1 TIMOTHY

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Key Verse:

INTRODUCTION TO 1 TIMOTHY

Paul called Timothy "my true son in the faith." He led him to Christ during his first missionary journey, when he pioneered the church in Lystra, Timothy's hometown. Timothy's mother and grandmother were Jewish Christians; his father was Greek. When Paul stopped by Lystra on his second evangelistic journey, he invited Timothy to join him as an intern shepherd. Timothy's training in obedience began when Paul circumcised him. Later, Paul wrote the Philippians (2:19-22): "I hope...to send Timothy to you...I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But...Timothy has proved himself..."

1 Timothy was written to Timothy after Paul went to Macedonia, leaving him to shepherd the church in Ephesus. Some of Timothy's flock were older and more experienced than he. But Paul exhorted him to lead by love, and by setting an example in speech and life, in purity and in faith. A leader must continue to grow in faith and in love. Two times Paul told Timothy to "fight the good fight of faith" (1Ti 1:18; 6:12).

Paul gave advice about false teachers, and some specific directions about appointing and training leaders.

DO GOD'S WORK BY FAITH

1 Timothy 1:1-11 (Mon.) January 1

Key Verse: 1:5

1. The goal of this command is love (1-7)

Genuine love comes from a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith. There were certain men in the church in Ephesus who wanted to show off their "superior" knowledge by teaching something different from the Bible. Their teaching promoted controversies rather than God's work, so Paul told Timothy to command these men to stop such false teaching. God's work is done by faith and love--not by arguing.

2. The law is for lawbreakers (8-11)

The law is good and necessary, for man has a sinful nature. The law was given to restrain and limit that sinful nature so that people might live together in peace. When men receive the glorious gospel, they are changed within and can live according to the inner leading of the Spirit rather than the outer constraints of the law.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for entrusting me with your glorious gospel. Come and dwell within me and lead in your love. Help me to do your work by faith.

One Word: God's work is done in love

CHRIST JESUS CAME TO SAVE SINNERS

1 Timothy 1:12-20 (Tue.) January 2

Key Verse: 1:15

1. I was shown mercy (12-17)

Paul never forgot God's grace in his life. He had been a violent man, a blasphemer of God and a persecutor of God's people. But Jesus poured out his grace and changed him into a man of faith and love. Jesus displayed his patience with sinners by appointing this "worst of sinners" to his service. When Paul thought about God's grace in his life, a doxology of praise welled up from his heart.

2. Fight the good fight (18-20)

Timothy was a promising young man. Paul wanted him to know that to be a servant of God was not an easy or "natural" way of life. The life of faith is a battle. The servant of God must hold on to faith when everyone else is full of doubt; he must not compromise his conscience no matter what temptations arise. Those who shipwreck their faith by seeking an easy way must suffer under Satan's yoke.

Prayer: Lord, help me to remember your basic grace and fight the good fight of faith.

One Word: Jesus came to save sinners

ONE GOD AND ONE MEDIATOR

1 Timothy 2:1-15 (Wed.) January 3

Key Verse: 2:5,6a

1. God wants all men to be saved (1-7)

Jesus died as a ransom sacrifice for the sins of the world. He is the only mediator between God and man. Through him alone all people can be saved and come to the knowledge of truth. Through him alone can men have peace in themselves and peace with one another. In these times of increasing national and ethnic hatred and unrest, let us intercede in prayer for all people, especially for kings and those in authority. When God's peace is in men's hearts, then there can be peace on earth. God wants all people of all nations to be saved.

2. Men and women must promote peace (8-15)

When men everywhere lift holy hands in prayer instead of angry fists in rebellion, there can be peace on earth. When women dress and act to please God, not themselves or men, when they clothe themselves in good deeds, and seek by quiet and obedient lives to keep spiritual order, there can be peace.

Prayer: Lord, help me to pray and work for the preaching of the gospel to the world.

One Word: There is only one Mediator

A NOBLE TASK

1 Timothy 3:1-16 (Thur.) January 4

Key Verse: 3:1

1. A shepherd must be above reproach (1-13)

A shepherd or overseer has a noble task. He should live a faithful life before God. He should have spiritual leadership in his own family. He should be self-disciplined; he should be clear about women and money. He should be a good Bible teacher and have an open, hospitable home. He should pay his bills--including credit card bills--and he should not bounce checks. He should be a good influence in his community. When he is in a position of leadership, he must not become proud. Deacons and deaconesses--leaders--are stewards in God's household. They must be trustworthy. Most importantly, a leader must keep hold of the truth with a clear conscience.

2. The mystery of godliness (14-16)

The "mystery of godliness" is an open secret. That secret is Jesus. He is God who appeared in the body, died and was raised to forgive our sins and make us holy. God's church must preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations.

Prayer: Lord, raise up shepherds with vision to preach the gospel to the nations.

One Word: Spiritual leaders with vision

TRAIN YOURSELF TO BE GODLY

1 Timothy 4:1-8 (Fri.) January 5

Key Verse: 4:7b,8

1. Everything God created is good (1-5)

We live in the times Paul warned Timothy about. Some abandon the faith and follow the teachings of hypocritical liars whose consciences are dead. False asceticism is not godliness. But it sometimes appeals to sincere people who do not know God's way. The Bible teaches that God created a good world and gave us good gifts to be enjoyed with thankful hearts.

2. Godliness has value for all things (7-8)

We should not be fooled by godless men who say and do things that sound good. A godly man has God's spirit in his heart. He knows and loves Jesus. We must not listen to godless men. We must train ourselves to be godly by prayer, Bible study and obedience. Our thought world must be under Christ's control. Training in godliness requires effort, just as physical training requires effort and discipline. Godliness has value now and forever.

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, for the good world you made for us. Help me to train myself to be godly.

One Word: Train yourself to be godly

SET AN EXAMPLE FOR BELIEVERS

1 Timothy 4:9-16 (Sat.) January 6

Key Verse: 4:12

1. We have put our hope in the living God (9-10)

Our hope is not in money or education; nor is it in our own godliness or human abilities. Our hope is in the living God who is the Savior of all men, especially those who believe his gospel. The task that God has given his people is to make Jesus known to all people everywhere so that they might be saved. This is the task that was entrusted to young Timothy, called to be the shepherd of the large and growing congregation in Ephesus.

2. Set an example for the believers (11-16)

How could young Timothy have effective spiritual leadership? Paul admonishes, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers." He must lead by going ahead of his flock in speech, life, love, faith and purity. He must teach the truth without compromise and put his hope in the living God. He must be diligent; he must persevere in personal Bible study and in an obedient life, and so, grow spiritually.

Prayer: Lord, my hope is in you alone. Help me to live an exemplary life in speech, love, faith and purity.

One Word: Set an example for believers

ONE WHO LIVES FOR PLEASURE IS DEAD

1 Timothy 5:1-16 (Sun.) January 7

Key Verse: 5:6

1. Treat everyone with respect (1-2)

God's servant must treat every person with respect, including those whom he rebukes. He must keep his heart pure regarding women.

2. The one who lives for pleasure is dead (3-16)

There were some people in the church who were in need of help. Especially, in that society, men were the bread-winners and women depended on their husbands, so widows had a hard time surviving. Paul gave Timothy some guidelines for helping the needy. First of all, families should practice their faith by taking care of their own needy. Children should take care of needy parents. But the church should recognize and aid one who is all alone, who prays day and night and depends on God and seeks to serve others. Those who live alone in order to enjoy selfish, pleasure-seeking lives are spiritually dead and need no help from the church. Widows who are young and full of desire should marry.

Prayer: Lord, help me to use my life not in pleasure-seeking, but in seeking you and serving others. Help me to keep my heart and life pure.

One Word: Don’t live for pleasure; live for Christ

DO NOTHING OUT OF FAVORITISM

1 Timothy 5:17-25 (Mon.) January 8

Key Verse: 21

1. Elders are worthy of honor (17-20)

Shepherds who devote their full time to preaching and teaching have a right to receive material support. The Bible says that even the ox who treads the grain to remove the husks has a right to eat some of the grain. There are always jealous people seeking to find fault with the leaders. If a leader is accused of some sin, we should ignore the accusation unless there are two or three witnesses. However, leaders who betray their trust should be rebuked publicly.

2. Keep yourself pure (21-25)

A leader should be strict with himself and generous with others. He should be impartial in rebuking and impartial in giving help. He is not the final judge. Each person’s sin will either go before him or follow after to the place of judgment. Good deeds will also ultimately be known to all. Timothy evidently had a stomach problem, so Paul, not a legalist, admonishes him to take a little medicinal wine.

Prayer: Lord, help me to be strict with myself and generous with others. Help me to have a pure heart and to do nothing out of false motives.

One Word: Don’t show favoritism

THE LOVE OF MONEY

1 Timothy 6:1-10 (Tue.) January 9

Key Verse: 6:6

1. A right attitude toward one's job (1-2)

The inner life of a person is more important than his work environment. Jesus’ people must not be rebellious or bitter or blame others for their problems. They must not try to use their faith to get human benefit. A Christian should respect his boss and do his best. Joseph in Genesis is the best example. He overcame adversity by faith and won the victory.

2. Godliness with contentment is gain (3-10)

People should not strive for godliness because they expect some material benefit. One who holds such false motives has a corrupted heart and no love of truth. To strive for godliness means to live according to the gospel with a heart full of thanksgiving for God's grace. If we have food, clothes and shelter, we should be content. We brought nothing into the world; we can take nothing out. People who measure everything in terms of money cannot be happy. The love of money is the root of evil.

Prayer: Lord, rule my heart and teach me godliness with contentment. Help me to work hard and do my best today.

One Word: Love God, not money

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH

1 Timothy 6:11-21 (Wed.) January 10

Key Verse: 6:12

1. Pursue righteousness (11-16)

Men and women of God must fight the good fight of faith. Our first confession of faith before many witnesses is just the beginning. We must stand on Jesus' side in every situation. We must flee from controversies, useless quarrels and greedy ambition. Taking firm hold of eternal life, we must pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. With all our hearts we must honor and love God, the only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

2. Command the rich (17-21)

Those who are rich should not be proud or put their hope in wealth. Rather, they should put their hope in God, and use their wealth to do good deeds and to help others. It is more important to store up treasures in heaven than to hold on to earthly riches, which fade, spoil and perish.

Prayer: Lord, help me to fight a good fight of faith, and take firm hold of the life that is life indeed.

One Word: Fight the good fight of faith