

NOTES
ON THE
NEW TESTAMENT

PART 3

The Pastoral Epistles

First Timothy, Second Timothy, and Titus



GENE CUNNINGHAM

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“Endure hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”
(2 Timothy 2:3)

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No effort that I undertake ever fails to have the support and help of my dear lady Nan, whose love of our Lord Jesus and humble servant’s heart are a constant source of strength and encouragement to me.

We are so thankful for the contributions of these faithful saints and fellow servants, for their dedication and commitment to this project!

Gene

DEDICATION

*“This will be written for the generation to come,
that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord.”*

Psalm 102:18

While it is my hope and prayer that these notes will be helpful to all current students of the Word of God, I send them forth with a special dedication to the 144,000 Jewish evangelists who are yet to come on the scene of world history (Rev. 7:1–8). They will be the heroes of the faith in the coming time of Tribulation following the soon coming Rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4:13–18).

To these brothers and sisters of the future, I want you to know you have been thought of, prayed for, and loved—before you even knew your mission. We of the Church Age salute you for the sufferings you will endure and the victories you will win. We bid you to be strong in the Lord, for your victory is sure in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May the labor put into these notes by many hands and through many prayers, be a help to you as you boldly proclaim the name of Jesus Christ in a dark and dangerous time!

Before you begin any study of the Word of God, take a few moments to make sure that you are in fellowship with God, filled by means of the Holy Spirit. Comprehension, like everything else in the Christian life, is a gift that can be appropriated only by faith. The Bible clearly lays out three requirements that must be met before we can expect to understand God's Word. All three require nothing from us but faith.

1. *We must be believers in Jesus Christ* (John 3:16).

It is impossible for unbelievers to understand the Word of God (1 Cor. 2:14). Jesus declared to the leading religious leader of His day that apart from spiritual birth, man is blind to the things of God. "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit ... You must be born again*" (John 3:6–7).

2. *We must be filled by means of the Spirit* (1 Corinthians 2:12).

Only the Spirit of God knows the thoughts of God. As believers, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but when we sin, we break fellowship with God and cease to function in the power of the Spirit. When we confess our sins, God is always faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). The moment we confess, we are restored to fellowship and are again under the control of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, able to learn.

3. *We must approach in faith* (Hebrews 11:6).

Only when we approach in humility, with child-like faith, will the Word of God make sense to us (Matt. 18:4; Heb. 11:3). Where we find Scripture at odds with our ideas or our desires, we must submit to the authority of the Word. Intimacy, understanding, and power are reserved for those who are willing to do God's will (John 7:17).

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PREFACE

While I was teaching in Myanmar/Burma in March 2019, some of my long-term, advanced students suggested that I go through the New Testament and provide basic notes, which they could then be able to print as a study Bible. They specifically asked that I focus on issues that are a major area of confusion in the churches where they work. Therefore, the following commentary will focus on these five primary areas:

1. What is the nature of God's grace and how is it received?
2. What is God's plan of salvation and the clear message of the Gospel?
3. What is the Bible's teaching on the security and assurance of the believer?
4. How is the believer to live the Christian life and be effective in witness/service?
5. What does prophecy say about the last days and the order of end-times events?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

These notes are purposely brief in nature. This work is not intended to be a complete commentary. All through the work I have kept in mind those who live in remote areas of our world, who labor to both understand and to teach others the Word of God. They do not have access to Bible school or seminary training. Neither are they able to afford the vast array of books available to pastors and teachers who live in more advanced countries.

I encourage all who utilize these notes to study them with an open Bible. Pray for the illumination of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:15–23; 3:14–21) as you study. Read the context of the passage carefully. Look up and compare the references that are provided. Above all, let the Word of God, and not these notes, guide your insight into God's Word. As I always tell my students: "Never take my word for anything; search the Scriptures and prove what is true" (Acts 17:10–12; 1 John 4:1).

Paul's Pastoral Epistles

***1 Timothy, 2 Timothy,
and Titus***

INTRODUCTION

The three letters of Paul in this group are unique in that they are not addressed to churches, but to the young pastors in charge of those churches. These were written after Paul's release from his first imprisonment (see Acts 28:30–31). Both First Timothy and Titus imply that Paul is free and involved in ministry elsewhere (1 Tim. 1:3; Titus 1:5). It is possible that Paul was spending time with Philemon, as he had hinted in Philemon v. 22.

These epistles are filled with instructions for pastors and church leaders on godly conduct for all church leaders (1 Tim. 3:15) and exhortations to remain faithful to sound doctrine (1 Tim. 4:1–3; 6:3–5; 2 Tim. 2:11–19; 3:16). Paul often uses military language in these letters, speaking of the pastor as a warrior on the battlefield of truth (1 Tim. 6:11–17; 2 Tim. 2:1–7). These letters give us the mind of Paul on how the local church was to operate in a hostile, cultural environment.

Many “critics” have denied Paul's authorship based on differences of writing style, and by assuming that the doctrinal errors he addresses were not developed until much later. Both are moot arguments coming nearly 2,000 years after the fact. Paul, like most philosophers and authors in the ancient world, used various people as secretaries, whose writing styles would have differed significantly. Furthermore, no man is always the same in different times and places, and his language and thought will reveal these changes.

Since Paul was most likely freed from Roman prison around the year 62 A.D., these letters would be written sometime between 63 and 67 A.D., when Paul would have been in his final imprisonment. This would make Second Timothy his last known epistle.

Timothy was a young and ardent disciple, being the son of a believing Jewish mother and an apparently unbelieving Greek father (Acts 16:1–5; 2 Tim. 1:5). We know much less about Titus, except that he was a Gentile convert (Gal. 2:3) and was effective in resolving much of the turmoil in the Corinthian church (2 Cor. 7:5–7; 8:6, 16–18; 12:18). Titus was with Paul in Rome during his final imprisonment and was being sent out to represent Paul in places like Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10). He seems to have been especially helpful to Paul in dealing with difficult churches and circumstances (Titus 1:5, 10–16).

1 Timothy

PAUL'S FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

1 TIMOTHY CHAPTER 1

Paul opens this letter urging Timothy to remain true to sound doctrine, to avoid empty philosophical disputes, and to command him to *“fight the good fight”* (1 Tim. 1:18; 6:12). In the midst of these charges, Paul praised God for His mercy in bringing him into the light of Christ (John 8:12) and putting him *“into the ministry”* (1 Tim. 1:12–17).

Sound Doctrine and Faithful Conduct

1 Timothy 1:1–11

1:1 *“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ.”* Jesus Christ directly chose all twelve apostles. Paul declares that he was *“one born out of due time”* (1 Cor. 15:8; Acts 9:3–6). *“By the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ.”* Paul shows that both God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son are united in the work of our salvation (1 Tim. 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3–4; 2:10; 3:4). *“Our hope.”* “Hope” in the New Testament refers to our absolute assurance of eternal life based on simple faith in Jesus Christ (Heb. 6:19). We can see Paul’s handiwork by noticing *“hope”* (v. 1) ... *“faith”* (v. 2) ... *“love”* (v. 5).”

1:2 *“To Timothy, a true son in the faith.”* The language Paul uses here was legal language for a father who had adopted a son. Paul’s focus here is *“the faith,”* referring to *“sound doctrine”* (v. 10). He uses the word *“faith”* 19 times in 1 Timothy. *“Grace, mercy and peace.”* These three form a personal greeting directly *“from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.”* The grace of God provides us with what we do not deserve (eternal life). His mercy removes from us what we do deserve (eternal judgment), and the result is that we live in a state of *“peace with God”* (Rom. 5:1). In God’s mathematics, He subtracts our sins through forgiveness, then adds the righteousness of Jesus Christ to our account, and as we grow, He then multiplies our joy and peace (see 2 Pet. 1:2–3).

1:3 *“Charge some.”* Note the *“some”* in v. 6 and see the ten references given in the commentary notes below on 1 Timothy 4:1. These all refer to believers. *“Teach no other doctrine.”* This phrase expresses the *“them”* of the pastoral epistles. The *“other doctrine”* was that which strayed from the *“sound doctrine”* (v. 10; Titus 2:1), which Paul had been given by direct revelation from Christ. The Church has always been in danger from those who seek to bring in false doctrines (2 Cor. 11:4, 13–14; Gal. 1:8–9; 1 Tim. 6:3–5; 2 Tim. 2:18).

1:4 *“Nor give heed to fables.”* Those who would pervert the Word of God always come up with something new and exciting, often based on empty philosophy or some genealogical or astrological framework. The Christian world is always under assault from pseudo-prophets making exciting claims based on everything but the Word of God. *“Rather than godly edification which is in faith.”* Paul will show that all sound doctrine is based on the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 3:15–16).

1:5 *“The purpose of the commandment.”* The word for *“commandment”* here is the same one translated *“charge”* in v. 18. The idea of *“command,”* a military metaphor, is heavy in these epistles (1 Tim. 1:1; 4:11; 5:7; 6:13–14, 17; Titus 1:3). *“Love from a pure heart ... good conscience ... sincere faith.”* From Old to New Testament, it is clear that true faith generates love, in response to the love of God (Matt. 22:37–40; John 13:34–35; 1 Cor. 13:13; 2 Cor. 5:14–15; 2 Pet. 1:7). We might reverse these to say that genuine faith results in a lifestyle that produces a good conscience, resulting in *“a pure heart.”*

1:6 *“Some, having strayed, have turned aside.”* The idea here pictures one who has *“wandered off the track”* aimlessly, and as a result was *“put out of joint”* (Heb. 12:13). The idea of the gradual slide away from truth is pictured perfectly in Psalm 1:1, 4–5 and Ephesians 4:17–19.

1:7 *“Desiring to be teachers.”* The error comes when those not spiritually gifted to lead, teach (Rom. 12:4, 7–8; Eph. 4:11–12; 1 Tim. 4:14–15; 1 Pet. 4:11) or seek to usurp that office. *“Understanding”* is seen as co-existing with their desire. What they keep on *“desiring”* is something they keep on not *“understanding.”* They are

1 TIMOTHY 1:8–15

“always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim. 3:7). These men turned back from the grace of God to an emphasis on the Law of Moses.

1:8 *“The law is good if one uses it lawfully.”* The Law of Moses was never intended to provide a) salvation, b) spiritual growth, or c) spiritual production or service. The “lawful” purpose of the Law is to magnify the fact that all men are hopeless sinners before God (Rom. 5:20) and are therefore under eternal condemnation (Rom. 3:10–18, 23). In doing this, the Law becomes a tutor pointing sinners to faith in Christ (Gal. 3:21–29).

1:9–10 *“The law is not made for a righteous person.”* Since there are *“none righteous”* (Rom. 3:10), the Law condemns all mankind. However, once we receive the righteousness of Christ through faith (Rom. 4:3; 2 Cor. 5:21), we are free from the Law (Rom. 7:1–4; Gal. 3:6–8, 10–14), for *“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus”* (Rom. 8:1). It is clear that in his list of lawbreakers, Paul is following closely the ten commandments (Exod. 20:3–17). *“Any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.”* The word “sound” here is a medical term referring to “that which is healthy and wholesome.” The word “doctrine” simply refers to the systematic teaching of God’s Word and is used by Paul sixteen times in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim. 1:3, 10; 4:1, 6, 13, 16; 5:17; 6:1, 3; 2 Tim. 3:10, 16; 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1, 7, 10).

1:11 *“According to the glorious gospel.”* The “gospel” message about the saving work of Jesus Christ forms the foundation of all sound teaching (Rom. 1:1–5, 14–17; 1 Cor. 3:11; 15:1–4; Gal. 2:14–16). Any departure from the truth of God’s Word will inevitably involve a compromise of the gospel message. *“The blessed God.”* The God who is eternally blessed, is made known to us through His Son, Jesus Christ (Rom. 9:5; Heb. 1:1–3). *“Committed to my trust.”* Paul felt a great obligation to the message that had been entrusted to him (Rom. 1:14–15; 1 Cor. 9:16; 1 Thess. 2:4; Titus 1:3).

Paul Exults in the Grace of God

1 Timothy 1:12–17

This section is a parenthetical passage, coming between the words *“committed”* (v. 11), and *“charge”* (v. 18). Paul is amazed that God, in grace, called him— *“the chief of sinners”* (v. 15) —to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, and to bear the message of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.

1:12 *“Who has enabled me.”* The word *“enabled”* means “to strengthen from within” (Phil. 4:13). *“He counted me faithful.”* This is the chief requirement for stewards of the faith (1 Cor. 4:2). God saw the desire of Paul’s heart and matched it with power from the Holy Spirit to fulfill the task he was given.

1:13 *“I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man.”* Paul does not hide what he was before he came to faith (Acts 7:58; 8:1–3; 9:1–2, 13–14, 21; 22:4–5, 19–20; 26:9–11). The word translated *“insolent”* means a “sadistic and violent person,” one who takes pleasure in the pain and humiliation of others (*Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, Reinecker and Rogers, p. 617). *“I did it ignorantly in unbelief.”* Here, Paul makes a subtle allusion to the fact that sins of ignorance in the Old Testament could be atoned for (Lev. 22:14; Num. 15:22–29). God has compassion on the *“ignorant”* (Heb. 5:2).

1:14 *“Exceedingly abundant”* speaks of that which is above and beyond what could rightly be expected. He is saying that God’s grace to him was “superabundant.” *“With faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”* The faithfulness and love of Christ reproduces faith and love in those who follow Him (2 Cor. 5:14–21; 2 Pet. 1:5–7). We can say that *“faith and love”* replaced Paul’s ignorance and unbelief, along with the malice and hatred they generated.

1:15 *“This is a faithful saying.”* This is apparently a formula for repeating early prophetic statements given in the Church before the New Testament Scriptures were written. There are five of these in the Pastoral Epistles. They relate to:

1. God’s plan of redemption (1 Tim. 1:15),
2. The work of the ministry (1 Tim. 3:1),
3. The profit of godliness (1 Tim. 4:8–9),
4. The value of faithfulness (2 Tim. 2:11–13), and
5. The value of the “*good works*” of faith (Titus 3:8).

These show five stages of spiritual development toward the likeness of Christ. **“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”** This is a summary of passages like John 3:16–17 and is the central focus of the gospel message. **“Of whom I am chief.”** This is one of three self-evaluations Paul gives of himself in the New Testament:

1. That he was not fit “*to be called an apostle*” (1 Cor. 15:9),
2. That he was the “*least of all the saints*” (Eph. 3:8), and
3. That he was the “*chief of sinners*” (1 Tim. 1:15).

The longer Paul lived, and the more he grew in grace, the more humble he became!

1:16 “I obtained mercy, that in me ... as a pattern.” Paul sees himself as a superlative example of the mercy and longsuffering of God toward sinners. If God is able to forgive the “*chief of sinners*,” He will surely forgive all others who believe. **“Believe on Him for eternal life.”** The offer of Jesus Christ to the world is nothing less than the possession and assurance of eternal life (John 3:15; 6:54, 68; 10:28; 17:2–3; Rom. 6:23; Titus 3:7; Heb. 5:9; 1 John 2:25; 5:11, 13). It is a true saying that Christ did not die to make bad men good; He died to make dead men live! Only after we possess the life of Christ does the Spirit begin the work of transformation into the likeness of Christ (Rom. 8:29; 12:1–2; 2 Cor. 3:18).

1:17 “Now to the King.” Paul’s review of God’s grace to him compels him to break out in a doxology, a hymn of praise. **“Eternal”** God is the sovereign ruler of all time and eternity. **“Immortal”** God alone possesses life without beginning or end (1 Tim. 6:15–16; 2 Tim. 1:10). He is **“Invisible,”** for God is Spirit (John 4:24), and His glory so great that no mortal can see Him and live (Exod. 33:20; John 1:18).

The Charge: Fight the Good Fight

1 Timothy 1:18–20

1:18 “This charge.” Paul is passing on to young Timothy the same command that he himself was given (1 Tim. 1:1, 5, 11). **“I commit to you, son Timothy.”** The word “*commit*” used here was a common banking term in the ancient world for taking a pledge or making a deposit (2 Tim. 1:14). Paul is depositing into the care of Timothy the greatest treasure in the world, the Good News of the offer of eternal salvation. This “*deposit*,” like the talents (Matt. 25:14–28), ought to be multiplied. **“Prophecies previously made concerning you.”** Apparently, prophets in Timothy’s home church had already identified the plan of God for his life (Acts 16:1–3). **“That ... you may wage the good warfare.”** I like “*fight the good fight*” (1 Tim. 6:12) much better. The word translated “*fight*” is the word we get “*strategy*” from and speaks of the role of a soldier engaged in a comprehensive military campaign.

1:19 “Having faith and a good conscience.” The possession of these two things is the key to effective and victorious, spiritual warfare. Faith gives us the assurance of victory, and a clear conscience protects us from the counterattacks of the enemy. **“Some having rejected.”** The word “*rejected*” is very strong, meaning “*to thrust away from themselves, to repudiate.*” **“Have suffered shipwreck.”** When Paul wrote this epistle, he had endured at least four shipwrecks on his missionary journeys (2 Cor. 11:25; Acts 27:13–44). In such a condition, all is lost but one’s life.

1:20 “Of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander.” Paul was not afraid to name names! This Hymenaeus was likely the same person as in 2 Timothy 2:17, showing that he had not repented of his error. Both these men were

1 TIMOTHY 2:1–2:6

believers, who once had known and taught the truth. Then they had turned aside to false doctrines and lost the blessing and protection of God. **“I delivered to Satan.”** This phrase includes excommunication from the local church (1 Cor. 5:1–5). This action, however, is intended for their ultimate repentance and spiritual recovery. **“That they may learn not to blaspheme.”** The goal is their future restoration (2 Cor. 2:5–8, refers to the sinful man of 1 Cor. 5:1–5, and 2 Thess. 3:14–15).

1 TIMOTHY CHAPTER 2

Paul expresses both the need for and the power of effective prayer for all men, on the basis of Christ’s death for all men. He then gives practical instructions on Christian conduct, with emphasis on the role of women.

The Priority of Prayer

1 Timothy 2:1–8

2:1 “Supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks.” First, we pray for our personal needs, followed by general requests, then the needs of others and, finally, we give thanks for all of God’s gracious gifts. **“For all men.”** The emphasis in this entire section is the love and care of God for every member of the human race. The word *“all”* is used five times in the first four verses. The two major truths that come out in this section are God’s desire for *“all men to be saved”* (v. 4) and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for all men (v. 6). Those who seek to limit the *“all”* in these verses are rejecting the fundamental message of the Gospel, as well as multiple passages that teach the same truths (John 3:16–19; 12:32; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 5:18–21; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2).

2:2 “All who are in authority.” Leaders at every level especially need our prayers since, by their position, they are subject to many temptations, and are targets of manipulation by the devil to do his will. In the time of the early church, many leaders, from the least to the greatest, persecuted the church. Others, like the emperor Galerius (311 A.D.), requested that Christians pray for him and for the Empire. **“That we may lead ... life.”** Paul’s focus for prayer is not only for the salvation of leaders, that they will not hinder Christian citizens from living a spiritual life of faith. This *“life”* Paul qualifies as **“quiet ... peaceable ... in all godliness and reverence.”** These qualities ought to always dominate in the Christian community.

2:3–4 “God our Savior.” Again, this phrase is dominant in the (1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; Titus 1:3; 2:10, 13; 3:4. See also Jude 25). **“Who desires all men to be saved.”** This is the expressed desire of God the Father for every member of the human race. This is best illustrated by the three “lost” parables of Luke 15. **“And to come to the knowledge of the truth.”** Our faith is based on a proposition of truth concerning the Person and the Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Facts must be presented and understood, as they are in John 3:15–19, 1 Corinthians 15:1–5, and 2 Corinthians 5:14–21. This is why **“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”** (Rom. 10:17).

2:5 “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men.” This is the central theme of the book of Hebrews (Heb. 1:3; 2:9; 4:14–16; 5:5–6; 6:17–20; 8:1–2, 6; 9:14–15; 10:9–14, 19–24). It was a Mediator between himself and God that Job yearned for (Job 9:32–33), and through his spiritual struggle, he found (Job 19:25–27) that it is by our coming to know Him that **“we have ... an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”** (Heb. 6:19–20).

2:6 “Who gave Himself a ransom for all.” The emphasis on the universal scope of the plan of God and the redemptive work of Christ could not be clearer (Isa. 53:6; John 1:29; 3:16–19; 4:42; Acts 17:30; Rom. 3:23–24; 5:18; 1 Cor. 15:22; 2 Cor. 5:14–15, 19; 1 Tim. 1:15; 4:10; Titus 2:11; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2). The word *“ransom”* (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45) was used of the payment price made for the release of a slave. How fitting then that when Judas agreed to betray his Master he bargained for *“thirty pieces of silver,”* the price

of a slave (Exod. 21:32; Zec. 11:12-13; Matt. 26:14-16). ***“To be testified in due time.”*** The timing of Jesus’ coming and crucifixion was the perfect time in history (Gal. 4:4-5; Heb. 1:1-3).

2:7 *“I was appointed a preacher and an apostle ... a teacher of the Gentiles.”* Paul’s appointment came directly from God (Acts 9:15-16). This appointment was specifically, but not exclusively, to the Gentiles. Paul always went *“to the Jew first”* (Acts 13:5, 14-15; Rom. 1:16; 2:10). Only after his message was rejected by the Jews did he then turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13:44-52; 26:19-23). Paul’s desire for the salvation of his people was never diminished (Rom. 9:1-5; 10:1). Paul’s calling of Christ as his witness stressed the truth of his claims (2 Cor. 11:31; Gal. 1:20).

2:8 *“I desire therefore that men pray everywhere.”* Paul is thinking here of prayer as a critical part of church worship, as well as a personal discipline of every believer. ***“Lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”*** The *“hands”* here speak of the conduct of the person praying. When we pray, we are lifting up our souls to God, and they are to be cleansed of all wrongdoing (Matt. 6:14-15; 18:35; 2 Tim. 2:20-22; 1 John 1:7, 9). Both *“wrath”* and *“doubting”* can hinder our prayer life (James 1:6-7; 4:1-4; 1 Pet. 3:7, 10-12).

Conduct of Christian Women

1 Timothy 2:9-15

2:9 *“In like manner also ... the women.”* Many wrongly assume that the early church suppressed the women. Nothing could be further from the truth. Women were elevated in Christianity as they had never been before in history (Eph. 5:25-33). The wife was to be loved, cherished, and protected. Men were to understand and honor their wives as an equal heir of eternal life (1 Pet. 3:7). Paul’s instructions for *“the women”* here are just as timely today as they were in the early church. ***“Adorn themselves.”*** Paul is not saying that attractive outward adornment is wrong, but rather is stressing the greater priority of inner adornment of the soul (Titus 2:10; 1 Pet. 3:1-6).

2:10 *“Women professing godliness.”* In the ancient world, Christianity had an uphill battle winning favor among Gentile populations. The conduct of every individual reflected on the community as a whole. It is no less true for us today. We live in a hostile world environment, and every failure of any believer is often used to defame the name of Jesus Christ. ***“Good works.”*** When the Bible speaks of *“good works,”* it is always referring to divine production coming from faith in God’s Word and under the control and leading of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16; 22-23; Eph. 5:18; Titus 2:14; 3:1).

2:11-12 *“Let a woman learn in silence.”* In the early church, as a carry-over from the synagogue, men would often ask questions of the teacher. This command for the women to remain silent was again a recognition of the roles that God gave from the beginning for men and women (Gen. 1:26; 2:15-25; 3:16; 1 Cor. 11:1-12; 14:34-38). The men are to exercise leadership and authority; the women are to be submissive. As proof of the value of these instructions, look at our modern world, which rejects all such standards as an evil *“Patriarchy.”* Are we better off today than decades ago? Most people today do not realize that in the ancient world, and in many countries today, women are not even allowed to learn! ***“I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man.”*** In the ancient world, people were enslaved by many cults in which women were dominant. In the city of Corinth, the Temple of Aphrodite employed a thousand prostitutes as priestesses. The same was true of the Temple of Diana in Ephesus. This is why Paul warns against false teachers who appeal to the emotions of women (2 Tim. 3:6-7).

2:13-14 *“For Adam was formed first, then Eve.”* Paul goes back to the creation story to establish the unique roles of men and women. Eve was to be a *“helper”* to Adam, not his leader (Gen. 2:15-25). These roles were established before man fell into sin (died spiritually, Gen. 2:17) and are not a result of the entrance of sin (Rom. 5:12). They existed in the perfect environment of the Garden and were considered by God to be *“very good.”* There is a three-fold authority chain-of-command in the Christian family:

1 TIMOTHY 2:15–3:4

1. Christ is the Head of the Church (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18),
2. The pastor is head over the local church (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1–4), and
3. The husband is the head of the wife (1 Cor. 11:1–3; 14:35).

“Adam was not deceived.” The point Paul is making here is two-fold: Adam knew full well what he was doing and, therefore, the sin and its curse falls on him (Rom. 5:12); however, Eve was deceived, and that danger of deception continues to this day (2 Cor. 11:3; 2 Tim. 3:6–7). Both the role and the accountability for upholding and teaching the truth has been committed to the men in the church.

2:15 “She shall be saved in childbearing.” This appears, first of all, to be a continuing reference to Adam and Eve. Though she was deceived by the devil, yet her deliverance would come by her role as a child-bearer (Gen. 3:15–16). She—not the man—has the dominant role in bringing forth the Seed—the Messiah (Gal. 3:16, 19). Then comes its application to today. It is critical to remember that the word “*saved*” is used often in the New Testament for temporal deliverance of some kind. The woman who bears and raises children will find her “*deliverance*,” if her children (“*they*” here is third person plural) “*continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.*” This fits with Paul’s instructions to young women in 1 Timothy 5:14 and Titus 2:4–5. God has given a vital and unique position to the woman, and no man could ever fill that unique role!

1 TIMOTHY CHAPTER 3

This entire chapter is devoted to the proper qualifications and conduct of church leadership.

Qualifications for Elders/Bishops

1 Timothy 3:1–7

3:1 “This is a faithful saying.” Paul uses this phrase five times in the Pastoral Epistles (see the note on 1 Tim. 1:15). **“The position of a bishop.”** Three titles are used in the New Testament for the same office: Bishop (overseer), Elder, and Pastor (note that the use of all three refer to the same men in Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7; 1 Peter 5:1–2). Some hold that the early church followed the Synagogue in having multiple “*elders*.” This did not take away from the fact that there was always one “*Shepherd*” who was in charge. **“He desires a good work.”** The first word, translated “*desires*” actually means to “*aspire to*.” The aspiration is the goal, while the desire is the motivation. Both are good but must be matched by the character and conduct of the “*bishop*.”

3:2 “A bishop then must be blameless.” The word “*blameless*” here literally means “*unimpeachable*,” therefore, no charges can be brought against him. He must be above reproach in his community. In other words, his character is known by his conduct. **“The husband of one wife.”** This literally means “*a one-woman man*.” The idea is that he is faithful to his wife. **“Temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable.”** These all speak of evident maturity and character (see Titus 1:5–9). **“Able to teach.”** The other qualities speak of spiritual maturity. This one relates to evidence of the spiritual gift (Rom. 12:4, 7; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11–12; 1 Pet. 4:10–11).

3:3 “Not given to wine.” Overindulgence in wine leads this list of five negatives, offset by the one positive, **“but gentle.”** The negatives present a man lacking self-control in relation to “*wine*,” bullying, love of money, argumentative (“*not quarrelsome*”), and greed (“*not covetous*”). Self-control is high on the scale of demonstrating both consistent spirituality (Gal. 5:23) and spiritual maturity (2 Pet. 1:6).

3:4 “One who rules his own house well.” A man’s ability to lead is demonstrated in the home. **“Having his children in submission.”** His children must not be out of control (Titus 1:6). The reason is given in v. 5.

3:5 “For if ... How?” This is a rhetorical question having an obvious answer. If he cannot lead his own home, how can it be assumed he can do the much more difficult task of leading the local church, which is the “*house of God*” (1 Tim. 3:15)?

3:6 “Not a novice.” This most likely is a reference to a new believer who is yet spiritually immature. Such men would be in danger of “*being puffed up with pride*,” which was the root cause of the devil’s fall (Isa. 14:12–15; Ezek. 28:1–2, 11–19).

3:7 “He must have a good testimony among those who are outside.” A poor reputation in the community would have adverse effects on the local church. “*Lest he fall into ... the snare of the devil*.” The devil uses accusations, even when they are false, to destroy many ministers and churches. How much more so when the accusations are true? To be falsely accused is an honor (1 Pet. 2:19–25; 3:13–17). To be rightly accused is a shame and a disgrace to the cause of Christ.

Qualifications for Deacons

1 Timothy 3:8–16

3:8 “Likewise deacons.” The office of deacon was established very early in the Church (Acts 6:1–7). The word refers to “one who serves in a practical role.” “*Reverent, not double tongued ...*” Again, as in v. 3, one positive is set in opposition to the negatives. The implication here is that genuine reverence for God will be displayed by the absence of lying, drunkenness, and money-lust. In the spiritual economy of God, the solution for all evil conduct is the development of true godliness, which is Christlikeness (vv. 15–16; 2 Pet. 1:6).

3:9 “Holding the mystery of the faith.” The word “*holding*” suggests a firm possession of “*the mystery of the faith*.” Even deacons need to be mature in the faith. This “*mystery*” will be clarified in v. 16. In the New Testament, the idea of “*mystery*” refers to something previously not revealed to men, but now revealed and known. “*With a pure conscience*.” Within this context, the “*pure* [clear] *conscience*” refers to a firm and sure grasp of Scripture and its theological contents.

3:10 “But let these first be tested.” The best way to determine if a man will be a good leader is to see how he is as a follower. Those who cannot submit to authority have no business exercising it. Any prospective pastor should have a resume of having been a faithful servant in the church. Timothy, in fact, had this reputation before Paul met him (Acts 16:1–2). This is also true of deacons who, in serving the church, exercise their own authority. “*Then let them serve as deacons*.” The key word here is “*serve*,” which is actually the verb form of “*deacon*.” They are not to see themselves as over others, but rather as servants of the church body.

3:11 “Likewise, their wives.” Just as the pastor’s leadership is reflected in his children (v. 4), even so the wives of deacons reflect their husbands. A wife who is irreverent, a gossip, or uncontrolled should disqualify a man from holding the office of deacon. Husbands and wives are a team, and if they are a mismatched team, it will hinder their effectiveness.

3:12 “Ruling ... their own houses well.” Men who know their Bible, who love their wives, and are in control of their children, are the standard for leadership of any kind in the church.

3:13 “Those who have served well.” The role of deacon fulfills the ideal of serving one another as an example to the whole church (Gal. 5:13; Col. 3:24). “*Obtain for themselves a good standing*.” The verb used here is the same as in v. 10, but the idea is probably “a good and honorable standing before God.” Their work will be rewarded in eternity (1 Cor. 3:10–15; 9:24–27). “*And great boldness in the faith*.” This “*boldness*” will be seen in the presence of Jesus Christ, now—in spiritual victory (Rom. 8:37; Gal. 2:20; Jude 3)—as well as at the Bema Seat (Eph. 3:12; 1 John 2:28).

1 TIMOTHY 3: 14–4:1

3:14 *“Though I hope to come to you shortly.”* Paul is now at liberty to go to Timothy, presumably after his first Roman imprisonment (the “two whole years” mentioned by Luke in Acts 28:30–31). He is perhaps enjoying the hospitality of Philemon (Phi. 21–22).

3:15 *“But if I am delayed.”* Paul knew well the potential for plans to go wrong (Acts 16:6–8; Rom. 1:10; 15:22; 2 Cor. 1:15–17; 1 Thess. 2:18). *“That you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God.”* This could be the key verse to the Pastoral Epistles. Here, the Church is compared both to a household and to a building (1 Pet. 2:4–5, 7–8). *“The pillar and ground of the truth.”* The “pillar” speaks of the stability of the building (Prov. 9:1). The foundation of the Church is the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:11). The church that stands firm on the “truth” about Jesus Christ will be stable and secure in the truth. Verse 16 makes this point clear.

3:16 *“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness.”* There is no argument of human wisdom or philosophy that can stand against the truth about our Lord. This “mystery” was mentioned in v. 9. “Godliness” among men of faith is possible only because of the coming and saving work of the Lord Jesus. This verse contains what appears to be stanzas from an ancient hymn. The “greatness” of true godliness is that it was never before revealed until the coming of our Lord (Heb. 1:1–14). Six lines cover the coming of Christ from His incarnation to His ascension:

1. *“God was manifested in the flesh.”* This is a clear declaration of the deity of Jesus becoming humanity (Phil. 2:5–8; Col. 1:19–20; Heb. 2:6–14).
2. *“Justified in the Spirit.”* Literally, He was vindicated by the Spirit, both in His holy life, and by His resurrection (Acts 2:24–28; Rom. 1:4; 8:11).
3. *“Seen by angels.”* The angels rejoiced at His resurrection (Phil. 2:9–11; Col. 2:15; Heb. 1:5–9, 13).
4. *“Preached among the Gentiles.”* Here, Paul especially exults in the ministry God had given him as the Apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; Rom. 15:16–20; Gal. 2:8–10; Col. 1:23).
5. *“Believed on in the world.”* God had chosen the “foolishness of the message preached” to spread the gospel message of the offer of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:18–2:5).
6. *“Received up in glory.”* This speaks of His present session at the right hand of God (Psalm 110:1–4; Acts 2:33–36; Eph. 4:10; Heb. 1:3, 13). What a beautiful hymn of the whole redemptive work of our Savior. What a shame that this is not being sung in our churches today!

1 TIMOTHY CHAPTER 4

In this chapter, Paul turns to the problem of false teachers in the church and how their destructive work was to be defeated.

Refuting False Doctrines

1 Timothy 4:1–5

4:1 *“The Spirit expressly says.”* This refers to prophetic statements made by both the Old and New Testament prophets as a matter of revelation from God. *“Some will depart from the faith.”* The “some” here refers to erring believers, as also the “some” in 1 Timothy 1:3, 6, 19; 5:15, 24–25; 6:10, 21, and 2 Timothy 2:18 and 20. These are ten examples of how some believers are led astray from the faith, while some excel in faith, growth, and service. *“Giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.”* Satan aligns all his forces against the truth and works incessantly to deceive the saints (Eph. 6:10–13).

4:2 “Speaking lies in hypocrisy.” Satan works through deceitful and self-centered men to sow deception throughout the churches (Rom. 1:18; 2 Cor. 1:13–15; Gal. 2:13; Col. 2:4, 8, 16, 18; 2 Pet. 2:1–22; Jude 4, 8–13, 19). Their evil is cloaked in a façade of pseudo-good. **“Having their own conscience seared.”** We get our word “cauterize” from the word “seared” in the Greek language. Continued resistance to the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit renders the conscience—God’s gift to all men—hardened beyond repair (Rom. 1:18–32; Eph. 4:17–19; see 1 Tim. 1:5, 19).

4:3 “Forbidding to marry ... to abstain from foods.” False teaching often takes on a legalistic and ascetic front, presenting this self-denial as more “spiritual.” **“Which God created to be received with thanksgiving.”** The teaching of Paul is that *“God ... gives us richly all things to enjoy”* (1 Tim. 6:17). All things are right in proper proportion and in moderation, not becoming enslaved to any (1 Cor. 6:12; Col. 2:16; Rom. 14:1–12).

4:4 “Nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving.” God used the animals prohibited by the Law of Moses to teach Peter the lesson of God’s love and care for the Gentiles (Acts 10:9–16, 28–29). Peter, along with others, later “departed” from this vital truth (Gal. 2:11–21), both in regard to what they ate, and how they treated Gentile converts. The key is found in the command, *“What God has cleansed you must not call common”* (Acts 10:15). Therefore, this verse declares that God has created all things to hold a rightful place and use (see also God’s command to Noah, Gen. 9:3).

4:5 “For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.” The Christian has the freedom to enjoy all things God has created, knowing that His Word declares them *“very good”* (Gen. 1:31). But all are to be received with thanksgiving to God for His wonderful gifts (1 Thess. 5:18).

Instructing the Church

1 Timothy 4:6–11

This section is packed with vital instruction on how to be an effective teacher and leader in the local church.

4:6 “If you instruct ... nourished in the words of the faith ... good doctrine which you have carefully followed.” Here, Paul gives Timothy a format for effective ministry. This one verse ought to challenge each and every one who takes up the task of leading and teaching. To get the value of what Paul is saying, it is helpful to reverse the order:

1. “Carefully follow” in practice the Word that you learn; to this we can add “spiritual exercise” (v. 7).
2. You will then be “spiritually nourished” in and by the *“words of faith.”*
3. Then, you are enabled to “faithfully instruct” the brethren, and
4. By this process you will be a **“good minister”** of Jesus Christ.

There are no shortcuts in either spiritual growth or in service to God (2 Tim. 2:13–15).

4:7 “But reject profane old wives’ fables.” The word *“profane”* speaks of that which has no spiritual value whatsoever (1 Tim. 1:9; 6:20; 2 Tim. 2:16). Paul is not denigrating older women, he is simply using language common in their day, as it is in ours. **“Exercise yourself toward godliness.”** The word *“exercise”* is *gumnazo*, from which we get “gymnasium.” In the Greco-Roman world of Paul, two traits were held above all others. The first was the ability to speak to command attention and admiration through eloquence. The second was physical strength and athletic capability. Timothy was in danger of falling for one or the other. Paul’s warnings to him imply that he inclined toward asceticism and rigorous physical training (vv. 7–8; 1 Tim. 5:23).

4:8 “For bodily exercise profits a little.” Paul does not deny the value of physical exercise. His point is that it is of only temporal value. **“Godliness is profitable for all things.”** Consistent spiritual training (1 Cor. 9:24–27) has both temporal benefits as well as the promise of eternal reward in the life to come.

1 TIMOTHY 4:9–14

4:9 *“This is a faithful saying.”* See the note on 1 Timothy 1:15. These sayings are said to be *“worthy of all acceptance.”* The word *“worthy”* is used of that which balances out, or equals, something else (Eph. 4:1). It can point to what goes before (1 Tim. 1:15), or what comes after (Titus 3:8). Here, it most likely refers to v. 8. (This information comes from *The Bible Knowledge Commentary—New Testament* by Walvoord and Zuck).

4:10 *“For to this end.”* That is, *“the life ... to come”* mentioned in v. 8. *“We both labor and suffer reproach.”* The word for *“suffer”* is *agonizomai*, from which we get *“agonize.”* It was used in the ancient world for the athlete in the climax of effort, and for the soldier in the thick of battle. Indeed, *“all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution”* (2 Tim. 3:12). *“Because we trust in the living God.”* It is our faith that Satan hates and persecutes, because the object of our faith, Jesus, is the God who lives! *“The Savior of all men.”* God’s plan of redemption provides salvation for every member of the human race (see note and references on 1 Tim. 2:6). *“Especially of those who believe.”* While Christ died for all mankind, the benefits of His finished work are only applied to *“those who believe.”* The word *“believe”* is stated at least ninety-eight times in the Gospel of John. It is critical to understand that because of the cross of Christ, men’s sins are no longer imputed to them (2 Cor. 5:19), because Jesus Christ paid the debt in full (John 19:30; Col. 2:14). This means that God has gone as far as He can in righteousness and justice toward providing salvation. He is fully satisfied with the work of Christ on the cross (*“propitiation”*). This same point is made in 1 John 2:2. However, the issue now is faith versus unbelief. All who end up in the Lake of Fire will be there for one reason only—that they refused to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:18–19).

4:11 *“These things command and teach.”* Timothy, though young and “looked down on” for this reason (v. 12), could speak with the authority of the Apostle Paul, with the full weight of the Word of God. Young preachers need to know where their authority comes from.

Ministry Involves Gift, Example, and Message

1 Timothy 4:12–16

4:12 *“Let no one despise your youth.”* The word *“despise”* means to “look down on” or “to disregard or underrate.” How does a young pastor overcome this dismissive attitude? The answer follows with five instructions in vv. 12–16:

1. Be an example,
2. Give attention to the Word of God,
3. Do not neglect your spiritual gift,
4. Be devoted so that your progress is evident, and
5. Be vigilant in your life and teaching.

First, *“Be an example.”* Evident spiritual growth and strong Christian character are not easy to ignore or despise. Six areas are cited by Paul: *“in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”* The first three visible evidences are outward manifestations of the last three, which are inner qualities.

4:13 Next, *“Give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”* The church service should be built around these three things. God’s Word should be read to the people, who should then be exhorted to apply what they have heard. But whatever the topic of truth is in the passage read, it should then be expounded upon, using cross-references, stories, and illustrations from other portions of Scripture. This method will not fail to bring growth to the entire Body of Christ.

4:14 Third, *“Do not neglect the gift that is in you.”* The word for *“neglect”* means “to be unconcerned about something.” Paul uses the present imperative, suggesting that Timothy was guilty of this very thing. Every child of God is given a spiritual gift at the moment of the new birth (Rom. 12:3–8; 1 Cor. 12:27–31; Eph. 4:8–16; 1 Pet. 4:10–11). Our spiritual *“gift”* helps to define the plan of God for our lives. What a terrible waste, that so many believers never seek to know, develop, and serve in that for which they have been uniquely gifted.

“By prophecy with the laying on of hands.” Apparently, before Paul met Timothy (Acts 16:1–3), prophets in Timothy’s local church had revealed his gift, and the elders had committed him by ordination to that ministry (see also notes on 2 Tim. 1:6).

4:15 Fourth, **“Meditate ... give yourself entirely to them.”** Timothy is exhorted to *“meditate”* (think deeply on) and then to “be in them,” which means to be devoted to the things Paul has set before him. **“That your progress may be evident to all.”** No matter what stage of spiritual growth we may have attained, we ought to continue to make *“progress”* that is evident to ourselves and to others. The word “progress” pictures a scout blazing a trail for others to follow. This was a favorite word used by Stoic philosophers of a student’s progress (*Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1980, 1 Tim. 4:15, p. 628).

4:16 Finally, **“Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine.”** Paul urges Timothy to carefully scrutinize both the faithfulness of his walk, and the accuracy of his teaching. Vigilance on the spiritual battlefield is crucial, for the enemy of our souls never sleeps. Thank God, neither does our heavenly Father (Psalm 121:3–4)! **“You will save both yourself and those who hear you.”** As so often in the New Testament, the word “save” is used here not in the sense of eternal salvation (which is a gift), but in the sense of temporal deliverance (which requires our obedience). If a drowning person yells out, “save me,” we know they are not asking for eternal salvation. People in the time of the New Testament used the word “save” in exactly the same way. By being diligent in the things Paul has written, Timothy would deliver himself from the snares and pitfalls of the devil, as well as delivering those who hear his teaching and obey it.

1 TIMOTHY CHAPTER 5

This chapter begins Paul’s final instructions for ministry to various groups of people within the church family. These instructions speak of older men and women, widows, elders, slaves, troublemakers, and the rich. In this chapter, we will see the first three mentioned.

Ministry to Older Saints

1 Timothy 5:1–2

5:1–2 “Do not rebuke an older man.” In these two verses, Paul deals with the difficulty a young pastor like Timothy would face in correcting various groups in the church. It shows how strongly the local church was to reflect a good family. The word **“exhort”** applies to all classes, and means “to encourage, correct, or reprove” (Titus 2:1: 9). It is most interesting that Chrysostom (347–407 A.D.), the early pastor in Antioch, was himself the son of a mother who was widowed at the age of twenty. Rather than remarry, she devoted her life to the raising and education of her son. During his ministry, Chrysostom wrote, *“Rebuke is in its own nature offensive particularly when it is addressed to an old man; and when it proceeds from a young man too, there is a show of forwardness. By the manner and mildness of it, therefore, he would soften it.”* (*The Daily Study Bible*, 1 Tim. 5:1–2, William Barclay). But see also 1 Timothy 5:20 for the stronger rebuke of pastors who sin. Timothy is commanded to treat older men **“as a father,”** younger men **“as brothers,”** older women should be treated with respect **“as mothers,”** and the younger women **“as sisters, with all purity.”** This last condition is especially needed when counsel or instruction is given to young women. We see then that in the pastor’s relation to church members there must be a) respect, b) affection, c) brotherly love, and d) purity. This is the expression of what may be called Christian chivalry.

Ministry to Widows

1 Timothy 5:3–16

5:3 “Honor widows who are really widows.” The King James version has *“widows indeed.”* The distinction is explained in the following verses. The distinction is necessary to determine when the church should provide care and sustenance for a widow.

1 TIMOTHY 5:4–11

5:4 *“Let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents.”* The church should not support a widow with children or grandchildren. The reason given is that this removes a duty and responsibility that belongs to family members. The word *“learn”* is the word used in the New Testament for discipleship, and this is one of its duties. Family members who care for widows demonstrate two qualities of the disciple: *“piety,”* that is, reverence for God, and *“to repay”* means to show gratitude by providing a recompense to a mother who has raised and provided for them. The early church father Ignatius (108–140 A.D.) wrote, *“Let not a widow be neglected. After the Lord, be thou their guardian”* (*The Daily Study Bible*, William Barclay).

5:5 *“She who is really a widow.”* This means in the sense that the church should care for her, because she has no other source of support. Three conditions are given in this verse: she is *“left alone”* without family to help her; she *“trusts in God,”* meaning she is a faithful believer; and she *“continues in prayers ... night and day.”* These widows were expected to serve God in the church through the ministry of prayer. In this manner, they would follow the example of women like Anna (Luke 2:36–38) and Dorcas (Acts 9:36).

5:6 *“But she who lives in pleasure.”* The word translated *“pleasure”* occurs only here and James 5:5. The word is *spatalao*—to abandon oneself to pleasure (*Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, Reinecker and Rogers). The present participle speaks of a life characterized by this pursuit. The word *“pleasure”* appears in the New Testament 19 times. It suggests a devotion to self-gratification. *“Is dead while she lives.”* This does not refer to loss of salvation, but to the deadness of consistent carnality (Rom. 8:6; James 2:17, 20; Rev. 3:1). Such widows are disqualified from the support of the church.

5:7 *“Command, that they may be blameless.”* Timothy must instruct the church in these matters, so that both widows and their families, and the church will have no cause for blame.

5:8 *“If anyone does not provide for his own ...especially ... his household.”* The word *“provide”* means “to look ahead and make provision.” Forethought for family members is implied. In 2 Corinthians 12:14, Paul says, *“For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.”* This is not a contradiction. Parents are obligated for the care of their children—while they are growing. Once grown, the duty is reversed, as we see here in Timothy. *“He has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”* This denial is explained in Titus 1:16, where one’s actions are the opposite of their words. In the ancient world, even non-believers recognized the need to care for elderly parents. From the time of Solon (638 B.C.), the Athenian lawmaker, it was actually a law that families care for elderly parents. The Athenian statesman and orator Demosthenes (384–322 B.C.) declared, *“I regard the man who neglects his parents as unbelieving in and hateful to the gods, as well as to men.”* Since even known unbelievers held these values, we can see why Paul says what he does here.

5:9–10 *“Do not let a widow under sixty ... be taken into the number.”* Early churches apparently had a list or roster of widows needing support. The age of sixty was set as a limit because younger widows are encouraged to remarry (v. 14). Here, Paul resumes the three qualifications begun in v. 5, making twelve in all. *“The wife of one man”* is the same expression used in 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6 for the qualifications of the pastor. Again, the meaning is “a faithful wife.” Remarriage due to divorce, or death of a spouse, is not the issue here. *“Well reported for good works ... if she has diligently followed every good work.”* The qualities listed here give a general view of a woman whose faith has been “tested,” just as that of those in church leadership (1 Tim 3:6–7, 10).

5:11 *“Refuse the younger widows.”* Young widows were not to be supported by the church. To be placed on the list for support meant that a commitment was made by the widows to devote themselves to ministry in the church. These duties included prayer, ministry to younger women who were ill, or in childbirth, and making of clothes, like Dorcas. *“When they have begun to grow wanton.”* The word *“wanton”* here refers to sexual desire, a normal impulse for young women, yet used here of following the impulse to the abandonment of Christ. It pictures a young animal fighting against the yoke. *“They desire to marry.”* Paul is not condemning

the desire, he is condemning a young woman who makes a pledge to serve the church, and then goes back on her commitment. Paul's standard is that one be able to "*serve the Lord without distraction*" (1 Cor. 7:35).

5:12 "*Having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith.*" This verse has been much abused in churches and has been used to say that young widows ought not to remarry, in contradiction of v. 14. The cause of condemnation here is that if young widows have pledged to serve the church, in return for the support of the church, and then break their pledge, they are guilty of dishonesty to God (Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21; Eccl. 5:4–5).

5:13 "*And besides they learn to be idle.*" Young women would be subject to temptations and distractions that would be less appealing to older women. Becoming "*gossips and busybodies*" would be dishonoring to themselves and a stain on the church.

5:14 "*Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house ...*" In other words, go on to live a full, useful, and meaningful life. In 1 Corinthians 7:39, Paul limits this marriage to another believer.

5:15 "*Some have already turned aside after Satan.*" Here, the "*adversary*" of v. 14 is identified. Timothy no doubt knew of the cases Paul is referring to. News of sinful conduct by believers always spreads rapidly, from church to church. This also encourages the very "*gossips*" Paul condemns in v. 13. The devil takes advantage of all such situations to create division, strife, and chaos in the churches. The sin of those who give in to gossip and slander is just as great as that of those whose sins they talk breathlessly about. The spiritual way of dealing with such cases is given in Matthew 18:15–35, though few churches have been faithful to this standard. Two responses to sin in the church seem to be the norm: either a boasting about it as evidence of the freedom we have in grace (1 Cor. 5:2), or the imposition of such shame on the sinner as to destroy them (2 Cor. 2:6–8).

5:16 "*Let them relieve them ... do not let the church be burdened.*" The early church, like so many today, had very limited financial resources. The hard-earned offerings of the people should always be valued as gifts devoted to God. The point of v. 4 is restated, but here, to emphasize that the church ought not to be needlessly obligated for the care of those who have other sources of support.

Summary: The Twelve Qualifications for a Widow To Be Ministered To:

1. She is left alone (v. 5),
2. Trusts in God (v. 5),
3. Continues in supplications and prayers night and day (v. 5),
4. She is blameless (v. 7),
5. She is over the age of sixty (v. 9),
6. Was a wife of one man (v. 9),
7. Is well-reported for good works (v. 10),
8. Has not grown wanton against Christ (v. 11),
9. Has not cast off her first faith (v. 12),
10. Is not idle (v. 13),
11. Is not a gossip or busybody (v. 13), and
12. Does not have family to care for her (v. 16).

Ministry to Elders

1 Timothy 5:17–20

5:17 *“Let the elders who rule well.”* The word *“rule”* means “to stand before,” and implies leadership. *“Be counted worthy of double honor.”* This word *“honor”* included not only respect, but also financial support. *“Especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.”* Dedication to the study and teaching of God’s Word with accuracy and power is of special value to all the Church (1 Cor. 9:14; 1 Thess. 5:12–13; Heb. 13:7, 17). The word *“labor”* here means to work to the point of exhaustion.

5:18 *“For the Scripture says.”* The first quote in this verse is from Deuteronomy 25:4, repeated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:9–10. The second is a quote from Jesus in Luke 10:7. These references make it clear that the phrase *“double honor”* in v. 17 includes financial support. The church blessed with a pastor who is a diligent student, and effective teacher of the Word of God, is under obligation to give both respect and support that equals his labors.

5:19 *“Except from two or three witnesses.”* This standard goes back to the Law of Moses (Deut. 19:15) and is affirmed in the New Testament (Matt. 18:16; John 8:17; 2 Cor. 13:1). The Jewish legal standard was that it is better for a guilty man to go unpunished than for any man to be wrongfully condemned. The three witnesses were to be questioned separately. If their testimony was: a) not an eyewitness account, b) not consistent with two other eyewitness accounts, and c) the accuser was not party to the sin, the testimony was rejected. How many Christians have suffered ruin due to the malicious accusation of just one person?

5:20 *“Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all.”* The context must be kept in mind here. First, Paul is specifically dealing with elders/leaders. Secondly, the idea is that accusations have been brought and confirmed as true. Finally, the word *“sinning”* is a present participle, implying that the sin continues even after they have been confronted. This is in perfect accord with what Jesus says in Matthew 18:15–20. *“That the rest also may fear.”* This means other pastors or leaders. Church discipline, when done biblically, seeks to restore those who stray, and to warn others not to follow their example. Jesus publicly rebuked Peter (Matt. 16:21–23; Mark 8:32–33; John 21:15–19), having all the disciples as witnesses of Peter’s failure. However, He did this in a most gracious and compassionate way, and for the restoration of Peter, not for his enduring shame or disqualification.

Personal Instructions for Timothy

1 Timothy 5:21–25

5:21 *“I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ.”* Paul appears to take this solemn way of charging Timothy, possibly because he had failed to apply discipline where it was needed. Paul wants him to remember that these three witnesses were observing him: God the Father, Jesus Christ, and Paul. *“And the elect angels.”* Peter reminds us that the holy angels observe us from Heaven (1 Pet. 1:12). *“Without prejudice ... partiality.”* Neither *“prejudice”* against anyone, nor *“partiality”* in favor of another, should affect the pastor’s treatment, whether of other pastors, or of church members. God is impartial and is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11), and neither should we be.

5:22 *“Do not lay hands on anyone hastily.”* This refers back to 1 Timothy 3:6 and 10 regarding ordaining men to leadership positions. *“Nor share in other people’s sins.”* The one who ordains unfit men into offices of leadership and authority will share in what they do, for good or bad. We are accountable, both to God and to the church, for those we promote. *“Keep yourself pure.”* He is specifically telling Timothy to *“keep yourself pure”* from the danger of ordaining the wrong kind of men. The *“savagely wolves”* Paul warned about in Ephesus would not have been so destructive had they not been given authority in the church (Acts 20:28–30).

5:23 *“No longer drink only water.”* Timothy appears to have been devoted to an ascetic lifestyle (1 Tim. 4:7–8; 6:6–7). In Old Testament times, the Nazarite vow precluded the drinking of any wine (Num. 6:1–21), and some

Jews, like the Rechabites, rejected drinking wine altogether (Jer. 35). Scripture records three Nazarites devoted for life: Samson (Judg. 13:2–13), Samuel (1 Sam. 1:11), and John (Luke 1:13–17). Possibly, Timothy chose to abstain from wine, considering that course to be more spiritual. Yet, his health was not good, and Doctor Paul prescribes *“a little wine.”* As always, all indulgences, whether in food or drink, ought to be moderate. This verse shows that care for the health and the body is needed so as to be strong for the strenuous work of the ministry. A pastor ought to be an example of good health and physical condition.

5:24 *“Some men’s sins are clearly evident ... some men follow later.”* This is again referring to church leadership. Some men’s sins become public knowledge, those of others may be hidden, but will be manifested in the presence of Christ at the Bema Seat (Luke 8:17; 1 Cor. 3:10–15; 2 Cor. 5:10–11; 1 John 2:28–3:3).

5:25 *“Likewise, the good works.”* There are some who labor and serve, whose works become known, even famous. They receive praise and honor during their lifetimes. Others labor just as faithfully, and are never known, and receive no recognition or praise in this life. However, whether good or bad works, they *“cannot be hidden.”* Our true lives will be made clear when we all stand before the Lord. Do not serve for the sake of praise, otherwise you already have your reward (Matt. 6:1–2, 5, 16). Do not become proud if you are recognized, for this will only diminish your reward. Better to labor unsung and unrecognized, for God sees and will reward you before at the Judgment/Bema Seat of Christ. See note in 2 Tim. 4:1.

1 TIMOTHY CHAPTER 6

In chapter 5, Paul has dealt with older men and women, widows, and elders. He now turns his attention to the conduct of slaves, how to deal with troublemakers, and instructions for those who are rich in this world.

Instructions for Christian Slaves

1 Timothy 6:1–2

6:1 *“Bondservants ... under the yoke.”* Slavery has existed since the fall of man and continues to be practiced in many places today. In the Old Testament times, slaves were to be treated as family members (Gen. 17:23; Exod. 12:43–44). Hebrew slaves were more like indentured servants and were to be treated with kindness. They were to be set free after six years unless they freely chose to remain with their master. In Christ, there is no distinction between the slave or the free (Gal. 3:28; Eph. 6:5–9). Paul encouraged Philemon to receive his slave Onesimus back as a brother in Christ (Phi. 15–16). Christian slaves were to serve as unto the Lord (Col. 3:22–25) and to *“count their own masters worthy of all honor”* as with all who are in authority (1 Pet. 2:17) *“so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed.”*

There were 60,000,000 slaves in the Roman Empire. Any slave revolt was put down ruthlessly. Had Paul called on the slaves to rebel, it would have been the end of the growing Christian church. Instead, by the principle of the leaven and the mustard seed (Matt. 13:31–33), Christianity slowly and gradually conquered slavery in the ancient world. Any misconduct by Christian slaves would bring shame on the witness toward God and the teachings of the faith. That being said, he also encouraged slaves to gain their freedom if possible (1 Cor. 7:20–24).

6:2 *“Those who have believing masters ... believers and beloved.”* In the teachings of Jesus, the greatest were those who were humble servants, whether slave or free (Mark 10:42–45; John 13:3–17; 15:9–14). *“Teach and exhort these things.”* Timothy is not directed to come up with his own teaching content but is commanded to simply teach what Paul has written (1 Tim. 4:6, 11; 5:7; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:14–17; 4:2). This is the same task entrusted to pastors today.

Instructions Regarding Troublemakers

1 Timothy 6:3–5

6:3 *“If anyone teaches otherwise.”* As long as there have been teachers, there have been false teachers (Jer. 28; Ezek. 34:1–10; Amos 7:10–17; Matt. 7:15; 24:11, 23–24; 2 Peter 2). *“Words of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Paul is not encouraging the idea of those who only take the “red-letter” portions of the Bible to be authoritative. Rather, he is equating all Scripture to be the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16–17). *“Doctrine ... godliness.”* The truth of God’s Word produces Christ-like lives (2 Pet. 1:5–7), whereas false doctrine always produces lives of depraved character, as seen in v. 4.

6:4 *“He is proud, knowing nothing.”* Arrogance and ignorance are always connected. *“But is obsessed.”* The Greek word for “obsessed” is *noseō*, meaning, “unhealthy interest in controversies, and verbal dispute” (ref: The NET Bible). In ancient Greece, the most famous men were called “sophists,” or “wise men,” who enthralled their audiences with witty lectures on worthless topics. Their obsession *“with disputes and arguments”* produced every form of competition and division, all being fueled by their *“envy,”* the most deadly of all motives (Prov. 14:30; 27:4; Isa. 11:13; Ezek. 35:11; Matt. 27:18; Acts 7:9; 13:45; 17:5; 1 Cor. 3:3; Gal. 5:26; James 3:14, 16). The word *zeteo* used here “denotes the preoccupation with pseudo-intellectual theorizing” (*Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, Reinecker and Rogers).

6:5 *“Useless wranglings ... corrupt minds ... who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.”* Their true motive is self-promotion and personal profit (Titus 1:10–13; 2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 12–13). *“From such withdraw yourself.”* The only defense against such men is to separate from them (Matt. 12:14–15; Luke 5:16; 2 Thess. 3:14).

Instruction Regarding Riches

1 Timothy 6:6–10

6:6 *“Now godliness with contentment is great gain.”* Paul shows the true wealth of a “godly” life (Christ-like, see 1 Tim. 3:16). The word translated as “contentment” means “self-sufficiency.” This is the self-sustaining power of Jesus Christ within (2 Cor. 3:4–6). This gives to the spiritual believer (1 Cor. 2:10–16; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 5:18) the power to face and overcome all things in this life (Rom. 8:37; 2 Cor. 4:7–12, 16–18; 11:23–33; Phil. 4:13). This verse is engraved on the monument dedicated to the celebrated soldier, Colonel Kenneth Douglas MacKenzie of the 79th Highlanders. He served for 42 years, fought in two wars, and died at his post on August 24, 1875. This was the verse he followed through his long and strenuous life.

6:7 *“We brought nothing into this world ... we can carry nothing out.”* Paul here is quoting a classical proverb. Seneca, the Roman statesman and philosopher, who lived at the same time as Paul, said, *“You cannot take anything more out of the world than you brought into it.”* A Spanish proverb says, *“There are no pockets in a shroud.”*

6:8 *“Having food and clothing ... be content.”* The Stoics used to say, “If a little is enough, enough is a feast.” The word “content” here is related to the same word in v. 6 but has the idea of satisfaction and delight (Phil. 4:10–13; Heb. 13:5–6).

6:9 *“Those who desire to be rich.”* This speaks of those mentioned in v. 10 who are motivated by the love, or lust, for money. It is the lust for wealth that destroys and becomes *“a snare”* from which it is hard to escape (Luke 16:9, 11; Titus 1:7, 11). This is because there is never enough wealth to satisfy the craving for more. People often seek wealth first for security, but this soon gives way to the pursuit of luxury.

6:10 *“The love of money.”* This is the sin of greed and avarice, or covetousness (Exod. 20:17; Deut. 5:21; Luke 16:14; Rom. 7:7; 13:9; 1 Cor. 5:10; 6:10; Eph. 5:5; 2 Tim. 3:2; 2 Pet. 2:14). *“From which some have strayed from the faith.”* He is talking here of believers (see “some” in 1 Tim. 1:3, 6, 19; 4:1; 5:15, 24; 6:10, 21;

2 Tim. 2:18, 20). who **“pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”** The comfort and luxury they seek become a hook from which they cannot escape.

The Flight, the Delight, and the Fight of the Man of God

1 Timothy 6:11–16

6:11–12 “But you, O man of God.” Timothy, who deeply felt his own inadequacies, needed to hear that his power was not from himself, but from the call and enablement of God. Paul pays him a high honor with this title, linking him to men like Moses (Deut. 33:1; Ezra 3:2), Elijah (1 Kings 17:18), Elisha (2 Kings 4:8–9), Samuel (1 Sam. 9:6), and David (Neh. 12:24, 36). To live up to this high calling, Timothy is commanded to do three things:

1. **“Flee”** from false doctrines (vv. 3–5), and the love of money (vv. 9–10),
2. **“Pursue”** six spiritual qualities of great value: **“righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness”** (v. 11), and
3. Finally, to **“fight the good fight of faith”** (v. 12).

The life of faith is an ongoing battle within and without. The spiritual Christian must be a good soldier (2 Tim. 2:3–4; 4:7; Eph. 6:10–18; 1 Cor. 16: 13). **“Lay hold on eternal life.”** This does not suggest working for eternal life, which is a free gift (Eph. 2:8–9). It is the equivalent of what Jesus said in Matthew 6:20, **“Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.”** This is a challenge to think of life as an opportunity to lay up **“gold, silver, precious stones”** (1 Cor. 3:12) for eternity. The Apostle Paul was highly motivated to gain eternal rewards (1 Cor. 9:24–27; 2 Tim. 4:6–8). These rewards will be an eternal evidence of our love and gratitude to the Lord Jesus Christ for His sacrifice in our place.

6:13 “I urge you in the sight of God ... and the Lord Jesus, who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate.” Timothy is challenged (see 1 Tim. 5:21) to follow the example of Jesus, who acknowledged His identity before Pilate, to His own condemnation and crucifixion (Luke 23:3).

6:14 “Keep this commandment without spot, blameless.” This “command” or “charge” refers to the teaching of this whole epistle (1 Tim. 1:1, 18; 5:7, 21). Timothy is challenged to maintain an irreproachable ministry. **“Until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing.”** This applies either until our death, or the Rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4:13–18; 1 John 2:28).

6:15 “He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords.” The man Christ Jesus has been exalted above all authorities and powers, in Heaven and on Earth, to Whom **“every knee shall bow”** (Isa. 45:23; Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:9–11; Rev. 17:14; 19:16).

6:16 “Who alone has immortality.” This eternal life, which God alone has, is His gift to all who trust in the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 15:53–54; 2 Tim. 1:10). **“Whom no man has seen or can see.”** God’s glory is too great for man to behold (Exod. 33:20; John 1:18).

Final Challenge to Timothy

1 Timothy 6:17–21

6:17 “Command those who are rich in this present age.” The repetition of this idea from vv. 6–10 suggests that there were rich believers in Ephesus who needed this emphasis. By the standards of the world in which Paul lived, most of us who live today would be considered rich. **“Not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches.”** Proverbs 23:5 says, **“Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; They fly away like an eagle toward heaven.”** Solomon learned by bitter experience the vanity of riches (Eccl. 2:4–17; 4:7–8; 5:10–17). **“But in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.”** God is not a

1 TIMOTHY 6:18–21

killjoy, and Paul is not an ascetic! Those who know and love God are the richest of men (Eph. 1:3; 2 Pet. 1:3). Everything God has made has a proper use and enjoyment (Psalm 24:1; Rom. 14:1–12, 17–18; 1 Cor. 10:23–28).

6:18 *“Let them ... be rich in good works.”* Those who have should always share their blessings with those who are in need. An old saying goes, “What I kept for myself, I have lost. What I gave away, I have kept.” When we give graciously, we are sowing seed God has deposited with us. *“He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully”* (2 Cor. 9:6). Those who use the wealth God gives to them will always have sufficient supply (2 Cor. 9:8; Phil. 4:14–19). Many Christians who love to quote Philippians 4:19 should read it in the context of Philippians 4:14–18, which speaks of the sacrificial giving of the Philippian believers! When God blesses us with money, He is giving us seed. We can either use it for our own bread, or we can choose to sow it for increased fruitfulness. Paul says that God will *“multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness”* (2 Cor. 9:10).

6:19 *“Storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come.”* This is the promise of eternal rewards, which we can lay up for ourselves by faithful service (Matt. 6:20; Luke 6:20–23; 12:33–34; 18:22; John 12:3–8). *“That they may lay hold on eternal life.”* As in v. 12, and as the context shows, this has to do with eternal reward, not the entering/receiving of eternal life by faith in Christ.

6:20–21 *“O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust.”* The word “guard” was used for soldiers doing guard duty. It implies vigilance and steadfastness. The word “committed” was used of a valuable deposit placed in one’s keeping. Like the servants in the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14–29), or of the minas (Luke 19:11–27), we will be held accountable for what we have been given—not only in physical wealth, but also in our spiritual gift (Rom. 11:29; 1 Cor. 12:7, 18; 2 Pet. 1:3). *“Avoiding ... falsely called knowledge.”* Because the study and teaching of God’s Word—the grasp of theology in all its scope—is an intellectual pursuit, there is always the danger of seeking the “new” and the “exciting” teachings. *“By professing it some have strayed concerning the faith.”* Again, the “some” refers to believers who have wandered from sound teaching and living (1 Tim. 1:3, 6, 19; 4:1; 5:15, 24; 6:10). How great is the peril of this defection, that Paul mentions it seven times in this epistle. May God grant that we remain faithful to the truth that has been entrusted to the saints (Rom. 6:17; Titus 1:9; 2 Pet. 3:2; Jude 3). *“Grace be with you.”* With the full supply of the grace of God, we cannot fail, providing we appropriate and utilize that grace by faith (2 Cor. 12:9–10).

2 Timothy

PAUL'S SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

2 TIMOTHY CHAPTER 1

By the time he wrote this epistle, Paul had been rearrested and was now a prisoner in Rome again (2 Tim. 1:8; 2:9; 4:16). In this letter, Paul expects his execution (2 Tim. 4:6–8) and urges Timothy to come to him quickly (2 Tim. 4:9–13, 21). This is most likely the last letter of Paul the Apostle, and his last will and testament to his “son” Timothy (1 Tim. 1:2, 18; 2 Tim. 1:2; 2:1). Chapter one is a call to arms in the battle for the truth.

Stir Up the Gift

2 Timothy 1:1–6

1:1 *“Paul, an apostle ... by the will of God, according to the promise of life ... in Christ Jesus.”* Here, we see the man (“Paul” means “small, little,” not “Saul,” meaning “mighty”), the mission (Apostle to the Gentiles), and the message (life in Christ).

1:2 *“To Timothy ... grace, mercy, and peace.”* It is only later in life that Paul adds “mercy” to his greetings. His challenge to Christians based on “the mercies of God” (Rom. 12:1) follows nine references to mercy in Romans 9–11. God’s dealings with Israel seem to have deeply impressed Paul with the depth of His mercy toward sinners.

1:3 *“With a pure conscience.”* Paul was very concerned about maintaining a good “conscience” before God (Acts 23:1; Rom. 9:1; 13:5; 2 Cor. 1:12; 1 Tim. 1:5, 19; 3:9). A defiled conscience was something to avoid at all costs (Acts 24:16; 1 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:15). *“As my forefathers did.”* Paul identifies with his believing ancestry, not those who lived in unbelief (see 1 Pet. 1:18).

1:4 *“Being mindful of your tears.”* Paul most likely refers here to his parting with Timothy on the occasion of his second arrest. Compare this with the tears of the elders in Ephesus at Paul’s final departure (Acts 20:37).

1:5 *“I call to remembrance the genuine faith ... which first dwelt.”* The word “dwelt” here means “to reside or abide within” (Col. 3:16). It is possible that Paul led these women (Timothy’s grandmother and mother) to Christ on his first mission to Lystra, when he was stoned and left for dead (compare Acts 14:8–20 and 16:1–3). Timothy’s father was a Greek and, apparently, a non-believer.

1:6 *“Stir up the gift of God.”* The word “stir” used here means “to stir the dying embers into a full flame.” Paul had earlier challenged Timothy to stop neglecting his spiritual gift (1 Tim. 4:14). *“The laying on of my hands.”* This apparently occurred in concert with other elders in Lystra (Acts 16:1–3; 1 Tim. 4:14).

1:7 *“A spirit of fear.”* The command “not to fear” is the most common in Scripture. While it is claimed that the command “fear not” is given 365 times in the Bible, the actual number is just over one hundred. Isaiah 41:10 is a good example. *“But of power and love and of a sound mind.”* The “power” of God is demonstrated by love toward others and discipline over ourselves. Our ability to fulfill our God-given work comes through our spiritual gift (v. 6) combined with spiritual growth.

Endure Suffering

2 Timothy 1:8–12

1:8 *“Share with me in the sufferings.”* The command to endure suffering is repeated in 2 Timothy 2:3 and 4:5. Based on his appeal to Timothy not to be ashamed of Paul as a prisoner, and the defection of many (2 Tim. 1:15; 4:10, 14), it appears that many believers turned against Paul in the end (2 Tim. 4:16). Paul calls himself a “prisoner of Christ” (2 Tim. 2:9; Eph. 3:1; Phil. 1:12–14; Phi. 1, 9). *“According to the power of God.”* That “power” He has given us (2 Tim. 1:7), along with His grace, is always sufficient (2 Cor. 12:9).

2 TIMOTHY 1:9–16

1:9 *“Saved us ... called us ... according to His own purpose and grace.”* Our salvation is not just to deliver us from eternal condemnation, but for the *“purpose”* God has for us in time. His *“gift”* and *“power”* (vv. 6–7) are given to fulfill His eternal plan for us (Rom. 8:28–30; Eph. 1:11; 2:8–10; 3:11).

1:10 *“Has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus.”* Paul uses *“Savior”* both of Christ (Titus 1:4; 2:13; 3:6), and of God the Father (1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 2:10; 3:4). *“Who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”* Death came into the world through sin (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12; 6:23). By paying the penalty for all sins, Jesus conquered, and will one day eliminate, death (1 Cor. 15:26) and share His own immortality (1 Tim. 6:16) with all who believe in Him.

1:11 *“I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher.”* These three speak of evangelism (*“preacher”*), the writing of Scripture (*“an apostle”*), and doctrinal instruction (*“teacher”*). Note the same three in 1 Timothy 2:7. Paul’s gift (apostle) worked for the evangelism of the lost (preacher), and for the edification of the saved (teacher). The word *“appointed”* indicates that God brought Paul onto the scene of history at the right time and place, and he came to faith in Jesus Christ, to fulfill His purpose (Acts 9:16, 20).

1:12 *“For this reason I also suffer.”* Paul saw his sufferings as part of the plan of God. This verse combines a summary of the life of Paul: *“I ... suffer ... I am not ashamed ... I know whom I have believed ... am persuaded ... I have committed.”* Here, we see Paul’s faith, obedience, endurance, conviction, and hope. *“Until that Day.”* Paul is looking forward to his eternal reward (1 Cor. 9:24–27; 2 Tim. 4:6–8).

Stay Faithful 2 Timothy 1:13–18

1:13 *“Hold fast the pattern of sound words.”* The word translated *“pattern”* speaks of a model or an outline. The word *“sound”* means “healthy, health-giving.” *“Which you have heard from me.”* Paul did not expect Timothy to be ingenious or innovative. Too many pastors try to be “original” and, in doing so, depart from biblical truth. The challenge of the ministry is *“preach the word”* (2 Tim. 4:2). *“In faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”* *“Faith”* is the conviction of the truth of God’s Word. *“Love”* is the compulsion to share that Word with others (2 Cor. 5:14–21).

1:14 *“That good thing which was committed to you.”* This command pictures a soldier on guard duty. The word *“committed”* speaks of a valuable deposit, a sacred trust. *“By the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.”* Every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation in Jesus Christ (John 14:16–18; Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 1:21–22; Eph. 1:12–14; James 4:5). God’s Word is a *“treasure”* to be guarded and kept at all cost (2 Cor. 4:7).

1:15 *“All those in Asia have turned away from me.”* Timothy would be familiar with this mass defection, since Ephesus was one of the chief cities of what we know today as “Asia Minor,” or Turkey. It is possible that Paul’s return to the temple, even to the point of preparing to offer a sacrifice (Acts 21:20–27), was seen as an act of hypocrisy, in light of the stern letter Paul had written to the Galatians. The “Jews from Asia” (Acts 21:20) would certainly have used this as an accusation against Paul’s teaching of grace and freedom from the Law. *“Phygellus and Hermogenes.”* These two were believers who go down in history as deserters of Paul and of the Gospel. In one sentence, their failure is captured forever.

1:16 *“The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus.”* Here, we see a shining contrast to the two deserters. The name *“Onesiphorus”* means “one bearing profit or blessing.” *“For he often refreshed me.”* What an honor to be recorded in the Bible, not as a deserter, but as a refresher of Paul’s spirit while in prison! What this man did for Paul he did for Christ, and the result brought blessing to his entire *“household,”* possibly a “house-church” (2 Tim. 4:19).

1:17 *“He sought me out very zealously and found me.”* The word translated “zealously” literally means “diligently,” and indicates that Onesiphorus made a great effort to find Paul. This would have been at the risk of his own life and safety.

1:18 *“The Lord grant to him ... mercy ... in that Day.”* Paul prays that God will grant Onesiphorus rich eternal reward when he stands at the Bema Seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:10–15; 2 Cor. 5:10–11). *“You know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus.”* In just a few sentences, we have a record of selfless devotion and service in the life of this unknown man.

2 TIMOTHY CHAPTER 2

In this chapter, Paul emphasizes the need for endurance in the ministry, and instructs Timothy how to deal with false teachers.

Endurance in Suffering

2 Timothy 2:1–13

2:1 *“You therefore, my son.”* Paul’s affection for Timothy comes through again (1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2). *“Be strong in ... grace.”* God’s power (2 Tim. 1:7–8) is a gift to all who believe, but that power comes through His Word and His Spirit (2 Tim. 1:13–14).

2:2 *“The things you have heard from me ... commit these to faithful men.”* Again, the task of the Bible teacher is not to be “original,” but rather to be “faithful.” *“Who will be able to teach others also.”* Every pastor should be training other men and equipping them for their ministry. The phrase “able to teach” suggests the training of other elders (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9).

2:3 *“Endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”* Endurance and suffering are key concepts in this chapter (vv. 9, 10, 12). The Christian soldier can only hope to win on the spiritual battlefield by putting on the “armor of God” (Rom. 13:12; 2 Cor. 10:3–6; Eph. 6:10–18). In vv. 3–6, Paul compares the Christian to a “soldier,” an “athlete,” and a “farmer.”

2:4 *“No one ... entangles himself.”* This warning pictures a soldier whose sword is entangled in his cloak. Preoccupation with worldly details is a hindrance to spiritual warfare and victory (Heb. 12:1). *“That he may please him who enlisted him.”* We are called into the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are called to be “overcomers” (Rom. 8:37; 1 John 5:4–5; Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21).

2:5 *“Competes in athletics.”* The athlete is also a favorite figure used by Paul (1 Cor. 9:24–27; Heb. 12:1–3). *“He is not crowned.”* Winning a crown from the Lord was extremely important to Paul (1 Cor. 9:24–27; 2 Tim. 4:6–8). Five crowns are mentioned in the New Testament for:

1. Self-discipline (“imperishable crown,” 1 Cor. 9:25–27),
2. Winning others to Christ (“crown of rejoicing,” Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:19),
3. Faithfulness in suffering (“crown of life,” 2 Tim. 2:12; James 1:12; Rev. 2:10),
4. Living in light of Christ’s return (“crown of righteousness,” 2 Tim. 4:6–8; 1 John 2:28–3:3), and
5. Faithful ministry (“crown of glory,” 1 Pet. 5:4).

“Unless he competes according to the rules.” Our rule book is the Word of God. Those who violated the rules of the competition were “disqualified” from attaining the reward (1 Chron. 15:13; 1 Cor. 9:27).

2:6 *“The hardworking farmer.”* The word “hardworking” Paul uses here, translated “labor” in 1 Timothy 5:17, means “to work to the point of exhaustion.” The Bible everywhere condemns laziness (Prov. 18:9; 20:4; 24:30–34; 2 Thess. 3:10–12). The “farmer” illustrates the need for patience, both in waiting for God’s blessings

2 TIMOTHY 2:7-15

in time, and for eternal reward (1 Thess. 1:9-10). **“First to partake.”** His hard labor brings his reward when the time of harvest comes. This principle applies equally to the spiritual harvest (John 4:34-38; Gal. 6:7-10).

2:7 “May the Lord give you understanding.” The Holy Spirit gives illumination into understanding God’s Word (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:12-15), but His inner work must be matched by our *“diligent”* study (v. 15). Combined with this, we must come to God’s Word with the desire to obey it (John 7:17; 13:17; 14:15).

2:8 “Jesus Christ, of the seed of David.” This lineage was prophesied to David (2 Sam. 7:12-16) in what we know as the Davidic Covenant. **“Was raised from the dead.”** The sufferings of our Lord are the ultimate example of endurance, and His resurrection shows the eternal value of His faithfulness (Phil. 2:5-11). **“According to my gospel.”** Paul includes the resurrection as an essential part of the *“gospel”* message (Rom. 1:1-4; 1 Cor. 15:1-8).

2:9 “For which I suffer ... as an evildoer.” Paul was no doubt falsely accused of many things by his enemies (Acts 21:26-29). **“But the word of God is not chained.”** They could put Paul in prison, but God’s Word continued to go forth (Isa. 40:7-8; Jer. 23:29; Heb. 4:12).

2:10 “I endure all things for the sake of the elect.” The term *“elect”* speaks of those who are in Christ by faith, because He is the *“Elect”* of God (Isa. 42:1-4). Paul no doubt had in mind those who would yet come to faith in Christ. Each and every believer today is a testament to the truth of Paul’s conviction that his sufferings would pay off (Phil. 3:10).

2:11-13 “This is a faithful saying.” As used by Paul, this introduces things known among the churches, probably from prophetic utterances (see the note on 1 Tim. 1:15). The following lines were probably part of an early hymn. **“If we died with Him, we will also live with Him.”** When we believe in Jesus, His death is applied to us, and we share in its value (Rom. 6:1-23; Gal. 2:20). **“If we endure, we shall also reign with Him.”** Faithfulness in this life will be rewarded with eternal position and power (Luke 19:15-27; 22:28-30; Rom. 8:17; Rev. 3:21). **“If we deny Him, He will deny us.”** The issue here is not our eternal salvation, but rather eternal reward. There will be loss of reward for unfaithfulness (1 Cor. 3:11-15). Remember that Peter denied the Lord (Matt. 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:56-62; John 18:15-18), yet he was repentant and was restored by Jesus (John 21:15-19). **“If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.”** How comforting to know that our unbelief and disobedience will never change His faithfulness to us! To deny one of His own would be the same as denying Himself, which He cannot do (Num. 23:19). Since Jesus promised eternal life to everyone who believed in Him (John 3:16; 6:35), He cannot later deny what He has promised. However, for the unbeliever, who denies that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior, there will be an eternal denial of the right to enter His kingdom (Matt. 10:32-33).

Dealing with False Teachers

2 Timothy 2:14-23

2:14 “Remind them ... charging them.” Paul likely refers here to those who were being trained by Timothy, though the truth applies to us all. **“Strive ... to the ruin of the hearers.”** The Greeks loved debate, and especially when it involved minute details (Acts 17:16-21). Such debates concerning God’s Word are destructive to the congregation.

2:15 “Be diligent ... approved to God.” There are no shortcuts, either in the learning of God’s Word or in spiritual growth and application of it to life. The word translated *“approved”* literally means to “prove through testing” (Rom. 5:3-5; 12:2). It is like the refining of gold in the fire (1 Pet. 1:6-9). The approval of God is worth more than the praise of the whole world. **“Rightly dividing the word of truth.”** This could be translated “accurately handling the Word of truth.” Every Bible teacher ought to strive above all for the skill of accurate Bible teaching. Much harm has been done through sloppy and careless teaching.

2:16 *“But shun profane and idle babblings.”* Speculation and imagination are not Bible study methods. Such an approach may gain popularity, but *“will increase to more ungodliness.”* Today, our churches are, in many cases, in a shambles because of the intrusion of worldly messages and methods.

2:17 *“Their message will spread like cancer.”* This is the opposite effect from *“sound [healthy] doctrine”* (1 Tim. 1:3, 10; 4:1–10). *“Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort.”* Paul was not afraid to name false teachers (see 2 Tim. 1:15). Imagine having your name forever recorded in God’s Word as a false teacher! This is probably the same Hymenaeus mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:20.

2:18 *“Saying that the resurrection is already past.”* Imagine what turmoil such a teaching would create among believers. It may be by this they were referring to the Rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4:13–18). By this teaching alone *“they overthrow the faith of some.”*

2:19 *“The Lord knows those who are His.”* Men may be fooled by religious pretenders, but God is never fooled (Num. 16:16–26; Isa. 52:11; Jude 11). *“Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”* The call of God to His people is always to separate from evil (Rom. 12:21; Rev. 18:4–6).

2:20 *“But in a great house there are ... vessels ... some for honor and some for dishonor.”* The Church is God’s *“house,”* which is built on the *“solid foundation”* (v. 19) of Jesus Christ (Matt. 7:24–25; 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:11). Some who are members of the family of God live dishonorable lives (*“Hymenaeus and Alexander,”* 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17; *“Phygellus and Hermogenes,”* 2 Tim. 1:15; *“Philetus,”* 2 Tim. 2:17) while others are obedient to God’s Word, and are honorable (*“Onesiphorus,”* 2 Tim. 1:16–18).

2:21 *“Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter.”* This is the glory of God’s grace, that *“anyone”* is able to receive cleansing from *“dishonor”* (v. 20). By repentance (change of focus from self to Christ), confession of sin (Psalm 51:1–12; 1 John 1:9), and receiving correction (2 Tim 3:16–17), any *“dishonorable vessel”* can become a *“vessel for honor”* to the Lord. How great and glorious is God’s grace! *“Sanctified and useful for the Master.”* To be *“sanctified”* is to be cleansed and set apart for the service of God. This requires that we *“depart from iniquity”* (v. 19). Once we humble ourselves before God (Prov. 3:34; James 4:6–10; 1 Pet. 5:5) and receive His forgiveness and cleansing, the Holy Spirit fills and controls the heart, mind, and life of the believer (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:16, 22–25).

2:22 *“Flee ... lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace.”* This verse explains how the *“cleansing”* of v. 21 takes place (compare 1 Tim. 6:11–14). In the Hebrew of the Old Testament, the word for *“repentance”* indicates a change of direction. The Greek of the New Testament emphasizes more the change of mind. The inner change leads to outward correction. All of this is done by faith in God’s Word and submission to His Spirit. The pursuit of *“righteousness”* follows a pattern: *“faith”* in God’s Word, resulting *“love”* for Him because of His grace, leading to a life of inner *“peace”*—the result of a *“pure heart.”*

2:23 *“Avoid foolish and ignorant disputes.”* This is an endless trap for teachers of God’s Word (1 Tim. 1:3–4; 4:1–3; 6:3–5; 2 Tim. 2:16–18). *“Knowing that they generate strife.”* Error brings antagonism because it panders to the ego of its promoters. Sound doctrine will also divide, but it separates between the honorable and the dishonorable of v. 20.

The Good Servant

2 Timothy 2:24–26

2:24 *“A servant of the Lord.”* What marks the *“servant of the Lord”* is that his desire is to do the will of his Master, in the way that the Lord Himself would do it. The ministry of Jesus was marked by a Shepherd’s gentleness (Isa. 42:1–4; Matt. 12:18–21). *“Able to teach, patient.”* True Christ-like gentleness never compromises the truth for the sake of unity. Patience is required in bringing babes to maturity.

2 TIMOTHY 2:25–3:7

2:25 *“In humility correcting ... if God perhaps will grant them repentance.”* The hope of the good teacher is always the correction of those in error. *“That they may know the truth.”* The word “*know*” here signifies a full and experiential knowledge of the truth. This is a deep transforming, not a superficial, knowledge (Rom. 12:2; Col. 1:9–12; Titus 2:11–14).

2:26 *“That they may come to their senses.”* The best illustration of this is found in the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:17, *“but when he came to himself ...”*). It is like one who regains consciousness after fainting. *“Escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.”* Compassion for those who are ignorant and erring (Heb. 5:1–2) takes into consideration the part played by the enemy of men’s souls (Matt. 13:24–30; 2 Cor. 4:3–4; Gal. 5:1–7; 1 Tim. 4:1).

2 TIMOTHY CHAPTER 3

In this chapter, Paul warns Timothy of perilous times ahead. These times always give rise to many false prophets and teachers. The solution to both the false teachers from within the Church, and the persecution from without, is to hold firm to sound doctrine and live it out in our lives.

Perilous Times, Perverted Men

2 Timothy 3:1–9

3:1 *“But know this ... perilous times will come.”* The reference to *“last days”* included all time from the crucifixion forward. History demonstrates the fulfillment of these words. The word *“perilous”* means “difficult, dangerous, filled with trial and sorrow” (Rom. 1:18–32; 1 Tim. 1:3–4). We are certainly entering into such times. From vv. 2–5, Paul lists 20 characteristics of those who make the times perilous.

3:2 *“For men will be lovers of themselves.”* It is the love of self that gives rise to all the evils mentioned in vv. 3–4 (1 Cor. 6:9–10; Gal. 5:19–21; Eph. 4:17–19; 1 Tim. 6:10).

3:3 *“Unloving ... without self-control.”* When love of self dominates the life, everything is consumed (“greediness,” Eph. 4:19) and destroyed for self-gratification.

3:4 *“Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.”* These people become what they become because of what they love. They love self supremely (v. 2a) and, because of this, they love money (v. 2b). Because they are consumed by self-love, they are *“unloving”* to others (v. 3a), and they love *“pleasure”* (self-gratification) rather than God. These four aspects of how they distort love give rise to all the other brutal qualities.

3:5 *“Having a form of godliness but denying its power.”* The word *“form”* here is from *morphosis*, speaking of the outward appearance is used only here and in Romans 2:20, and depicts a religious fraud, like Jesus said of the Pharisees, *“Like whitewashed tombs”* (Matt. 23:27). The *“power”* comes from humble submission to the Spirit and the Word of God (James 4:6–10; 1 Pet. 5:5–11). *“From such people turn away!”* The word for *“turn away”* is very strong and means “to reject, deny, repulse, thrust away from you.”

3:6 *“Make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts.”* This verse describes the effects of the cult of Diana, which dominated Ephesus in the time of Paul (Acts 19:23–29). This cult had many temple prostitutes (as in Corinth), and promoted sexual gratification along with various forms of witchcraft and sorcery as a means of worship.

3:7 *“Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* The witchcraft and sorcery practices of this cult involved instruction into ever deeper “mysteries.” These only served to lead its followers further from the truth of God in His Word.

3:8 *“Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses.”* This refers to the priests of Pharaoh (Exod. 7:11; 9:11). Here again is a reference to the use of occult practices. *“These also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds.”* Those who reject and *“resist the truth”* are *“disapproved concerning the faith.”* In other words, they disqualify themselves as teachers of truth.

3:9 *“Their folly will be manifest to all.”* Just as true virtue is *“evident”* (1 Tim. 4:15; 2 Pet. 1:5–7), so the opposite cannot be hidden (Jer. 20:1–6; 28:1–17; Ezek. 2:3–5; 33:33; 34:1–24; Amos 7:10–17; 1 Tim. 5:24–25). God will always honor and uphold His own and expose those who are frauds (Num. 32:23).

Stand Firm in the Faith

2 Timothy 3:10–17

3:10 *“But you have carefully followed my doctrine.”* The power of Paul’s life came from the truth of his teaching (Heb. 4:12–13). *“Manner of life ... perseverance.”* This power of a disciplined and devoted life came not from Paul, but from the provisions of the grace of God (2 Cor. 12:7–10; 2 Pet. 1:5–7).

3:11 *“Persecutions, afflictions ... at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra.”* These were the scenes of some of Paul’s worst persecutions, and Timothy would have witnessed many of them (Acts 13, 14, 16). *“What persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me.”* God’s deliverance was not immediate, and Paul suffered tremendously. However, in the end, Paul remained standing, and his persecutors were gone.

3:12 *“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”* We ought not to be surprised when persecutions come (Matt. 5:10–12; John 15:18–21; Acts 14:22; 1 Thess. 3:4; 1 Pet. 4:12–14).

3:13 *“Evil men ... will grow worse and worse.”* This is because it is in the nature of sin, and the sin nature, that it grows ever more corrupt (Eph. 4:22). *“Deceiving and being deceived.”* Error feeds upon itself and only produces more deception. Those who make a life of deceiving others, in the end, are the most deceived of all (Jer. 17:9).

3:14 *“Continue in the things you have learned.”* What we have learned from the Bible is of value only when we become convicted of the truth of it. That strong inner conviction is the proof that we have not only heard, but also believed (John 8:30–32; 16:8; Rom. 10:17).

3:15 *“That from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures.”* Timothy learned God’s Word from his grandmother and his mother (2 Tim. 1:5). It is possible that Paul led these two to Christ on his first visit to the area of Lystra, Derbe, and Lycaonia (see Acts 14:1–7) where Paul later met Timothy when he was a notable believer (Acts 16:1–3). *“Which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”* Even in the Old Testament, the clear teaching is that salvation comes by faith and not works (Gen. 15:6; Hab. 2:4). This *“salvation”* refers not only to eternal deliverance, but also includes deliverance in time of persecution (The word *“delivered”* in v. 11 is the same word).

3:16 *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”* The word translated *“inspiration”* literally means *“God-breathed.”* Just as God *“breathed into [Adam] the breath of life”* (Gen. 2:7), so God’s Word breathes the breath of eternal life into all who receive it. *“And is profitable.”* It is useful and effective for what God intended (Isa. 55:11). The teaching of sound *“doctrine”* will inevitably bring *“reproof ... correction”* to the life of the recipient. We need to depart from evil before we can do good (Job 28:8; Psalm 34:14; 37:27; Prov. 3:7; 13:19; 16:6; 1 Pet. 3:10–12). *“Instruction in righteousness.”* The word *“instruction,”* translated *“training,”* literally means *“child-training.”* The heavenly Father uses His Word to train up His children into the likeness of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:28–29; 2 Cor. 3:17–18; Phil. 3:9–14).

2 TIMOTHY 3:17–4:6

3:17 *“That the man of God may be complete.”* The idea contained in this phrase is that of a man who is capable, adequate, proficient in his work. *“Thoroughly equipped for every good work.”* Here we see the *“vessel of honor ... useful for the Master”* Paul spoke of in 2 Timothy 2:21. The man well-trained in the Word of God will be effective in the work of leading others to Christ, and in bringing new believers to spiritual maturity.

2 TIMOTHY CHAPTER 4

This chapter contains Paul’s final challenge to Timothy to be faithful. Paul is anticipating his own death and urges Timothy to come to him quickly.

Paul’s Exhortation to Faithful Ministry

2 Timothy 4:1–5

4:1 *“I charge you.”* This word *“charge”* means “to take a solemn oath or pledge.” The fact that this is *“before God and the Lord Jesus Christ”* shows the seriousness of it, for Jesus *“will judge the living and the dead.”* This refers to the Bema Seat of Jesus Christ (place of gain or loss of rewards). The “Bema” was well known in the ancient world as the place, not of condemnation, but reward, as in the victory stand in the ancient athletic games— (the Bema is also mentioned on pages 9, 17, and 24). See Psalm 62:12, Romans 2:6, 1 Corinthians 3:10–15, 9:24–27, and 2 Corinthians 5:10 *“At His appearing and His kingdom.”* The Bema will follow the Rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4:13–18), and the results—in rewards gained or lost—will be seen in His kingdom. Timothy is to be a good workman in the eyes of God (2 Tim. 2:15), so as to receive the commendation *“well done”* from Jesus Christ (the Judge) (Matt. 25:21, 23).

4:2 *“Preach the word,”* that is, the message of the coming of the Person of Jesus Christ, and the effects of His work (Rom. 1:1–4; 1 Cor. 15:1–4; 2 Cor. 5:14–21; 2 Tim. 3:14–17). *“Be ready in season and out of season.”* This command came from the Roman military and meant to “stand firm at your post” in good or bad weather, whether well received or hotly opposed by men (see vv. 14–15 and consider the prophets: Exod. 6:9–13; Jer. 6:11–15; 20:8–9; 26:1–9; 28:9–17). *“Convince, rebuke, exhort.”* This is a logical progression. First comes the conviction of wrongdoing, then the challenge to correction, and finally, encouragement to complete the task at hand. *“With all longsuffering and teaching.”* The ministry calls for great patience in dealing with difficult people. Every need, whether of evangelism, of edification, or of correction, is to be met with sound doctrinal instruction.

4:3 *“They will not endure sound doctrine.”* This expresses an intolerance for the truth, and the persecution of those who proclaim it. *“According to their own desires ... they will heap up ... teachers.”* They will accumulate many false teachers who will speak what is pleasing to hear (Ezek. 13:10, 16; Micah 3:5, 11; Rom. 1:18–32).

4:4 *“They will turn ... away from the truth ... to fables.”* Paul mentioned this problem in 1 Timothy 1:4 and 2 Timothy 4:7. Some people love speculation and novelty more than truth (2 Tim. 3:8–9, 16–17).

4:5 *“Be watchful.”* Vigilance for the truth and against false doctrines is required. *“Endure afflictions.”* The idea is a willingness to suffer the hardships that come from standing firm for the Truth (1 Cor. 16:13–14; 2 Tim. 1:8; 2:3; James 1:2; Jude 3). *“Do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”* Timothy’s calling, as with any pastor/teacher, is to first lead the lost to faith in Christ, then to bring them up to spiritual maturity. Every believer has a unique God-given ministry (Rom. 11:29; 12:3–8; 1 Cor. 12:7, 18; Eph. 2:10).

Paul’s Example in Facing Death

2 Timothy 4:6–8

4:6 *“Poured out as a drink offering.”* The drink offering was wine poured out on the offering of the lamb, and the expression of gratitude and thanksgiving (Gen. 35:14–15; Exod. 29:40; Num. 28:7–8; Phil. 2:17). Paul sees

his approaching martyrdom as an offering of gratitude to God for His grace in providing salvation. ***“The time of my departure.”*** The word translated *“departure”* here was an ancient term for taking the yoke off of the oxen at the day’s end, or of the pulling up of the tent stakes so as to move on. The last words of General Robert E. Lee were, “Strike the tent!” In like manner, the last words of General Stonewall Jackson were, “Let us cross over the river, and rest in the shade of the trees.”

4:7 *“I have fought the good fight.”* In this verse, Paul uses three different analogies of a life well-lived. Here, he pictures himself at the end of a victorious campaign. The words *“fought”* and *“fight”* come from the Greek word that means “agony,” indicating the intensity of his life (2 Cor. 11:23–33). ***“I have finished the race.”*** Here, the picture shifts to a runner crossing the finish line (Heb. 12:1–3). It is easy to start a race, but the longer the race, the harder it is to finish well. ***“I have kept the faith.”*** Here, he uses a picture of an Old Testament Jew who was faithful to the covenant, or to a citizen who had fulfilled his civic duties (Phil. 3:20).

4:8 *“The crown of righteousness.”* This is one of five crowns mentioned in the New Testament (see the note in 2 Tim. 2:5). ***“The Lord, the righteous Judge.”*** The very One who is our Savior will also be our Judge. He will judge us in mercy, but also in justice ***“on that Day”*** (v. 1), the day of the Bema Seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:10–15; 2 Cor. 5:9–10; see note at 2 Tim. 4:1). ***“Also to all who have loved His appearing.”*** This speaks of those who live in light of His return (Phil. 3:20–21; Titus 2:13; 1 John 2:28).

Paul’s Eagerness for Timothy’s Coming

2 Timothy 4:9–22

4:9 *“Be diligent to come to me quickly.”* This is an urgent appeal to Timothy to make all haste to see Paul before he was martyred. This idea dominates Paul’s closing words (v. 21). Timothy is in Ephesus; Paul is in Rome. The journey would be long and difficult, especially if winter was approaching (see Acts 27).

4:10 *“For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world.”* Demas is mentioned in Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24 with Luke, called *“fellow laborers.”* Whatever his role, he ends his life in spiritual disgrace. He is one who did not have what it took to finish the race. By this time, many had deserted the great Apostle (2 Tim. 1:15). ***“Crescens ... Titus.”*** Though we know quite a bit about Titus (2 Cor. 2:13; 7:6–7, 13–15; 8:6, 16, 23; 12:18; Gal. 2:1, 3; Titus 1:4), we know nothing more about Crescens. These two apparently were directed by Paul to fields of ministry, for there is no hint of disloyalty here.

4:11 *“Only Luke is with me. Get Mark ... for he is useful for me.”* Faithful Luke, the *“beloved physician”* (Col. 4:14), apparently stayed with Paul until the end. Mark is a reference to John-Mark, who Paul originally had little use for (Acts 13:13; 15:36–41). Some start well and fail to finish the work. Others may start poorly yet recover and finish strong. Mark ought to be an encouragement to all who have stumbled and struggled in the ministry. Get back in the race and finish strong!

4:12 *“Tychicus”* This man was probably the one who carried this epistle to Timothy, as he also carried the letter to the Colossians (Col. 4:7) and the letter to the Ephesians (Eph. 6:21). He was highly commended by Paul.

4:13 *“Bring the cloak ... and the books, especially the parchments.”* The kind of *“cloak”* Paul mentions was a thick heavy blanket with a hole for the head, like a poncho. Winter was coming, and Paul would be cold. The *“books”* could have been early copies of the Gospel. The word he uses is *biblia*, from which we get Bible. The *“parchments”* could either have been legal documents, such as proof of his Roman citizenship, or copies of Old Testament writings.

4:14 *“Alexander ... did me much harm.”* Some scholars suggest that it may have been due to an evil report from Alexander that Paul was arrested for the second time. This was probably the same Alexander mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:20. ***“May the Lord repay him according to his works.”*** God is just, and He repays or rewards

2 TIMOTHY 4:15–22

us according to what we do (Psalm 52:2–5; 55:12–15, 23; 63:9–10; Rom. 2:6, 11; 12:19). See the opposite of this request in 2 Timothy 1:16–18.

4:15 *“Beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.”* The word *“beware”* means to “be on guard” against him, as one who is an enemy. The hostility of one who defects to false doctrine and is publicly rebuked for it (1 Tim. 1:20), can work great damage in the ministry. Such men have no integrity and will use lies and innuendoes to destroy the reputation of those who oppose them.

4:16 *“At my first defense ... all forsook me.”* When Paul was brought up on false charges, many former helpers and fellow believers deserted him. This was likely done out of fear of retribution from Rome. Paul, in his mercy, says *“may it not be charged against them.”* There is a great difference in what men do out of human weakness and fear, and what is done out of malice to the Truth (Luke 23:34).

4:17 *“But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me.”* Paul’s reliance was on his faithful Lord (Acts 18:9–11; 23:11; 27:21–25; 2 Cor. 12:9; Phil. 4:13; 1 Tim. 1:12) not on unreliable men. *“So that the message might be preached fully.”* Paul’s focus to the end was the message that had been entrusted to him (1 Tim. 1:12–17). *“Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.”* He may mean here that he had been delivered from a judgment of being thrown into the arena to be devoured by beasts, or simply that thus far he was delivered from the devil (1 Pet. 5:7–9).

4:18 *“And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work.”* Rome would ultimately condemn Paul to be beheaded, yet he saw this as a victory, not a defeat. *“Evil”* could not prevail over him, for he was safe in the Lord’s hands (John 10:28–29). It is worth noting that the word *“delivered”* (or *“saved”*) is used in v. 17 for physical deliverance, but is used in v. 18, for eternal salvation. The word *“saved”* is used in many ways in the New Testament, and when we see it, we should examine the context, and answer the question, *“saved from what? Is it speaking of temporal or eternal salvation?”* *“To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen.”* God alone is to be praised for His sustaining grace in Paul’s life. We ought never to trust in our own strength or faithfulness, but only in the power of God to carry us through.

4:19–20 *“Greet Prisca and Aquila.”* These two had been a constant source of support to Paul, and a true husband-wife ministry team (Acts 18:2, 18, 26; Rom. 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19). *“And the household of Onesiphorus.”* He is the one who *“sought”* for Paul and greatly encouraged him in his imprisonment (2 Tim. 1:16–18). *“Erastus ... Trophimus”* are co-workers of Paul briefly mentioned in Acts 19:22; 20:4; and 21:29.

4:21 *“Do your utmost to come before winter.”* As mentioned in v. 13, the cloak would be needed for the cold of the Roman prison, and winter would be a dangerous time to travel, possibly keeping Timothy from reaching Paul before his martyrdom. Whether Timothy made it in time we do not know. *“Eubulus ... Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren.”* Of these believers we know nothing, but it is comforting to see that they were not among the deserters of 2 Timothy 1:15 and 4:10. These would have most likely been members of the church in Rome.

4:22 *“The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.”* Paul is calling on Timothy to begin a long, difficult, and dangerous journey, and to make it in all haste. No doubt, Timothy needed these closing words—a prayer for him by his beloved apostle and teacher. But they also include all to whom the letter would be read, as the last *“you”* is plural. These closing words therefore include each one of us!

Titus

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO TITUS

Introduction

Paul wrote this letter after release from his first Roman imprisonment (Titus 1:5). This would be around the same time as 1 Timothy was written—63 A.D. We know much less about Titus than we do of Timothy. He is commended in Titus 1:4 as “*a true son in our common faith.*” While he does not receive quite the same praise as Timothy (see Phil. 2:19–22), neither does he need some of the warnings, correction, and exhortation Paul gave to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:18–20; 4:12–16; 5:21–25; 6:11–16, 20–21; 2 Tim. 1:6–8; 13–14)

The fact that Paul sent him into difficult churches (Corinth, 2 Cor. 12:18; Crete, Titus 1:5) indicates that he was of a stable character and strong faith. He was a strong support and encouragement to Paul (2 Cor. 2:13; 7:6, 13–14). Paul was able to entrust him with the task of delivering a large sum of money to the needy church in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:6, 16–23). He was with Paul at the Council of Jerusalem where the issue of circumcision in regard to salvation was settled (Acts 15:1–21; Gal. 2:1, 3).

TITUS CHAPTER 1

In this chapter, Paul greets Titus and reviews his commission to ordain elders and withstand false teachers.

Paul's Greeting to Titus

Titus 1:1–4

1:1 “*Paul, a bondservant of God.*” To be a servant of the Most High God is the greatest honor one can receive (Josh. 1:2; 24:29; Amos 3:7). “*An apostle of Jesus Christ.*” Apostleship was the highest gift given in the Church Age (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11–12). The original apostles were personally chosen by Jesus Christ Himself (1 Cor. 15:3–8), and this office carried the highest delegated authority given to men. “*According to the faith of God's elect.*” The term “*elect*” here is used corporately of the Church, as it was used in the Old Testament of Israel (Rom. 8:33; Col. 3:12). Individuals become “*elect*” when they enter by faith into union with Christ, who is the “*Elect One*” (Isa. 42:1). “*And the acknowledgement of the truth.*” Faith requires an object, that is, what we believe in. Here, “*the truth*” specifically relates to the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. “*Which accords with godliness.*” The truth about God's grace offered to us leads us to “*godliness,*” which is found in Christ (Eph. 2:8–10; Titus 2:11–12; 2 Pet. 1:5–7).

Note:

It is crucial to point out here that Paul gives a very clear definition of how one becomes “*elect.*” The phrase “*according to*” identifies that requirement as “*faith,*” and then clarifies that the object of that “*faith*” is revealed in “*the truth which accords with godliness.*” In 1 Timothy 3:16, Paul sets forth this truth, as revealed in the Person and work of our Lord. In other words, it is not our godliness that is in view, but that which belongs only to the Son of God (1 Tim. 2:3–6). This is confirmed in v. 2.

1:2 “*In hope of eternal life.*” The word “*hope,*” as used by Paul, always speaks of an absolute assurance based on the promise of God. “*God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.*” There are things God cannot do: He cannot lie (Heb. 6:18); and He cannot be tempted by evil, nor can He tempt men to evil (James 1:13). So much, then, for the idea of people blaming God for making all things (to include evil) happen! That the promise of eternal salvation was made before time (2 Tim. 1:9), indicates that God revealed some of His plans to the angelic realm. Perhaps this explains Lucifer's revolt (Isa. 14:12–15; Ezek. 28:11–19), in that he could not accept a lesser creature (mankind) being exalted above him (1 Cor. 6:3).

1:3 “*But has in due time.*” God's timing is always perfect (Gal. 4:4). God's plan “*from before time*” unfolds in His perfect timing. When Christ came into the world, five things made the spread of the Gospel possible:

1. The whole known world spoke Greek;
2. The Roman Empire embraced the known world;
3. Roman roads were extensive, and safe to travel;

TITUS 1:4–9

4. The *Pax Romana*, “peace of Rome,” made for easy access (Roman roads, one universal language—Greek—and relative safety for all citizens) throughout the Empire; and
5. The old religions, philosophies, had proven ineffective in meeting the needs of men’s souls.

“Manifested His word through preaching.” This message encompasses all that Paul presents in vv. 1–2. It is the “good news” of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Titus 2:11–14; 3:4–7). **“According to the commandment of God our Savior.”** This phrase is unique to Paul, who credits both the Father and the Son as our Savior (1 Tim. 1:1; Titus 2:10; also 2 Pet. 1:1). See note on 1 Timothy 2:3.

1:4 “To Titus, a true son.” This term could refer to Paul having led Titus to faith in Christ. It most certainly indicated a mentor/disciple relationship. **“Grace, mercy, and peace.”** It is interesting that only in his later years did Paul include “mercy” in his greetings (1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2). Whereas grace supplies all our spiritual needs, which we do not deserve, mercy withholds from us the condemnation and judgment that we do deserve. **“From God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.”** This greeting comes directly from God. Here, “Savior” is applied to Jesus; in v. 3, to God the Father.

Qualifications of Elders

Titus 1:5–9

1:5 “Set in order the things that are lacking.” What was “lacking” in the church in Crete was qualified spiritual leadership. **“Appoint elders in every city.”** The Island of Crete was known, even in the time of Homer (approx. 500 B.C.), as “Crete of the hundred cities.” Titus is acting as the agent of Paul, as an apostolic ambassador.

1:6 “If a man is blameless.” As in 1 Timothy 3:2 and 10, this does not mean “sinless.” It means “without indictment, unchargeable, above reproach.” An elder must be of good reputation in his own community. Paul’s list of qualifications here roughly follows that of 1 Timothy 3:1–7.

1:7 “A bishop must be blameless.” Here, Paul shifts the title from “elder,” which emphasizes authority, to “bishop” (literally “overseer”), which speaks more of his function or responsibility. In 1 Peter 5:1–4, Peter uses three titles interchangeably: “elder,” “shepherd,” and “overseer.” This plainly shows that these titles all refer to the office we would call “pastor,” **“a steward of God.”** The “steward” was the highest ranked servant in the household and was entrusted with all his master’s goods (Gen. 15:2; 43:19; 44:1; Matt. 20:8; Luke 8:3; 12:42; 16:1–8). Five negatives define what a minister of the Word must not be: **“self-willed ... quick tempered ... given to wine ... violent ... greedy.”** These traits are disqualifications from the ministry (1 Tim. 3:3; 6:4–5; James 1:19–21).

1:8 “But hospitable.” In this verse, we find six positive qualities: **“Hospitable”** (1 Tim. 3:2; Heb. 13:2–3), **“a lover of what is good”** (Psalm 34:12–16; 1 Pet. 3:10–13), **“sober minded”** (Gal. 5:22–23; 1 Tim. 3:2), **“just, holy”** (1 Thess. 2:10), and **“self-controlled”** (1 Tim. 4:7–8; 2 Pet. 1:6).

1:9 “Holding fast the faithful word.” This contains the idea of holding out against hostile forces. **“As he has been taught.”** The bishop must remain true to the doctrines revealed to and taught by the apostles—now the written Word of God. **“That he may be able.”** The word “able” here means “to have power to accomplish” what is needed. **“By sound doctrine.”** This is the source of his power (1 Tim. 1:10; 2 Tim. 1:13; 4:3; Titus 1:13; 2:1–2, 8). The ability to use God’s Word accurately was of utmost importance to Paul (2 Tim. 2:15). **“To exhort and convict.”** God’s Word both rebukes those in error and encourages them to correction (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

The Rebuke of False Teachers

Titus 1:10–16

1:10–11 *“For there are many insubordinate ... idle talkers and deceivers.”* There appears to be, at the end of Paul’s life, a tremendous increase of opposition and false teaching, *“especially those of the circumcision.”* This would have been a continuation of the heresy of circumcision and law-keeping being necessary for salvation (Acts 15:1–5; Gal. 1:6–10; 2:11–21; 3:2–14). *“Whose mouths must be stopped.”* The idea here is similar to “putting a muzzle on an ox” (Deut. 25:4; 1 Tim. 5:18), in order to silence their false teaching. *“Who subvert whole households,”* which probably is referring here to the house-church. These false teachers *“overthrow the faith of some”* (2 Tim. 2:18; 3:6–7). *“For the sake of dishonest gain.”* Their ulterior motive is personal profit (1 Tim. 6:5).

1:12 *“Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.”* Paul quotes the sixth-century B.C. poet and philosopher, Epimenides. By Paul’s day, this had become a proverbial saying about the Cretans, which Paul says is true.

1:13 *“This testimony is true.”* Paul is not afraid to state unpleasant truths, specifically regarding the false teachers. *“Therefore rebuke them sharply.”* The *“sword of the Spirit”* (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12) must be used boldly to silence teachers of false doctrine (2 Tim. 3:16; 4:2). *“That they may be sound in the faith.”* The goal is not to destroy them, but to bring them into the truth of God’s Word (Gal. 6:1–2; 1 Tim. 6:3–5; 2 Thess. 3:14–15).

1:14 *“Not giving heed to Jewish fables.”* In Paul’s time, the Pharisees explained Old Testament passages with many fanciful and allegorical explanations (1 Tim. 1:4). *“Who turn from the truth.”* The word *“turn”* here means “to turn aside, to go off track, to stray.” The idea is that they have misled themselves, and willingly turned aside *“from the truth.”*

1:15 *“To the pure all things are pure.”* As Jesus taught, it is the impurity of the heart that perverts the use of things (Luke 11:39–41; Mark 7:15–23). All things created by God have a pure and proper use (Rom. 14:20; 1 Cor. 10:23–24; 1 Tim. 4:4–5). *“To those who are defiled ... nothing is pure.”* A man of corrupt mind and spirit defiles and corrupts everything he touches. An example is King Saul, who defiled *“the sacrifice”* by his own evil motives (1 Sam. 13:8–14).

1:16 *“They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him.”* The idea here is of an intimate and deep knowledge of God, which they do not have, as evidenced by their conduct (Titus 3:8; 1 John 1:6; 2:3, 6, 9; 3:3, 18–19; 4:20). *“Being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.”* The word *“abominable”* is an expression of disgust at their hypocrisy. Because they are *“disobedient”* to the inner demands of God’s Word, their *“thoughts and intents of the heart”* (Heb. 4: 12) are far from pure and produce disobedience. The word *“disqualified”* means “to be rejected” (1 Cor. 9:27; 2 Tim. 3:8).

TITUS CHAPTER 2

In this chapter, Paul gives to Titus examples of how God’s Word counters the destructive effects of the false teachers. The key thought of the chapter is found here in vv. 11–14, which is that sound doctrine, genuinely believed, has a transforming effect on one’s life.

The Evidence of Sound Doctrine

Titus 2:1–10

2:1 *“Speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine.”* Paul uses the word *“sound”* nine times in the Pastoral Epistles, five times in Titus (Titus 1:9, 13; 2:1, 2, 8; 1 Tim. 1:10; 2 Tim. 1:7, 13; 4:3). The word means

TITUS 2:2–10

“that which is healthy, health-giving.” It speaks of the power of the Word of God to bring us to a healthy spiritual condition in our relationship to God. Faithful teaching, received by faith, produces faithful lives.

2:2 *“That the older men be sober.”* Six qualities are given here for older men. These are *“sober”* (serious, wise), *“reverent”* (fearing God), *“temperate”* (self-control), *“sound in faith”* (spiritually strong, mature), *“in love”* (fruit of the Spirit), and *“in patience”* (longsuffering).

2:3 *“Older women likewise.”* The word *“likewise”* applies the qualities of v. 1 to the older women (see 1 Tim. 5:3–13). Paul then adds *“reverent in behavior”* (both toward God and their husbands), *“not slanderers”* (not gossips), *“not given to much wine”* (not drunkards), and *“teachers of good things.”* Women who are spiritually mature are often gifted teachers to young women and children.

2:4 *“Admonish the young women.”* The word *“admonish”* used here means to teach someone self-control. *“To love their husbands, to love their children.”* Genuine love is much greater than emotion. It involves humble and sacrificial service. This does not come naturally and must be learned from those who have grown strong in the love of Christ (John 13:34–35; 14:15; 15:9–14; 2 Cor. 5:14–15; Phil. 2:3–4). There is no greater task in the world than to make a holy and happy home, and the home is the foundation of the Church.

2:5 *“To be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands.”* These qualities speak of vigilance, modesty, and industriousness, being honorable, and submissive to their husbands. *“That the word of God may not be blasphemed.”* Every believer must understand that they are either a steppingstone to the Gospel, or a stumbling block. Our lives have an effect on others, for good or evil.

2:6 *“Likewise, exhort the young men.”* Just as Jesus’ commission to Peter was to both *“lambs”* and *“sheep”* (John 21:15–18), so the faithful pastor must care for believers of all ages, and at all levels of spiritual growth. *“To be sober-minded.”* This means to be of *“sound mind”* (2 Tim. 1:7), or *“having self-control”* (Prov. 16:32; Gal. 5:23; 2 Pet. 1:6).

2:7 *“Showing yourself ... a pattern.”* Timothy was to be a model or example of the things he taught. This is the standard and challenge for every Bible teacher (1 Tim. 4:12–16). Five qualities are listed here: *“good works”* (fruit of the Spirit, Gal. 5:22–23; 2 Tim. 2:21; Titus 1:16), *“in doctrine showing integrity”* (faithful to God’s Word), *“reverence”* (piety, respect for God), *“incorruptibility”* (this speaks of purity of motive, life, and teaching), and *“sound speech”* (see v. 8).

2:8 *“Sound speech* (again, from *“healthy doctrine”*) *that cannot be condemned.”* False teachers will always attack the Truth (1 Tim. 1:18–20; 2 Tim. 2:15–19; 3:1–5, 8–9). Our goal is to be sure that the content of our message is true and faithful to God’s Word. Those who embrace false teaching will always be proven wrong at some point. *“An opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.”* Sound teaching and faithful living robs the devil and his servants of grounds for attacking us. By teaching and living the truth, we disarm our enemies, as well as erring believers (2 Thess. 3:13–15).

2:9 *“Exhort bondservants to be obedient ... well pleasing in all things.”* Christian slaves (or employees) have a duty to witness through their obedience (Eph. 6:5–9; Col. 3:22–23; 1 Tim. 6:1–2; 1 Pet. 2:18). The Christian slave who served his master *“as to Christ”* (Eph. 6:5) could not fail to be a good witness.

2:10 *“Not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity.”* The contrast of the negative and the positive here add up to conduct that would earn the trust and confidence of one’s master. *“That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.”* The word *“adorn”* means to *“beautify, to make attractive.”* This is the task of all who believe. We are to be an example to the world of *“the beauty of holiness”* (2 Chron. 20:21; Psalm 29:2; 96:9).

The Power behind Sound Doctrine

Titus 2:11–15

2:11 *“The grace of God ... has appeared to all men.”* In this verse, Paul is explaining where the power comes from for the kind of life-style God requires in vv. 1–10. The power behind the truth of God is found in the provisions of the grace of God (2 Pet. 1:2–4). This appearance was in the form of the “epiphany” of Jesus Christ (Titus 3:4–6). The word means “an appearance of God.” In the coming of Jesus Christ, men *“beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”* (John 1:14). It is worth noting that whenever the word “grace” is linked in the Bible to any other word, such as “grace and faith” or “grace and peace,” grace always comes first. Grace means “the unmerited, undeserved favor of God.” Grace came to men at the greatest cost—that of Christ Jesus crucified. Because *“all men”* are sinners (Rom. 3:23; 5:12), and because Christ died for all men (2 Cor. 5:14–21; 1 Tim. 2:1–6; 1 John 2:2), it follows that God’s grace is offered and available to all men. *“The grace of God”* includes the convicting and illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7–14). Apart from this, no one would understand God’s Word, or receive Jesus Christ as Savior. *“That brings salvation.”* The Greek words in this verse actually read, *“The saving grace of God has appeared to all men.”* It was the revelation of God’s favor, in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, that brings to all men the offer of eternal life, *“By grace you have been saved through faith”* (Eph. 2:5, 8). But salvation from eternal condemnation is not all that the grace of God supplies, as Paul explains in v. 12.

2:12 *“Teaching us.”* The grace and truth of God does not stop with the message of eternal salvation. The biblical idea of salvation involves three phases:

1. Deliverance from the condemnation of sin—**salvation** (Rom. 3:21–26),
2. Deliverance from the practice of sin—**sanctification** (Romans chapters 6–8), and
3. Deliverance from the presence of sin—**glorification** (Rom. 8:18–23)

“Denying ungodliness ... lusts.” The word *“denying”* means “to reject as a lifestyle.” Demas is an example of one who failed in this (2 Tim. 4:10). True repentance is a mental shift from choosing to love evil to loving what is good (Isa. 1:16–18; Rom. 12:9; Heb. 11:24–27; 1 Pet. 3:10–12). This is a learning process (discipleship) through the teaching ministry of God’s Word (Heb. 4:12–13; 2 Pet. 3:18). *“We should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.”* The progression here is from taking life seriously, to obedience to what is right, and to ultimate conformity to Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29; 1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Cor. 3:18). This *“present age”* is seen as evil and totally corrupt (Gal. 1:4; Eph. 2:2).

2:13 *“Looking for the blessed hope.”* Our motivation to be saved, to learn, and to grow in obedience, is the *“hope”* of our Lord’s return (1 Thess. 4:13–18). The word *“hope”* as used in the New Testament speaks of *“confident assurance.”* It is this *“hope”* that brings blessing into our lives regardless of external circumstances (2 Tim. 4:8; 1 John 2:28–3:3). *“Glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”* Here, Paul clearly declares Jesus to be God!

2:14 *“Who gave Himself for us.”* This is a reference to His willing surrender to the cross on our behalf (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 1:18–19; 2:21–25; 3:18). *“That He might redeem us.”* This means *“to set us free by paying the price of our freedom”* (Matt. 20:28; Rom. 5:8–9, 18). This redemption is not just from condemnation, but is also to *“purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”* The *“good works”* mentioned here are not mere human good deeds—they are works:

1. In obedience to the Word of God (Rom. 12:1–2),
2. Accomplished by faith (2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 14:23b), and
3. Done in the filling power of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 22–23; Eph. 5:18).

TITUS 2:15–3:6

2:15 *“Speak these things.”* In other words, “teach these truths” to the people. *“Exhort, and rebuke with all authority.”* The “authority” of the Bible teacher rests in the Word of God. *“Let no one despise you”* is similar to Paul’s instruction to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:12), but the age of Titus is not an issue here. He was most likely past his youth.

TITUS CHAPTER 3

In this chapter, Paul expands on his thoughts in Titus 2:11–14. The main idea is that our justification by faith ought to lead us to a life of gratitude demonstrated by works that are God-honoring.

We Are Saved to Serve

Titus 3:1–11

3:1 *“Remind them.”* Good teaching involves repetition, and reminding people of what they already know (Phil. 3:1; 2 Pet. 1:12; 3:1–2). *“To be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey.”* This is a common command of Scripture (Rom. 13:1–7; 1 Pet. 2:13–17), but it is not absolute. There are times when civil authorities demand what is contrary to our duty to God, and then we must resist (Dan. 3:12–28; 6:10–22; Acts 4:19; Acts 5:17–32).

3:2 *“To speak evil of no one.”* This does not prohibit calling out the evil that men do (Matt. 3:7; 12:34; 23:13–36). It commands us not to slander or malign others. *“To be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.”* Our conduct is to be a witness *“to all men,”* because Christ died for all, and desires all men to come to faith in Christ (1 Tim. 2:3–5; 1 Pet. 3:15; 2 Pet. 3:9). True *“humility”* reflects the character of Jesus Christ (Luke 22:27; John 13:3–16; Phil. 2:5–9).

3:3 *“For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived.”* This is the normal condition of unregenerate men (2 Cor. 4:3–4; Eph. 2:1–3; 1 Pet. 4:3). *“Living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.”* Paul knew this as a bitter truth, for he persecuted the early Church (Acts 22:4; 26:11; 1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13, 23). This was due to his hatred of the claims of Jesus Christ (Acts 9:4–5; 22:7–8; 26:14–15).

3:4 *“But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared.”* This is a reference back to Titus 2:11, concerning the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. The *“grace of God”* (Titus 2:11) is defined here as *“kindness and ... love ... toward man[kind].”* This is the *“love of God”* for a world of lost sinners (see John 3:16). Note that in Titus 2:13 he writes, *“our great God and Savior Jesus Christ”* and here, *“God our savior.”*

3:5 *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done.”* Our salvation is totally apart from good *“works”* (Eph. 2:9), simply because no one could ever be righteous enough (Rom. 3:10–24). *“But according to His mercy He saved us.”* Grace offers to us eternal life, which we do not deserve. Mercy withholds the judgment for sin, which we all do deserve. *“The washing of regeneration.”* Our sins are said to be “washed away” the moment we receive Jesus as Savior (John 13:10; Eph. 5:26). Paul’s sins were “washed away,” not by being baptized, but because he was saved by *“calling on the name of the Lord”* in faith (Acts 22:16; Rom. 10:13). *“And renewing of the Holy Spirit.”* At the moment of salvation, God the Holy Spirit creates in us a *“new creation”* (2 Cor. 5:17), which Paul calls the *“new man”* or *“inner man”* (John 3:6; 2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 3:16; 4:24; Col. 3:10; 1 John 5:4).

3:6 *“Whom He poured out on us abundantly.”* This refers back to the Holy Spirit, who indwells every believer at the moment of salvation (John 14:15–18, 26; 1 Cor. 3:16; Rom. 8:9, 11, 15; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13–14; 2 Tim. 1:14). *“Through Jesus Christ our Savior.”* See Titus 1:4; 2:10, 13; and 3:4 where Paul applies the term *“Savior”* both to God the Father and to Jesus Christ.

3:7 *“That having been justified by His grace.”* The word *“justified”* means to be “declared righteous” in the sight of God. This is possible by:

1. Our sins “not being imputed” (accounted) to us (Rom. 4:8; 2 Cor. 5:19), and
2. By having the righteousness of Jesus “imputed to us” (Rom. 4:6, 11, 22–24).

Again, all credit goes to the *“grace of God”* (Titus 2:11). *“We should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”* Every child of God has an eternal inheritance from the heavenly Father (Gal. 3:29; Heb. 1:14; James 2:5; 1 Pet. 1:3–5; 3:7). This inheritance can be greatly increased by a life that is worthy of reward (Psalm 19:11; 58:11; Matt. 5:12; 6:20–21; 10:41–42; Mark 9:41; 1 Cor. 3:8; Heb. 10:35–36).

3:8 *“This is a faithful saying.”* This phrase introduces a common saying in the early Church (see the note on 1 Tim. 1:15). *“Affirm constantly.”* These truths need to be *“constantly”* upheld and confirmed. *“Those who believe in God should be careful to maintain good works.”* For a definition of good works, see note on Titus 2:14. *“These ... are good and profitable.”* These works are produced in and through us (Phil. 2:12–13) by His Spirit and His Word. They are beneficial both to us and to others as they back up our witness and point others to Christ.

3:9 *“But avoid foolish disputes ... they are unprofitable and useless.”* As these debates were popular in the ancient world (Eccl. 1:8; Acts 17:21; 1 Tim. 1:4; 6:3–5; 2 Tim. 4:3), so they are today, among those who prefer speculation to truth. The word *“foolish”* and *“moron”* are from the same Greek word.

3:10 *“Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition.”* Every attempt should be made to bring men to the Truth. However, those who only delight in controversy are to be rejected (Rom. 16:17–18; 2 Thess. 3:14–15; 2 Tim. 3:5). The word *“divisive”* and *“heretic”* come from the same Greek word. This rejection may include putting them out of the church, for the sake of maintaining order (Matt. 18:15–17).

3:11 *“Such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.”* The person who will not accept correction when it comes from the Word of God is willingly and blatantly resisting both the Truth and the Spirit (see John 4:24). By their persistence in evil, they stand condemned by their own words and actions.

Final Instructions and Greetings

Titus 3:12–15

3:12 *“When I send Artemis to you, or Tychicus.”* We know nothing of *“Artemis,”* but *“Tychicus”* served with Paul (Eph. 6:21–22; Col. 4:7). He would possibly replace Titus in Crete, so he could join Paul. *“Come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.”* Paul is free at this point, as when he wrote 1 Timothy. *“Nicopolis”* was a capitol city in Greece, being founded by Caesar Augustus in 29 B.C.

3:13 *“Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey ... that they may lack nothing.”* We know nothing about *“Zenas,”* but perhaps his legal skills were needed by Paul in preparing for a future defense. *“Apollos”* was an eloquent preacher (Acts 18:24; 19:1; 1 Cor. 1:12; 3:4–6; 4:6; 16:12).

3:14 *“And let our people also learn to maintain good works.”* That believers were to be diligent in *“good works”* is evident in this epistle (Titus 2:14; 3:1, 8, 14). This is said in connection with the provisions for Zenas’ and Apollos’ travel needs, and therefore applies to the support of missionaries (Rom. 15:24; 1 Cor. 16:6; 2 Cor. 1:16; 3 John 5–8). *“To meet urgent needs.”* These were the unexpected necessities of those who came for the ministry of the Word.

TITUS 3:15

3:15 *“Greet those who love us in the faith.”* In 3 John 14, these are called *“friends.”* **“Grace be with you all.”** Apart from the grace of God, we would have no hope, either of living in this evil world, or of bringing others into the family of God. To say that all is of God, is to say that all is of grace. Paul summarizes all of this idea of the life that comes through grace in a few words in Ephesians 2:4–5:

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us ... made us alive together with Christ, (by grace you have been saved).”

CONCLUSION

Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus, although directed toward the leadership of the Church, are filled with rich instructions and exhortations for each one of us. For those who are entering into public ministry, as well as for those who have been serving in that capacity for years, they are a doctrinal gold mine of information on how to serve God faithfully and effectively as an elder (pastor), deacon, or Bible teacher.

It is my prayer that God may use these notes to encourage and edify my fellow soldiers who are engaged in the teaching of God's Word and in the leading of His people.

