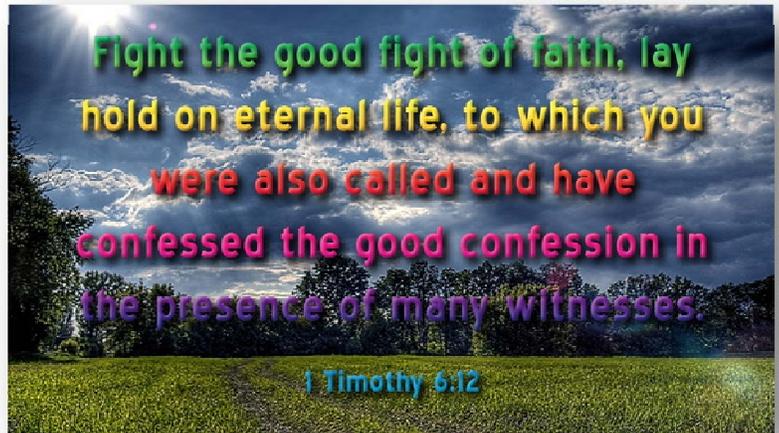


## 54 – 1 Timothy: Instructions for Churches and Church Leaders

- The books of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus are called by some the “**Pastoral Letters**” of Paul. These are some of the last letters written by Paul. They are addressed not to whole churches, but to **two young men (Timothy and Titus)** who were carrying out continued ministry, acting as leaders of congregations – pastors, as we would call them.
- These pastoral letters deal with both the **beliefs of the church, and the behavior of the church** in leadership and in laity. Paul addresses officers and order in the church, and also deals with the need to know about and refute **growing apostasy** (false teaching).
- Many people spend a lot of time discussing and debating what Paul was setting up in these letters. Some take these to indicate the **form of government that should be present in the church**, but most likely Paul’s chief concern is the not the form of leadership and government, but the condition of the hearts of the individuals. The same is true today. God is not interested in ritual. He wants relationship. To spend an inordinate amount of time debating church government puts us at risk of forgetting that individual hearts interest God more. ***No system of government, whether it is in the church or elsewhere (countries, nations, etc.) will work unless the leadership has the right heart and qualifications.*** This is what concerned Paul the most. And in the church, those leaders must have the right relationship with God, and His Son – that is the highest qualification.
- Paul also wanted them to understand that it is not the individual leaders or authorities in the church who have the power, it is **Jesus Christ, the real head of the church**. Everyone is subject to Him first.
- While these are letters addressed to individuals, they still contain truths that the whole congregation needs to hear, and were widely circulated to entire churches. These books are very personal and practical, dealing with church matters and order. As the churches were growing, they needed more guidance and some specific teaching about the functions of the church body and its leadership.
- Timothy had a Greek (Gentile) father, and Jewish mother. We know his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois were sincere believers. Timothy knew and believed the Old Testament scriptures. Paul may have led Timothy to faith, but we don’t know for sure. Paul took him on as a disciple and growing leader in the faith. **They had a very close relationship**, and Paul called him is “true son in the faith.” Timothy is mentioned in several of Paul’s letters. Paul clearly sees Timothy as the one who will continue his ministry for the Lord.
- Since Timothy had a Gentile father, **he was not circumcised as an infant**. Although Paul did not promote circumcision among the Gentiles, he knew that Jews would have a difficult time receiving anything from an uncircumcised Gentile, and thus he had Timothy circumcised to avoid this problem.
- This is a short letter, but one that is **full of both vital and controversial (the role of women in the church) information**. It deserves careful and thorough reading, study, and serious application to our daily lives. There is a lot here that could be read lightly and not taken seriously, but Paul’s emotional appeals to Timothy are seen, indicating that this information is very important to church leaders, and all believers.



# Highlights

Ch 1	Greeting to Timothy (1-2); warning about “fables” and idle talk, have “no other doctrine” (3-7); law is good if used “lawfully,” law not for righteous, but the lawless (8-11); sincere thanks for God’s grace to allow Paul to minister, Jesus came to save sinners, of whom Paul says he is “chief,” Paul is an example to others of God’s mercy (12-16); honor and glory to the “King eternal, immortal, invisible” (17)
Ch 2	Paul requests prayers for “all men” including kings and those in authority, because God desires all men to be saved (1-4); one God and one Mediator, Jesus, ransom for all, Paul a teacher of Gentiles (5-7); worship in sincerity without anger, no doubting (8); women to dress modestly, with propriety, and do good works, women’s position in the church (9-15)
Ch 3	Qualifications for bishops (lit. “overseers”) (1-7); qualifications for deacons (lit. an assistant, one who runs errands, servant, etc.) (8-13); reasons for writing, so they know how to conduct themselves (14-15); the great “mystery of godliness”
Ch 4	warning of coming apostasy in “latter times” (1-5); Timothy to teach these things, reject the profane and fables, practice godliness, we suffer reproach, but trust the living God (6-11); don’t let anyone despise his youth, be an example, pay attention to your studies, encouraging and doctrine (12-13); Timothy told to not neglect his gift, to think about the things Paul writes, and by doing so will save himself and others who hear him (14-16)
Ch 5	How to treat church members, older men treated as a father, younger as brothers (same with women and girls, mothers and daughters) all with purity (1-2); take care of widows, but with certain qualifications, each family should take care of their own first, younger widows should remarry (3-16); honor worthy elders doubly, testimony against them should at least 2-3 others (17-19) rebuke those sinners in front of everyone (in the church), do these things without prejudice or partiality, don’t be too hasty to lay hands on others, don’t share other’s sins, keep yourself pure (20-22); Paul’s personal note to Timothy about wine for stomach distress (23); Paul says some sin blatantly and their sins are evident, others will follow them to judgment, not clearly seen now, but all will be judged. Also, the good works of some are evident, and even the ones unseen cannot be hidden (24-25)
Ch 6	Personal instructions continue, slaves honor your masters, especially believing masters (1-2); those who debate, don’t agree, are proud and dispute things, are of corrupt minds and “destitute of the truth” and think false godliness will get them something – steer clear of them! (3-5); “godliness with contentment is great gain” (6); we didn’t bring anything into the world and we don’t take anything out (about contentment with what we have), desire for riches causes temptation, lust, love of money root of all kinds of evil, causes us to stray from faith (7-10); flee from such lusts, pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness, fight good fight, stay blameless until Jesus comes, Jesus is only “Potentate” and King of Kings, Lord of Lords, to Him belongs all honor and everlasting power (11-16); rich not to be arrogant, or trust in riches, trust only God, do good, be willing to share, lay a good foundation for the future eternal life (17-19) Timothy to guard the faith committed to his trust, not men’s knowledge, which leads people astray (20-21)

- ***“I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works”.*** (2:8-10) This begins some very controversial verses. First of all, and important to remember, Paul **prefaces these with the phrase “I desire, or I will,”** we need to understand that Paul is saying “this is my idea, my thoughts on this subject.” This is not a mandate from God. These verses, and the ones that follow, can be better understood with a commentary by J. Vernon McGee: **COMMENTARY:** **The confusion that exists about this rather practical issue has been brought about by a misunderstanding of this passage of Scripture and also by an unfamiliarity with the Roman world of Paul's day. Let's establish first that God has used women. In the Word of God we see Deborah, Queen Esther, Ruth, and others. In church history, we find women like Mary Fletcher and Priscilla Gurney. There are multitudes of others whom God has used in a wonderful way. However, in the Roman world the female principle was a part of all the heathen religions, and women occupied a prominent place. The worship of Aphrodite at Corinth was probably one of the most immoral in which prostitution was actually made into a religion. The thousand vestal virgins who were in the temple of Aphrodite on top of the Acropolis there in Corinth were nothing in the world but prostitutes. They were characterized by very disheveled hair. The reason God said that a woman should have her head covered was so she would not be associated at all with religions like this. Also, in Ephesus where Timothy was at this time, women occupied a very prominent position in the worship at the temple of Diana. In all the mystery religions there were priestesses. It is because of these heathen practices that Paul is emphasizing in this passage that this matter of sex is not to enter into the public prayer in the services of the Christian churches. We need to approach this passage with these factors in mind.**

"In like manner also"—Paul has said how men are to pray in public, and now he will say how women are to pray. Note that he is saying women *are* to pray. That is not the issue, but he is telling them the *way* in which they are to pray in public. His emphasis will be upon inner adornment rather than outward adornment. Women are to pray in public, but they should not dress up from the viewpoint of appealing to God in a sexual or physical way.

- ***“Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.”*** (2:11-14) And the controversy continues here. Does this mean a woman cannot teach at all, and all they can do is sit in silence? No. That is not what Paul is writing here. He is trying to counter the “big city” trend in places like Ephesus where women held a prominent place in the sexually expressed false religions. Also, God has an authority structure in place, and contrary to what some would like to believe, the man is the head of the woman, and women should be, in authority, under the man. Some women in this time were apparently trying to “take over” the services. And this still happens today. Sometimes when men don’t step up to claim their places of leadership and authority, women will step in to fill the gap, and in so doing can go a little bit farther than they should. The Bible even tells us of these times, as God used a female judge (Deborah) when the Israelite men were not doing what they should have been doing. *(And as a note to whoever reads this, these notes are written by a female teacher of the Word! I do believe women belong in God’s authority structure under men, and I believe sometimes women can get a little “bossy” and out of order, but I also believe that God anoints women with all the gifts of the Spirit, including teaching, at the right time, under His direction. Paul’s concern is combating the trend of the false religions of the time.)*

- **COMMENTARY:** In emphasizing godly conduct for women, Paul stressed, with Peter, ***“the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight”*** (1Peter 3:4). The females in the congregation should receive instruction from the male leadership with quietness and full submission. They should not attempt to turn the tables by clamoring for the office of congregational teacher or by grasping for authority over men. Rather they should, literally, “be in quietness.” The word, *hēsychia*, translated “quietness” in 1 Tim 2:11 and silent in 1 Tim 2:12, does not mean complete silence or no talking. It is clearly used elsewhere (Acts 22:2; 2 Thess 3:12) to mean “settled down, undisturbed, not unruly.” A different word (*sigāō*) means “to be silent, to say nothing” (cf. Luke 18:39; 1 Cor 14:34). Why is such a quiet and submissive spirit “of great worth in God’s sight”? (1Pe\_3:4) Because it manifests an understanding and acceptance of His design for the human race. As elsewhere (cf. 1Co\_11:8-10), Paul here based his view of male/female relationships in the church on the account of Creation recorded in Gen\_2:1-25. He made no reference whatever to the so-called “curse” of Gen\_3:16. Rather, the roles Paul spelled out here are a product of God’s fundamental design wherein Adam was formed first, then Eve (cf. Gen\_2:7-25). More is involved here than mere chronological priority. Paul saw the priority in time as indicative of the leadership given to the male, to which the woman, the “helper suitable for him” (Gen\_2:18), should respond.

Further, Paul contrasted the experiences of Adam and Eve. The woman... was deceived and became a sinner, but Adam was not the one deceived. Some chauvinists see Paul arguing here that women, as represented in their archetype Eve, are more gullible and thus more susceptible to error, than men. Thus, they say, females should not be in places of teaching or authority in the church. Others believe Paul was saying, in effect, “Look what happens when the Creation order is reversed and the man abdicates the leadership role to the woman.” In any case, Paul was emphatically not excusing or absolving Adam of blame for the Fall. Elsewhere Paul put the responsibility squarely on Adam’s shoulders (Romans 5:12-21). (Walvoord and Zuck)

- ***“Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.”*** (2:15) **COMMENTARY:** This is one of the most difficult verses of the New Testament to interpret. The ambiguous words kept safe through childbirth have given rise to several diverse interpretations: (a) preserved (physically) through the difficult and dangerous process of childbirth; (b) preserved (from insignificance) by means of her role in the family; (c) saved through the ultimate childbirth of Jesus Christ the Savior (an indirect reference to Gen\_3:15); and (d) kept from the corruption of society by being at home raising children. The interpretation of the verse is further clouded by the conditional clause at the end: if they, that is, mothers, continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety. Whatever one understands the first part of the verse to be affirming, it is contingent on a woman’s willingness to abide in these four virtues. Hence the second of the preceding options seems most likely. A woman will find her greatest satisfaction and meaning in life, not in seeking the male role, but in fulfilling God’s design for her as wife and mother with all “faith, love, and holiness with propriety” (i.e., self-restraint; cf. 1Ti\_2:9). (Walvoord and Zuck)
- ***“God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.”*** (3:16) This great mystery is something previously hidden, the fact that God was (through His Son Jesus): 1) shown in the flesh, 2) justified by the Holy Spirit, 3) seen by angels, 4) preached to the nations, 5) believed by the world, 6) received into glory. A very succinct description of the life of Jesus.

- ***“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”*** (6:6-10) These verses are a profound statement of what our lives should be, and instead what they often are, when we stray into a desire for “things” instead of God. The phrase **“Now godliness with contentment is great gain”** should be our motto. When we pursue godliness, instead of material things, and we know contentment, then we can be happy. But only then. Desiring stuff never brings happiness. It is not money that is the root of all evil, it is the LOVE of money.
- Verses 6: 11-19 also contain some very important guidelines for living in godliness: ***“But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen. Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”*** It is too easy to read through these verses quickly, without really seeing that these are a formula for the kind of godliness that Paul is promoting with Timothy and all believers. Here are the instructions, one at a time, as well as statements of belief that provide the foundation for that godliness. It is worth looking at them in this way:

1. Flee the pursuit of material things
2. Pursue righteousness
3. Pursue godliness
4. Pursue faith
5. Pursue love
6. Pursue patience
7. Pursue gentleness
8. Fight the good fight of faith
9. Lay hold of eternal life (can only be done by faith in Jesus Christ)
10. Stay blameless always
11. Jesus will appear in His time
12. Jesus is the only Potentate (chief ruler)
13. Jesus is King of Kings
14. Jesus is Lord of Lords
15. Jesus is the only immortal One
16. Jesus lives in unapproachable Light
17. No one has or can see this Light
18. Honor and everlasting power belong to Jesus
19. If rich, do not be “haughty”
20. Do not put your trust in riches or material things
21. Trust in the living God (who gives us all things, richly)
22. Do good (be rich in good works)
23. Be ready to give, willing to share
24. Store us a good foundation for the future, in order to obtain eternal life

*“...storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”*

- ***“O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust...”*** (6:20) The closing verses of this letter contain Paul’s emotional appeal to Timothy to stand guard of what has been given to him, including his faith and Paul’s charge to be a leader in the faith. “O Timothy!” shows that Paul feels these things deeply, deeply cares for Timothy and his eternal future, and the future of all those he will lead.