

# Note

## 1 Timothy – Part 1 of 1

### Summary

#### **1 Timothy - Part 1 of 1 .....2**

1 Timothy contains practical principles for the organisation and leadership of the church, and touches on how our Christian lives should be modelled after Christ's perfect example of purity and service. Written by the apostle Paul to Timothy, whom Paul entrusted with leading the church at Ephesus, this book records warnings against false teachings, to the proper order of church discipline. It also delves into the qualification of overseers and elders, the roles of women in the church as well as the importance of caring for those in need.

In addition, we are reminded to glorify God in whatever we do, not only in the church setting, but also in our workplace. At the same time, 1 Timothy emphasises the godliness that should characterise Christian leaders and the gatherings they oversee.

# Transcript

## 1 Timothy – Part 1 of 1

Today we come to the Epistle to Timothy. We'll start with 1 Timothy. The previous book was Thessalonians where we saw how Christians should work, not be idle, because God works. We have a working God, everyday keeping things going. In his Son, we saw him moving-going, going, (and) serving.

In Timothy, we see now how God works— not that God works but how God works. So in Timothy, we're taught some practical ways of how to live by working and serving others. Timothy is a pastoral Epistle. Now most Epistles or letters were written to churches. Some of them were written to individuals— Timothy, Titus (and) Philemon. These were called personal Epistles. But the Epistle to Timothy, and (the) Epistle to Titus are called pastoral Epistles because they were written to people who pastored the church. Though in a very strict sense, they were not pastors as we define them where the pastor stays in the church. Both Timothy and Titus were what we would call apostolic representatives. They were helping plant churches and then when everything was established, they ordained local leaders, and they moved on. In that sense, they're different from what we think are pastors. Our pastors are taking care of the church, not so much going out and planting churches. The word apostle means "sent out".

This book is more practical - how to live out our faith, especially as leaders, Timothy was taught how to be a good leader. So it's more practical than doctrinal, and as such, it's probably a bit easier to understand. In most of the Epistles you see doctrine in the first part, and then out of the doctrine flows certain practices, but here it's almost all practical.

Paul was very old at this time when he wrote to Timothy. These are the last few Epistles, (as) he's about to be executed. Timothy was his son in the faith. As far as we know Paul never got married and had a family, and so Timothy was probably the closest thing he had to a biological family, and

so he calls Timothy “my son”. And he's probably his protege, the one he looked forward to replace him when he was gone.

That's why in 2 Timothy, it's almost like Paul was passing on his ministry to Timothy, his successor. He had disciplined him and mentored him. Paul met his mother and grandmother in Lystra, which is in present day Turkey, and he liked Timothy and started to mentor him. Actually Timothy was just part of a team of coworkers that Paul had. Later we read of Silas, and Titus, Aquilla and Priscilla.

Timothy had been his representative whenever Paul moved on, and when there were some problems, he would send Timothy to sort things out. So Timothy had been his representative in Thessalonica, in Corinth, in Philippi, and now in this letter, Timothy was in Ephesus and he had been left behind there as Paul moved on.

Timothy was also a co-writer of many of the Epistles— at least six of them - the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, first and second Corinthians, Philippians and to Philemon.

Let's go straight into 1 Timothy and since it's a very short book, we can almost do a little bit of verse studies in the choice verses.

1 Timothy chapter 1 verse 2.

To Timothy, my true child in the faith

verse 3 As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine.

Paul had to move on but there were people in the church who were teaching false doctrines. In Acts chapter 20 and verses 29 to 30 Paul had told them that there will be wolves in your church who will teach terrible doctrines that will mess up your church and they will come from your own people. Oftentimes, within the church, there are men whom Satan raises up to cause problems by preaching false doctrines, and sowing doubts.

Typically a church grows stronger when it is persecuted from outside, like the Philippian church, and the Thessalonian church. But the Ephesian church grew weaker because it was wrecked from inside. So generally speaking, it was Satanic attacks inside. If Satan causes outsiders to

persecute, he's defeating himself because persecuted churches get purer and stronger. So what was their problem?

verse 4

nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.

So they went in and promoted all kinds of strange myths and endless genealogies. They probably used the Old Testament and made all kinds of mysterious teachings about the genealogies, which you can speculate like, "who's related to who... and who has got this 'godly' line....And so, what happened was it caused speculation in the church.

I realized that one of the favorite hobbies of Christians is to speculate on difficult to understand verses that are difficult to understand and, frankly, of very little practical value. Why do people do that? Sometimes they're just plain curious, but I think when you spend time speculating, (and) debating, then you don't need to leave the classroom and go out and serve.

I find that is quite a common motivation because going out is more difficult than sitting in. Using your mouth is very much easier than your feet and your hands. And so, 90% of Christians (would) rather sit in class and ask questions looking very studious, rather than go out and serve.

v 5

The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart.....

The aim of all that we teach is love, agape love - looking for needs and meeting needs.

v 7

desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

Most people would rather be teachers of the Word of God rather than servants of God. The Greek thinking is teachers are better than servants. And so the church is full of teachers and scholars and students and very few servants and workers. Laborers are very rare. That's the goal—to produce people like Christ. Christ was never much of a classroom guy. In fact, He never entered a classroom, He went to the synagogue, said something and then moved on, and basically served people.

## Chapter 1 verse 8-11

Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

What's Paul saying all this for? Paul is saying that the law is basically to tell us, to tell sinners, that they are sinners. Why is that necessary? Because many times the "Judah-isers", the people who love the law—the Torah—were still in the church, and they kept saying, "You must learn the law, and when you obey the law, then you will get saved". Paul said "No, the law is basically to tell these sinners, you're sinners so that they will turn to Christ".

The Jews thought the law was the way to salvation, but Paul was telling them "No, the law is to slap all these wicked people and say, God doesn't like all this and you still continue in your sin". And they say "I can't help it, I'm like that. I still get involved in sexual sin, I still lie." And God said, I know, that's why I'm telling you, you can't get saved by the law, you need to turn to Christ". The purpose of the law was to tell people how sinful they are, and how hopeless they are to try to obey the law because they can't, so they will turn to Christ, to the Gospel.

## verse 11

in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

I think that even today, many people think that there's some condition for salvation. Though we are not Jews, but still the idea you need to earn your salvation is still ingrained in the DNA of almost every human being on earth, because it is part of our upbringing, it's part of our religion, of all religion.

Now, verse 19, just a little side line here, "holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander...."

I want you to know that Paul names people and he does so quite often. He names people who should be identified. There's a lot of Christianity today

that says "Oh, you shouldn't name people, it's not right, who are you to judge?" Never judge motives, you can't, only God can see the heart. But you can judge actions and people who do wrong actions, you can name them, you should, otherwise how do I know who to avoid.

So Christianity has become so mushy today, that if you stand up and identify somebody and say, "that man is doing wrong", you are accused of condemning him. I cannot see why he's doing it but I can see what he is doing. You have to identify it because you want people to avoid the mistake.

#### Chapter 2:1-4

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for all people, for kings and for all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God, our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

He tells us, we should pray for all, especially for our rulers because when we pray for our rulers, then they will be wise and they will rule in such a way that there will be peace in the land. When there is peace and order, then we can do our work of reaching out. If there is disorder in any place, then we have no energy to reach out. We just have to defend ourselves from all the chaos and problems around us. So pray for good leaders and leaders to make good decisions so that we have peace, and we can then do positive work like preaching the gospel, not defensive work. I notice many people never pray for their leaders. They complain more than they pray.

#### In chapter 2:9-13

there are a lot of women here in this church who seem to be giving problems in the Ephesian church.

In chapter 2 verse 9,

likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls of costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness with good works. Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.

This passage has been, I would say, interpreted in different ways. It's not an easy passage to come to a very clear lines, and I don't pretend to be any clearer than anyone else. It tells us here that there were women in this church who made church a kind of a fashion parade. They spend all their energy dressing up and looking gorgeous, and Paul said, "I believe that you should spend more of your time not trying to look good, but do good". Focus on doing good not looking pretty.

That's basically what Paul was saying and it appears that these showy women also wanted to take authority in the church. So, Paul says "No, you can't take authority over the men". In Greek culture, it was democratic. Democracy gives people more freedom, generally, especially if you're a Roman citizen. You sort of lorded over your slaves in your household, and it was common for rich women to have many slaves. And so they became bossy and they went to church and started to boss people around. That's probably the cultural background.

We have some difficult parts here. It says here, "Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over men but she is to remain quiet". What does that exactly mean? You mean a woman cannot talk in church, just be quiet in church? That's what some people teach. That's one extreme, women cannot say anything, cannot teach, cannot lead, cannot do anything. There's another extreme that says this passage is cultural. It's a particular case in a particular situation and it's not to be applied on all women. So there are two extremes.

When I don't know how to interpret something exactly, I tend to take a modern view. And for me, women can teach and talk in the church and not to be just totally dumb. They are allowed to talk, they are allowed to ask questions, they are allowed to teach, but not over men. That's what I would believe, in other words, they don't stand on the pulpit and tell men what to do. They can teach children, they can ask questions, they can lead ministries.

But, always, women are women and men are men. In the Bible, we are all equal before God, but the gender divisions are never removed. A man is still a man, a woman is still a woman. A young man is still a young man, an old man is still an old man. What am I saying? Old men should be respected, that never changes when we become Christians, we always respect age. We also recognize gender. It's made by God. So in the house, there is a

male and there are female. Men dressed like a man and behave manly, woman dressed like a woman and behave womanly. I believe that God's creation is to be preserved, not destroyed. So how do I interpret this? I interpret it in the middle, and I say, yes, women can lead, can teach but be careful not to be manly, and to go around bossing men, because that's not how God works. You can talk to men, you can lead men, but in a lady like way.

As for the pastor, my view is that a pastor has to take authority. A pastor is basically the head of the house of God, of the household of God. And when a pastor is a lady, it is a struggle because we are told in Ephesians that the wife's job is to submit to the husband. So you see the woman leading in the church and then at home, the same pastor has to go home and submit to her husband who was sitting in the congregation there. Now, that is difficult. I think that gives a very, very difficult picture in the mind and teaching is more of what you see than what you hear, more example than teaching them with words. I stand in the middle of this passage.

Now chapter 3 is about elders. Timothy now had a problem. He had bad elders in Ephesus, who were teaching false doctrines, so he had to remove the bad ones and appoint new ones and Paul gives the terms in this letter. The elder here simply means people who are more mature in the faith, not older in age. You can be older, and a Christian for many years, and yet never grow up.

An elder is the word 'overseer' - episkopos. The word overseer is just a translation of the Greek word, episkopos, where you get the word 'episcopal'.

v2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober minded, self controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's Church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders so that he may not fall into disgrace into the snare of the devil.

If you look here at what the conditions for an elder are, you will realize that the main conditions are about character, not ability. In fact, you only see



one ability in this entire set of conditions, and that is the ability to teach. So an elder should basically be a man of Christ-like character. All these virtues are not just Christ-like, these are good virtues. Every culture says these are good virtues to have. He must have good character and be able to teach, and it emphasizes the fact he must rule his house well, because otherwise how can he rule the house of God?

So I want you to know that God parallels the church as a family. If a man cannot be a good father over his family, how is he going to be a good leader over God's family? So the church should be a family and the the elders should have a fatherly role. Of course in those days churches met in houses so the likely thing is if you had unruly children and your whole congregation came to your house and saw the way your kids are ruled you're really in trouble, you're an example.

Today you can be an elder looking very religious in church and your house could be a total mess and the chances are not a lot of people would see it, maybe once a week for an hour or so. But in those days, there was nowhere to go except your house, your house was like the gathering place. In other words, his character had to show through. Today, if you could speak well, and even if your home is a mess, it's not such a big issue.

Then we see here, the next set of conditions in chapter 3 verse 8 to 13 is for deacons and it's fairly similar except, they are not needed to be able to teach. So character-wise, similar. I want you to know that they should be a husband of one wife. I think that means they should be males. It's very hard to have a husband of one wife who is a female. So people say "can we have female elders and female deacons?" I say. "Hmm. I don't think that's what the Bible told us".

Here we have, again, the deacons must also rule their households well. Now what's the difference between an elder and a deacon? An elder is to watch over, oversee the spiritual state of the church. Deacons, as we learned in the book of Acts, are to manage the church affairs, the finances, be sure that things are properly arranged and so on. So there's a difference. It's not like two levels, one more spiritual than the other. Just different focus.

It's not a system whereby if you're a deacon for four years then you become an elder. It's not in the same classification. One is in charge of temporal things, they are very good at this, good in administration, etc. But it's not

less than the spiritual part. Don't think Greek. If God puts you to just wipe the table of the church and you do it well, you will have a better reward than a pastor who is asked to preach and didn't do it well, but did it for his own glory. So we have here the conditions for deacons and elders.

Chapter 4:3 (tells us about the errors of the church and these are one of the errors)

who forbid marriage (these people forbade marriage) and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving for it is made holy by the word of God in prayer.

So there were 'bad' elders who taught a false doctrine, "you cannot get married, it's not good to get married", this is very Greek. The Greeks always separated the physical from the spiritual. They say "you should just focus on spiritual things, getting married is about the physical side, your physical desires, your needs, in your sexual relationships, all those are not good for spiritual" That's the Greek thinking. There are some major "Christian" groups that say their leaders cannot get married. It came from this Greek thinking.

Marriage is invented by God. There's nothing bad about it. Sex is invented by God, there's nothing bad about it, unless you abuse it. Anything you abuse, including food, is bad. But it's given by God and to be used with thanksgiving. This is a false teaching that cause us to perceive some people to be more spiritual because they do not marry, or because they didn't eat certain foods. I tell you what's spiritual -becoming molded to be like Christ, that's spiritual. That's the goal.

This word spiritual is totally perverted by our Greek thinking. They say "Oh the guy's very spiritual" then we see all he does is read the Bible and argue about speculations in the Bible. This is not spiritual. The Word should not be stuck in your brain. It should flow out in your life to others. That's why Thessalonians is very important. The Book of Thessalonians tells us, wherever we are, work well. Don't be idle, work well.

Today's discipleship is all about how we spend our time outside of our workplace. Almost all our teaching is "how to have quiet time, how to pray, how to go to church, how to have fellowship in church", but very little teaching is about how you are a good Christian in your workplace, which is

where you spend most of your working time. That's why church never impacts the world because we are "spiritual", and work is "secular". No, whatever you do, do for the glory of God. Be the best doctor, be the best taxi driver, be the best cleaner, whatever, shine for God as a Christian, wherever you are. God works in every part of our lives. So, we have this kind of strange Christianity but it's not strange, it's normal now.

#### Chapter 4:8 (another Greek issue)

For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is a value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and for the life to come.

The Greeks value sports a lot. Olympics came from the Greeks. You always see Greek statues, all muscular men, showing their beautiful muscles. So for them, there was a clear line between the spiritual or the mental and the physical. And some of them mastered the physical part. They did a lot of bodily exercise and they made it almost a religion. You see their gods look all so muscular and that has come actually into our culture. A lot of our energy is spent on looking good, on exercise. Most of us are victims of this, thinking exercise is highly profitable. It doesn't say it's wrong, it says in verse 8, "it's of some value". It's good to have some exercise to keep fit, but don't make an obsession of it.

#### chapter 4:16

Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Most preachers I meet are spending hours a day, a week, preparing their messages. Some young pastors I talk to say, "I spend 80% of my working week preparing for my 30 minute message at the end of the week". They spend a lot of time on the message. What does Paul tell Timothy? Verse 16, "Keep a close watch on yourself first, and on the teaching". Isn't that important? I tell young preachers, I said, "You know, your message mostly will be forgotten, your life will be seen and remembered". Parents, the same. You can nag your children to death with teaching, but what they will be when they grow up is what they see in you, not what they heard. Keep watch on your life and on your teaching. Put it in the right order and perspective.

All these are very practical. It's for Paul, the leader, it's for you, father, the leader; it's for you, mother, the leader. A lot of these things can be applied in our lives. We don't have to be pastors for this. When they say that this is

a pastoral Epistle, we think, it's for my pastor. In that sense the word, pastoral Epistle is not a very good term. This is a practical Epistle for all of us. All of us lead, in some way or another. The word lead is to influence, to influence the world with our lives.

### Chapter 5:3

Honor widows who are truly widows. But if a widow has children or grandchildren...”, and then you can read on to verse 16.

It tells us how to identify the real widows so that they can avail of help from the church. Is this all about widows? Yes, it's all about widows, but can it be applied to other things? Yes. Basically, I think these verses tell us that the church not only dispenses good teaching which is critical, through an example of the leaders and their teaching, but also a church must be practical in helping those in need, in this case, widows. And not just practical, if you read from verse 3 to verse 16, it tells us to be careful to identify the real ones in need, from the ones who take advantage of the church's charity.

A church usually swings from one extreme to the other. Many churches don't dispense anything to do with charity, they don't even have a mercy ministry. Normally the deacons are there to help in the mercy ministry, see temporal needs of members of the church, example - If he lost his job, they lost their child and they need some help in the process, the mother got a stroke, so on. Those are temporal needs.

Churches should be doing charity. Most churches don't do it at all, and other churches just give charity indiscriminately. They start all kinds of mercy ministries and the world takes advantage of it simply because they're not very discerning. On one hand the world says, “Christians just talk, they don't impact society, and on the other hand, when they impact society, they are quite gullible. Chapter 5 verse 3 to 16 tells us, do charity but be discerning.

Verse 17-18 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,’ and, ‘The laborer deserves his wages’.

Now, you don't muzzle that ox, that's in the Old Testament. When the ox is pulling that millstone to grind the grain, the ox should be not muzzled so

that he can eat hay at the same time and keep its energy going. In other words, you should feed the ox who does the work. In the same principle, take care financially of your leaders. That is also a principle, you not only care for the poor widow, you also take care of those who feed you spiritually.

#### Chapter 6 verse 1-2

Let all those who are under a yoke as bond servants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled. Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers, rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved.

This is about slavery. The Bible never tells slaves to rebel. Slavery was very much a part of human history, a very sad part of it. And in the Roman household, slaves were dominant in the sense that they often outnumbered the the household. Paul never said, we're all equal, we're free, then rebel. Paul reformed slavery. He said to the slaves, you're serving your masters, do a good job because you're glorifying God by serving them.

Just like your work, whatever work you do, do it well because you do it for God. Let the world see how good we are as Christians. But later on he tells the Christian masters to treat them well. So what Paul did actually was, he did not cause a rebellion, he caused a reform. So that soon enough, the Christians who had slaves treated their slaves well, and the slaves behaved well, and slowly slavery lost its impact in the Christian world, not by rebellion but by changing it from a new heart of serving their master and the master's new heart of taking care of their slaves and soon they freed their slaves. The best way of reform is not rebellion, it's a new heart.

#### Chapter 6:6

But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

Paul tells us that the best way to be rich is to be content. "Godliness with contentment is great gain". We all want great gain in our life, we want to be advanced. Get more, how to get more? By getting more? No, by learning this very wonderful thing called contentment. When you're content, food tastes good, clothes you wear feel good, the wife you have looks more beautiful, the kids you have bring you greater joy.

When you are content, you have satisfaction. When you are greedy, even if you have something you can never be satisfied because you want something else. If I have 5000 pairs of shoes and I'm a greedy man, I don't enjoy the 5000 pairs I have. I want the 5001 pair that I don't have, the additional one I don't have. So contentment is great gain and Paul's preparing the ground for the next Epistle where he tells us, "You know what happens? The greedy people are often inside the church, the leaders".

We will see that all around because as I said religion is one of the easiest ways to make money. You can play on people's fears and you don't need a lot of capital, you just need no conscience to be a religious crook. So it tells us here, be content. That's the way to go, having food and your basic needs, be content. Of course the word "basic needs" becomes stranger and stranger now, people have many needs now.

And then finally, we end with chapter 6 v17-19

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, not to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so they may take hold of that which is truly life.

So he tells those in the church, "Timothy, tell those in the church who have money to be rich in good works. Give out your money, every dollar you give out for Christ gets invested in the bank of heaven. Not necessarily you'll get it back here. You get the satisfaction here, you get the rewards in heaven, the eternal rewards." So be rich in good works. So how do you measure richness as a Christian? It's not how much you have, it's how much you give. And that's true riches because you're storing it up in the bank of heaven.

So what have we seen in 1 Timothy? We've seen a lot of practical lessons. What does it tell us? God is not a God that tells us to shave our the head,

go into a cave and hide from the world. God is a God who is very practical. God impacts every part of our life. God cares for everything in our life. God doesn't just care for our spiritual state, God impacts every part as He shows in Timothy, every part of our life should be touched to do good, to be a blessing and Jesus is the perfect example of God. He went about touching lives, living a very practical and not, we would not even call it the spiritual life by today's standards. Jesus would not pass the spiritual 'test' by today's perverted idea of spirituality.

Many Christians want to be spiritual, be Christ-like - be practical. Jesus exemplified it and you follow it. And so we see all these things about how to lead your house, how to manage your money, how to do charity, all these things. Not so much about sitting in the classroom for hours upon hours, it's so impractical. There are so many Christians today who are so spiritually minded and so practically useless.

Timothy was asked to be practically useful, and impact lives. I believe this shows you what an amazing God we have, who touches every aspect of life even what we call 'secular. And life is so beautiful because of this God. Don't hide in a cave, but enjoy life to its fullest. I don't mean immoral things, but in all the blessings that God has given us, our family, our world, our work and everything else, and when you follow this formula, you will have a full life. May God bless you.