

I Timothy – Personal Epistle

Primary Teaching theme: *Preserving the Truth*

Paul the Apostle wrote two personal epistles to his ministry son, Timothy. The first epistle, although personally addressed to Timothy, is largely focused on doctrinal themes that address significant disruptive issues in the Church of Ephesus. The Apostle assigned Timothy to the church in Ephesus with the task of preventing anyone from teaching doctrines inconsistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (1:6)

Ephesus was a significant focal point of concern in the early days of the Church. The Apostle Paul made two excursions to the region of Asia to engage with the Gentile believers.

The Apostle John, when exiled to the island of Patmos, received a declaration of judgment for the seven Churches in Asia. Ephesus was the first church listed, and the oral verdict against them called them to repent and return to their first works, or to risk having their place in their relationship with God being removed. (Revelation 2:7) No Church is featured more in the New Testament than the Church of Ephesus.

The spiritual life of believers in Ephesus was in significant decline. The signs of apostasy, or turning away from the truth of the gospel, were abundantly evident in the Church. The history of Hellenism, deeply ingrained in Ephesian culture, particularly in the worship of Diana, the goddess of nature, made the people susceptible to secular idioms, myths, and mysticism. Their coastal location, exposing them to the Aegean Sea, made them accessible to outside influences from all parts of the world, competing to gain their confidence and convince them to set aside their beliefs in exchange for alternative versions of truth.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul addressed his concern for believers seeking spiritual enlightenment and understanding their divine calling. After Timothy was left in Ephesus to continue the ministry, it is apparent that the spiritual aptitude was declining and not increasing. There are believers losing hold of their faith and giving in to the misguided and idolatrous influences within their culture.

As in many Churches established in the first century, heresy and misrepresentations of the gospel were ongoing issues. Apostle Paul assigned Timothy to Ephesus to do the work of an evangelist, proclaiming the gospel to the Ephesians as if it had never been presented to them. (II Timothy 4:5) Timothy was challenged to reaffirm the truth and provoke believers to renew their faith in the gospel.



Deviation/Swerving from the Truth cp 1

The first caution addressed by the Apostle focused on believers turning away (swerved) from the truth, being attracted by random, empty, and unfounded versions of storytelling, and perhaps cultural enhancements that distorted concepts of truth. In extreme cases, some who turned away appointed themselves as teachers, allowing them to influence others to take the misguided path they presented. They aspired to be teachers of the law without proper training or certification and without being recognized by legitimate authority. (1:6)

The Call to Pray cp 2

Apostle Paul instructed Timothy to call for a time of prayer, supplications, intercession, and giving thanks. He was challenged to pray for kings and leaders in positions of authority who were expected to uphold their responsibility to curb self-appointed, uncertified teachers from misrepresenting the gospel or any other truth.

The ability to live a peaceful, undisrupted life was a sign of godliness and honesty, and such a life would be good and acceptable in the sight of God. It was God's universal plan for all men to be saved and have knowledge of the truth. (2:3-4)

There is One God cp 2

The first of many doctrinal premises that would be reviewed established that there is only "one God." The foundation of the gospel of Jesus Christ is laid soundly upon that premise. The standard of secular idolatry celebrates the idea of a pantheon of coordinated god figures.

In the first century, the concept of a single God faith was a contradiction to the culture. Ephesus was renowned for being a secular community that revered the goddess "*Diana*". (Acts 19:35) The Jews and Christians in Ephesus were both embattled with remaining faithful to a one-God system.

As the Apostle learned that the spiritual life of the Ephesians was waning and not growing, it was not surprising that many were straying from the truth and would revert to the practice of pagan beliefs that were ingrained in their culture. The dangerous narrative that challenged the truth of the Christian faith is the existence of one true God.

Paul ratified his position as a preacher and apostle based on truth, affirmed by the words of Christ. He validated his calling as a teacher to the Gentiles and affirmed his commitment to teaching the truth. (2:5-7)



Instructions to Women cp 2

The Apostle presents guidelines concerning women at the Church of Ephesus. Women are to learn in silence. The Apostle also addressed this subject in his letter to the Church at Corinth. The early church convened in the homes of families with an allegiance to the faith movement. The small, crowded meeting places for ministry were often interrupted, with married women asking their husbands questions about the Church's events or procedures. The guidance offered by the Apostle was intended to prevent disruption and distraction when members of the Church came together.

“Learning in silence” was a way to express the method by which women could learn in the quietness of their own homes, where they could receive uninterrupted attention and not become a distraction during public worship.

Conversations to learn and understand were expected at home. The husband's role at home was to teach all those under his care (through obedience). A woman asking questions at Church was also a sign of a husband's failure to teach his family when they were together at home.

Additional instructions for women outlined guidance for the structure and order of ministry. The husband is identified as the covering and leader over the woman (his wife) because God created Adam before He created Eve. The creation order also sets the order and succession for ministry in the Church. When both the husband and wife are present in the Church, the man (husband) should lead the ministry, i.e., first, and the woman (wife) should follow.

A cautionary statement included in the instructions explains that Adam, the man, was not deceived. The man is expected to lead (first) in ministry because God gave him the first charge and responsibility over the dominion assigned to him. God commanded Adam to be fruitful, multiply, replenish, and subdue the dominion that He had given him.

Instructions for Church offices cp 3

The individual aspiring to become a Bishop seeks meaningful work. Pursuing such work comes with specific criteria to qualify the individual. The primary criteria indicate that an overseer or bishop should be a husband, providing him experience in leading a family.

The office of the Diaconate is also required to meet the same standards as the Bishop (overseer). The office of the Bishop and the Diaconate are the first official offices established in the Church. The list of qualifications begins with establishing characteristics that *“must”* be found in the nature of the diakoneō.

The first qualification requires the Diakoneō to be grave; translated from the word *“semnos”* in Greek, it means to be honest and honorable. The first term sets the foundation upon which the balance of the Diakoneō character shall rest. When adjustments in character are required, they will be founded on honesty to produce a true change in a person.



Upon honesty is built the ability to speak without equivocation, not being vague, and uncommitted to spoken pledges or declarations. The honest man who makes his word his bond must not be given too much wine. A wine or fermented drink can create chemical reactions in the body that alter a person's soundness of mind, destabilizing their foundation of honesty, which

The final layer built upon the foundation of honesty is avoiding an appetite for greed. Greed is a symptom of lust, an overwhelming desire to satisfy an insatiable desire. Greed is not limited to money or sex. The text does not mention either. The word "lucre" means *gain*. Greed itself is the problem, not money, sex, or other vices. Greed is driven by an innate desire to have more, simply for the sake of having more.

Departure from the Faith cp 4

The latter days are described as a period when seductive spirits will draw believers away from the truth. The hypocrisy of that day will corrupt the standards used to distinguish between what is true and what is false. Traditional doctrine, including rules and discipline, will be removed, replaced, or redefined. Doctrinal truth generally accepted by all members of society will be replaced with the doctrine of devils (deception).

The consciousness of man will be corrupted (scorched) by falsehoods and lies, causing deep-seated convictions to be lost. Timothy is instructed to remind the brethren of believers of the truth and doctrine of Jesus Christ and to reject the promotion or acceptance of old wives' tales and fables. (4:6-7)

Instructions for Elders, Young Men/Women, and Widows cp 5

When truth is compromised, its loss will affect other areas and relationships in life. The Apostle offers guidance on repairing and restoring disrupted relationships within the Church and individual families.

The honor of elders as spiritual fathers must be restored. The relationship among young men should be recognized as a bond between spiritual brothers. The older women should be celebrated as mothers of the Church, and the younger women should bond together as spiritual sisters.

When the Church and society adhere to traditional standards of truth, the needs of widows grieving the loss of their husbands and their status will be met.



Instructions for Voluntary Servitude / Avoidance of Greed cp 6

Timothy addresses the relationship between a voluntary servant and his master (employer). The absence of truth standards will impact the respect and commitment of a voluntary servant and their master (employer). If the voluntary servant is a believer and under the yoke a master (employer) who is also a follower of Christ, they are expected to honor them so that God's doctrine and truth are not defamed. (6:1)

If someone teaches the Church differently, the words of that person are not regarded as life-giving truth (wholesome). Doctrinal truth is founded on godliness, and godliness, which means God-likeness, serves as the foundation for all doctrinal truth.

A person who finds contentment in God-likeness (godliness) will gain the greatest treasure available to them. Perverse thinking, characterized by ungodliness, leads to corruption. The corrupt mind seeks only to satisfy the next urge or desire. Insatiable greed drives people to chase material possessions that cannot be carried out of the present world. Man cannot bring anything into the world he is born into and certainly cannot take anything out. Men must be content with the measure of food and raiment they receive. Craving more is a sign of greed. Timothy is warned to flee from such avarice desires and follow after righteousness, because the love of money is a temptation that leads to destruction. (6:8-11)

Prepare for the King of Kings cp 6

The Apostle charged his disciple, Timothy, to keep God's commandments without any blemishes until Christ returns. He will return to earth as the only "potentate," a sovereign ruler holding all authority. He will rule as King of all Kings. No mortal king or sovereign on earth can stand against Him. He is immortal, dwelling in a light that a natural man cannot approach.

Instructions to the rich and wealthy cp 6

Timothy is instructed to advise the wealthy not to be arrogant or to place all their trust in worldly riches, as these are uncertain and fleeting. Instead, they should put their confidence in God, who can provide them with a fulfilling life.



II Timothy – Personal Epistle

Primary Teaching theme: *Stir up God's Gift*

The second epistle to Timothy is directed towards personal exhortation and instruction to the Apostle's protégé. The tears of Timothy are mentioned, indicating the possible emotional and spiritual conflict the young ambassador experienced, perhaps related to the complicated task of ministering to many Ephesians who were turning away from their faith in the Messiah and the doctrinal truth of the early Church.

Although it was not possible to see and reconnect with Timothy in person, the Apostle expressed his joy at the opportunity to do so. The Apostle reminded the student of his faith heritage rooted in his grandmother, Lois, and mother, Eunice. He encouraged his mentee to stir up and revive God's gift within him, which was affirmed by the Apostle laying hands upon him. (1:6)

The fear Timothy may have felt while facing the challenge to defend the faith and hold firmly to the principles of truth did not come from God. The spirit of fear contradicts the spirit of love, power, and a sound mind, all of which come from God. Paul offered reassurances that his personal embattlements and being taken into the custody of Roman superiors were no reason for shame or loss of commitment to the cause of advancing God's kingdom. Afflictions were a warranted companion to those that represent the gospel and power of God.

Personal Testimony of the Apostle Cp 1

The Apostle reviewed his personal testimony with his mentee. Affirming his calling as a preacher and an Apostle specifically to the Gentiles, he notes the suffering assigned to the calling. Jews despised him for preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. He also found himself persecuted by the people to whom he dedicated his life to help them gain access to the gift of eternal life. All of Asia, according to the Apostle, turned away from him in his time of need.

Nevertheless, the Apostle declares, "he is not ashamed of the gospel" because he is persuaded that God will keep (guard/protect) the faith promise made to him and all believers until the final day. He encouraged Timothy to hold fast and maintain the continuity of the sound doctrine he received.



Strong in Grace/Good Soldier Cp 2

The Apostle admonished Timothy to be strong in the grace found in Christ Jesus. Grace is God's favor that enables believers to advance and succeed in areas of life and ministry beyond their natural abilities. Grace empowers them to live and excel, unencumbered by past failures or weaknesses. God's grace emboldens and enables them to endure the hardships of life and ministry like a soldier. (2:3-4)

A good soldier fighting on behalf of God's kingdom cannot be entangled with life affairs that would compromise their duty to please God. Soldiers who lawfully strive (contend) will be rewarded with the crown of honor (mastery). (2:5)

The fight to teach the truth, specifically the gospel pertaining to the resurrection of Christ, continues in the face of all trouble or opposition, including the bonds of prison, because the word cannot be bound. (2:8-10)

Prepare to defend and represent the Truth Cp 2

Timothy is challenged to instruct believers not to waste time disputing words and debating issues that do not lead to life. Instead, being prepared to represent and defend the truth when it is misrepresented is of greater importance.

To know when the word of God is misrepresented requires knowing the correct interpretation and revelation of God's word. Achieving an accurate understanding of the word requires effective study. The study of God's word must meet the standards He has approved. God sets the truth standard. The student must be approved and tested by God. Testing the student against the truth standard will determine whether the word of God is correctly divided, i.e., accurately interpreted. (3:15-16)

Avoid empty debates and disputes Cp 2

Instructions were given to Timothy to avoid evil, empty conversations and debates.

The words of profane voices are like cankerworms, slowly eating away at the truth as they draw their opponent(s) into debate. It is more important to teach the truth than to engage in empty debates against opponents of the truth.

The Apostle named specific voices that were to be avoided because of their errant teachings: Hymenaeus and Philetus, who taught that the resurrection of the dead in Christ occurred in the past, leaving believers with no hope for a future reward. (2:17-18)



God knows His Vessels Cp 2

The foundation of God's truth stands firm and sure. God's followers and Truth believers are sealed (stamped/marked) by the truth and by their faith and reliance upon it. God knows all who are His and who possess the seal of truth. (2:17-18)

Different types of vessels can be found in a large, great house. Vessels of gold and silver can be found alongside vessels of wood and clay (earth) in the same house. The vessels are distinguished based on their purpose and use, either as vessels of honor or dishonor.

The vessel of honor is set apart and used for a greater occasion or event (purpose), whereas a vessel of dishonor is readily available for everyday use (purpose).

God knows the vessels set apart and sealed to honor and represent His truth. These are the vessels that have been purged from iniquities and impurities of an ungodly world and sanctified (set apart) to be used by God and prepared for every good work. (2:19-20)

Flee youthful lust Cp 2

The distractions and desires that would interfere with God's calling upon Timothy's life must be escaped and avoided. The path of youthful lust and cravings must be replaced with the path that follows righteousness, faith, charity (love), and peace. The new path leads away from the engagement with foolish and unlearned questions that give birth to strife.

The servants of God do not strive, fight, and quarrel; instead, they develop their ability to teach and use it with patience. Instructing others in meekness (humility) with the hope that those caught in the devil's deception (snare) will be restored to the truth. (2:23-26)

Perilous Times: Last Days Cp 3

The end of days begins with a season of peril (dangerous decay, i.e., "truth"). The time of peril will reduce the strength and foundation that sustains humanity, essentially truth.

The signs of perilous times begin with men who are fond of themselves, turning more attention to self-worth, self-accomplishments, and self-driven desires. (3:2-4)

The results of self-focused agendas will be represented by covetous, boasters, proud blasphemers (crediting God's work as the work of men).

Self-conscious attention and agendas can lead to disobedient parents who prioritize self-driven desires over their responsibility to care for and support their children. Family deterioration leads to unthankful and ungrateful children who are raised without respect for responsibility and the value of commitment. The disruption of the family will lead to unholy practices, causing the next generation of parents and children to stray from traditional moral values in pursuit of immorality. The immoral generation will usher in unnatural affection, promoting the attraction for same sex partners, binary, non-gender labels, and destroying relationship norms practiced by all previous generations.



The breakdown of morality will produce trucebreakers, false accusers, and incontinent behavior (individuals lacking self-control), fierce, savage behavior, and hostile despisers of anything virtuous, ***especially the truth.***

The generations born into times of peril are noted as traitors to the truth, characterized as heady and self-indulgent, who prioritize pleasure over their devotion to the Creator. The perilous behavior patterns and outcomes will falsely boast of a form of godliness while simultaneously denying the need to submit to God's power. (3:4-5)

Perilous Times: Instructions Cp 3

Timothy is instructed to continue following and practicing what he has learned, regardless of how the world around him may change its direction and pattern of behavior. The wisdom of Scripture, learned as a child, will be useful to him throughout his adult life because all scripture is given by inspiration of God. (3:15-16)

The Apostle's Final Charge Cp 4

The Apostle concludes his letter to Timothy with an urgent charge to preach the word. He commissions the protégé by God and the Lord Jesus Christ that will judge the works of all men when He returns. The declaration to preach the word is not conditional to seasons amenable to hearing God's word. The truth must be preached, regardless of whether the opportunities are favorable or unfavorable. He must be instant, ready to stand to rebuke (correct), reprove (admonish), and exhort (call to order). (4:1-2)

The proclaimer of truth must exhort (call to order) with fortitude (longsuffering) and be willing to preserve doctrinal truth. The perilous times predicted will produce people unwilling to adhere to sound doctrine. The people will gather teachers who are complicit in their selfish, lustful desires to speak words that satisfy what they want to hear. (4:3)

Drawn away from the truth, their ears will be in tune to hear well-told stories of cultural legends and the myths paired with idolatrous worship. (4:4)

The charge to Timothy challenged him to do the work of an evangelist, the proclaimer of good news, and to make full proof (fully accomplish) of his ministry. (4:5)



The Apostle's Departure/Transition Cp 4

Knowing he has prepared his spiritual son to assume his post in ministry, the Apostle declares he is ready to be surrendered and begin a life in eternity. He believes that his transition from this world to the next is imminent.

The great testimony of a life devoted to fulfilling a higher calling is declared. The Apostle acknowledges the good fight, contending to protect and preserve the truth concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ. He finished the assignment placed upon him by his calling to preach to the Gentiles. While preaching and teaching under duress and faced with great opposition, he did not lose his personal faith.

He is ready to receive the crown of righteousness, the reward given to all those that complete their assignment.

