

# General Study Of Letters To Timothy

## – Part 1

**Timothy is a prime example of a person who was influenced by godly relatives.** His mother Eunice and grandmother Lois, both were Jewish believers who helped shape his life and promote his spiritual growth, [2 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 3:15].

**Timothy is the first “second generation” Christian mentioned in the New Testament.**

**Timothy became Paul’s protégé and pastor of the Church at Ephesus.**

As a young minister, Timothy faced all sorts of pressures, conflicts and challenges from the Church and his surrounding culture.

To counsel and encourage Timothy, Paul sent this very personal letter.

Paul wrote this first letter to Timothy about AD64, just prior to his final Roman imprisonment. Because of his appeal to Caesar, as a Roman citizen Paul was sent as a prisoner to Rome, [Acts chapters 25-28] with certain freedom of movement, [Acts 28:16, 30].

Then Emperor Nero began his campaign to eliminate Christianity and Paul was again imprisoned and eventually executed.

Paul calls himself an apostle, meaning one who is sent. Paul was sent by Jesus Christ to bring the message of salvation to the Gentiles, [Acts 9:1-20].

During these years between his two imprisonments Paul wrote 1 Timothy and Titus. During his second imprisonment Paul wrote the second letter to Timothy.

**1 Timothy 1:1-2** [New King James] *“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Saviour and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope, To Timothy, a true son in the faith: grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

Paul affirms his relationship with Timothy.

**1 Timothy 1:3-4** [New King James] *“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.”*

Paul first visited Ephesus on his second missionary journey and stayed there almost three years, [Acts 19:20].

Ephesus was one of the major cities in the Roman Empire and the location of the temple dedicated to the goddess Artemis, [Diana].

**The Christian Church at Ephesus may have been plagued by the same heresy that was threatening the Church at Colosse.**

**The teaching was that to be acceptable to God a person had to discover certain hidden knowledge and had to worship angels, [Colossians 2:8, 18].**

Thinking it would aid their salvation, some Ephesians constructed mythical stories based on the Old Testament history or genealogies. **Those false teachers were motivated by their own interests**

**rather than Jesus Christ's. They embroiled the church in endless and irrelevant questions and controversies, taking precious time away from the study of the truth.**

**1 Timothy 1:5-7** [New King James] *“Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.”*

**There are religious leaders today who demand allegiance, some of whom would even have us turn from Jesus Christ as head of the Christian Church, [Ephesians 1:22; Ephesians 4:15; Colossians 1:18] and follow a human being who claims to be head of the Christian Church.**

When such people seem to know the Word of God, the Christian Bible, their influence can be dangerously subtle.

How can we recognise such false teaching?

It promotes controversies instead of helping people come to Jesus Christ, [verse 4].

It is often initiated by those who want to make a name for themselves, [verse 7].

It will be contrary to the true teaching of God's Word, the Christian Bible, [1 Timothy 1:6-7; 1 Timothy 4:1-3].

**To protect yourself from the deception of such false teachers, you should learn exactly what the Christian Bible teaches and remain steadfast in your faith in Jesus Christ.**

**1 Timothy 1:8** [New King James] *“But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully,”*

**How do we use the law given by Moses “lawfully”?** [Romans 7:7; Romans 3:20; Galatians 3:19-25].

**1 Timothy 1:9-11** [New King James] *“knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.”*

**The law is given that such people as listed in those verses may through the work of the Holy Spirit come to recognise that they are sinners and need the salvation from eternal death offered by faith in the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ.**

**John 16:5-8** [New King James] *“But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:”*

**To convict people of sin is part of the work of the Holy Spirit.**

**1 Timothy 1:12-15** [New King James] *“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.”*

Paul proceeds to indirectly encourage Timothy to a high yet humble view of his calling and to sustained devotion to its discharge.

**People can feel so guilt-ridden when the Holy Spirit shows them their sinful past, that they think that God could never forgive, accept and use them.**

**But consider Paul's past –**

He scoffed at the teachings of Jesus Christ [a blasphemer].

He hunted down and murdered God's people [a persecutor and violent man].

All this before coming to faith in Jesus Christ, [Acts 8:1-3; Acts 9:1-19].

**Yet God forgave Paul and used him in a mighty way to preach the gospel message to the Gentiles.**

**No matter how shameful your past, God can forgive and use any person to further His Kingdom.**

**1 Timothy 1:16-17** [New King James] *“However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.”*

**Paul believed that the great mercy and forgiveness he received was going to be used by God to encourage many others as they were also offered salvation through Jesus Christ.**

**1 Timothy 1:18-20** [New King James] *“This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.”*

**The Greek word most used in the New Testament that is translated “prophecy” is “prōphētēs” meaning an inspired preacher of God's Word, the Christian Bible, the Truth [John 17:17]. This gift from God had been recognised in Timothy at a young age, and would allow him to wage a good warfare against false doctrines and their false teachers.**

**Paul highly valued the gift of inspired preaching, [1 Corinthians 14:1].**

**Through such inspired teaching important messages of warning and encouragement came to the church.**

Timothy had been set apart for his ministry to the church when the elders laid hands on him, ordaining him as a minister [servant] of Jesus Christ, [1 Timothy 4:14]. The fact that several believers considered that Timothy would be ordained must have been of great encouragement to Timothy at the time.

To treasure your faith in Jesus Christ more than anything else will allow you to have a good conscience, [verse 19]. Lack of such faith could cause you to turn your back on Jesus Christ who is central to your eternal future.

Such a person was referred to as to blaspheme Jesus Christ.

**2 Peter 2:20-22** [New King James] *“For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment*

*delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: 'A dog returns to his own vomit,' and, 'a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.'*"

This is how God the Father sees any who have been offered salvation in Jesus Christ if they turn back to their old way of life, not a pleasant sight.

"*Deliver to Satan,*" to read what could happen to you read the experience of Job, who remained faithful to God inspite of what God allowed Satan to do to him personally.

**1 Timothy 2:1-4** [New King James] *"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, **for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.** For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."*

Although God is all-powerful and all-knowing, He has chosen to let humans help Him to change the world, our prayers are one way in which we can fulfil our part in this great desire that God has for all people to be saved from eternal death and come to know the Truth about why God created human beings and this whole universe.

**How our prayers work is a mystery to us because of our limited understanding but it is a reality. Our earnest prayers will have powerful results, [James 5:16].**

**When Paul commanded Christians to pray for kings, a notoriously cruel ruler Nero was emperor at this time, and persecution was a growing threat to believers.**

When Nero needed a scapegoat for the great fire that destroyed Roman in AD64 he blamed the Christians so as to take the focus off of himself. Not only were Christians denied certain privileges in society, some were publically butchered, burned or fed to animals during the public games in the great arena.

**1 Timothy 2:5-7** [New King James] *"For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle, I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth."*

**It seems probable that Jewish or gnostic heretical teaching was suggesting the restriction of salvation to a particular race or to certain classes only.**

Paul, therefore, justifies the universal offering of salvation by a six-fold assertion.

There is only one true Eternal Creator God.

There is only one mediator between God and human beings, the man Jesus Christ.

There is only one Saviour of humanity, Jesus Christ.

There was only one sacrifice made for humans to be ransomed from eternal death; that was the one made by Jesus Christ.

This sacrifice was prophesied from the very beginning of human life, and decided on before the creation of the universe.

Jesus Christ had appointed Paul to be a teacher to the Gentiles so that the message of what God had done through Jesus Christ would be heard by all human beings.

**1 Timothy 2:8** [New King James] *"I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, **lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;**"*

**“Lifting up holy hands” is a recognised outward expression of the attitude of prayer, [Exodus 17:11-12; 1 Kings 8:22; Psalms 28:2].**

**“Without wrath”** besides displeasing God, anger and strife make prayer difficult, for we are not approaching the Eternal God with the humble attitude we should because of who He is and what He is.

If necessary we should make peace with others before we offer our gift of prayer, [Matthew 5:23-24].

**“Without doubting,” [James 1:5-8]** where there is doubt there is an unstable attitude of mind.

The Greek word used in James translated “double-minded” is “*dipsuchōs*” meaning two-spirited, that is being influenced by the spirit of Satan as well as the Holy Spirit.

**1 Timothy 2:9-10** [New King James] *“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.”*

Apparently some Christian women were trying to gain respect in the congregation by looking beautiful rather than becoming Christ-like in character.

Some may have thought that they could win unbelieving husbands to Jesus Christ by their appearance.

**1 Peter 3:1-6** [New King James] *“Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Do not let your adornment be merely outward, arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel, rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.”*

**Peter addresses the same problem showing how a wife can influence an unbelieving husband to believe in Jesus Christ.**

**1 Timothy 2:11-15** [New King James] *“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. Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.”*

When Paul said that women should **learn** in quietness and full submission, he was offering an amazing new opportunity to them, for in first-century Jewish culture, women were not allowed to study in the synagogue schools, so they did not yet have enough knowledge or experience to teach.

**Evidently the women were especially susceptible to the false teachings, [2 Timothy 3:1-9] because they did not as yet have enough Biblical knowledge to discern the truth.**

**Paul was not forbidding women from ever teaching.** Priscilla taught Apollos the great preacher, [Acts 18:24-26]. In addition, **Paul frequently mentioned other women who held positions of responsibility in the church.**

Phoebe worked in the church, [Romans 16:1].

Mary, Tryphene and Tryphose were the Lord’s workers, [Romans 16:6, 12].

Euodia and Syntyche were the Lord’s workers, [Philippians 4:2-3].

Paul was telling Timothy not to place anyone, [in this case women] into a leadership position who was not yet mature enough in faith, [1 Timothy 5:22; 1 Timothy 3:6].

“*Saved by child bearing*” – Adam sinned so all men were condemned to painful physical labour, [Genesis 3:17-19].

Eve sinned and so women were condemned to painful childbirth, [Genesis 3:16].

From the lessons learned through the trials of childbearing, women can develop qualities that teach them about love, trust, submission and service.

**Both men and women, however, can be saved through trusting Jesus Christ and obeying Him.**

**Genesis 3:21** [New King James] “*Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.*”

This is the first indication that it is the blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, [John 1:29] would cover the sins of all humanity, by His saving act of spilling His blood on the cross. The blood of the Passover lamb expands on this act of salvation from eternal death, [1 Corinthians 5:6-8; Exodus 12:1-30].

**1 Timothy 3:1-7** [New King James] “*This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behaviour, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*”

**To be a church leader, [“*bishop*” in the translation of the Greek word “*episkopos*” meaning overseer, that is to look or watch the congregation.] Elder is another term for the same position.**

**It is good to desire to be a spiritual leader, but the standards are high.**

Paul lists these high standards and qualifications.

Even if we never plan to be a church leader, these are guidelines to our life.

“**Blameless**” – Greek word “*antilēgē*” meaning without being spoken against, a pure life that requires effort and self-discipline.

“**Husband of one wife**” – Paul is prohibiting both polygamy and promiscuity, but is not prohibiting an unmarried man or widowed becoming an elder.

“**Temperate sober-minded**” – Greek word “*nēphaliōs*” meaning discrete and circumspect, which could be clouded with excess wine, [“*not given to wine*”].

“**Hospitable**” – Greek word “*philōxēnos*” meaning fond of guests.

“**Able to teach**” – Greek word “*didaktikōs*” the gift of clear communication of doctrine or statement in God’s Word, listed as one gift of Holy Spirit.

“**Not violent**” – Greek word “*plektēs*” meaning pugnacious or quarrelsome, but gentle and forbearing, considerate of others’ feelings.

“**Not covetous [of money]**” – Paul repeats this in **1 Timothy 6:10**, for such an attitude can lead to many evil actions, not fitting for a leader in the Church, [Matthew 6:24].

**“Rules his own house well”** – all spiritual leadership must begin at home.

**“Not a novice”** – until a newly converted Christian comes to understand that they are now *“bond slaves”* of Jesus Christ who purchased us with His [Acts 20:28] and sacrificed their lives to God, [Romans 12:1-2] they are **not** humble enough in their lives to avoid pride becoming their downfall, the very attitude that changed Lucifer [anointed cherub – Ezekiel 28:14-15] into Satan [Isaiah 14:12-15] God’s adversary, who will end up in lake of fire, [Revelation 20:10].

**“A good testimony among those who are outside”** – a good example that will set them apart from this society, that is ruled by Satan, [1 John 5:19] for them to be a light in society, [Matthew 5:14-16] which will bring honour to God the Father.

**1 Timothy 3:8-13** [New King James] *“Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.”*

**Paul then lists the essential qualities of a deacon and deaconess.**

**“Likewise”** translated of the Greek word *“hōsalitōs”* meaning in the same manner.

Many of the qualification are the same or very similar to those needed to be an elder in the church.

**“Reverent”** – Greek *“sēmnoōs”* meaning devout, religious and honest.

**“Double-tongued”** – Greek *“dilōgōs”* saying the same thing to one person and giving a different view of it to another.

**“Not given too much wine”** – excessive alcohol can lead to wrong ideas and judgements.

**“Not greedy for money”** – no deacon should expect to be paid for the service they offer the people in their fellowship.

**“Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience”** – a faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ with complete sincerity.

**“Let these also be proved”** – a person must be fulfilling the duties of a deacon before they are ordained as one in the church, the major proof is the way they are always willing to serve people in need.

**“Blameless”** – Greek *“amēptōs”* not open to censure, without reproach, the absence of any charge or accusation against a person.

A deacon’s wife must reflect the qualities of her husband, [verse 11].

Like elders a deacon must be a person who manages their own household properly.

**“Good standing and boldness in the faith”** – to act as a deacon to a congregation is a good foundation for being used as an elder in the church, for both are founded on faithfully serving the people in their local fellowship.

I can say this without conviction for I served as a deacon for four years before being ordained as an elder, now retired, after twenty eight years as a bi-vocational minister, **not** taking any expenses from the church following Paul’s example, [1 Corinthians 9:16-17].