

General Study Of Letters To Timothy

– Part 2

1 Timothy 3:14-16 [New King James] *“These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: 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.”*

Paul affirms the humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ, by so doing reveals the heart of the gospel message, the mystery of godliness, the secret of how we become created children of the Triune God.

Jesus Christ’s pre-existence is implied, *“God [John 1:1-3] manifested in the flesh,” [John 1:14].*

“Justified” Greek *“dikalōō”* righteous, vindicated by the Holy Spirit.

It is what happened in the realm of the spirit that Jesus Christ’s true identity is vindicated, [**Romans 1:3-6**].

This manifestation of God in human history disclosed new wonders even to angels, [**Ephesians 3:10; 1 Peter 1:12**] and has provided good news to be preached to all nations.

The fellowship of believers, the true Christian Church has the task of holding up [pillars] and offer a firm foundation [the truth] to all human beings.

Jesus Christ now at the right hand of God the Father, [**Romans 8:34; Hebrews 1:2-3; Hebrews 10:10-12**] interceding for us, [**Hebrews 7:25**] awaiting the time of His Second Coming as King of kings and Lord of lords, [**Revelation 17:14; Revelation 19:11-16**] a time only known by God the Father, [**Matthew 24:36**].

1 Timothy 4:1-3 [New King James] *“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.”*

A solemn warning regarding false teachers, who will cause some to abandon the revealed truth.

This will be due fundamentally to the influence of evil spirits and more immediately to the influence of insincere men, who will be instruments of these evil spirits, [**2 Corinthians 11:14-15**].

***“Consciences seared”* men lacking in moral sensitiveness or men bearing the brand mark of demonic ownership.**

The false teachers gave stringent rules such as forbidding people to marry.

This is Gnosticism, that believes that only spirit is good and all matter is altogether evil.

Therefore men must abstain from marriage, for the body is evil and must be entirely suppressed. This kind of thing came to a head in the monks and hermits of the fourth century, totally forgetting that God created humans both male and female, [**Genesis 1:27**] and instituted the marriage of a man and woman that included sex, [**Genesis 2:24**].

“Abstain from foods” was directed towards the Jewish Christians who abstained from certain meat products which the Gentile Christians had no problem in eating.

To balance what Paul is referring to in these verses we have to also read what he said to the Church in Rome, again a mixture of Christian Jews and Gentile Christians.

Romans 14:14-23 [New King James] *“I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men. Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; **for whatever is not from faith is sin.**”*

Both of these statements in **1 Timothy 1:1-4** were designed by Satan to divide the Church, Paul in this part of his letter to the Christians in Rome was to condemn those who judged others by what they would or would not eat, [**Romans 14:10, 13**].

1 Timothy 4:4-5 [New King James] *“For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.”*

Everything is a gift from God and needs to be used in a certain way, never forgetting that they are gifts from God; this includes our own existence.

All have to be used by sharing, God’s Word, the Christian Bible, constantly forbids selfishness, humans cannot monopolise God’s gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:1, 7 [NIV] *“Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.” ... “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”*

If the gifts are of an intellectual or physical nature the same commandment applies.

Romans 12:4-13 [New King James] *“For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.”*

Again the sharing of the gifts that God has given us with other human beings is the only way we can know the will of God, [Romans 12:1-3].

1 Timothy 4:6 [New King James] *“If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.”*

It was Timothy’s responsibility to set these truths [verses four and five] before the Christians, to lay them down as a foundation of right practice. This he could only do if he constantly feeds himself with the gospel truths to whose practice he is committed.

1 Timothy 4:7 [New King James] *“But reject profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness.”*

Timothy was to avoid irreverent legends and silly myths, rather exercise himself in godliness, acts of love and compassion for other human beings.

1 Timothy 4:8 [New King James] *“For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.”*

The physical training of the human body has only limited value, but training in godliness, allowing the Holy Spirit to produce in us the “fruits” of the spirit which are the very characteristics of the Eternal God, [Galatians 5:22-25] as we follow His lead.

1 Timothy 4:9-10 [New King James] *“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For to this end we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe.”*

No-one claims that living a Christian life will be easy, but its goal is eternal life with the Creator God, [John 17:3].

It will eventually be a gift from God, [Romans 6:23] but we can experience it now, [1 John 5:11] through obedience to the words of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, [John 6:66-68].

The greatness of this goal makes the toil of the struggle worthwhile.

1 Timothy 4:11-16 [New King James] *“These things command and teach. Take Heed to Your Ministry. Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”*

One of the difficulties which Timothy would have to overcome was the fact he was young. [The Greek word used for “youth” is “neotēs” that describes anyone of military age; that is up to the age of forty. Remember it was fifteen years since Timothy had first become Paul’s helper.

The advice that Paul gave to Timothy is the hardest possible advice to follow, and yet it was the only way possible, Timothy must silence criticism by conduct.

What were to be the marks of Timothy’s conduct?

Love – Greek word used is “agapé,” a spontaneous love irrespective of the “rights” or response of the recipient, [Romans 5:8] a sacrificial love, [John 3:16-17] that puts aside personal desires, [Philippians 2:5-8] to love the object of that love.

Faithfulness – loyalty is an unconquerable fidelity to Jesus Christ no matter what the cost.

Purity – purity is the unconquerable allegiance to the standards given to us by the teaching of our Master and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Every true Christian ought to have a standard of honour, honesty, self-control and sexual purity, discipline and consideration, all of which are far above the standards of the world around them.

1 Timothy 5:1-2 [New King James] *“Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.”*

The giving of correction must be given in an atmosphere of true affection and sober restraint.

To exhort young women is part of Timothy's ministry but we must watch against any development, or even suggestion of, improper interest or intimacy. In Titus the training of young women is explicitly entrusted to the older Christians of their own sex, [**Titus 2:3-5**].

1 Timothy 5:3-10 [New King James] *“Honour widows who are really widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God. Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. And these things command, that they may be blameless. But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man, well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.”*

“**Honour**” may include provision of necessary material assistance, this refers to widows who are genuinely widows without children or grandchildren, also is over sixty years of age, [**verse 9**] and has a good reputation for good works towards those in and outside the Christian fellowship.

Unless the widow is all of the above, financial and material support is the responsibility of the children and grandchildren, **not** the church, [**verse 8**].

1 Timothy 5:11-15 [New King James] *“But refuse the younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith. And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not. Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some have already turned aside after Satan.”*

Paul gives two reasons for not enrolling the younger widows.

It is unwise to make them pledge not to re-marry, and dedicate their lives to serve the church as a servant of Jesus Christ. For should they later wish to re-marry and do so it would seem they have turned their back on Jesus Christ, self-condemned having violated their pledge, [**verses 11-12**].

Also to forbid re-marriage would give them an undesirable opportunity to become talkative busybodies rather than active workers, [**verse 13**].

The suggestion seems to be that still young active widows, whose former life had been occupied with home management, if they were suddenly given maintenance, and possibly a ministry largely to be fulfilled by visiting homes and giving words of encouragement, may cause them to fall into the temptation to be lazy and to become talkers who make mischief by the betraying of confidences.

To avoid this harmful situation it is better that these young widows re-marry and once again be fully occupied with family responsibilities.

Alternatively any healthy widow under 60 ought to find some kind of employment, [if not a husband] rather than be given full maintenance even if involved in church work.

Paul appeals to the witness of experience to confirm his judgement, [**verse 15**].

The extended family should always be the main support of any widow, whatever her age, [**verse 16**].

1 Timothy 5:17-18 [New King James] *“Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,’ and, ‘The labourer is worthy of his wages.’”*

“Elders” refers to the local church leaders.

“Double” or ample “honour” Greek word “*timē*” meaning value or esteem rather than material support.

Paul quotes **Deuteronomy 25:4**, **not** to enforce the letter of the law but to appeal to the moral principle which it illustrates. Note Deuteronomy states “*when it is treading*” that is actually working, [**Luke 10:7**].

1 Timothy 5:19-20 [New King James] “*Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.*”

Paul continues to quote from Old Testament laws, [**Deuteronomy 19:15**] the word “*those*” [**verse 20**] may include all in church fellowships **not** just church leaders!

1 Timothy 5:21-22 [New King James] “*I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality. Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people’s sins; keep yourself pure.*”

“*Laying on of hands*” means ordaining a person for a special responsibility in the church fellowship, as well as receiving of the Holy Spirit on baptism, [**Acts 8:14-17**] and healing the sick, [**Mark 16:18**].

Paul warns Timothy that he will serve the people well only if he keeps himself pure and refuses to welcome the unworthy to take part in leadership.

1 Timothy 5:23 [New King James] “*No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach’s sake and your frequent infirmities.*”

This personal parenthesis is a striking sign of the letter’s genuineness.

1 Timothy 5:24-25 [New King James] “*Some men’s sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later. Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.*”

Paul continues to help Timothy in any choice of leaders to work alongside him.

Some people’s sins are obvious but some are pursued later by the after-effects of past sins, which will only in the passing of time be revealed.

The same can be for positive good works of present and also the past, that have never been appreciated, never thanked, never valued as they ought to have been.