

General Study Of Letters To Timothy

– Part 3

1 Timothy 6:1-2 [NIV] *“All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God’s name and our teaching may not be slandered. Those who have believing masters are not to show less respect for them because they are brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their service are believers, and dear to them. These are the things you are to teach and urge on them.”*

In Paul’s culture there was a great social and legal gulf separating masters and slaves.

Beneath the surface of these statements by Paul there are certain very important Christian principles for everyday life and work in every generation.

As Christians masters and slaves became spiritual equals, brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, [Galatians 3:28].

Paul does not speak against the institution of slavery, but he gives guidelines for Christian slaves and Christian masters.

It would only bring dishonour on the name and gospel of the Eternal Creator God if Christians who happened to be slaves failed to be good slaves.

Nor, if their masters happened to be fellow-believers, they ought to serve them better, just because they’re fellow-believers.

Masters are not to show less respect to their Christian slaves because they are fellow-believers, but treat them as beloved brothers.

This should be applied to the employer and employee relationship today, [Colossians 3:22-25; Colossians 4:1].

1 Timothy 6:3-5 [NIV] *“If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.”*

Paul told Timothy to stay away from those who just wanted to make money from preaching, and those who strayed away from the sound teaching of the gospel message that Jesus Christ brought to this world from God the Father.

Unsound teaching of the gospel message causes quarrels and strife in the church.

Also a person’s understanding of the finer points of theology should not become the basis for lauding it over others or for making money.

Paul’s simple statement was to avoid such people.

1 Timothy 6:6 [NIV] *“But godliness with contentment is great gain.”*

This statement is the key to spiritual growth and personal fulfilment. We should honour God and centre our desires on Him, being content with what the Eternal God is doing in our lives, [Philippians 4:11-13].

1 Timothy 6:7-11 [NIV] *“For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.”*

We are but a steward of this life we have received from the Creator God and is sustained by Him, until the day of our physical death over which we have no power, [Ecclesiastes 8:8].

Material things are secondary in importance, not transferable into a life beyond physical death.

Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, most people still believe that money brings happiness.

Rich people craving greater riches can be caught in an endless cycle that only ends in ruin and destruction.

How can we keep away from the love of money?

Paul gives us some guidelines.

- a) Realise that one day riches will be gone, [verses 6, 7, 17].
- b) Be content with what we have [verse 8].
- c) Monitor what you are willing to do to get more money, [verses 9, 10].
- d) Love people more than money, [verse 11].
- e) Love God’s work more than money, [verse 11].
- f) Freely share with others what we have, [verse 18].

It is often helpful if we distinguish between needs and wants.

Like Paul we can learn to be content with what we have, otherwise we become a slave to our desires.

1 Timothy 6:12-16 [NIV] *“Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time, God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no-one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might for ever. Amen.”*

Paul uses active and forceful words to describe the Christian life, flee, pursue, fight, take hold. Some consider Christianity to be a passive religion that advocates on God to act, but we must have an active faith.

James 2:14-26 [NIV] *“What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, ‘Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith; I have deeds.’ Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that, and shudder. You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our*

*ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,' and he was called God's friend. You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? **As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.***"

Obeying God with courage and doing what we know is right acting as a servant to God and other human beings, [Matthew 20:25-28].

1 Timothy 6:17-19 [NIV] *"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. **Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.**"*

Ephesus was a wealthy city and the Ephesian Church probably had many wealthy members.

Paul continues his teaching concerning material wealth by adding to his previous warnings against desire for gain [verses 6-10] with positive instructions concerning the right use of wealth by those who have it.

Rich Christians need to beware lest possessions of material wealth make them over-confident. Their settled hope should rest, **not** in their wealth and its characteristic insecurity, [Proverbs 23:4-5] but in God the Giver, [verse 17].

The rich need to know that physical wealth is given not to be hoarded, but to be enjoyed [1 Timothy 4:3-5] and used to do good, [verse 18].

Note also the contrast between this present world and the "coming age," the glorious world tomorrow after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, this time as King of kings and Lord of lords, [verse 15].

1 Timothy 6:20-21 [NIV] *"Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith. Grace be with you."*

In an emphatic personal word to Timothy, Paul here briefly sums up his chief, twofold concern in writing to secure that Timothy preserves and hands on unimpaired the truth and avoids the impious and arrogantly assertive false teaching that had already side-tracked some members of the church.

It may well be that the name "Timothy" is here used in the fullness of its meaning.

The name Timothy comes from two words, "timan" meaning to honour and "theos" referring to God.

It may well be that in this concluding statement begins by reminding Timothy of his name, and urging him to be true to it.

Timothy was addressed as a steward who had been entrusted with a deposit, Greek "parathēkē" used for money deposited with a bank or a friend. When such money was in time demanded back it was a sacred duty to hand it back entire, whole and unharmed.

The husband's duty when God gives him a child is to present that child, trained, disciplined and equipped to serve God.

Also the Christian faith that we have received from our forefathers is something which we must pass on to our children.

Paul ends desiring that God's grace, His love and compassion, will be with Timothy in all that he does as a servant of the Eternal God.

2 Timothy 1:1-4 [NIV] *“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy.”*

This letter has a sombre tone. Paul was imprisoned for the last time and knew he would soon die. Written AD66-67 these are the last words we have from Paul.

Timothy had been Paul's travelling companion on his second and third missionary journeys and Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus to help the church there, [**1 Timothy 1:3-4**].

Although the two men were separated from each other their prayers provided a source of mutual encouragement. We too should pray constantly for others, especially for those who are doing God's work.

We do not know when Paul and Timothy last parted, but it was probably when Paul was arrested and taken to Rome for his second imprisonment. The tears they shed at parting revealed the depth of their friendship.

2 Timothy 1:5-6 [NIV] *“I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”*

Timothy's mother and grandmother were both early Christian converts, possibly through Paul's ministry in their home city, Lystra, [**Acts 16:1**].

They had communicated their strong Christian faith to Timothy, even though his father was not a believer.

Do not hide your Christian faith at home for our families are fertile soil for planting the seeds of the gospel message.

At the time of his ordination Timothy received special gifts of the Holy Spirit to enable him to serve the Church, [**1 Timothy 4:14**].

Paul was reminding Timothy of these gifts as an encouragement for him to persevere.

Timothy did not need new revelation or new gifts, but the courage and self-discipline to hang on to the truth and use the gifts he already had.

2 Timothy 1:7 [NIV] *“For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.”*

When you use the gifts that God has given you, [1 Corinthians 12:4-11] the Holy Spirit will also give you the power to use them.

This power is found in the various qualities that were found in Timothy.

Courage – Not the timidity that can hinder our witness to others who are not Christians. It will always take courage to be a Christian, the courage that comes from the continual presence of the Holy Spirit in us, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, [**Romans 8:9**].

Power – The power to cope with things and to remain faithful in the face of searing sorrow.

Love – In Timothy’s case it was the love of the brethren, love for the congregation of believers that God had given him to serve. It is this love for the people that will draw out the other qualities that a true pastor needs.

Self-discipline – The Greek word “*sōphrōnismōs*” meaning a sound mind that gives self-control, sober-minded. It is one of the “*fruits*” of an active Holy Spirit in our lives, [**Galatians 5:22-25**].

2 Timothy 1:8-11 [NIV] *“So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life, not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher.”*

For Timothy loyalty to the gospel message and also loyalty to Paul, a man who was regarded by many as a criminal, because Paul wrote that he was in prison in Rome.

Paul sets out the gospel message in all its glory as something worth suffering for.

It is the gospel of power – Any suffering which preaching the gospel message is to be borne in the power of the Eternal God, the power to live life to the full, to master all circumstances.

It is the gospel of salvation – God is the god who saves us from sin and all that it brings on us. It is essentially the rescuing power that can make bad people good.

In this time of mounting persecution, Timothy may have been afraid to continue to preach the gospel message. His fears were based on fact, because believers were being arrested and persecuted. **Timothy, like Paul, was jailed for preaching the gospel message, [Hebrews 13:23].**

2 Timothy 1:12 [NIV] *“That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.”*

The phrase “*guard what I have entrusted to you*” could mean:

- 1) Paul knew that God would guard those who were converted through his preaching;
- 2) Paul trusted God to guard his own human spirit, [**Job 32:8; Proverbs 20:27; 1 Corinthians 2:11**] until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ;
- 3) Paul was confident that, though he was in prison facing death, that God would carry on the gospel ministry through others such as Timothy. Paul may have expressed this to encourage Timothy, who was undoubtedly discouraged by the problems he faced in Ephesus, and the fear of persecution, even prison.

2 Timothy 1:13-14 [NIV] *“What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you, guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.”*

Timothy was in a time of transition, he had been Paul’s helper for many years, but now he is his own leader of a church in a difficult environment. Although his responsibilities were changing, Timothy was **not** without help, from the experiences he had working with Paul and the guidance of the Holy Spirit that was active within his life.

2 Timothy 1:15-18 [NIV] *“You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. On the contrary, when he was in*

Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.”

Nothing more is known about Phygelus and Hermogenes who evidently opposed Paul’s ministry, but these men serve as a warning that even leaders in the church fellowship can fall away.

Onesiphorus is mentioned as a positive example of support in contrast to the other two men.

“*The province of Asia*” refers to the Roman part of Asia to the western part of Asia Minor, where the capital city was Ephesus.

When Paul was imprisoned his friends left him, most likely out of personal fear of themselves also being imprisoned.

There can be no doubt that Paul was imprisoned as a dangerous troublemaker and disturber of public peace, a political charge, [Acts 16:16-22 is an example of Paul’s preaching and ministry causing a public disturbance].

To be a friend of such a man as Paul could be dangerous, yet Onesiphorus risked such danger to visit Paul, a political criminal in prison.

We all have to ask the question ‘how would we react in similar situations? Would we be a true disciple of God’s chosen servant or would we be a traitor?’

2 Timothy 2:1-2 [NIV] *“You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”*

How can someone be “strong in grace”?

Grace means receiving undeserved favour, just as we are saved from eternal death by faith in the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made on the cross. Nothing we can ever do can earn such a sacrifice, [Ephesians 2:8-9].

We should then live a new life in Him strengthened by His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, [Romans 8:9]. This means living by grace, [Colossians 2:6] **trusting completely in Jesus Christ and His power, not trying to live for Jesus Christ in our strength alone.**

John 15:4-5 [NIV] *“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; **apart from me you can do nothing.**”*

Unless Jesus Christ is empowering us we will never produce any spiritual fruit, [Galatians 5:22-25].

Such a life will allow us to teach others by personal example that it is far more effective than just words.

This is how we are “strong in grace.”