ephesian church then we know that the health of this church must have been a high priority to Paul. He wanted them to function in the most Christ-honoring fashion possible. This is the primary reason why Paul is writing this letter to Timothy.

This epistle from Paul to Timothy is aimed at giving Timothy certain reminders and instructions that would help him lead the people of Ephesus to be a spiritu-

ally healthy community, committed to prayer and to the teachings of the Scriptures. Paul wrote, “I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God” (1 Tim 3:14–15a).

Paul had desired to visit the Ephesian church. He intended to return to them to spend time with them in order that he might be able to defend right doctrines in that region as well as help them grow in their faith. But he realized that he might get delayed, so he sent these instructions to guide them. Here, yet again, we see another example of how much Paul cared about the community at Ephesus. Not only was he willing to be separated from his friend Timothy, so that Timothy could care for the people, but Paul also went out of his way to give them these instructions in this letter. Paul cared about their holiness, their conduct, and their spiritual health.

Why did Paul care so much? Paul cared a lot because he knew the importance of holiness in the church. He knew that their spiritual vitality would be impacted, not just by their theology, but also by their conduct, their behavior, and their attitude towards sin. The great puritan writer John Owen asserted that a lack of holiness in the life of the believer has the potential to “weaken the soul, and deprive it of its vigour.”

Paul also knew that their holiness would impact their ministry. Paul wanted Timothy to know how to pastor the Ephesians so that they’d know how to “conduct themselves in the household of God” because Paul knew that

the local church “is the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15b NLT). The church is the platform from which God planned to launch his transformative work in the lives of the people within that community. That has always been God’s ideal design, for his church to be the primary instrument that he uses to bring about transformation in dark places and tough situations. As author David Platt says, “The church is God’s ‘Plan A’ and there is no ‘Plan B!’”

The Apostle Paul recognized that the Ephesian Christians were God’s ‘Plan A’ to transform the city of Ephe-

sus, and for that reason he was fiercely committed to the success and holiness of the Ephesian church. The Apostle Paul knew that if the gospel was going to continue to spread throughout the region, and if ministry workers were going to be continually sent out from the church of Ephesus to other parts of the world, then the church needed to be holy. Later he would write these words to the Christians in Ephesus, “I urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.” (Eph 4:1).

Timothy and the Ephesians were not the only people who received these sorts of instructions from the Apostle Paul. He instructed the church in Philippi to be “blameless and innocent”

even while living in a sinful culture (Phil 2:15-16). Paul encouraged the believers in Corinth to “aim for honorable things” (2 Cor 8:21). He commanded the Romans to “put to death the deeds of the flesh” (Rom 8:13). To the Colossians he wrote, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you.” (Col 3:5). And Paul reminded Titus, another young man that Paul had mentored, that the Christian ought to seek to “be a model of good works” (Titus 2:7–8). As John Owen exclaimed, “Be killing sin or it will be killing you.”

Paul was committed to the holiness

God is calling Christians to live holy lives. Holiness matters. The individuals we correspond with on the daily basis, and our society at large, need Christians to be holy.

and conduct of the local churches. This sentiment, of course, was expressed by Jesus himself too. Jesus desired for his disciples to “shine” so that people would give glory to God (Matt 5:16), and Jesus later commands us to take radical measures to kill sin (Matt 5:30).

The Apostle Peter echoed this sentiment when he implored Christians to live in accordance with God’s ideals and demonstrate the excellencies of God, so that other people would glorify God (1 Pet 2:9–12).

We see this theme clearly throughout the New Testament. God desires for local churches to be fiercely committed to being holy and conducting themselves in accordance with the gospel.

God wants us to be holy, both for our own spiritual health as well as for our evangelism efforts. The gospel should not merely be a narrative that we embrace to receive salvation, but instead the gospel ought to genuinely govern and inform our lives every single day.

Today, we live in a culture where many people call themselves ‘Christian’ but their lives do not look different from those who do not profess Christ. Our contemporary evangelical sub-culture is often indistinguishable from the culture around us. The Bible calls believers to be distinct from the world in the way we live our lives (2 Cor. 6:7) and to hate the sinful things of this world (1 John 2:15–17).

God is calling Christians to live holy lives. Holiness matters. The individuals we correspond with on the daily basis, and our society at large, need Christians to be holy. When we are committed to holiness, our Christ-honoring conduct will open the door for ministry in this broken world. We ought to be committed to holiness.

Being holy does not earn us any spiritual points or favor with God. The ledgers in heaven are not contingent on our behavior. Your status as a child of God is not dependent upon your work, not contingent on your obedience at all. If you are a follower of Christ, your status in the family of God has been settled by the work of Christ. Praise be to God!

However, your holiness does indeed impact your life and your influence in several ways. John Owen asserts, “Believers are assuredly freed from the condemning power of sin, yet believers

ought to make it their business all their days to mortify the indwelling power of sin.” We have been freed from the condemnation of sin and the eternal ramifications of sin, however we ought to make it a high priority to get rid of sin because we know it’ll hurt us and hurt our opportunities to minister to people.

For these reasons the Apostle Paul was fiercely committed to giving instructions to the church in Ephesus. It was important to Paul for Timothy to have these reminders and directions. Paul was willing to be parted from his dear friend Timothy because he recognized the importance of holiness in the lives of believers. Paul wanted Timothy there to help the people live that out.

This should be a priority to us today. It would be valuable for every believer to pause and ask himself these questions, “Am I truly committed to conducting myself in accordance with God’s ideal? Is my conduct informed by the gospel? And, am I fiercely committed to helping others live out holiness? Have I sacrificed so that others can have the instructions they need to be holy too?”

This is the precedent set by the Apostle Paul, a fierce commitment to personal holiness and a commitment to serving others in a manner that would help them be holy too. Are we marked by these sorts of commitments?

Of course, living holy is easier said than done. Certainly, every believer has struggled to be holy. But the most magnificent thing to remember is that we are not alone. We have Christ!

Living a holy life is not possible in human strength. But through the grace

and supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, we can live lives in accordance with God’s will. The power of Christ indwells us and empowers us to victoriously wage war against our sin. The same power that brought Jesus back from the dead resides in the believer! Furthermore, God himself promises to make us holy. God promises that he will be the one who will sanctify us and develop us into the people he wants us to be. He is faithful to this promise (1 Thess 5:23–24). Jesus himself will hold us fast (Jude 24–25).

We, as followers of Christ, absolutely ought to be committed to being holy and we ought to be deeply committed to helping others be holy too. However, in our efforts we must remember that Jesus is the one who does the work in us and we must continually come back to him, throwing ourselves upon his mercy and gazing at his beauty. As Owen wrote, “On Christ’s glory I would fix all my thoughts and desires, and the more I see of the glory of Christ, the more the painted beauties of this world will wither in my eyes and I will be more and more crucified to this world.”





# Day 1 – 1 Timothy 3:14

- ① In this section, Paul is taking a break from the instructions and establishing some truths about the church. Who does Paul want to see? And if he plans to see him, why do you think he wrote this letter? If you were a leader in the church and receiving this letter, how would you be feeling so far as you read the first three chapters?
- ② This section serves to bring closure to the unit that was started in 2:1. Summarize the important points (“these things”) you have learned in 2:1-3:13.
- ③ Describe an important meeting you have coming up or you’ve had recently. Did you do some prep work like send some preliminary text messages or emails? What form of communication in which situations do you like best with people and why? If Paul could text, do you think he would’ve written these letters?

## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 3:15

- ① What is Paul most emphatic about that Timothy knows, which prompts Paul to write this letter? Define “ought”. Define “behave”.
- ② What is the household of God? How does Paul describe it?
- ③ What do you think are the most important criteria/areas/characteristics for how a person ought to behave in the church? Is this possible? Where/when have you experienced this?

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 3:16

- ① Describe the confessional hymn in 3:16. Who is the “he” that was manifested in the flesh (see John 1:14)? Define “vindicated”. What does it mean that he was vindicated in the spirit, for example, in the spiritual realm (see Romans 1:4)?
  
- ② Paul says this confession in 3:16 is great – why is it great? Angelic worshippers of the Son was a popular theme among early Christians. What else do we know about angels (see Ephesians 3:10, 1 Peter 1:12)?
  
- ③ Define “proclaim”. In what ways is Jesus proclaimed among the nations? How can you help in proclaiming Jesus? Describe a time when you proclaimed Jesus? What does the next line show us that can happen if you proclaim Jesus to the world (see Colossians 1:6, 23)? Has this ever happened to you?

# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Study 1 Corinthians 3:9-17

For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s field, God’s building. According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw—each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.

## Notes

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Thirteen

136

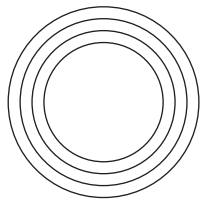


# Enjoying God's good Gifts

Kyle McIver

# Enjoying God's good Gifts

## Kyle McIver



One of my favorite places to eat is the Brazilian steakhouse, Fogo de Chao. If you love meat, you've probably been there. Trained chefs move nimbly around the restaurant holding a variety of meats, needing only to hear how you like it cooked (medium or medium rare) before they slice a piece on to your plate. The sights, sounds, and smells permeating the restaurant make for one of the best eating experiences I've ever had. It's also happens to be an expensive meal. Does hearing about a high price tag make you wonder if it's alright to

enjoy that meal? Would you feel guilty afterward if you enjoyed the food?

### Demonic Doctrine

Whatever you may think about an expensive meal, the question what we should or shouldn't eat isn't new. Whether it's the food itself, where it came from, or what it costs, opinions abound. We're also all too familiar with the variety of views on sex and marriage today. 1 Timothy 4:3 speaks to a particular brand of false teaching that lays blanket ban on marriage and certain foods. These teachers "forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods..." through "...deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared." This is strong language. Do we feel as strongly about these lies as God does? Or are we perhaps a little surprised by the seriousness of these errors? When the Bible speaks so clearly against something, it's good to make sure we understand what's going on. In this case, we might ask a questions:

"why is this such a serious example of false teaching?" People today still forbid marriage and require abstinence from certain foods, and it may not seem all that strange to us. So why is this a demonic teaching?

### The Giver of Good Gifts

One of the keys to understanding what Paul is saying is the positive language he uses in the passage. Food and marriage are to be *received* with *thanksgiving*. If we receive something, what does that mean? *It was given to us*. Who gave us marriage and food? *God did*. If we string our answers together, we see that God gives the (very) good gifts of marriage and food to his creatures and that he means for us to receive them. If instead we reject them, we are not only rejecting the gifts, but also the Giver. And we're not talking about people who are single either by choice or by circumstance, or about those who choose to eat gluten-free meals. These are teachers who are laying a burden on their hearers by forbidding them to choose

# We must reject false teaching that robs God of his glory and his people of the gifts they've been given.

marriage and certain foods. They are saying these things are out of bounds. Christians can in good conscience forgo a good gift for a God-glorifying reason, but to broadly forbid something God calls good and gives to his people is to cross the line into demonic false teaching.

## Good Gift, Grateful Heart

Receiving the gift however, is not enough. God doesn't intend for us to *merely* receive his gifts. He cares about *how* we receive them - he wants them to be received with a grateful *heart*. In my home, meals served to our kids tend to be received with anywhere from skepticism to grumbling to the accusation of poisoning. They receive the food, but not with thanksgiving. They receive, but they don't honor the one who gave it. The proper response to God - the Giver of good gifts - is not merely to receive them, but to receive them with a grateful heart. Gratitude recognizes what is given as what it is - a good gift. A good thing, given by a good God, to be enjoyed by his creatures. Without grat-

itude, we can receive our filet mignon with a grumbling heart that dishonors God. When we receive God's gifts with thankfulness in our hearts, we display the truth that our God is good, and that he delights to do good to his people.

## Who Can Rightly Receive the Gifts?

Receiving God's gifts with gratitude answers the "How?" of enjoying created things. Paul also addresses the "who?" - he says that those who "believe and know the truth" are able to receive everything because they "are made holy by the word of God and prayer." Simply put, those who believe and know the truth have the resources (God's Word and prayer) to understand and enjoy God's gifts. We can joyfully receive the gift of marriage and sex within marriage, but we understand that anything outside of that perverts God's gift. We gratefully receive money as a means of provision, generosity, and mission, but must not hoard money and love it more than anything else. We buy a nice meal and enjoy it - guilt free - with gratitude.

We also need to be wise in what we eat and how we spend, which is we need to regularly put our decisions before God and His Word.

We must reject false teaching that robs God of his glory and his people of the gifts they've been given. We need God's revealed Word to rightly understand the world around us and know what God has given us. When we do, then we go all in - we enjoy our steak with a glad heart full of gratitude, just the way God intended.

# Day 1 – 1 Timothy 4:1

- ① What does the Spirit say? What does Paul mean that the Holy Spirit “says” this? And is what “times” does Paul think this will happen – when is that? See John 14:16-17 and 2 Timothy 3:1-5.
- ② Define “devote”. What does it mean and what does it look like when someone “departs from the faith”? Describe the process by which someone does this? See 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12, 1 John 4:6, and Matthew 7:15.
- ③ Define “allegiance”. Describe your strongest allegiances. How do you safeguard your heart and your life from departing from the faith?

## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 4:2-3

- 1 Define “insincere”. Define “conscience”. Why is a seared conscience bad? Describe these false teachers and the false teaching that Paul lays out. What makes it false teaching?
- 2 Describe how Christians are to receive these things. How does “truth” help you receive these things? See 1 Thessalonians 2:3-4 and Hebrews 13:4.
- 3 Read/study Colossians 2:16-23 and Romans 14:6 and compare what you learn with 1 Timothy 4:1-5. How do these passages impact how you view family traditions and holiday traditions?

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 4:4-5

- 1 Read Acts 10:9-16 and James 1:17 and compare to 1 Timothy 4:4-5. How might you reject something that would be dishonoring to God? How does that happen and what does that look like?
- 2 Define “holy”. Why should Christians receive and not reject the things created by God (4:5)? How does prayer come into play with this?
- 3 What in your life do you typically think “God has made this, and it is good”? What do you see in your life that you should remember that “God has made this, and it is good”?

# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Ephesians 6:10-12

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

## Notes

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Fourteen

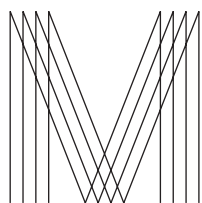
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# Trained for Death

Tyler Holley

# Trained for Death

## Tyler Holley



Man is a being on the way to death. All our deeds, all our thoughts, and all our pursuits are just the toil before death. Philosophers have grown into despair thinking of such things. Indeed, death haunts us all in the quiet moments of self-reflection, in the dark moments when we drift off to sleep. Toil, pain, despair, and after these, death.

However, God does not leave us with such thoughts. He says, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Blessed indeed,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!’” (Rev 14:13). In

one sense, man is a being on the way to his grave, but that doesn’t demand the loss of our labor and the meaninglessness of our toil. God would have us toil, because he would have us trained for death—not just final death, but a kind of living that is also a kind of dying. As our savior said, “Whoever loses his life...will find it” (Matt 10:38). Death is always evil, but death faced bravely is glory. There is no resurrection without death, and glory always leaves scars.

As men and women who wish to serve our Lord, we must learn to be trained for death, and not just trained, but well trained. As Paul writes this epistle, he desires that Timothy “be a good servant of Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 4:6). Good servants, Paul says, are “trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine” (4:6). Servants who do not know their faith and doctrine

are perilously close to the slippery precipice of death. False doctrine befriends death and gathers many into its fellowship. The lustful are attracted to false doctrine. Paul warns in the second letter to Timothy, “For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions” (2 Tim 4:3). The word “passions” is often translated “lusts.” Lustful passions are the sedative that pacifies men and women on the way to death, listening to the soothing lullabies of the lies of hell.

Thus, well trained servants know their doctrine. They are alert and aware of the truth that wars against their sinful desires. But, well trained servants not only know their doctrine, they also know how to live it out. They stay away from the false doctrines of

Servants who do not know their faith and doctrine are perilously close to the slippery precipice of death. False doctrine befriends death and gathers many into its fellowship.

death encapsulated in “silly myths,” and instead they “train [themselves] in godliness” (1 Tim 4:7). They know that “godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come,” that is, after death (1 Tim 4:8). Well trained servants always keep their enemy in view. Death is always on the horizon for the godly, and they live in such a way as to prepare themselves for it. They don’t prepare like a child gearing up the courage to enter a haunted house, but as a mother who labors to teach her children because “I won’t be around forever.” The godly labor and are “always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord [their] labor is not in vain” (1 Cor 15:58).

Well trained servants live godly lives in the face of death. They “toil and strive” because they know that they serve “the living God, who is the Savior of all people” (1 Tim 4:10). The living God, who is also the Savior of all people is none other than Jesus Christ who, long ago, went into death. Jesus Christ, who lives today, only became the Sav-

ior of all because on one dark day he became the man on the way to death. He marched up to the grave, and leapt inside, the rest, as they say, is history—a living history, a history that lives in us today.

Well trained servants of Jesus, know their faith and live Godly lives because they know that death looms in the future. Death is the last enemy, but if we can eat “in the presence of our enemies” (Psalm 23:5), then we can surely also labor in its presence. In this way, man can become a being laboring on the way to death. If our living becomes a type of dying, then we become men and women on the way to life.

# Day 1 – 1 Timothy 4:6

- ① Lay out the “if/then” clause. What is Paul’s point? What does it look like to “put these things before the brothers and sisters”?
- ② It is often helpful to slow down and lay out what is in your control and what is not. First, describe the context of who is involved and what is going on. Second, what is not Timothy’s fault or what is not in Timothy’s control? Third, what is in Timothy’s control and what should he do?
- ③ It is important for Timothy’s life that he follow good doctrine. What does it look like for you to follow good doctrine? How does that happen? See 2 Timothy 3:14-15 and Philippians 1:27-30.

## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 4:7-8

- ① What does Paul strongly advise Timothy against and why? Contrast to that, what does Paul want Timothy to do? Compare and contrast these two statements.
- ② What does Paul mean by “bodily training” versus “godliness”? Comparatively, why is bodily training not as good as godliness? See Proverbs 19:23 and Matthew 6:33.
- ③ Do you value godliness? Explain. In your life what things do you put above godliness? How do you increase the value of godliness in your life?

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 4:9-10

- ① What “saying” is Paul referring to? Do you think the saying is trustworthy? Explain.
- ② What is Paul’s goal in his life on earth? See Colossians 1:28-29. Why is this his goal?
- ③ What is your goal in life? What do you think God thinks of your goals? What does he like about your goals and what parts would he question do you think?



# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Study 1 Peter 3:13-17

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Fifteen

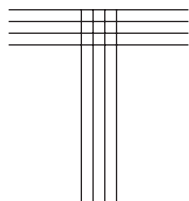
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Grace for us all

Joanna Polley

# Grace for us all

## Joanna Polley



These verses seemed a little disconnected after the first few readings. It felt like a bunch of random different exhortations that just popped into Paul's head to remind Timothy to do. I know that's not the case because "all scripture is breathed out by God" (2 Timothy 3:16). After reading and wrestling through them, they suddenly seemed like the most important words that Timothy needed to hear from Paul.

Timothy was sent to minister to the church in Ephesus, a hard hearted sin laden city that housed the temple for the Greek goddess Artemis (see Acts

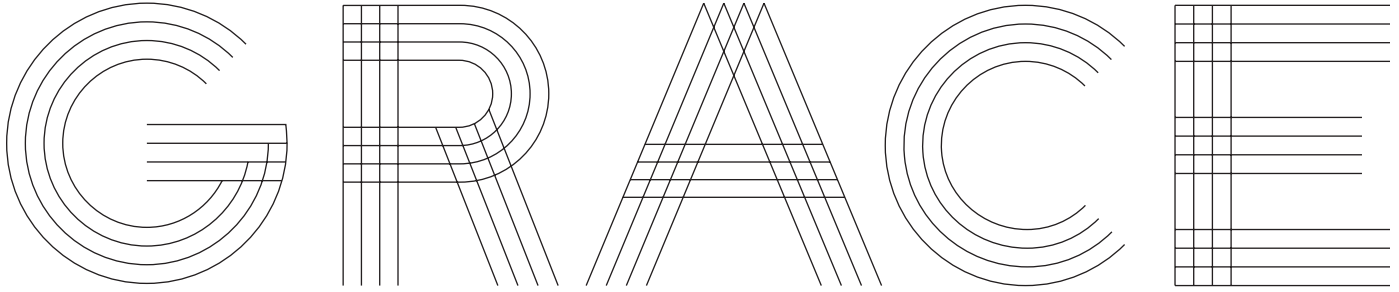
19). Ministering here would have been hard, which is why I think Paul writes about false teachers, qualifications for overseers and deacons, and specific instructions for the church. So much discernment would have been needed to navigate the life of a young church located in this difficult city. Timothy needed all the help he could get in leading this church.

Timothy is probably one of the younger ministers of the early church and this church is most likely multi-generational with members who would be much older than him. Having older members could make Timothy feel unsure of himself and his preaching. Because Paul specifically mentions this, it makes me think Timothy had talked about this with Paul or written to him about it. The word Paul uses here, often translated as despised, means to disdain or think little of someone. There may have been members in the church who had scoffed at Timothy or gossiped or used who knows what means to cause him to feel unsure. Whatever it may have been, Paul is adamant that

Timothy remain faithful to his calling as a minister of the Gospel and find his security in the good news of the grace of Jesus.

Paul also calls Timothy to set an example for the believers who are around him. This is so important for all believers, but can be a special weight on those in public ministry. Pastors, teachers, elders, are constantly being watched and assessed. Makes sense, right? They are usually up in front doing their best to discern the Word of God for His people, hoping to encourage, to convict, to give hope, to bring those who don't know Jesus to repentance. That's a lot for our pastors to carry. As a sinner I know I can often be critical of a message if I don't like what's being said, I can be quick to discount the teacher or the message. I was so convicted by these words and encouraged by Paul's heart for Timothy.

Paul doesn't just leave Timothy with a quick warning of "be careful you're being watched!" He gives him specific ways he can encourage and strengthen his own heart. He commands him to



immerse himself in scripture, especially the public reading of it. He tells him to continue preaching and teaching, the very thing he felt unsure of. Paul puts so much emphasis on these things saying, they will “save both yourself and your hearers.” Paul even gives him a slight rebuke, to “not neglect the gift you have.” Perhaps Timothy had become sheepish of his gift or thought it

hear this too! It is not me, it is Jesus that people need.

One last thing Paul says is so interesting, he says “that all may see your progress.” O how humbling that must have been! Paul is calling Timothy to let people know he is weak because as they see Jesus’ grace conquer his weakness and sin they will be encouraged. They need to know that grace wins

neediness is helpful when displayed as a pointer to Jesus’ grace at work in my life. Our pastors are young and in need of grace, our church is young and need of grace. We’re still figuring out the kinks. Am I praying for our church? For our pastors? For my community group leader? Often I can put a lot of weight on them to meet my needs perfectly, but instead I should probably buck up and get my hands dirty in the weight of prayer and interceding for them, for us, for me. O how thankful I am that in all this God holds me. God holds our church. His grace runs deep and will catch me and our church.

Servants who do not know their faith and doctrine are perilously close to the slippery precipice of death. False doctrine befriends death and gathers many into its fellowship.

wasn’t useful. But Paul calls him out and reminds him how he obtained this gift, it was prophesied over him, not just by Paul but by a whole group of elders. Paul is essentially saying in these exhortations, “Buck up! You are called to this. It has been affirmed by many. It is not your strength you need, it is Jesus. Depend on him! That’s who they need too!” O how often my heart needs to

out and the best way to do that is to let them in. That is so hard. It is so hard to let people see my weaknesses, my sin, but I think the key is remembering we are all weak, needy sinners. Our pastors and deacons are weak needy sinners in need of grace just as much as you and I.

These few verses have been so helpful and convicting for me in several ways. I am young and in need of grace, but my

## Day 1 – 1 Timothy 4:11-12

- ① What is Paul instructing Timothy to do? How do you think Timothy internalized and received these instructions from Paul and what did it look like for Timothy to carry out these instructions in the local church?
- ② Why does Paul bring up Timothy's age? How old was Timothy and what do you think was the average age of his congregation? What things does Paul want Timothy to exemplify? Why are these important? See 1 Corinthians 16:10-11, 2 Timothy 2:22-23, and Titus 2:7-8.
- ③ How does your attitude and actions impact your fellow members of the church? How can you set a good example for those in your community group? Do you think your involvement, attendance, attitude, and actions impact those in your community group?



## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 4:13-14

- 1 Define “devote”. Describe the three things Paul asks Timothy to devote himself to. What is different between these three? Why are all three important?
- 2 Define “neglect”. What gift did Timothy receive? Why is it so important for Timothy to not neglect this?
- 3 The public reading of the Bible was critical since so few had access to it on their own. How many times did you open your personal Bible this week and what did each time look like (reading or in depth study)? Do you want this to change in any way next week? How many times did you hear the Bible read out loud in a group this week? Do you want this to change in any way next week?

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 4:15-16

- 1 Define “practice”. What should Timothy be practicing? Why is devotion important?
- 2 What does Paul mean when he tells Timothy to keep a close watch on himself? Why is keeping a close watch on your life important? Define “persist”. What should Timothy “persist” in doing and why is this helpful and necessary? See Acts 20:28.
- 3 What do you practice on a daily or weekly basis? Getting older sneaks up on us. You aren't as young as you once were. So, what should you be practicing, given your age and stage in life? Who might be helped and encouraged in your life if they saw progress? What progress would these people want to see?

## Day 4 – Cross Reference

### Study Philippians 2:12-13

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

### Notes

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Sixteen

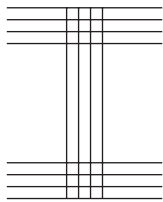
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# The Family of Faith

Emma Rains

# The Family of Faith

## Emma Rains



In 1 Timothy 5:1-8, Paul gives Timothy a few instructions about the church family, widows, and earthly households. One, he says, treat the members of God's household as your own family. Two, make sure that the church takes care of widows who have no family, but also make sure that widows who *do* have family are being cared for by their relatives. Three, instruct everyone to provide for their own relatives. Simple, right? But I left out a few things: "She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in

supplications and prayers night and day, she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives" (6). "But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (8) Well, that took things up a notch. Apparently, this family stuff is a big deal.

What can we learn from this passage? For one thing, God cares that believers honor each other as family (1-2) and that they honor their own earthly families (3-8). Jesus says basi-

or his mother, 'Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban' (that is, given to God) then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down" (Matthew 7:9-13). Both Paul and Jesus condemn those who use the church (or the law) as an excuse to shirk the responsibility of caring for earthly family. The believer must care for the church *as* a family, *and* for his own family, especially widows.

God cares about the family, and he designed both earthly families and the church family to provide for those without resources. All over Scripture, God loves to show his faithfulness to those who have nowhere to turn.

cally the same thing in Matthew: "For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.' But you say, 'If a man tells his father

This provides an opportunity for believers to grow in maturity. Children and grandchildren must provide for a widow before allowing the church to step in, so that they will "learn to show



# When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over them again. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow Deut. 24:20

godliness” (3). Caring for all family is a really big deal, and Paul makes sure Timothy can’t miss this: a few verses later believers are warned that neglect of family is equal to denying the faith. Anyone who does so is “worse than an unbeliever” (8). Family is the training ground for godliness, and the stakes are high.

God cares about the family, and he designed both earthly families and the church family to provide for those without resources. All over Scripture, God loves to show his faithfulness to those who have nowhere to turn. Just look at the story of Israel: small, rejected, struggling to find a homeland, enslaved, rebellious; yet God rescues again and again. In Deuteronomy, we find his care for the widows and fatherless in every detail. Even the olive trees matter: “When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over them again. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow” (Deuteronomy 24:20). God “executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and cloth-

ing” (Deuteronomy 10:18), and he calls his people to do the same. The church and the family work in conjunction to provide blessing for everyone involved. The natural family provides for its own, and the church family provides where there is no natural family. In all situations, the widows, those without resources, receive what they need, and those who provide gain maturity and please God. “She who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives” sounds harsh. But in light of God’s design for church and family, I think Paul is saying that the widow who uses this generosity to be idle and greedy does not gain any of the blessing that God intended, not from how he designed the natural family to work nor from the church. In God’s economy, neediness is an opportunity for blessing, both for the receiver and for the giver.

In my life, I feel the pull of our independence-driven culture daily. It says not to be hampered by caring too much about anyone else, especially the particularly needy. My own heart adds that church should exist for me, rather

than that I should serve those without resources. But Paul tells me the opposite: love by caring for those in need. In light of this passage, I cannot, nor can any of us, give in to these temptations. There is far too much danger in giving in, and too much blessing to be gained by living God’s way.

## Day 1 – 1 Timothy 5:1-2

- 1 Define “rebuke”. Why is rebuking an older man just not a good idea? In what situations might Timothy want to rebuke an older man in the church? Instead of rebuking him what does Paul want Timothy to do? How is gospel critical in helping Timothy make this happen?
- 2 Describe the various relationships in the church as Paul also lays out for Timothy. Describe the various interactions these groups of people have with each other in the church. Describe how you should interact with folks in these groups.
- 3 Define “respect”. In what ways could you show various folks who are older or younger or different gender respect in your church? What challenges do you think those older, younger, different gender face on a daily basis? How could you be more compassionate with each?

## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 5:3-6

- 1 Do you know any widows? Who? What is their life like? What pains or challenges do they face? Caring for widows was very important in the early church. Is it still the case now? Why is caring for widows so important for the church?
- 2 What makes a widow truly a widow? What two factors does Paul consider with whether or not a widow should be cared for? Why do you think he makes these distinctions? Should we?
- 3 Regardless if you are a widow or not, what does Paul say in 5:5-6 that is helpful for all of us? Where do you place your hope? Define “self-indulgent”. In what ways are you self-indulgent? How does the gospel change this in you?

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 5:7-8

- ① Define “reproach”. In what ways could a widow be in reproach? How does a widow be without reproach?
  
- ② What practical advice does Paul give Timothy in 5:8? How do you view your relatives?
  
- ③ How does Paul want you to treat your relatives? What practical ways can you help and serve your relatives?

# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Study Galatians 6:6-10

Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

## Notes

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Seven- teen

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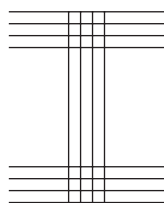


God's  
Compassionate  
Care for  
Widows

Linda Linder

# God's Compassionate Care for Widows

Linda Linder



## God Cares About Women as Illustrated in Jesus

In first century Jewish culture, women were considered to be second-class citizens, but Jesus raised the stature of women from a position of servitude to a place of value. For example, in the time-period of Jesus' earthly ministry, women were forbidden to learn from rabbis, but Jesus welcomed women into his circle of followers to learn from him.

Jesus understood the heart issues of women, as illustrated in his conversation at the well with the Samaritan woman. (John 4:4-42) Jesus protect-

ed women, like the woman caught in adultery. (John 8:2-11) Jesus cared about the physical, spiritual, and social hardships in a woman's life, as illustrated when he healed the woman with the issue of blood. (Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48) Jesus noticed the little things a woman does, like when he commended the poor widow's generosity. (Mark 12:42-44; Luke 21:1-4) And above all, Jesus disclosed his true identity most clearly to women – the Samaritan woman (John 4:26), and Mary Magdalene. (John 20:15-16)

## God Cares About Women as Illustrated in the Early Church

Jesus set the standard for how we treat each other. And then the apostle, Paul, was tasked with practically and personally establishing this standard in the local church. In his first letter to Timothy, his young coworker and liaison to the church in Ephesus, Paul gives specific instructions on how to take the examples of Jesus regarding the treatment of others and work them out in a

practical manner in the church body. Paul addresses various groups with explicit instructions: men, women, overseers, deacons, young men, older men, young women, and older women. In the 5th chapter of his letter, Paul instructs Timothy specifically on how to treat widows in the church. These instructions make clear the compassionate, practical care we are to have for one another in the body of Christ, and set criteria to guard against confusion in the local church.

## God Cares Compassionately for Widows

Paul's approach in his instructions to Timothy goes from the general to the specific. In the first sections of his letter he refers to broad categories of age and gender, and then gets more specific as he gives qualifications for church leadership. Paul, then turns to the subject of widows in the church and is quite detailed as to the responsibility of the church body to these women. Paul clearly defines who these widows are, what qualifies them to receive support,

and when the church must step in with compassionate care.

To avoid any confusion, Paul gives Timothy his definition of a widow in chapter 5, verse 5, “She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day, ....” This concise definition makes clear that the widows Paul is referring to are godly women who are very much alone.

The original word for “widow” as used in 1 Timothy 5 is *chera*. Two important points regarding the word *chera* are critical to our understanding of Paul’s instructions. First, this woman (widow, *chera*) is a woman who has had a husband, but has lost him for any reason whatsoever; i.e. death, divorce, desertion.

One of the most poignant moments in the Scriptures is when Jesus, while on the cross, provided for his mother.

Second, the term *chera* indicates that this woman is truly alone. In other words, the particular *chera* the church has responsibility for is a woman who once had a husband and now does not. She is a woman for whom no provision or support has been made. She has been left no inheritance and has no family to care for her. She is utterly alone, without resources or support.

And she is godly. The description Paul gives of the widow is very close to his depiction of the “older woman” in his letter to Titus, chapter 2:3-5. These

women, both the older woman and the widow, are to be women of reverent behavior and good reputation, self-controlled, pure, kind, hardworking, hospitable, etc. Clearly, Paul is saying that the widows the church must compassionately care for are godly women who are truly alone.

Blessedly, the church can encourage younger widows to marry again. Of course, they must not marry just anyone simply because they are lonely. But young widows are encouraged to remarry within the body of Christ and to enjoy a full and fulfilling life.

As women in Christ, we are called to make it our aim to be godly women of good report. We have many examples in the Bible of such women, from Jochebed to Anna, from Sarah to Mary

and Martha. We have encouragement in the Proverbs and from Paul. And the church of Christ is called to give freedom to women to learn, flourish, and be safely and compassionately cared for. When a woman’s focus is to live her life according to biblical principles and when the local church puts these principles into action, a beautiful, safe environment is created. Jesus illustrated the heart of God toward women when he walked on this earth, and the body of Christ in the local church now carries on his example.

We must always remember that God cares about us. And if we doubt that, we can look to the cross.

## Compassionate Care from the Cross

One of the most poignant moments in the Scriptures is when Jesus, while on the cross, provided for his mother. Mary, who was a widow by this time, had followed Jesus to the foot of the cross. She apparently was the only one from her immediate family who was there at the moment of Jesus’ death. She was alone. In his gospel, John describes this dramatic moment in chapter 19:26-27. John writes, “When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.” As he hung on the cross in his dying moments, Jesus spoke to his widowed mother and to John.

John, referring to himself as the “disciple whom he loved”, takes on the responsibility of caring for Jesus’ mother and Mary is secure in his care.

Jesus made provision for his beloved and widowed mother. And in doing this we see the very heart of God – full of compassionate care for all his people, perhaps especially for the widow.

## Day 1 – 1 Timothy 5:9-10

- ① What qualifications does Paul put on which widows should be helped by the church? Why do you think Paul does this? Which widows does Paul want to help the most? See 1 Corinthians 7:39-40.
- ② What aspects of the godly widows provide a picture that younger women should aspire to?
- ③ Do you know any widows in the church? Do you look up to them? How can you help them?

## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 5:11-12

- ① What concerns does Paul have in mind with certain widows? What concerns does he not have? See 1 Corinthians 7:39-40.
- ② What situation is Paul trying to guard against happening with these widows?
- ③ Why is our loyalty to Christ so important? What happens if our utmost loyalty is not to Christ? What loyalties do you have in your life that may rival that of Christ? Is your faith in Christ stronger or weaker now than it was in previous years? How so?

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 5:13-16

- 1 Define “idler”. Define “gossip”. Define “busy body”. What does this look like in your life and how do these things tend to crop up? How do you fight the urge to live like this? How does the gospel change your heart to fight this?
- 2 What types of things or specific things did you say this week that you should not have said? How do you change this moving forward to help correct this?
- 3 What final instructions does Paul have in regard to widows?

# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Study 2 Thessalonians 3:10-15

For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

### Notes

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Eighteen

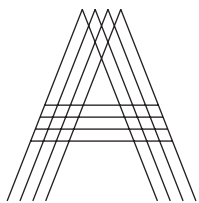
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Walk Wisely  
With Your  
Elders

Mike Polley

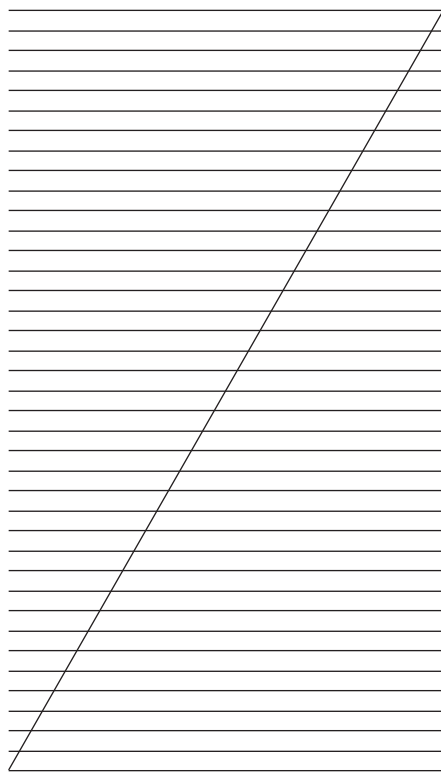
# Walk Wisely With Your Elders

## Mike Polley



As Paul progresses through his first letter to Timothy, he moves into several instructions on how the body of Christ should conduct itself. At the beginning of Chapter 5, Paul lays out general guidelines for how we ought to interact with one another. He says “to [treat older men] as you would a father. Treat younger men like brothers, older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity.” (v.1-2) This is the foundation for how we ought to view one another. We are to interact as the family of God in all purity. Then in 1 Tim. 5:3-6:2, Paul gives more specific

instructions about widows, elders and slaves. 1 Timothy 5:17-24 addresses how Timothy and the church should help its elders as they serve and lead the church. In this short paragraph, there are five instructions mentioned to guide Timothy and the believers in Ephesus as they follow their elders.



### 1. Consider them worthy of double honor (v.17)

Paul calls them to consider the elder that rules well, as worthy of double honor. He grounds this with two references, one from the Old Testament and one from the New. Both examples make it clear that the elder should be physically compensated for his work. The Ox should be allowed to feed while he produces food for others (Deut 25:4). The laborer deserves his wages and payment for his work. Paul elsewhere makes his point even clearer. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul calls him to “share in suffering as a good soldier for Jesus Christ” (2:3). In a letter to the Corinthians, before quoting Deut. 25:4 again (1 Cor. 9:9), he asks several rhetorical questions. “Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? (1 Cor. 9:7) The point is not that every elder must be paid, but that they all could be based on the work they do in leading the church, especially those that labor in preaching and

teaching (1 Tim. 5:17). The soldiers and shepherds that serve full-time should be well supplied. They are an example to the flock (1 Peter 5:3), and those who teach are judged with greater strictness (James 3:1). So it makes sense that those who are judged stricter should have the greater honor if they do it well. It is a help to us that our pastors are well supplied, so that they may serve and lead without any unnecessary burdens. Why muzzle the ox when it is treading? The more the ox thrives the more we may thrive.

But beyond physical needs, there are many other ways we can show honor and help our shepherds thrive. We can honor them through encouragement. Gal. 6:6 says, "The one who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches." The language here is more than a suggestion. It is worded in such a way that to not do this, implies that we are keeping from them what is due. Hebrews 13:17 says, "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you." It is for our good that we help our shepherds thrive.

## 2. Guard them from erroneous accusations (v.19)

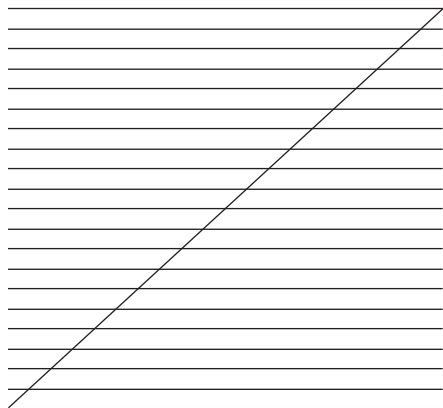
It can be easy to grumble and complain. For many of us, it may be easier to critique someone then to commend them. Those in leadership are clear targets for Satan, and can be tempting targets for us. How easy it can be to complain, or to blame, rather than address my own heart, or have a clarifying conversation. We may make an observation, and come up with an interpretation quickly, without even recognizing that we did it. Because of sin, we give ourselves too much credit and often give others too little. So let us strive to guard one another and give honor to one another, especially those that lead us. And let us be careful with our critiques and be thought through if we must make an accusation.

## 3. Guard them from unrepentant sin (v.20)

Those who lead are examples, but far from perfect ones. Right after Paul cautions them not to chase any charge against an elder, he commands them to rebuke the one where it is found to be true. Those whose sins are public, because they are an example to the flock, are rebuked in public to minimize the damage done and caution others from following their erroneous path. This is true and right, but what is implied here is also extremely important. Verse 20 says, "those who persist in sin" are the ones subject to the public rebuke. For someone to persist in sin means they continue regardless of being confronted and enlightened to their sin. I think our culture can think more in the category of disqualification than development. Indeed, disqualification is right in many circumstances, and the Bible gives guidance here, but the Bible also guides us in confrontation and restoration of an error. We are called to help sharpen our leaders and prevent their sin from growing unchecked. Leaders are shepherds of the flock, but also are sheep themselves. If we see them getting entangled in sin we should restore them, as they so often do to us. If we fail to restore them a small thing we may need to remove them in a big thing, and potentially because we didn't guard them well.

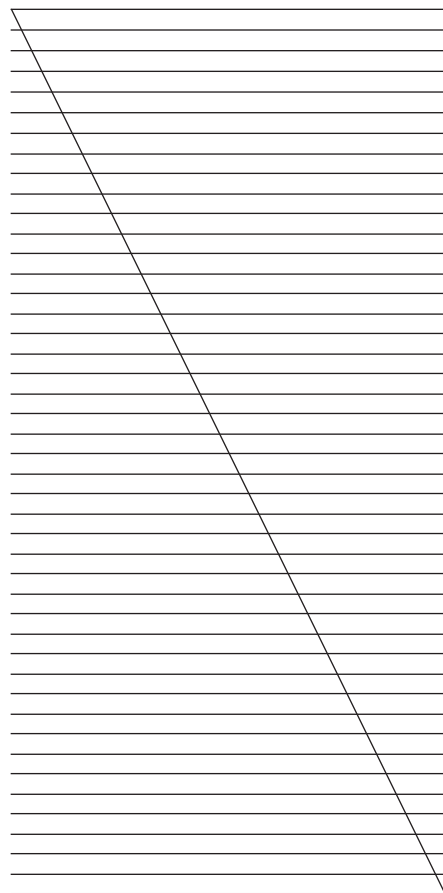
#### 4. Do 1-3 with impartiality (v.21)

If numbers 1-3 address what we should do, numbers 4 and 5 address how we should go about doing it. Paul charges Timothy and the church to do this “without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality” (v.21). We would like to think that we are objective but we are not, not perfectly at least. I would like to think that I am on the more objective/impartial side of things, but watch a Notre Dame football game with me and you’ll be quick to disagree! My wife and I have only done premarital counseling for a few couples. During one of the training classing I took, the instructor said, “You need to know and acknowledge your bias, because you all will bias”. Especially in marriage counseling, there will be one person you will relate to more than the other. If I don’t acknowledge that fact, I may favor that person without even knowing it. In counseling of others or in our judgments, we must fight to be impartial. Our sinful hearts will favor some people or leaders, and be frustrated by others. May God help us discern the difference between our personal preferences and what may or may not be sin.



#### 5. Do 1-3 with wisdom (v.24-25)

Last, we desperately need wisdom. Verses 24-25 say that some sin and good works are plain to all, but some sin and good works may also be hidden. We need God’s help and guidance as we seek to follow, encourage, and sometimes confront our elders. We can’t see their hearts and their hidden deeds, whether good or bad. So let us wisely encourage them, restore them, prayer for them, and follow them. Let us not exclude them from the many “one another” commands in the Bible. They are sheep too, and need the Chief Shepherd like us (1 Peter. 5:4). Let us be a royal priesthood to one another, but also to our leaders.





## Day 1 – 1 Timothy 5:17-19

- ① Define “rule”. Define “labor” and “toil”. What type of authority does the pastor/elder have? What activities/responsibilities do pastors/elders do that is unique to their role? What does “double honor” mean? See 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22.
  
- ② How is the Old Testament passage Deuteronomy 25:4 applied here? See Luke 10:7 and Matthew 10:10.
  
- ③ Why does Paul add that the guideline that a charge against an elder should only be admitted if there are two or three witnesses? What types of things in a church can go wrong when accusing a pastor/elder of something? Describe the various types of people that can be in the church who all have access to accusing a pastor/elder of something. Does this passage say that a pastor/elder is perfect and untouchable? Explain.



## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 5:20-21

- 1 Define “persist”. Define “sin”. Define “rebuke”. Who is Paul referring to with “as for those”? What are these people doing? How is Timothy to handle these people? See 2 Timothy 2:14.
- 2 Define “prejudging”. Define “partiality”. Why are these things bad? What instruction does Paul give Timothy in his leadership? Who does Timothy ultimately report to and operate under?
- 3 What sphere of influence do you, or who do you have authority over based on your various roles in life? How are you tempted to be “partial” or have favorites? Describe a time that you showed partiality and what were the consequences?

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 5:22-25

- 1 Define “hasty”. What are some final instructions that Paul gives timothy? What is “laying on of hands” (Acts 6:6)? Why is it a bad thing to be “hasty” with the laying on of hands? What can we glean from the fact that Paul includes physical health advice for Timothy?
- 2 Write out and study 5:24-25. Define “conspicuous”. What is Paul teaching us? See Proverbs 10:9.
- 3 In what ways or in what situations are you tempted to take part in the sin of others? What does that look like in your daily life? How do you keep yourself pure? Read 2 John.

# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Study Romans 12:3-8

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

## Notes

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Nineteen

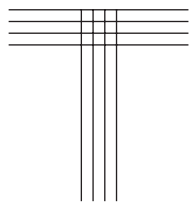
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All Sufficiency

Linda Sandager

# All Sufficiency

## Linda Sandager



Teach and urge these things. If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.

1 TIM 6:2B-5

“He is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing.” This is what Paul says in 1 Timothy about those who teach a different doctrine. Those who do not agree with “the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness” (1 Tim 6:3).

In his letter to Timothy, Paul takes false teaching very seriously. He addresses it throughout the letter. So what are these false teachings? In chapter 1, he brings up myths and endless genealogies (1 Tim 1:4), in chapter 4 devotion to deceitful spirits and demons (1 Tim 4:1) and an unhealthy craving for controversy and quarrel for words (1 Tim 6:4). Many of us would say that we don’t get involved with myths and endless genealogies. Many of us cringe at the very thought of following deceitful spirits and demons.

Then, Paul throws in another way we can swerve from the truth. “Imagining that godliness is a means of gain.” (1 Tim 6:5). What many of us forget is that this is also a false doctrine. Even now you might be thinking, “I don’t believe I can earn God’s love and blessings

by being good.” I exhort you to think about the conversations you have with other believers. Are these conversations about Christ? Or are these conversations only about what ministry you’ve been doing lately? That new teaching you’ve found online? That new app that helps you memorize verses? The amount of Christian meetings you attend throughout the week? The amount of morning quiet times you can cross off the list? These activities and resources are not evil and they do help train us in righteousness. They also help us pursue the Lord and he uses these tools to sanctify us and help us depend on his strength. Sometimes, however, they can distract us from the core foundation of the gospel and we can begin to believe that through them we are made righteous, opposed to redemption through Christ alone. And even if we don’t believe that we can earn our way to God through doing these things, we may begin to drift into the lie that God will bless us only after we are good enough.



## Paul's Exhortation

I love how Paul says in 1 Timothy 1:12-16:

I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent... and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

Paul could have talked about what a powerful citizen he was before he became a believer. He could have said that he received mercy because of his good works. Instead, he brings up his

insufficiency at that time and applies the gospel to his own life. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost."

## Godliness with Contentment

But godliness with contentment is great gain

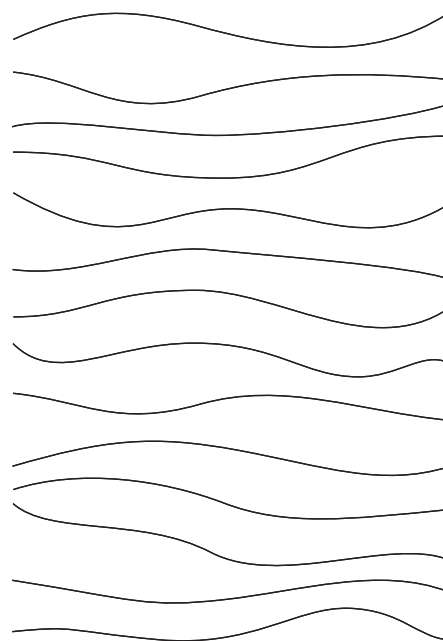
1 TIM 6:6

Right after Paul warns about people who imagine that godliness is a means of gain, he says "godliness with contentment is great gain." It almost seems like a contradiction. When we look at "contentment" however, we find the same word used in 2 Corinthians 9:9-11:

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

The Lord is the one who gives us sufficiency through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is able to make all grace abound to us. Although we are

the worst of sinners, his grace overflows for us and helps us to pursue godliness. Through the sufficiency that comes through Christ's sacrifice and the new life we receive in him, we are able to abound in every good work. May we never forget that all is grace. He has given us all sufficiency. Therefore, "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith" (1 Tim 6:11).



# Day 1 – 1 Timothy 6:1-2a

- ① Describe what “bondservant” was like in Paul’s day. What is Paul really after when he speaks of bondservants honoring their masters? What is Paul not saying or implying with this instruction? How is this similar to what Paul has already said in the letter (2:2, 3:7, 5:7, 5:14)? See Ephesians 6:5-8, Colossians 3:22-25, and 1 Peter 2:18-25.
  
- ② Describe the relationship and what to watch out for and focus on between a Christian worker and an unbelieving boss versus a Christian worker and a believing boss.
  
- ③ Describe your work situation. Are there any Christians in your workplace? Describe the health of your relationship with your co-workers and boss. How can you be a better witness to them of Jesus?

## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 6:2b-5

- 1 Define “urge”. What should Timothy teach versus what would the false teachers teach? Lay out the if/then clause from Paul. See Titus 3:9.
- 2 What important elements are included with teaching that accords with godliness? How does Paul describe the false teachers? See 1 Corinthians 8:2-3 and 2 Timothy 2:14-15.
- 3 Describe a time where you may have been promoting an unclear or distorted gospel message? How have you improved or changed this? Describe a teacher that you heard or know that you think is a false teacher. What about their message do you think is untrue?

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 6:6-7

- ① What is “godliness with contentment”? What will you gain if you obtain this?
- ② “For” – why is “godliness with contentment” something to pursue and cherish? How does an eternal perspective help you avoid greed?
- ③ How can money negatively impact your contentment? Study Hebrews 13:5.

# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Study Colossians 3:23-25

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

## Notes

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Twenty

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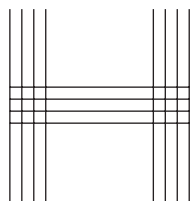


What's So  
Scary About  
'Love of  
Money'?

David Mathis

# What's So Scary About 'Love of Money'?

David Mathis



How Christians handle money speaks volumes about our Christ. It's one of our greatest opportunities today to show ourselves distinct from the world, or just like it.

Jesus talked about money more than any other temptation. More than sex. More than power. More than heaven and hell. Some of his best-known words, in his most-remembered sermon, strike right at the heart of the polar reality deep beneath all the practical shades of gray: "You cannot serve God and money" (Matthew 6:24).

Money represents value, the value of God's created world, and humanity's God-commissioned efforts to "subdue it" into goods and services for our flourishing (Genesis 1:28) and to move around and exchange such God-ordained value with others. It is not money itself that the apostles warn us of but "the love of money" (1 Timothy 6:10; Hebrews 13:5).

## Money Talks

When Jesus explained the parable of the sower, he identified the thorns choking out his gospel as "the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things" (Mark 4:19). "Love of money" wouldn't be an unfair summary. When the apostle Paul warned of the climactic evil to come "in the last days," he said, "People will be lovers of self, *lovers of money*, proud, arrogant, abusive" (2 Timothy 3:2) — anticipated by the religious leaders of Jesus's day, the Pharisees, who were also "lovers of money" (Luke 16:24).

Jesus also told the parable of the rich fool, who instead of trusting in God for

his future, built bigger barns to trust in his surplus. The fool said to himself, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry" (Luke 12:19). Yet in an ironic twist on the saying "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die," he didn't even see tomorrow. God said, "Fool! This night your soul is required of you" (Luke 12:20).

Jesus's point for his people is plain: be "rich toward God," which means handling money in such a way that we show God, not money, to be our greatest treasure. Or, to put it negatively, do not "lay up for yourselves treasures on earth" (Luke 12:21; Matthew 6:19–20) but "be on your guard against all covetousness" (Luke 12:15) — for which Jesus gives this penetrating rationale: "for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15).

## Showing the Soul

Christians, of all people, have come to know that *our life* does not consist in what we have on earth but whom we have in heaven. We look upward, with

eternity in view, to “take hold of that which is truly life” (1 Timothy 6:19), not the temporal and earthly. And yet the money-loving world in which we live constantly dulls us to what is truly life.

Money is a powerful revealer of the human soul. What we do (and don’t do) with money puts the depths of our inner person on display — in ways we often do not see (and show) otherwise. Money provides a wonderful and terrible objectifying glimpse into one’s heart.

The human heart is deep and complex, the very seat of subjectivity. Who knows the heart of man besides his maker? Well, one startling peek into a man’s subjective heart is his treatment of objective dollars and cents. Which is why our handling of money is such a wonderful opportunity for Christians to show the world the value of Christ — and for pastors to lead the way.

### Not Greedy of Filthy Lucre

“Not a lover of money” is an especially vital qualification for Christian leaders. The way the leadership goes, the church soon will follow. God appoints a

plurality of pastor-elders in the church (Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1) not only to teach and govern together (1 Timothy 5:17), but also to serve as a collective example to the flock of the healthy Christian life (1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Peter 5:3). What leaders do with money — and all Christians besides — is no small thing.

Love of money, then, is not an isolated flaw or foible. It is a penetrating peek into the recesses of a soul’s rebellion against God. In due course, the truth will come out.

Of the fifteen qualifications mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 for the church’s lead office, “not a lover of money” (memorably in the KJV, “not greedy of filthy lucre”) may be the most conspicuous when compared with other lists. The synonymous attribute “not greedy for gain” appears both in Titus 1:7 and 1 Peter 5:2, as well as for deacons in 1 Timothy 3:8, while Titus 1:11 rebukes false teachers who are “teach-

ing for shameful gain.” The single word translated “not a lover of money” in 1 Timothy 3:3 (Greek *afilarguron*) appears again in Hebrews 13:5, this time for the whole church: “Keep your life free from love of money.”

Why is it essential to have pastors who aren’t seduced by money? Not simply so that pastoral teaching and deci-

sions aren’t sold to the highest bidder, but chiefly because of how pointedly our handling of money shows what we believe about God. Hebrews 13:5 makes the connection crystal clear. Why “keep your life free from love of money”? “For he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’” Why do you need more money when you have God? Why pine over acquiring more when you have a Father in heaven who owns everything?

## Root of All Evils

At the heart of Christianity is the claim that God is our true life (Luke 12:15). It is tragic beyond words for a professing Christian to pursue life in more and more earthly possessions. Modern society constantly inundates us with messaging that implies true life consists in more stuff and greater spending power, while the apostle Paul warns us, in 1 Timothy 6, that the love of money is not a small danger in the human soul. Literally, it is “the root of all evils” — meaning, according to John Piper, that love of money

corresponds to the root longing for the things money can buy minus God. That is why all these *many desires* “plunge people into ruin and destruction” (1 Timothy 6:9). . . . [A]ll evils come from that root desire — the desire for anything minus God. No exceptions. . . . all sin, “all evils,” come from this desire, this love — represented in 1 Timothy 6:10 by love for the currency of satisfaction minus God.” (“Is Love of Money Really the Root of All Evils?”)

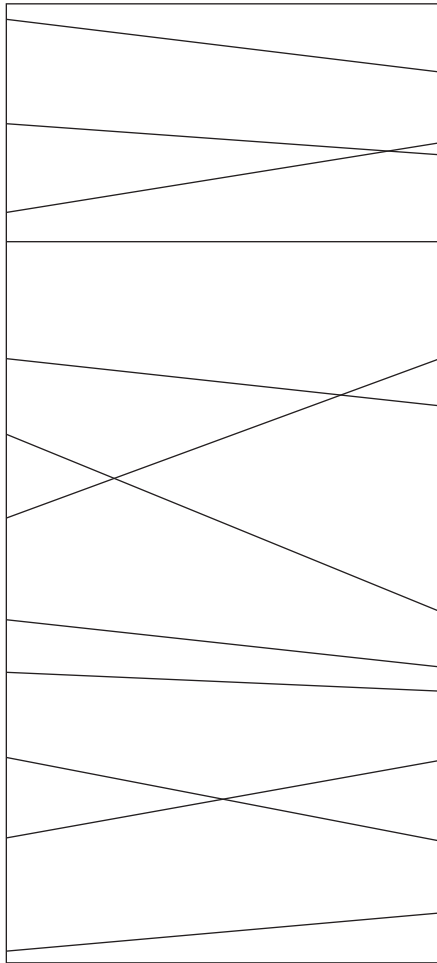
In other words, the kind of heart that loves money (more and more human resources) in place of God is the kind of heart that produces all manner of evil, and the very essence of evil. Love of money, then, is not an isolated flaw or foible. It is a penetrating peek into the recesses of a soul’s rebellion against God. In due course, the truth will come out.

## Cheerful Givers

But thankfully we have more to look for, and pray for — in ourselves and in our leaders — than simply “not a lover of money.” Hebrews 13 and 1 Timothy 6 both are explicit about the positive virtues as well: “be content with what you have” (Hebrews 13:5; also 1 Timothy 6:8) and “be generous and ready to share” (1 Timothy 6:18). Why line our lives now with gold when copper will do? Our gold is coming. Even the streets will be paved with gold then — can you imagine the furnishings in heaven’s mansions?

When God does the miracle of unseating love for money in a human heart, he grows in its place an increasing eagerness to give, and do so with joy. “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7).

God is filling his church with people who are only free from the tyranny of money, but who know, and regularly recall, the words of Jesus: “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). God is remaking us into those who are not reluctant givers, but cheerful ones — and not just individually but together, in order that our church too becomes a cheerful giver as a body.



# Day 1 – 1 Timothy 6:8-10

- ① What bare minimums is Paul saying that people need in life to be content? What are the few simple things in life that you need to be content? What things do you add to your life to try and make you happy in the ultimate sense? How do these things have an allure of ultimate happiness yet not measure up?
  
- ② Define “desire”. Define “snare”. Are all desires to be rich wrong? What issues can come with the desire to be rich? Why is this desire bad?
  
- ③ Define “craving”. What do you crave? What is the issue with craving money? What types of problems can come from this? How can the love of money cause someone to leave the faith?

## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 6:11

- ① “But” – Lay out the contrast from the previous verses and 6:11. Define “Flee”. What are we supposed to flee? What does that look like?
- ② Define “pursue”. What should we pursue? Describe each. See Proverbs 15:9.
- ③ What in your life right now should you be “fleeing” and yet you are not? What steps can you take to flee from these?

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 6:12

- ① What does it mean and what does it look like to “fight the good fight of faith”? See 1 Corinthians 9:25.
- ② Define and describe “take hold”. What are you supposed to take hold of and why should you? See Philippians 3:12.
- ③ What does “fight for your faith” look like right now in your life? How did your fight go in the past week? What challenges are attacking your faith right now and how are you responding? What are you turning to for help and is that the right thing to be turning to?



# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Study Matthew 13:22

As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

## Notes

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

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# Week Twenty- one

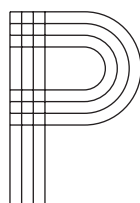
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We Have  
Nothing  
to Lose

Eric and  
Rachel Beise

# We Have Nothing to Lose

## Eric and Rachel Beise



Paul primarily does two things as he closes this first letter to Timothy: he gives a renewed set of charges and then draws Timothy's gaze upwards to behold Jesus. And, because Paul couldn't help but include some more apostolic advice, he throws in one more practical specifically for the rich in the church. Paul's intentionality to point to Jesus' identity and reign immediately after pointing out Timothy's calling instructs us: We must behold Jesus and have him orient our perspective in order to live out our call intentionally and practically in light of who he is.

Calling to mind Jesus's identity and authority is a way of wiping off the windshield of life to clear our perspective. Paul knew that Timothy would never be able to fulfil the charge that he was called to without beholding Jesus as he is. We will not make it in our lives either if we do not do the same. Paul shares with us an incredible list of Jesus's attributes that we are to behold and worship. Take time to let these truths about our Jesus blow your mind. First Jesus is "Blessed": fully happy and completely set apart as holy. Jesus is "only sovereign": omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent - nothing happens out of his sight or his power. Jesus is the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords": He is above any and all authorities that ever have been or will be. Jesus "alone has immortality" and "dwells in unapproachable light" yet is invisible.

Death has no power over him. Our king Jesus is deserving of all of our both honor and eternal dominion forever and ever over all created things on earth and in heaven and under the earth. There is no being or thing or creature that is not under his reign. Jesus has eternal dominion over all things for all time.

Comparatively, we have temporal stewardship over a little for a limited time. We must keep that perspective as we listen to the practical teaching for the rich that Paul gives following his charge to Timothy and exaltation of Christ as it is especially relevant to our lives. We are the rich in this present age (1 Tim 6:17). We are among the richest peoples in finances and resources in the world. We are also rich in time and energy. We may not feel like we have time and energy but when was the last time you had filter or boil the water you

It is through the deposit that we, like Timothy, have been entrusted with, namely the gospel of Jesus that we are eternally rich and have all we would ever need.

use? How about your kitchen? Does it have a refrigerator allowing you to store meat for more than a few hours? We have been given abundant riches but as we know, our human hearts are weak and the love of riches is a slippery slope. This abundance could lead to our ruin or to massive gospel advancement in these cities. So, let us heed Paul's exhortation, "Do not be haughty or set our hopes on the uncertainty of riches" (1 Tim 6:17) but instead set our hope on God. We need to behold Jesus as he is in Paul's exaltation early in the text and be changed by him to use our riches to pursue gospel advancement in our own hearts and these cities.

It is through the deposit that we, like Timothy, have been entrusted with, namely the gospel of Jesus that we are eternally rich and have all we would ever need. That is our true treasure and that is what Paul implores Timothy to hold onto in verse 20 when he says, "guard the deposit entrusted to you." (1 Tim 6:20) As we behold Jesus and the gospel, we will become more like him, and in the arena of riches that means

abounding in goodness. It is because of the generosity of goodness of our King that we would ever be able to be generous. Because our hope is in Him, we are free to imitate Christ in his goodness through generosity.

After beholding Christ and getting true perspective, we are called to intentional and practical action. Let's "do good, to be rich in good works" (1 Tim 6:18) and pursue "taking hold of what is truly life" (1 Tim 6:19) that Jesus has secured in eternity for us. We have an amazing opportunity to show the radical generosity of our King. Let's seek the Lord fervently in prayer to see what He is doing and calling us to in these cities. What if we opened up our homes to the 149 children in foster care waiting for a family in Hennepin county? Or meet the tangible needs of the 30 children without a home every day in Ramsey county? What if we volunteer our money and time to work with ministries to end the rampant sex trafficking that goes on in our cities? Or use our positions of influence to advocate for the unborn? What if we seek to bless

the widows in nursing homes? It is obvious we have been given much. Let's be faithful to where he calls us and give so much that it doesn't make sense apart from Jesus. Our King is alive and has authority over all things, we truly have nothing to lose.

# Day 1 – 1 Timothy 6:13-16

- ① What do we learn about God in 6:13? Why is the presence of God significant here? What good confession did Jesus make before Pontius Pilate? See Matthew 27:11-14 and John 18:37-38.
  
- ② What commandment is Paul referring to? How does Paul describe God and Jesus?
  
- ③ How does the glory of God and the fact that he sees all things impact how you want to live your daily life? How might this reality help keep certain aspects of life in perspective? How does the truth about God in these verses help you with a current challenge you are facing?



## Day 2 – 1 Timothy 6:17-19

- 1 Define “haughty”. Why are rich people typically haughty? Why is the gospel necessary for a rich person to be truly humble? Are riches certain or uncertain? Explain. Why is hoping in the uncertainty of riches a bad thing? Why is it better to hope in God instead of money?
- 2 How should a rich person live in this world? See James 1:9-11.
- 3 Define “store”. What do you store up? What are you hoping for with your “store house”? What do you treasure? See Matthew 6:19-21.

## Day 3 – 1 Timothy 6:20-21

- 1 Define “guard”. Define “deposit”. Define “entrust”. What is the deposit that Paul is referring to? How do you guard this deposit? Why should you guard this deposit?
- 2 Define “avoid”. What is Timothy supposed to avoid and why?
- 3 How does Paul end his letter to Timothy? How are you doing with guarding the deposit entrusted to you? What would you like to do differently? What is the most significant thing you learned in this study on 1 Timothy?

# Day 4 – Cross Reference

## Study Luke 12:13-21

Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” But he said to him, “Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?” And he said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

## Notes

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# Day 5 – Sermon Notes

A large grid of small dots for taking notes, consisting of 20 columns and 30 rows of dots, providing a structured space for writing.