

GEARING UP FOR GOD'S MISSION



from
1 TIMOTHY

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FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT



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STUDY 1

STUDY 1 - TO TIMOTHY - (1 TIMOTHY 1:1-11)

SHARE

Have you ever had something precious entrusted to you for safekeeping?
How did it make you feel?

READ 1 TIMOTHY 1:1-11

In the verses following his introductory greetings, Paul launches into his personal letter to Timothy with a barrage of strong language. "Timothy, I call on you you to charge certain people NOT to act in a particular way." List what they are not to do?



What two ways are contrasted in verse 4?

How does the "stewardship" idea fit with what Paul writes in verse 11?

We're going to see the "entrust" word come up again and again throughout the letter. Note particularly the 2 uses of the word "doctrine" (teaching) in this section (1:3, 10).

By what criteria is Timothy to distinguish sound from unsound doctrine?

MOTIVATION

In verse 5 Paul explains not only his aim but also his motivation for his charge to Timothy.

In our minds we often separate the following:

- Holding to and teaching sound doctrine
- Loving people

What warnings does Paul give in verses 6-7?

Note - their "confident assertions" may well make them sound very convincing.

The list of practices in verses 9-10 is awful and highlights the fact that we are often tempted to separate sound teaching which we see as a purely cerebral activity from godly behaviour.

- *How in verses 9-10 can we see that Paul won't allow this?*
- *Where should we expect sound teaching to lead us?*

DID YOU NOTICE?

So far in the letter Paul hasn't instructed Timothy to do anything other than silence those who are teaching error. Timothy's posture, at least for the moment, is purely defensive - strenuously so! (see 1:18). The danger to the Ephesian Christians is very real especially since it would seem that those Timothy is to oppose are from within the church.

Paul describes in verses 8-11 the purpose of the law. In what way does what he lists rub up against the prevailing culture of today?



GEARING UP

Choose one of the following to discuss with your group

- How can we use this passage to decide when or if to get involved online discussions? (think about online posts that you've seen/contributed to recently)?
- How might we use this passage to help us if we were moving cities and looking for a new church?
- How should we respond when we hear false teaching?
- The importance of us being able to observe closely the lives of those who teach God's word. How does this expose the potential weakness of online sermons, for example?

PRAY TOGETHER

STUDY 2

STUDY 2 - WAGE THE GOOD WARFARE - (1 TIMOTHY 1:12-20)

SHARE

Share with the group at what point in your life you came to embrace God's mercy to you in sending Christ into the world to die for you, saving you from your sins.

READ 1 TIMOTHY 1:12-20

1. How does the apostle Paul describe the way God's grace has been shown to him?
2. What was he like before?
3. What is different for him now at the time that he writes?
4. "But I received mercy..." appears twice. (verses 13 & 16) How do they differ?



TRUSTWORTHY

Paul qualifies the key statement he makes in verse 15 as being "trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance".

- *Why the emphasis here?*
- *What might have others been saying?*
- *In what ways can we be tempted NOT to insist as strongly as Paul does here?*
- *How can we ensure that this saying stays front and centre in our hearts and minds?*

At first sight, Paul seems to use himself as example (verse 16)

- *In reality however who or what is the real example?*
- *How does this example speak to you?*
- *When in your life has God shown his patience to you?*
- *Why was Paul such an appropriate person to be entrusted with preaching God's gospel?*

Paul rounds off this section with an amazing flourish giving praise and honour to God in the light of His great mercy in Christ (verse 17). When we recognize our unworthiness and the unmerited kindness that God has shown us what better way to respond then to give God all the glory!

In 1:18-20 Paul returns to his charge to Timothy. In 1:3 the call was for Timothy to silence those who were teaching error. Now, with the battle lines drawn, Timothy is to continue to wage the good fight.

- How does Timothy's own life factor in this?
- Where in verses 18-20 do we see Paul emphasizing again the close link between teaching and behaviour?

GEARING UP

What does it look like for you to "wage the good warfare"? In what areas in your life do you struggle to:

- *hold on to the faith?*
- *live in accordance with it?*

Whom can you be praying for, that the Lord would show his perfect patience towards them?

PRAY TOGETHER

Remind yourself this week of the saying that is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance. Ask the living God to anchor this truth deep in your heart. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

STUDY 3

STUDY 3 - SALVATION FOR ALL (1 TIMOTHY 2:1-7)

SHARE

How often does praying for all people figure in our prayers? Have you found yourself limiting those for whom you pray to family, friends or work colleagues?

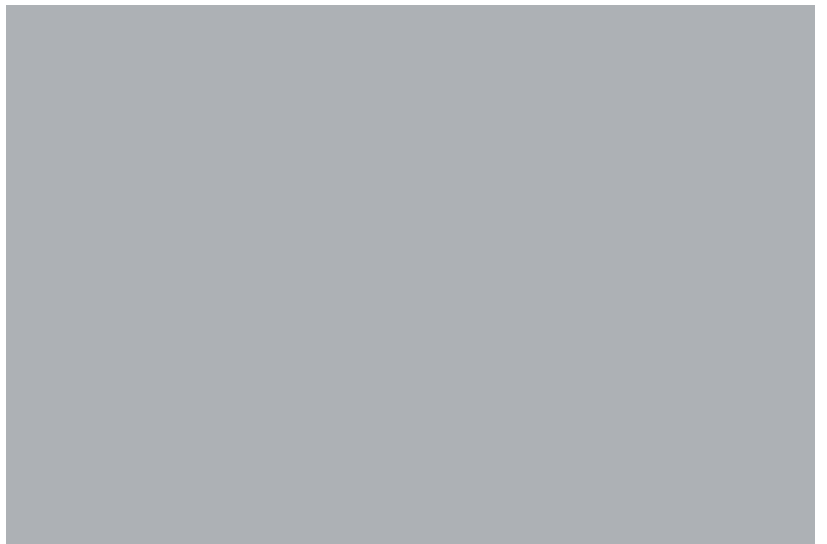
READ 1 TIMOTHY 2:1-7

Can you remember what we prayed for:

- At last sunday's service?
- In Growth Group last week?

How do we measure up compared with what Paul asks of the church where Timothy is serving?

Why does Paul encourage people to pray for these things?



What extraordinary things do we learn in verses 4-7 about:

- *God the Father?*
- *Jesus?*
- *Paul?*

1. *What, according to Paul does to "come to the knowledge of the truth" consist of?*
2. *How does Paul's outline of the truth in 2:5-7 contrast with the myths, speculations and endless genealogies of the false teachers in 1:4?*
3. *What is Paul's particular role in this?*

The "one God" of verse 5 echos the great Old Testament statement of Israel's faith in Deuteronomy 6:4. Paul is saying something new here however. And it has to do with the reach of message of the gospel. Where in this section do we see Paul claiming that the message of the gospel reaches beyond the bounds of people of Israel?

"...one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus...."

1. What is a mediator?
2. What does this say about other ways of seeking to be right with God?
3. What does verse 6 tell us about the way that Jesus enacted his mediatory role?

Paul's preaching, his message and his person are all intimately tied to the message of mediation through Jesus Christ which he has just outlined.

GEARING UP

We've read in verse 4 what God's desires. If it's good enough for God, what about us!

- *How can we let this section of Paul's letter shape our desires in life?*

We are so often shaped by our sinful desires.

- *How might we retrain our desires to bring them in line with what God desires?*

Brainstorm some concrete plans that you can put in place to broaden the scope of our Growth Group prayers.

- *In what ways would you like to change the priority of prayer and your prayer patterns in the light of this passage?*

PRAY TOGETHER

STUDY 4

STUDY 4 - MEN & WOMEN IN GOD'S HOUSEHOLD - (1 TIMOTHY 2:8-15)

What stance do you want to have when the Bible instructs you to live significantly at odds with the prevailing culture?

READ VERSES 8-12

What do you find most attractive about these verses?

What do you find most challenging about them?



At first reading we might think that Paul's instructions to men are significantly more straightforward than those to women. Is this the case? Why? Why not? Share your answers.

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS

1. How does what Paul writes in verse 8 tie in with the previous verses? (What is the "then" there for?).
2. How is the way that men are called to respond especially appropriate in the light of the gospel truths of verses 3-7?
3. How might verse 8 differ from what generally comes most naturally to men?

How can we help creatively apply this teaching in our church meetings to:

Husbands

Single men

Teenage males



What does Paul mean by "in every place" in 2:8?

How is men giving themselves to prayer an antidote to quarrelling?

Ask the men in your group to share with the whole group how they feel about Paul's instruction here.

Ask the women to share with the group their thoughts about what Paul is asking of Christian men.

CHRISTIAN SISTERS

READ 1 TIMOTHY 2:9-10

Before getting into the details, ask the women to share with the whole group how they feel about these verses.

Likewise ask the men to share their thoughts about the way women are called to respond.

- *What does godliness look like for a Christian woman?*
- *Is Paul encouraging women to pay little attention to or neglect their outward appearance? If not, what is he seeking to emphasize here? (It seems that the issue is about rich clothing being used as a symbol of power and status rather than immodesty)*
- *Can you think of a woman you know who dresses with good works?*

READ 1 TIMOTHY 2:11-12

Paul is not instructing men and women about how they are to behave in general. He is concerned about how they act, especially as they meet as God's assembled people, "the church of the living God - a pillar and buttress of the truth." (3:15).

These 2 verses form a unit in which women's quietness forms a bracket at the beginning and the end.

Literally "Women/wives in quietness, let them learn in all submissiveness.....but to be in quietness." vv 11-12

The word “quietness” here has a range of meanings. It can mean silence, although this would put this passage at odds with what Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 11:4-5, where women are praying and prophesying in the church gathering. (NB the word “wife” and “woman” here, is the same word in the original). In 1 Timothy 2, in asking women to be silent, Paul is more likely to be emphasizing their learning quietly rather than being silent.

READ 1 TIMOTHY 2:13-15

What 3 reasons does Paul give to argue that women should not teach or exercise authority over a man in the gathered Christian assembly?

Creation

What is significant about the fact that Adam preceded Eve temporally in the order of creation?

Fall

Adam was not deceived but he sinned. From your reading of Genesis 3, why did the serpent approach Eve rather than Adam?

Nothing is being said here about Eve's inherent gullibility. It is rather that the creation order is being reversed. Instead of the man taking responsibility and the woman following his lead and the serpent being ruled over along with all the other creatures by the man and the woman, in the temptation and the Fall, the order is being reversed. The background here would seem to be the fact that Eve listened to the serpent. Elsewhere in the Scriptures we know that Adam was held responsible for listening to his wife, i.e., the order has been reversed.

Saved through childbearing

Some argue that Paul is picking up the promise in Genesis 3:18, i.e., that Satan will ultimately be defeated by the birth of the child who will crush his head. It is a particular woman, Mary, and a particular child, Jesus, who are on view. Salvation will come to all through the birth of this child.

Others have picked up the language of salvation in the rest of the letter. We know that we are saved by faith in Christ. Paul instructs Timothy in 4:16 to persist in teaching the truth and thus he will "save" himself and his hearers. Clearly Paul is not writing about the means of salvation. In this light women are being encouraged to continue in faith and love and holiness with self-control. "And childbearing is a part of that. Childbearing is one of the good works (2:10), with which godly women are to adorn themselves, even though its goodness and godliness appears to have been under threat (4:3, 5:14-15)..... It seems to function as a shorthand way of referring to responsibilities that were peculiar to women." Claire Smith

We know that singleness is valued by Paul (see 1 Corinthians 7:25-35) and so clearly what Paul writes in 1 Timothy 2:15 does not apply to all women believers. For some this is a great cause of distress. However, Paul's later teaching in the letter about contentment (6:6) is something that each one of us needs to take to heart, irrespective of our marital situation or otherwise.

As you've worked through these verses you may have had a strong emotional reaction to Paul's instructions to young Timothy. That is perfectly understandable. How are we to now embrace this teaching? It's our prayer that each of us listen carefully to God's word, and that we don't walk away from it forgetting what it says. (James 1:22-25). Let's remember that the Lord desires to bless us abundantly and that he is good. Let's lean into this teaching.

PRAY TOGETHER

STUDY 5

STUDY 5 - OVERSEERS & DEACONS - (1 TIMOTHY 3:1-16)

SHARE

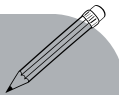
Are pastors and gospel workers (church leaders - or overseers) generally held in high esteem by members of the general public today? If not why not?

READ 1 TIMOTHY 3:1-16

We're seeking to employ new pastoral staff to serve as part of Crossroads ministry team. What essential qualities ought we look for in potential candidates applying for such a position? How might these be different from those required of candidates for a secular job?

In verses 2-3, Paul lists a number of characteristics for overseers. List them.

- 1. "These are qualities that we would like to see in every Christian believer." Is this true of the whole list?*
- 2. Which would have the potential to most harm the reputation of the gospel should an overseer fail in that area?*
- 3. In which of them is there a skill involved?*



In verses 4-5, the list continues, this time highlighting in, some cases, the person's actions in the home.

- *Why is their private life so important?*
- *Why is it surprising that in the midst of a set of instructions about overseers, Paul mentions the activity of the devil?*



What is different in the characteristics required of deacons compared with those required for overseers?

PAUL'S REASON FOR WRITING

We might have expected Paul to outline for Timothy the reason why he is writing at the start of the letter. However, he waits until 3:14-15, before making this clear. What is Paul most anxious to impress on the young Timothy?



Break down verse 15 and list the words that Paul uses to describe the local assembly.

Given that we wouldn't normally describe our local Sunday gathering in such exalted terms how does what Paul writes here encourage us to correct our thinking?

At first sight verse 16 seems to be an abrupt change of subject. Look again however. In what sense does the "truth" at the end of verse 15 link to what follows in verse 16?

Let's commit to ongoing prayer for the godliness of those who lead us in church. What changes do I need to make in my own life as I seek to follow their example?

STUDY 6

STUDY 6 - SOBER WARNINGS & GODLY RESPONSES (1 TIMOTHY 4:1-16)

SHARE

Have you ever seen someone depart from the faith? What was your reaction at the time?

READ 1 TIMOTHY 4:1-5

If Timothy was surprised by the actions of the false teachers in 1:3-4, perhaps he shouldn't have been. Why? What do you notice about the strength of the language that Paul uses to describe the actions and motivations of these people in 4:1-3?



Sadly, the history of the church has seen examples of leaders who have who have taught along these lines. They probably would have appeared to be sincere in their devotion and spirituality (see the two examples of their teaching that Paul cites in verse 3)

- *Have you ever come across such teaching?*
- *Who, in reality, are they really serving?*
- *What do you think of Paul's description of them: "...insincere liars whose consciences are seared."?*

Paul tells Timothy in 3:15 how believers are to behave in the household of God. Defending the truth of the gospel is a key component of this. If 4:1-5 is a description of what will take place in the future, (Paul is indicating here a future time in the not too distant future compared to his own) we see in what follows how Timothy is to respond.

READ 1 TIMOTHY 4:6-10

Like Paul, we want our church leaders to be well trained. What should we see them trained in above all other things? (Note: the word "trained" in verse 6 is the idea of being "nourished in the words of the faith")

See where else in the letter Paul refers to the idea of "good doctrine" which consists of a body of knowledge that has been passed on. (1:10, 4:1, 4:6, 4:13, 4:16, 5:17, 6:1, 6:3).



Look back through your list. If these apply to Timothy as well as church leaders today, how should we apply them to us as church members?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with ten horizontal dashed lines, typical of primary-ruled notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

How is verse 10 a personal encouragement to you?
How do you find it challenging?

PRAY TOGETHER

STUDY 7

STUDY 7 - CARING FOR THOSE IN GENUINE NEED (1 TIMOTHY 5:1-16)

SHARE

Have you ever been close to a migrant family where 3 generations or more live under the same roof? How did that resonate with your own experience? What stood out to you?

READ 1 TIMOTHY 5:1-16

In our day in Australia the nuclear family is the norm. When Paul describes the church as the household of God, his model for the household resembles an extended, migrant family rather than a modern, nuclear family.

How many different generations does Timothy need to be ready to deal with in the church family?

In the table on the following page chart what should be Timothy's concern in promoting the spiritual growth of each group. Can you think of a concrete action for each?



	Concern/attitude	Concrete action
Older men		
Older women		
Younger men		
Younger sisters		

Can you remember at time when you belonged to one of these groups and you were at the receiving end of the actions that Paul describes? Share it with you group.

WIDOWS

In the household of God, simple spontaneity or pure pragmatism in the care of those in need is not a solid enough framework to protect the church from harm. There are genuine needs to attend to and there is a structuring and ordering in the way that this is to be done. Responsibilities before God cannot be shirked. Paul is concerned to protect the flock and this involves Timothy needing to make some tough calls. Our context might not be the same as theirs, however let's think about some principles that we can glean from this passage.

- *Who gets to be on the list?*
- *Where in the passage does Paul lay before children and grandchildren the responsibility they share in the care of their elder family members?*
- *How are widows looked after in your congregation?*
- *How might you help in caring for them?*
- *What about others who are in a similar needy situation?*

For Paul, there are particular temptations that widows will face which may lead them away from true faith.

Where in this section do we see the church's practical care of widows or lack of it, having a spiritual dimension?

STUDY 8

STUDY 7 - ELDERS, SLAVES AND MASTERS (1 TIMOTHY 5:17-6:2)

READ 1 TIMOTHY 5:17-6:2

Paul's instructions to Timothy include honoring widows (5:3). In today's passage, Paul calls on us to honour elders. The word "elder" can simply refer to those who have reached a certain age.

- How should we to honour elders in the church?
- Why do teaching elders get a special mention here?
- How can we encourage them as they seek to teach us?

The way that we can best honour our teaching elders has nothing to do with the status that we afford them. Rather it is when we listen to and respond rightly to God's word. Weighing up what our elders teach us against God's word and then living it out will be to truly honour our teachers.

Surely, Paul's instruction here implies that we should do everything in our power to be good learners!

- What concrete steps can we take to be better at this?

Being a good learner should never be a source of pride however.

- How can we ensure at the same time that our desire for this is matched with a humble heart?

CHARGES BROUGHT AGAINST AN ELDER (1 TIMOTHY 5:19)

At Crossroads we have a rigorous safe ministry policy which we actively pursue . We take all complaints seriously and have systems in place so that every complaint is duly investigated. This recognizes that our church has vulnerable children and adults and that we need always to be careful in situations where there is a power imbalance. Each of the pastoral team adheres wholeheartedly to our safe ministry policy. Such actions today reflect what Paul tells Timothy to do in verses 19-21.

SIN AND ITS IMPACT (1 TIMOTHY 5:20, 24-25)

All sin is damaging and we need to repent of it as soon as we become aware of it. In verse 20 Paul instructs Timothy to take firm action in.

When will such action necessary and what will be its impact?

At times sin will be seen for what it is. However at other times it will be difficult to identify at the time and will only appear later. This is likely to be true particularly for the false teachers. The true motivation driving them may not be evident at first, something that makes them particularly dangerous to Christ's flock.

SLAVES & MASTERS

What is to be the true heart and motivation of the christian slave?
What attitude should they show towards:

- - an unbelieving master?
- - a believing master?
- Why might a Christian slave be tempted to show disrespect to a master who is a believer?
- How are they to act in order to counter such a tendency?
- What does Paul mean in calling the Christian master beloved?
- Beloved by whom and why?

CHRIST'S LOVE FOR ALL PEOPLE

This comes up in Paul's letter a number of times.

How does this square with the idea that Christian believers are especially loved? (see 4:10)

How should this affect the way that we respond to those around us?

CHALLENGE & PRAYER

The fact that good works are conspicuous means that we can fall into the trap of doing them so as to be seen.

How can we be encouraged in our motivation by the fact that "even those that are not cannot remain hidden"?

What good works, hidden or visible can you give yourself to this week?

STUDY 9

STUDY 9- DEEP IMPACT (1 TIMOTHY 6:3-21)

SHARE

The final words of a letter can really drive home its message. Can you think of a letter that you have received that closes with a punch?

READ 1 TIMOTHY 6:3-10

According to 6:3, by what criteria is Timothy to discern true from false teaching? Where else in the letter have we seen Paul encouraging Timothy to apply these principles?

We've seen previously that false teaching and godless behaviour go hand in hand. What do 6:4-5 tell us about the motivations and the m.o. of the false teachers?

Implications

We need to be able to observe closely the lives of our leaders and teachers - their lives must match their teaching. Not that we should expect them to be perfect. (see 1 Timothy 4:15)

Being able to observe a teacher's life is essential. However, even when a teacher presents really well, if their teaching is false, they are deeply corrupt and their motivation is highly suspect. Godliness as a means to gain will be seriously poisonous.

READ 1 TIMOTHY 6:11-16

How is Timothy to guard his heart against these terrible errors? Notice Paul's particularly strong language.

How should we pray for our leaders in the light of this passage?

These instructions are interspersed with some wonderful words used in praise of God the Father and of Jesus Christ.

What truths does Paul remind us of here?

True riches

What is the end result for those who live with the "desire" and "craving" Paul writes about in 6:9-10?

How does the language of "snare" and "root" reinforce the impact of Paul's warnings?

Now read 6:17-19.

Living in Australia today, as Christians, we are some of the wealthiest people on the planet. How does what Paul writes here help us to not be snared by the love of money?

What concrete steps can we take to live out our trust in the Lord Jesus more and more in our attitude to money?

Our series of studies on 1 Timothy has shown us how Timothy has been entrusted with something that is immensely precious.

How does Paul's final charge to Timothy align with what he has written earlier in the letter? (see 1:3-4, 18-19, 4:11-16, 5:21)



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