

# **Fighting the Good Fight**

## *A Study in First Timothy*

### **Introduction**

Paul's first letter to Timothy was written, most scholars agree, around 63 A.D. It is one of four letters that Paul wrote to an individual person, rather than to a church or group of churches. The others include Philemon, Titus, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy (Paul's second letter to Timothy, and probably the last letter Paul wrote).

Paul met Timothy during his second missionary journey in the city of Lystra, located in Asia Minor. Acts 16:1-4 tells us that the young Timothy was well spoken of by the other Christians in that area, and that Paul recruited him to come with him for the remainder of this second missionary trip. We find throughout the book of Acts that from that point on, Timothy was a frequent companion on many of Paul's missionary travels. Timothy began traveling with Paul shortly after Paul's separation from Barnabas, which is recorded in Acts 15:36-41, and he was no doubt a great comfort to Paul. Paul addresses Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:2 as his true son in the faith.

Timothy was with Paul when he first went to Europe. He was there when Paul was thrown into prison at Philippi. He travelled with Paul to Thessalonica and then to Berea. He remained for a while at Berea while Paul went to Athens. After that, Timothy joined Paul, and then traveled back to Thessalonica to make contact with the new believers. Acts 18:5 tells us he later travelled back to Paul who was then in Corinth, and on Paul's third missionary journey, Timothy joined him in Ephesus. Acts 19:22 tells us that while they were in Ephesus, Paul sent Timothy back to Macedonia (the area of Thessalonica, Berea and Philippi) and perhaps on to Corinth (see 1 Corinthians 16:10). After this it is obvious that Timothy returned to Ephesus because Paul urged him to remain in Ephesus in 1st Timothy 1:3, while Paul went on to Macedonia. We also know from 2 Corinthians 1:1, that at some point Timothy was with Paul when Paul went to Macedonia, and Acts 20:4 mentions that he accompanied Paul back to Asia. He was also with Paul in Rome when he wrote Philippians (see Philippians 1:1) and Colossians (see Colossians 1:1). And Hebrews 13:23 tells us that, at some point, Timothy was imprisoned and later set free.

Timothy obviously traveled extensively with Paul as a trusted fellow worker and companion in his ministry, but in both of Paul's letters to Timothy, we see that

Timothy was stationed in Ephesus, pastoring the church there.

This letter to Timothy is one of three letters referred to by scholars as Paul's "pastoral letters." The other two are his letter to Titus and his second letter to Timothy. These letters are invaluable in instructing us on how the church is to conduct itself, and of the three, this first letter to Timothy is the most detailed.

Paul lays out for this young pastor the structure of the church and how it should operate, and we find within this letter instructions concerning doctrine, concerning worship, concerning prayer, the role of women, the qualifications for elders and deacons, the care of widows and the use of money.

Although these important instructions make up the greater part of this letter, Paul's most heartfelt instruction to Timothy, and the letter's underlying theme, is to continue to **fight the good fight of faith** (1 Timothy 1:18 & 6:12), and this is the chosen title and theme for our study of this valuable letter that has so much to speak to us today.

**Please have the first lesson completed when you come to the first study.** We strongly encourage you to complete your lesson each week. Don't try to do it all in one sitting but spread it out throughout the week. That will give you more time to glean all that the Lord has for you and to come prepared to share your thoughts in our discussion time.

If for some reason you were not able to complete your study, **we want you to come anyway.** I know that you will receive much from the overview and discussion each week and you can always go back to complete the lesson later.

Take a few moments before you begin your time of study in God's Word to ask Him to quiet your mind from all other distractions and open your heart to the things He wants to show you. Take notes as you read, jotting down those things the Lord impresses on your heart. Keeping a study journal is a good way to do this and I encourage you to use one, or you can use the blank sheet at the back of each lesson for that purpose.

We are so excited that you are joining us in this study, and we look forward to all the Lord has for us to glean.

*Shawn Van Hook  
And the LT Women's Ministry Team*