

# **Fighting the Good Fight**

## *A Study in First Timothy*

### **LESSON ONE**

Prayerfully read through 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy, chapter one.

In Paul's typical fashion, he begins his letter with a formal greeting that states his credentials and authority for what he is about to say. Although this may seem to be unnecessary, given that he is writing a personal letter to a much loved co-worker in the spreading of the Gospel, there are two reasons Paul would do so. The first is a reminder to Timothy of God's calling on Paul's life, and of God's calling on Timothy's life as well. After stating his title, Paul adds that this title and calling was given "by the commandment of God." This would be an encouragement to Timothy that the work of the ministry laid before him was also by God's command and design. The second reason for such a formal greeting, was to give the letter the weight of authority needed, should the instructions it contained be referred to by Timothy to the whole congregation in Ephesus.

1. In **verse 2**, we get a glimpse of the kind of relationship Paul had with Timothy and the affection they shared for each other. How does Paul describe Timothy in this verse?
2. Look up **2 Timothy 1:5 and 3:15**. What insights do these two verses give us concerning Timothy, his mother and his grandmother?

Paul traveled through Timothy's hometown of Lystra during his first missionary journey. It is very possible that Timothy's mother and grandmother came to faith in Christ during Paul's preaching of the Gospel on this first missionary trip (see Acts 14). This would make Timothy to Paul a "true son" in the faith, not only through their close relationship which began when they first met on his second missionary trip through that area, but indirectly, in Timothy's spiritual birth in Christ which came about through his mother and grandmother.

3. Look up **Acts 20:29-30** and record the prophecy Paul gave to the Ephesian elders.

4. Looking at 1 Timothy 1:3-4, it appears that part of Paul's prophecy concerning this church in Ephesus had already come true. Record from **verse 3** what Paul tells Timothy he is to do.

5. The fact that Paul says that he "urged" Timothy to remain in Ephesus indicates that Timothy may have had thoughts about leaving this difficult task Paul had left for him there. Remember, Timothy was a young man and pastoring this church was no doubt challenging. What other things do we discover about Timothy from the following verses?

1 Timothy 5:23 -

2 Timothy 1:4 -

2 Timothy 1:6 -

2 Timothy 1:7 -

2 Timothy 1:8 -

6. Timothy is a great example to us that we all have our weaknesses. We all have our areas that need strengthening, and yet God uses us in spite of ourselves. What weaknesses do you have that you think are hindering you from being used more fully by God? Take a moment and give those weaknesses to the Lord and ask Him to be your strength. If you desire, write down your prayer on a separate sheet of paper or in a prayer journal.

7. Paul has given Timothy a charge in verse 3 of our chapter. Now he goes on to explain to Timothy the areas where doctrine needs to be corrected. What is the first area of correction that Paul addresses in **verse 4**?

8. I'm sure we've all experienced forms of this; those who rabbit trail off and make issues of things that distract us from what we should be focusing on. The Bible Knowledge Commentary calls these distractions "empty of any spiritual value leading only to further speculation, questions, and arguments." The commentary adds that, "Human speculations tend to lead off down endless blind tunnels which serve only to confuse and obscure God's truth." Look up and record the following verses that warn against this.

1 Timothy 6:20 -

2 Timothy 2:16-17a -

2 Timothy 2:23 -

Titus 1:14 -

Titus 3:9 -

9. Paul warns Timothy that "some" have ignored the true commandment that we as believers should focus our lives on. From **verse 5**, record what that commandment is.

10. What does **verse 6** tell us that they were focusing on instead?

11. What was the topic of their “idle talk” according to **verse 7**?
  
12. What did Jesus tell us about the Law in **Matthew 22:37–40**?
  
13. Paul reminds Timothy in **verse 8** that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully. What does **Galatians 3:11** tell us was **NOT** the purpose of the Law?
  
14. What does **Galatians 3:24** state was the **real purpose** of the Law?
  
15. Looking at the true purpose of the Law, Paul states in **1 Timothy 1:9** that the Law was not made for the “righteous.” In other words, it was not made for those already convinced of their sin and their need for a Savior. It was made for those still “unconvinced,” in order to reveal their sin to them. He goes on in verse 9 and in verse 10 to make quite a list of what some of those sins are. Our tendency is sometimes to look at a list like this and start crossing off those things that don’t apply to us, however, how does Paul conclude this list in the last half of **verse 10**? What does he add?
  
16. Sound doctrine is of vital importance to Paul and he makes it a major topic of instruction to this young pastor. Paul instructs Timothy concerning doctrine seven times in this first letter to Timothy alone. The word used here for doctrine is *didaskalia*. It simply means “the content of what is taught.” The **content** of what is being taught is more important than any other aspect of a church. If the content is not “sound” (true, accurate, correct, reliable) anything and everything else it has to offer is of no true value.

Look up **2 Timothy 2:15** and record Paul's words to Timothy in his second letter.

17. The word used (from the NKJV) for "dividing" in **2 Timothy 2:15** is the Greek word, *orthotomeo* and it means to "dissect;" to rightly or correctly pull apart and analyze; to expound on; to accurately "handle." The KJV says STUDY to show yourself approved.... The NKJV says BE DILEGENT..... The ESV says DO YOUR BEST. What reason does Paul give Timothy in the last part of **2 Timothy 2:15** for doing so?

18. The measuring stick of whether the doctrine being taught is "sound" is found in **1 Timothy 1:11**. What does Paul say that sound doctrine is according to?

19. Paul's utmost priority was the protection of the Gospel that had been entrusted to him. This also needed to be the highest priority of Timothy as a pastor over this congregation. Look up **1 Timothy 4:16** and record what Paul says to Timothy in this verse.

20. In 1 Timothy 1:12-14, Paul reiterates to Timothy his personal experience and calling from God. Timothy, no doubt, already knew Paul's testimony, but Paul here reminds Timothy of some important facts. In **verse 12** there are **two important facts** Paul calls to mind. First, he thanks the Lord for what? Complete the sentence below. (I am using the NKJV.)

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who hath \_\_\_\_\_

Second, Paul gives Timothy the one qualification that God required of him for putting him into the ministry. What was that qualification? Record the missing word in the following sentence.

...for He counted me \_\_\_\_\_, putting me into the ministry.

21. These two things were of vital importance for Timothy to keep in mind. Timothy was young, and he struggled with timidity. Paul is reminding him that it is not about his own strength, ability, or power. When God's calling comes to us, in any task He calls us to, it is **His power** that **enables us** for the work. Our confidence in His power is what helps us to step out in faith to do the works He has prepared for us to do. Record what these following verses say, which speak of that.

2 Corinthians 3:5 -

2 Corinthians 4:7 -

Philippians 2:13 -

22. The one true qualification Paul was reminding Timothy of was **faithfulness**. Look up the word **FAITHFUL** in the dictionary and record the definitions you find.

23. In **1 Timothy 1:13** Paul reminds Timothy of who he was before he came to Christ. If anyone had reason to feel **unqualified**, it was Paul. Record the facts Paul reminds Timothy of in this verse. What does he call himself?

24. Paul tags on a reminder that he was not in **intentional** rebellion against God but was ignorant of the truth. He isn't excusing his sinful behavior, but is stating that he was given great mercy because of his ignorance. Record from **verse 14** how Paul describes that mercy which God poured out upon him.

25. In **verse 15** Paul states, “**This is a faithful saying....**” Paul uses this phrase, or similar, six times in his pastoral letters, this being the first occasion. We find this same phrase used in 1 Timothy 2:3, 3:1 and 4:9; as well as in 2 Timothy 2:11 and in Titus 3:8. Here, Paul states that this faithful saying is worthy of **all acceptance**. What is this faithful saying?

26. Paul’s point is that being a sinner, which means “missing the mark” or “falling short of the goal” does not disqualify you from serving God. Christ came for the **purpose** of **saving sinners**. Paul’s last comment in this verse reminds Timothy that, “If God can save me and call me into ministry after what I’ve done, He can save anyone.” Paul’s sincere humility is confirmed in his statements in the following verses. Record them below.

1 Corinthians 15:9 -

Galatians 1:13 -

Ephesians 3:8 -

27. In **verse 16** Paul gives a second reason for why he obtained such abundant mercy from God. Record what that reason is.

28. Paul points out that God used him as **an example** so that anyone feeling that they are too great a sinner to obtain God’s mercy, need only look at Paul’s life to see that no one is outside of God’s reach and no sin is too great for God to forgive. Paul’s response to God’s mercy is a declaration of praise for who God is. Our response to God’s mercy and grace should always be a declaration of praise! In **verse 17** he recites some of the wonderful attributes of God. Name them.

We could do a whole lesson on verse 17 alone as we look at each one of these attributes of our wonderful, amazing God!

29. In **verse 18** Paul again reminds Timothy of the charge he gave him back in **Verse 3**. Look back and record again what that charge was.
30. Paul goes on to remind Timothy that “this charge” is in accordance with the prophecies previously given to Timothy. We often think of prophecy as a foretelling of the future, and it certainly can include that, but that is not the only form of prophecy, and not even the most common form. Record Paul’s description of prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14:3.
31. Apparently, Timothy had previously received prophecy concerning his ministry that Paul is now reminding him of. Paul is telling him to think back and be encouraged by those words and draw strength from them as he looks at the difficulty of the task ahead of him. For what purpose does Paul remind Timothy of these things, according to the last half of **verse 18**?
32. Paul reminds Timothy, and we must keep this in the forefront of our minds as well, that we are engaged in a spiritual warfare. That means we need to be prepared for battles. We need to be on our guard. We need to be prepared to stand strong. Record Paul’s admonition to Timothy in **2 Timothy 2:3**.
33. What are the two things Paul mentions are necessary to have in this warfare according to **verse 19**?

**David Guzik** states concerning this verse: “Timothy had to have the **faith** that God was in control, and would guide him as Timothy continued to seek him. He had to have a **good conscience**, because his enemies would be attacking him, and if Timothy had not conducted himself rightly, they would have good reason to attack. A **good conscience** isn’t just a conscience that approves us, but one that approves us *because we’ve been doing what is right* – it is connected with good conduct.

**Albert Barnes** notes: “A good conscience, as well as fidelity, is necessary in the service of the Redeemer. A good conscience is that which is well informed in regard to what is right, and where its dictates are honestly followed.”

34. In verse 19 Paul reminds Timothy that some have rejected these things and have “suffered shipwreck.” What “things” is Paul speaking of? **Sound doctrine**, their **faith and trust in the true Gospel** and therefore, a **good conscience**. Paul’s description of suffering shipwreck is not necessarily a judgement of them being eternally lost, but being in need of **discipline** and **correction**. Paul calls out two of these men in **verse 20**. What does he say that he was doing with them at the end of that verse and why?

This sounds pretty harsh, but this is much like Paul’s disciplinary action towards the man engaged in sexual immorality in 1 Corinthians chapter 5. Looking at **1 Corinthians 5:5**, Paul uses similar language as in **1 Timothy 1:20**. In the second half of **1 Corinthians 5:13**, we see that the punishment was a temporary excommunication from the church. However, we read Paul’s statements concerning this man in **2 Corinthians 2:5-11**, urging them to now forgive and bring him back into fellowship.

Paul’s reminder to Timothy of those whose faith had “suffered shipwreck” was another reason why Timothy needed to stay focused on the charge he was given to teach sound doctrine and prohibit any other perversions of that sound doctrine from entering the church so that others would not become “shipwrecked.” It is also a good admonition for us to stand firm and to **wage a good warfare**.

35. What was your greatest take-away from this first chapter of 1 Timothy?

This study was written and prepared by Shawn Van Hook, 2023