

# **How To Change The World**

## **1 Timothy 4:1-16**

**Have you ever wished the world was a better place?**

**How do we influence the world to be better?**

### **What Does The Bible Say?**

This is a trustworthy saying: “If someone aspires to be a church leader, he desires an honorable position.” 2 So a church leader must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. 3 He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money. 4 He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. 5 For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God’s church?

6 A church leader must not be a new believer, because he might become proud, and the devil would cause him to fall. 7 Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not be disgraced and fall into the devil's trap. (1 Timothy 1:1–7 NLT)

**To lead others, you must first be able to lead yourself.**

**We see this throughout the Bible.**

10 Then he added, “Son of man, let all my words sink deep into your own heart first. Listen to them carefully for yourself.

11 Then go to your people in exile and say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says!’ Do this whether they listen to you or not.” (Ezekiel 3:10–11 NLT)

**God wants obedient leaders.**

**God does not want leaders who say, “Do as I say, not as I do.”**

**The Bible does not talk about changing society or culture; it always talks about changing you!**

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. 6 Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. 7 Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. 8 Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free.

9 Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don't threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites. (Ephesians 6:5–9 NLT)

### **How Can You Obey?**

3 “And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? 4 How can you think of saying to your

friend, ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye. (Matthew 7:3–5 NLT)

**If you want to change the world, start with yourself.**

### **What Does The Bible Say?**

Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons. 2 These people are hypocrites and liars, and their consciences are dead. 3 They will say it is wrong to be married and wrong to eat certain foods. But God created those foods to be eaten with thanks by faithful people who know the truth. (1 Timothy 4:1–3 NLT)

**Why is teaching self-abstinence from demons?**

24 For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24 NLT)

**Self-denying asceticism moves one away from worshiping God “in spirit and in truth.”**

4 Since everything God created is good, we should not reject any of it but receive it with thanks. 5 For we know it is made acceptable by the word of God and prayer. (1 Timothy 4:4–5 NLT)

**Christians enjoy life. God made this world, and we should enjoy it.**

**How Can You Obey?**

Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach. 2 This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that he was associating with such sinful people—even eating with them! (Luke 15:1–2 NLT)

**Live your life in a way that lost people enjoy your company.**

## **What Does The Bible Say?**

7 Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. 8 "Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come." (1 Timothy 4:7-8 NLT)

## **We are to be godly, but what is godliness?**

16 Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith (*godliness: other translations*): Christ was revealed in a human body and vindicated by the Spirit. He was seen by angels and announced to the nations. He was believed in throughout the world and taken to heaven in glory. (1 Timothy 3:16 NLT)

**Becoming like Jesus is the essence of godliness.**

## **How Can You Obey?**

12 Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. 13 Until I get there, focus on reading the Scriptures to the church, encouraging the believers, and teaching them.

(1 Timothy 4:12–13 NLT)

**Our diet is to be the Scriptures, and we train ourselves by obeying them.**

**How do we change the world? We start by allowing God to change us.**

### **Additional Notes:**

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at [www.crosswaveschurch.com/host](http://www.crosswaveschurch.com/host). Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

## **Additional Notes:**

In this week's Deep Dive Into The Bible Michael S. Heiser, *I Dare You Not to Bore Me with the Bible*, ed. John D. Barry and Rebecca Van Noord (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press; Bible Study Magazine, 2014), 119.

## **Explore:**

How to write your testimony:

Similar to Paul's testimony, follow a three-point approach when writing and communicating your testimony.

First, create an outline of your life before your conversion to Christianity. Then move on to how you discovered God and succumbed to Him. Lastly, focus on the changes in your life since you converted.



## **Before**

Paint a picture of your life before you surrendered to Christ.

Follow the details that relate to your theme and show your need for Christ. Make sure not to sidetrack by dwelling on unnecessary details. Before outlining ask these relevant questions:

What were you looking for before finding Christ?

What part of your life before converting will relate most to the non-Christians? What were your actions and attitude towards Christianity before?

What were your underlying problems, conflicts, and emotions and how did you try to resolve them? How do they let you down?

What were my insecurities, source of happiness, and what does your life revolve around?

When you are announcing your testimony, communicate in a way that the people hearing you can comprehend how to become a Christian. Your testimony should help them find the way to light.

After detailing about past, give the details of how you found salvation with Jesus. Take the time and jot down the steps and events that led you to trust Christ in the first place.

Where were you, and what was happening when you heard about Christ?

What was your initial reaction?

What were the circumstances that led you to consider Him as your Savior?

When did you accept Him as your Lord? And why?

**After**

Don't suggest unrealistic expectations when emphasizing the changes after you accept Christianity. Show them you still struggle and converting to Christianity does not miraculously eliminate the stresses of life. Instead, focus on the changes in your attitude, character, perspective towards your life and others. Give real-life examples of how Jesus has fulfilled your physical and emotional needs. Consider these points when writing these parts down:

How is your life different from before?

What is the purpose of your life now?

How has conversion impacted you?

What your relationship with Christ means to you

### **Avoid Using These Words**

Avoid using words and terminologies that the non-Christian might not understand. when you spend more time in Church, you forget that people are not familiar with your new vocabulary.

Especially if some people in your audience are not comfortable with Christianity or Church.

Instead of using dogmatic religious statements, use more common and layman words in your testimony. Your message will become clearer.

### **Be Honest**

Include the important details only. There is no need to exaggerate or sensationalize your story. You don't need to share the details of your sins and personal misgivings. Relate to your audience with specific examples and real-life events, no matter how boring they sound.

If you have the time, you can give more information about your life experiences relating to conversion. If you are honest and communicate credible testimony, God will use your words to reach others.

### **Final Thoughts**

When you are ready to give testimony, it is important to write it down. Not only for memorizing it, but also to put your relationship with God in perspective. Your individual stories of journey to light might sound evangelistic and unique to you. However, with the choice of right words to develop the flow of the story is as essential as sharing your story. If the God has saved you, then it's a miracle of faith that deserves to be celebrated.

### **Explore:**

A common theme throughout this letter to Timothy is that of false teaching and the danger it presents. Each of the Pastoral Epistles deals with these challenges in some way. The difference in this particular chapter is the apostle's focus on the source of the false doctrines and not merely the content.

### **Believers Stay True to the Faith and Practice Disciplines**

## **That Lead to Godliness (1 Timothy 4:1-10)**

Just as Old Testament prophets often began with the expression, the Lord says..., so Paul began chapter four by asserting that the Spirit had clearly spoken (verse 1). Paul wanted the readers to know that this was indeed a message given to him from Heaven.

The first aspect of the Spirit's message was that the presence of false teaching will increase as Christ's return grows closer. The initial warning was that some would depart from the faith and be guilty of a major doctrinal defection. This defection occurs when people give heed to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons.

There is a real and possible danger of individuals being led away into the deceitfulness of false doctrine.

The word translated as depart or abandon in verse 1 is the source of our English word apostasy. It most commonly refers to a dramatic and drastic departure or withdrawal from a position that a person previously held. The apostates Paul alluded to

would depart from the faith, that is, from the body of Christian teaching we call the gospel, which leads people to faith in the person and work of Christ.

The false teachers were characterized as hypocritical liars whose consciences were seared beyond feeling (verse 2). This was, is, and always will be, standard operating procedure for the Evil One. In verse 3, the false teachers in Ephesus attempted to combine Eastern asceticism with Jewish legalism by propagating two false messages. First, they were forbidding marriage with a notion that anyone seeking to live a holy life must practice celibacy. Second, they were requiring abstinence from certain foods. They said that various foods or meats had to be rejected by anyone desiring to live a holy life.

Paul, however, refuted each of these messages with the principle of verse 4—everything created by God is good. Marriage was instituted by God and food is part of God's provision for us.

Instead of rejecting them in an effort to appease God, believers should receive them with thanksgiving (verses 4-5). See 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 for another description of how Satan works to deceive people.

Now that the apostle had dealt with the dangers of departing from the faith, he turned his focus to the young pastor Timothy. Paul instructed his son in the faith regarding how to deal with such false teaching as it arose. As Timothy instructed others in this regard, he would also assure that he himself was growing and nourished biblically, a concept established by the words, being trained or being nourished in verse 6. Just as the physical body has certain requirements for it to grow in health, so Timothy would have to incorporate a three-part spiritual health plan.

First, this spiritual regimen required nourishment or healthy spiritual food from the Scriptures. This is seen in the apostle's



use of words of the faith and good doctrine in verse 6. Second, he would also have to reject the spiritual “junk food” that would come his way. Paul referred to these specifically as worldly or irreverent, silly myths or fables in verse 7. This is a slightly different type of false doctrine than what he had previously mentioned and involves godless and untrue myths and fables, which have no value and should not be entertained by believers. An example of such a myth is the claim of certain spiritual benefits that supposedly come through physical exercise or asceticism. Some things may have value in this life, but Paul emphasized that priority must be given to activities that produce benefits for both time and eternity.

Third, for this spiritual regimen, Paul admonished Timothy to train himself for godliness (verse 7). The word train or exercise in the original language is the word from which we derive gymnasium. The verb here is expressed in continuous action, meaning it should be a consistent practice in our lives. Whether

thinking of the physical or spiritual realm, only activity that is both regular and prolonged will result in the desired benefits.

Godliness is the ultimate result of spiritual exercise.

To further illustrate his point, Paul turned to the physical body in verse 8. Physical training, Paul said, is beneficial in some ways.

There are certainly health benefits, such as lower blood pressure and weight loss, that come with this type of training. More significant, however, was the spiritual training or exercise the apostle asserted to be of value in every way. After all, this type of “exercise” benefits the believer now, and in the life to come.

In verse 9, Paul indicated this was another faithful saying. While the saying could be connected to verse 8 or verse 10, it appears that the connection is being made to what Paul said about the value of godliness in verse 8. As he wrapped up his thoughts in this section, Paul raised high the hope that comes from the pursuit of godliness. We strive for godliness because our hope

and trust are in the God who will save all who trust in Him (verse 10). Labor and strive portray the effort that one puts into developing the godliness he mentioned in previous verses. Regardless of the challenge and struggles involved, Paul knew that they were worth it because his hope was set in the living God and not in himself.

### **Explore:**

## **Believers Set a Good Example by Putting Biblical Truth Into Practice (1 Timothy 4:11-16)**

God uses all kinds of personality types and gift- ing for His kingdom's sake. According to scholars, Timothy apparently had a nonassertive personality and often had bouts with timidity and fear. With his personality and the implied doubts in the minds of some of those Timothy was called to lead, Paul exhorted him to command and teach these things (verse 11). This expression

these things certainly referred to the immediate context of the letter, but it also seems ambiguous enough to apply to the many teachings that Paul would pass on, or had already passed on, to young Timothy. See 1 Corinthians 16:10 and 2 Timothy 1:3-7 for more on Paul's concern for the young pastor Timothy.

In verse 12, Timothy was called to set an example for others of living the Christian life. The consensus of scholars was that Timothy was likely in his mid-thirties at the time. While this may not seem to fit the youth designation that Paul ascribed to him, in the first century culture in Ephesus, this age presented a potential problem. Elders were highly regarded and esteemed. As a young pastor, most, if not all of the elders would have likely been older than Timothy. For these reasons, his youth could be seen as a handicap. How did Paul encourage Timothy to overcome this stigma? Let no one despise you or look down on you or push you aside because of your youth.

Also, instead of fighting against these incorrect notions, Timothy was commanded to be an example or a pattern for others to follow, no matter their age. The word referred to an imprint or a figure formed by an impression. For Timothy to be this type of example, he would need to practice godliness in at least five areas of life: speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. This concise list portrays right words and right actions, as well as inward qualities that should characterize every believer and especially the minister of the gospel.

In verse 13, Timothy was given three activities to practice in the context of the church. First, he was to give attention to public reading of Scripture, a component of worship that was previously practiced in the synagogues. Beyond this immediate context, the public reading of Scripture has always been the practice of God's people. Timothy was to continue this practice. Paul also encouraged the young pastor to give attention to exhortation or preaching. This included both the exposition of

and application of the Scriptures. Finally, Timothy was to give attention to teaching or the passing on of Christian doctrine.

Young Timothy was also to give constant attention to improving his effectiveness through the proper cultivation of his spiritual gifts (verse 14). The laying on of hands alluded to here is commonly associated with a continuity of leadership. In Timothy's case, a body of elders or a presbytery bestowed on Timothy the privilege of leading this congregation, something he was to do without fear or intimidation. God had Timothy exactly where He wanted him. The spiritual progress seen in the young pastor's life would result in both respect for his ministry as well as eternal benefits for those around him (verses 15-16).

When we faithfully live for Christ and exercise our gifts and abilities, God uses us to bring Him glory and to encourage others in their walks with God. The effect of Timothy living, behaving, and serving in the manner prescribed by Paul would

“save” both Timothy and his hearers. The word translated save is a term that described spiritual health. It conveyed the sense of well-being or wholeness. The church at Ephesus was struggling because of false doctrines and false teachers. Timothy’s commitment to truth and genuine spiritual practices would “save” the church and bring a spiritual well-being to the believers. The young pastor’s task was daunting, but it was also one that God would honor and bless.

### **Explore:**

A commonly debated doctrine in the church today is the doctrine of apostasy, the renunciation or abandonment of one’s faith.

Regardless of the position one takes on this issue, false doctrine and false teachers remain a serious problem in our modern age.

Believers are constantly bombarded with some teaching about what genuine faith is or is not. It is important that believers reject these false doctrines and teachers according to the truth of

the canon of Scripture. In reality, apostasy is a second-tier issue. The position one takes on apostasy should not prevent fellowship among brothers or sisters. Although one might disagree with opposing positions on the issue of apostasy, discussion should always be civil and cordial.

### **Explore:**

Since Ephesians gives no hint of his release from prison, as do Philippians (1:19–26) and Philemon (v. 22), it is reasonable to think that he wrote it in the early part of his stay, or about AD 60. This would have been when Paul was kept under guard in rental quarters (Acts 28:30). Following his release he traveled, wrote 1 Timothy and Titus, was arrested again, wrote 2 Timothy, and was martyred in Rome.

Harold W. Hoehner, “Ephesians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F.



Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 614.

**Explore:**

**4:1–10.** As the repository and guardian of the truth, the church continually must be aware of the strategies of the enemies of the truth. Paul stressed that Timothy's pastoral duties involved guarding the truth and refuting the heretics. The church was instructed to confront the false teaching by teaching correct doctrine and by godly living.

The false teachers taught a false asceticism, forbidding marriage and the eating of various foods. But Paul maintained that God has given these things to be appreciated and used for God's glory.

**4:11–16.** The apostle moved from the general concerns of the church to personal exhortations specifically for Timothy. Paul

recognized that Timothy was a young man and that some of the older believers might be tempted to look down on his youth. Timothy was to be an example for the church “in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.” He was to give himself to the public proclamation of the Scriptures through the use of gift given to him. Since God had called Timothy and the church had sanctioned his ministry through the laying on of hands, Timothy was to strive to live up to these high responsibilities.

David S. Dockery, “The Pauline Letters,” in Holman Concise Bible Commentary, ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 605–606.

**Explore:**

They are hypocrites (v. 2). “Ye shall know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7:15–20). These false teachers preach one thing but practice another. They tell their disciples what to do, but they do not do it themselves. Satan works “by means of the hypocrisy of

liars” (1 Tim. 4:2, literal translation). One of the marks of a true servant of God is his honesty and integrity: He practices what he preaches. This does not mean he is sinlessly perfect, but that he sincerely seeks to obey the Word of God. He tries to maintain a good conscience (see 1 Tim. 1:5, 19; 3:9).

The word seared means “cauterized.” Just as a person’s flesh can be “branded” so that it becomes hard and without feeling, so a person’s conscience can be deadened. Whenever we affirm with our lips something that we deny with our lives (whether people know it or not), we deaden our consciences just a little more.

Jesus made it clear that it is not religious talk or even performing miracles that qualifies a person for heaven, but doing God’s will in everyday life (Matt. 7:21–29).

An apostate is not just wrong doctrinally; he is wrong morally. His personal life became wrong before his doctrines were changed. In fact, it is likely that he changed his teachings so that

he could continue his sinful living and pacify his conscience.

Believing and behaving always go together.

Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*

(Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 224–225.

### **Explore:**

By using the phrase “in latter times,” Paul is referring to a more specific time than in his phrase “in the last days” in 2 Timothy 3:1. Here, he seems to be thinking of a time that Timothy will clearly face in which some will depart from the faith. The language of “deceiving spirits” and “doctrines of demons” is a reminder that “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the

heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12). We do well to be constantly aware that there is a spiritual warfare always going on. To underestimate the power of the enemy is to invite capture.

The fact that people can come to a point when they can speak lies in hypocrisy and have no sense of wrongdoing is hard for most of us to identify with. In my pastoral experience, I have seen this only rarely. I think of a former pastor colleague whom I see from time to time. When I first knew him, we were truly brothers in the ministry. Sharing in common concerns, working together in many endeavors. Along the way he apostasized. He denied any validity to the gospel and even insisted that he had never really meant anything he had said or done in the ministry along the way. I’m convinced that he levels with me when he insists that he has no qualms or feelings of guilt in his departure from the faith. I consider him to be a prisoner of war, held captive and brainwashed by the enemy. And I pray for his liberation.

While most commentators tie the two marks of departing from the faith in verse 3 with the two in verse 2, I choose to separate them. I can't equate hypocritical liars with seared consciences (v. 2), with an asceticism which forbids marriage and develops scruples about certain foods (v. 3). It seems to me that we have before us two different directions that apostasy can take. The first direction of lying and seared consciences is obvious. But the second is rarely considered a departure from the faith. In fact, when it comes to demanding abstention from certain foods (or drinks), some consider these marks of a superChristian.

In what sense can such rules and regulations become a departure from the faith? When they become substitutes for salvation by grace through faith. It is in his letters to the Colossians and Galatians that Paul delivers the deathblow to Christian asceticism. We are dependent on Christ and Christ alone, grace and grace alone, and any rules and regulations that get between

Christ and us are antithetical to the gospel. To begin with Christ and end up with such rules is a contradiction.

A good God created a good creation. Such was the rhythmic cadence of the creation story in Genesis 1 and 2. “And God saw that it was good... . and God saw that it was good... . indeed it was very good... . and God rested.” To “throw away” (the literal meaning of “refused” in verse 4) anything in God’s creation is to deny God’s goodness. How consistently Paul stressed this, and how consistently we distort this truth.

It is not the Christian’s assignment to ferret out everything that is evil in God’s creation. Such would be to assign evil to God. It is rather our task to use everything in God’s creation wisely and well. To forbid to marry suggests that there is something evil in sex or marriage or both. But God created us as sexual beings. Therefore, both are good when properly used. The challenge

ever before us is to discover how to use everything in God's creation for the wellbeing of all of God's children.

The stark tragedy of modern technology is all too apparent at this point. The potential for goodness for humankind within the nucleus of the atom is without limits. But we have perverted that potential into weapons of mass destruction. It seems to me that our understanding of the difficult phrase in verse 5 comes into play here. To say that anything in God's creation can be received with thanksgiving when it is "sanctified by the word of God and prayer" is a sad commentary on modern technology.

Instead of laying our discoveries one by one on the altar of God to be used for His love and goodness in the world, we have chosen to use them as though they were ours, and we have brought God's good creation to the brink of destruction. It may be that we have just about completed the new Tower of Babel—only to discover that it doesn't reach God after all.



Such is the inevitable product of apostasy, at whatever level it occurs. It is time for a new reformation. It is time for Christians to recover the goodness of all God's creation.

Gary W. Demarest and Lloyd J. Ogilvie, 1, 2 Thessalonians / 1, 2 Timothy / Titus, vol. 32 of The Preacher's Commentary Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1984), 195–197.

### **Explore:**

Timothy was the son of a Greek father and Jewish mother (Acts 16:1). No mention is made of his father being a Christian, but his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois were both known for their sincere faith (2 Tim. 1:5). Timothy was no doubt living at Lystra when Paul visited that city on his first missionary journey (cf. Acts 14:6; 16:1). Whether or not Paul led Timothy to Christ cannot be known with certainty. At any rate Timothy already knew and believed the Old Testament Scriptures, thanks to his

mother and grandmother (cf. 2 Tim. 3:15), and Paul took him on as a promising protégé. Paul thus became like a spiritual father to the young man, referring to him as “my true son in the faith” (1 Tim. 1:2) and “my dear son” (2 Tim. 1:2; cf. Phil. 2:22).

Timothy’s promise for the ministry was recognized early (1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:5). Thus Paul took him on as a companion and he became one of the apostle’s most trustworthy fellow-laborers (cf. Rom. 16:21; 1 Cor. 16:10; Phil. 2:19–22; 1 Thes. 3:2). He also became Paul’s faithful representative and messenger (Acts 19:22; 1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Cor. 1:19; Phil. 2:19; 1 Thes. 3:2, 6). Six of Paul’s epistles include Timothy in the salutations (2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Thes. 1:1; 2 Thes. 1:1; Phile. 1; see the chart, “Paul’s Introduction to His Epistles” at Rom. 1:1). Timothy had become so dear to Paul that in the apostle’s last message was a touching appeal for Timothy to join him in his final days of imprisonment (2 Tim. 1:4; 4:9, 21).

After being released from his first Roman imprisonment Paul, with Timothy by his side, evidently revisited some of the churches in Asia, including Ephesus. On his departure from Ephesus, Paul left Timothy behind to provide leadership to the congregation. Then after an interval Paul wrote Timothy a letter, 1 Timothy, urging him on in that ministry.

Timothy may have been by nature somewhat passive, timid, retiring, and easily intimidated (cf. 2 Tim. 1:7). Thus Paul repeatedly spurred him into action (1 Tim. 1:3; 4:11; 5:7; 6:2; 2 Tim. 3:14; 4:2, 5). He was to let nothing, including his relative youth (1 Tim. 4:12) stand in the way of his performance of duty (2 Tim. 2:1–7; 4:5). Like a good soldier he was to “fight the good fight” (1 Tim. 1:18; 6:12), aggressively protecting and propagating the gospel, using the full range of his gifts (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).

A. Duane Litfin, “1 Timothy,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 729–730.

### **Explore:**

#### **Praying for those in authority**

As Paul writes, the Roman emperor is the cruel Nero. Paul encourages prayer for him and for all those in authority in national and local government (2:1–2).

There are times when the state authority is an evil tyranny. In the book of Revelation, evil powers and empires are shown to be fighting God. But in Paul’s experience and writing, the state is a positive influence—defending the good, protecting the weak and suppressing lawlessness. Even a pagan ruler can be used by God in his ordering of the world.

Andrew Knowles, *The Bible Guide*, 1st Augsburg books ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 648.

## **Explore:**

### **How to deal with misleading myths**

#### **(1 Timothy 4:1–10)**

Now Paul discusses a prophecy. The Holy Spirit warns that some believers will be deceived by evil spirits and abandon their faith.

This damage to the church will come from unscrupulous teachers. They will introduce false and unnecessary rules of self-denial—such as staying single or living by a strict diet. Needless to say, they have no instruction from God for this—and no intention of keeping such rules themselves.

Paul is attacking teachers who deny the good things of life. They tell their followers to apply rigid self-control. Behind this is the idea that this world and our bodies are bad. The world must be avoided and our bodies must be punished. If we try hard enough, we will escape from the pull of earthly desires and become spiritual enough to go to heaven. Perhaps the Gnostics of the next century, with their secret information and mystic passwords, have something of this approach.

For Paul, God's creation is good. Our bodies are a most wonderful gift. The pleasures of food and drink and sex (in their proper proportion and place) are to be received with thanksgiving and enjoyed with praise. Later on in the letter, Paul advises Timothy to drink a little wine. It will do him good!

In the face of false teaching, Timothy can teach the truth of Jesus. Jesus affirmed our human nature and life in this world by living fully to the glory of God. Timothy will set people free

with the truth—cutting through the myths and fables which bring fear and superstition. Physical fitness is good if you can do it—but spiritual fitness is even better. Godliness lasts for ever.

Andrew Knowles, *The Bible Guide*, 1st Augsburg books ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 650.

### **Explore:**

#### **Take care of yourself**

#### **(1 Timothy 4:11–16)**

Paul encourages Timothy to give a lead in these matters. He is not to leave it to those who are older or more experienced. He is to keep his own life in good order and be an example to others.

Ezra in the Old Testament and Jesus himself each believed in living the truth yourself before applying it to others (Ezra 7:10; Matthew 5:19).

Timothy's basic approach will be to read scripture (the Old Testament) and then explain its meaning and challenge his

hearers to change. He is to use his spiritual gift, which was prophesied for him and prayed in at his commissioning by the elders. He is, in his own life, to show the commitment and progress he commends to others—so both he and his hearers will benefit.

Andrew Knowles, *The Bible Guide*, 1st Augsburg books ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 650.

### **Explore:**

#### **KEY TRUTHS:**

1. Believers Stay True to the Faith and Practice Disciplines That Lead to Godliness.
2. Believers Set a Good Example by Putting Biblical Truth Into Practice.



## **HOW IT FITS: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the**

**Bible:** Likely written around AD 62-64, the apostle Paul wrote to the young leader Timothy to instruct him on how to lead the church at Ephesus. This section of the letter gave instruction on how to deal with false teachers and what to pray for.

### **Explore:**

Christianity is about more than going to church and living a good moral life. Being a Christian is about having a vibrant personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Every Sunday School teacher or Bible study leader should want to see each of his or her learners enter into this relationship—their eternal destiny depends on it. As you work toward this goal, keep the following in mind:

Following Christ is about more than a mere decision; it is about a lifelong relationship. Jesus called us to make disciples, not

mere decision-makers. Aim for long-term faith, not momentary emotion.

Salvation is a matter of grace, not works. Our works do not save us (Ephesians 2:8-9), nor do they keep us (Galatians 3:2-6).

Good works are a product of salvation, not a prerequisite to it.

Don't confuse sanctification with salvation. Holiness follows salvation; it doesn't precede it. Don't try to impose "Christian" expectations on men and women who don't know Christ.

- Keep it simple. Being born again is not complicated. Here's a simple way to explain it:

- Acknowledge your sinfulness and your need for a Savior (Romans 3:10, 23).

- Trust in Christ's sacrifice for your sins and in His resurrection (Romans 10:9-10).

Surrender your life to God's transforming power (Romans 12:1-2).

Most of all, remember that your job is to tell the truth in a way others can understand, answer their questions, and give them an opportunity to respond. If you do that faithfully, some will respond and join the band of Christ-followers. When they do, Heaven will rejoice!

### **Question 1 of 5**

Why wasn't Peter the rock upon which the church would be built?

### **Question 2 of 5**

Why should our leaders be above reproach?

### **Question 3 of 5**

Why is God most concerned about you and not society?

### **Question 4 of 5**

How could Jesus be so popular with lost people and still not sin?

### **Question 5 of 5**

How can we set a godly example in our speech and social media communication?