

# GEARING UP FOR GOD'S MISSION



LEADERS' NOTES

from

**1 TIMOTHY**

# Study 1

## Passage: 1 Timothy 1:1-11

**Aim: In response to God's word we commit ourselves to holding firmly to the truth that accords with sound doctrine and living lives of godliness that align with it.**

### Introduction to 1 Timothy

Aren't you struck by breathtaking beauty in the way that the apostle Paul expresses his fatherly love towards the younger man Timothy in 1:1-2? Throughout this short letter we also read of Paul's solemn charge to Timothy in 1:18, 3:14, 4:6, 14-16, 5:21, 6:11, 20. Paul expresses deep love for his "child in the faith" but also strongly urges him to press on in the ministry that he has been prepared for. This is a highly personal letter from Paul to this younger man and both these men will play a key role in the growth of the early church - one, an apostle, the other, a church leader. And although it is a personal letter, we have the privilege of listening in. There is much to learn here for Church leaders today, however it is not for them alone. Each one of us, wherever God has placed us, are called to live godly lives .

In 1 Timothy 3:14-15, Paul tells us the reason why he is writing this letter. You and I, if we follow the Saviour, are members of God's household which is "the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth." What an incredible privilege! And what a sobering reality to think about and live out!

As we start this new series, pray that we would hear God speak to us in His word especially as we are challenged to live godly lives. And as we work through the letter, Paul will not only teach us how to live - we'll learn much about our living God and the wonder of the Saviour.

### ***Let God's word do the work***

Two great questions to keep in mind as we work through this series are:

Is your discussion focused on the Bible text or has your group become distracted and is focusing elsewhere?

Does your discussion lead to a change of how groups members live for Christ?

Notes from Claire Smith, The Appearing of God Our Saviour

At first glance, 1 Timothy is concerned with pressing local issues. Paul instructs Timothy to stay in Ephesus to silence those leading God's people away by teaching "different doctrine"...

However closer consideration shows that 1 Timothy is primarily about God. (This, Claire points out, is shown by the number of times "God" and "Jesus Christ" occur in the letter). The main theme of the letter is God's desire to save a people for himself. The gospel is his (1:11). The plan of salvation is his (2:4-7). The church is his household. Paul and Timothy are doing his work (1:18; 2:7; 4:6).

In short, who God is and how he is toward those he saves are integral to the message of the letter. pp 9-10

This is shown in 2 ways:

Paul uses particular titles for God throughout the letter: Saviour, Father, the living God, the only God, King of kings, Lord of lords and more.

He also describes God: he is blessed, immortal and invisible, he dwells in inapproachable light, and more. Putting the titles and descriptions together we can see that "Some have rich backgrounds in the Old Testament in connection with God's self-revelation and acts in salvation history. Some identify his relationship to creation and humanity."

"The effect of these many titles and descriptions is to stress that the *same* God, who rules all things and who previously acted on Israel's behalf, now *in Christ Jesus* has accomplished his eschatological salvation plan for *all peoples*, Jew and Gentile, and there is no other way to be saved."

Note - NB Leaders' notes only

Paul condemns the "sexually immoral" and "men who practise homosexuality" in 1:10. This puts him at odds with our prevailing culture. As Christians we trust in God and his goodness who lovingly tells us how to live. Consistently throughout, the Bible tells us that sex is a good gift from God to be lived in the context of the marriage between man and a woman. A helpful book on this subject is Is God Anti-Gay by Sam Allbery

## Study 2

### Passage: 1 Timothy 1:12-20

**Aim: We would commit ourselves afresh to holding onto to the faith (the teaching about God's mercy shown to us in bringing salvation through Christ alone) and to living out the truth of the gospel from a good conscience.**

#### Notes

Timothy must have found himself severely troubled by what he saw going on around him. Note that the opponents that Paul describes in 1:1-11 may well have been claiming to be followers of Jesus and are operating even from within the church in Ephesus. This must have been especially confronting for the young Timothy. In our section today we see how much what Paul writes would comfort and strengthen his son in the faith.

The Lord's merciful trust in the apostle Paul vv12-16

These verses expand on what Paul wrote in verse 11, i.e., that he has been entrusted with the gospel.

### Paul as a pattern of a saved sinner

Paul writes that the forgiveness in Christ is an example (a sketch plan or outline) of the patience that the Lord will show to others who come to believe in Christ.

His own receipt and experience of salvation is a pattern for those who would also believe in Christ.

- He is the foremost of sinners - an enemy of God acting in ignorant unbelief. He was shown mercy.
- Christ's patience towards Paul is a pattern given by Christ for those who would also believe in him.
- He is a model of a faithful, gospel-focused ministry as a fitting response to divine grace.

### Salvation for all through Christ - a key message of the letter

The chief purpose of the letter is to advance and protect God's purpose and plan of salvation .....

The letter addresses a heresy that seems to involve restricting salvation to certain people. The heresy denied the salvation-historical development of the gospel, whereby God's intention to save all nations had been realized in Christ, and the blessings that were Israel's were now for the nations.

Salvation embraces all kinds of people. God is the only source of salvation for all people and those who receive it are those who believe. The false teachers' teaching was dangerous because of its elitist elements that likely restricted salvation to certain people on the basis of myths and genealogies. It was contrary to faith in that it promoted speculative interpretation of the OT and Jewish law and demanded asceticism. God's salvation however is available to all.

Note on "handed over to Satan" -They themselves have turned away from Christ and Paul's response is to exclude them from the fellowship. (see also 1 Corinthians 5:4-5).

## Study 3

### Passage: 1 Timothy 2:1-7

"God Our Saviour" This is the first (1:1) and most frequent title for God in 1 Timothy. The use of the term "Saviour" in the letters of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus, compared with the rest of the NT is proportionately very high.

There is a strong OT precedence for this. God himself declares that he is the only Savior, and there is no other. (Isaiah 45:21-22)

His saving deliverance of his people, Israel, from slavery in Egypt serves as a paradigm for his saving interventions and his saving deeds are an expression of his kingship over them and define his relationship with them. Yet the OT prophets looked forward to a final, future salvation that would be accomplished by God's messianic King/Son and would involve all nations. The message of the NT is that God has now done this in the incarnate life, death, resurrection, and ascension of his Son, Jesus Christ.

The Saviour God of 1 Timothy *is* the Savior God of the Old Testament, but rather than having an exclusive relationship with one nation, he has now provided salvation for *all* who believe: both Jew and Gentile.

Paul's logic is as follows:

There is only one God. This God is the only Saviour. Accordingly there is only one salvation plan - the one that God has accomplished in Christ Jesus. Now, Jew and Gentile alike can be saved and brought into a personal relationship with God as *their* Savior.

## Study 4

### Passage: 1 Timothy 2:8-15

We want everyone to lean into this teaching. For women, to urge and encourage men to be godly and deeply prayerful. For men, to encourage their sisters to be godly especially when they find these instructions difficult.

Note about "in every place" in 2:8

Paul is talking here about what men are to do as they gather in Christ's name. "In every place" means what it says. However the background to the phrase links it to the idea of God's people now meeting 'in every place.' (See Malachi 1:11, 1 Corinthians 1:2, 2 Corinthians 2:14, 1 Thessalonians 1:8)

Seeing that you are the people of God, gathering as local churches in Christ's name in every place, this is the way you are to behave. Of course, even though the focus here is on God's gathered people, how we behave there will have a bearing on how we live in the world.

Good book company PDJensen

How do we who live under God's word, approach a passage such as this? Quite simply, we have to become indifferent to its message until we've read it carefully. Then, and only then, do we turn to reconstruct our lives and culture in the light of what it teaches. This should make us wary of our own bias - be it conservative, radical or accommodationist. We need to be resolute in working against our own bias without worrying about the consequences. Only then are we in a position to turn to working out the consequences for ourselves in embracing, modifying or resisting society's changes.

Leaders, please be sensitive to women who may have been wronged by ungodly men who, in positions of authority in the church, have made unreasonable demands, teaching, for example, that it would be always wrong for a woman to question their teaching or leadership decisions. Male christian leaders are to follow the servant example of Christ who valued women deeply and encouraged them in their learning. (Think of Mary and Martha).

Also be sensitive to the real challenge of this passage to women for whom "learning quietly" sounds like it doesn't fit with their personality type. Learning quietly is fundamentally an attitude of the heart. A woman who has many questions or who has a lively, spirited personality is not being shut down by these verses. If learning quietly is a matter of the heart, what that actually looks like may well look very different from one person to another. It is for each woman to examine her own heart.

## Study 5

### Passage: 1 Timothy 3:1-16

#### Aim: Doing life together in the household of God

Paul often uses metaphors for the Christian community (temple, body, bride). The main metaphor in 1 Timothy is the "house" or "household of God". God's household, like his temple, is where God dwells with his people. He creates a people for his own possession. The local gathering is a "church of the living God". He is a "living" and active presence with them. The church is "a pillar and foundation of the truth". The truth, being the full body of revealed orthodox content, centered on the gospel including doctrine and ethics. The church, especially its leadership, is to pray for and advance the proclamation of the truth, defend it from attacks, and bear testimony to the truth through its presence in the world. The Christian community in first-century Ephesus, and in every other place and period in history is the "household of *God*" and assembly "*of the living God*". His ownership and presence provide the urgency and force of Paul's instructions and ethical demands, and underscore the gravity of the opponents' activities. The opponents were harming people and the dwelling place of *God*, not a mere human institution.

Members of God's household are bound to one another in familial allegiance of duty, love, and service. Irrespective of age or station in life, they are beloved brothers and sisters - even slaves with their masters - who equally know God as Father. However, these familial bonds don't negate God-given order and obligations in the family and church. e.g. fathers are to provide leadership and spiritual instruction, children are to submit to their fathers, family members are to provide for widows.

Conduct in the home impacts membership and ministry in God's household, for good and for ill, and failure to fulfill family obligations damages the church's mission.

Throughout the letter the activity of Satan in the dealings of the church is an ever present reality. Not only does Paul mention him regularly, he also warns Timothy to be watchful about the somewhat unexpected ways by which he will attack and destroy the church. (See 1 Timothy 3:6-7, for example) We might think that appointing a leader who is not well thought of by outsiders would not be a smart move and would be likely to cause problems. Paul sees that the risk of harm in doing so is far more serious.

#### The mystery of godliness

Paul's emphasis throughout the letter so far has been on holding firmly to a received body of truth and living accordingly. Seen in this light, Godliness is not simply a matter of displaying godly (good) behaviour. It involves also defending the truth of the gospel.



## Study 6

### Passage: 1 Timothy 4:1-16

We have already seen how Paul associates the importance of orderliness and godly behaviour in the church and the call to stand firm against false teaching. Compare 3:15 with 4:1 ff. Countering false teaching and living lives in line with the gospel go hand in hand in this chapter and throughout the letter.

Notice in 4:6 that Timothy himself has "followed" "the good doctrine".

The strong emphasis on godly living and holding to the truth of the gospel continues throughout the letter. Paul seems to move seamlessly between the two things. Verse 16 provides apt summary which includes both.

Early in the letter we saw that Timothy was to silence the false teachers. Here now he is to counter falsehood by actively teaching the truth. 4:11-16. Timothy's combat is not simply defensive against error.

God as savior - is also regularly mentioned throughout the letter along with Jesus' role as mediator and means of salvation

This reality is shown in Paul's divine commission as apostle and preacher of the gospel and the urgency of Timothy's task to:

- silence false teachers
- instill proper church leadership
- teach sound doctrine
- model the godly life

The chief purpose of the letter is to advance and protect God's purpose and plan of salvation .....The letter addresses a heresy that seems to involve restricting salvation to certain people. In contrast, God's intention to save all nations had been realized in Christ, and the blessings that were Israel's were now for the nations.

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Godliness holds promise for this age and the age to come.

Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus focus on Christian existence in the present age, *they do so in the context of Christ's return and the age to come.*

There are 4 dimensions to Paul's eschatological perspective in 1 Timothy:

1. Theological - Christ the Savior is our hope.
2. Soteriological - Salvation is a reality past and present for those who believe.
3. Ethical - the present life matters in the light of the age to come. All of life is to be lived in anticipation of divine judgment.
4. Missional - Christian witness and ministry are undertaken in the now and will only conclude when he returns

Until God's plan is consummated, believers are to persevere in lives of faith and love and truth, with confident expectation in "Christ Jesus our hope".

The goal is not peaceful coexistence with the world but, rather, as God's household, to live as his people, distinct from the surrounding society, displaying his character, advancing his saving purposes, and so bringing his blessings to the nations.

## Study 7

### Passage: 1 Timothy 5:1-16

Until Christ's appearing, believers are to conform to God's ordering in their own lives and households; and as *God's* household they and especially their leaders are to work toward the same goal, both in the church's internal life and in its engagement with the surrounding society and the public square.

## Study 9

### Passage: 1 Timothy 6:3-21

At the heart of the threat to the church in Ephesus was an attack against the word of God. The threat of the false teachers was not only seen in their conduct or methods. It was that they taught different doctrine that was opposed to the gospel and sound teaching. It was a contest for truth, and they were deceived liars, "deprived of the truth" 4:1-2, 6:5

Paul uses several terms for the fixed body of orthodox content to be believed, protected, preserved, proclaimed and taught by and among believers. These defy rigid distinctions.

- The faith
- The truth
- Teaching
- The gospel

A stable body of content about the appearing of Christ Jesus to save sinners and related doctrine that was recognized as genuine, reliable, authoritative apostolic teaching. ... The various terms draw attention to different aspects of the *one* truth.

It is God's message about God's plan. He is the source and it reflects his character. It cannot be known apart from divine revelation. The good news of Christ is at its core. Its authenticity and preservation are essential for God's saving plan, and the polemical nature of several terms reflects the live threat of false teaching. Paul's apostleship and Timothy's task (and that of others 1 Tim 4:12) are inextricably tied to this content and the command of God and Christ to proclaim, teach, and guard it.