

FIRST TIMOTHY

CHAPTER ONE

This letter is from Paul, appointed to be an apostle by the command of God our Savior, Christ Jesus, who, through the good news of the grace of God, has filled our lives with wonderful hope.

2 I am writing to Timothy — my “son” in the faith, because it was I who led you to Lord for salvation, making me your spiritual “father”.

May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you grace, mercy, and peace.

3 As you recall, when I left for Macedonia, I urged you to stay there with the Christians in Ephesus and stop those who are fellowshiping with you from teaching and doing things contrary to the vision and purposes I passed on to you. 4 Don't let the group have its precious time wasted by those who delight in endless discussion about things that don't really matter — like speculations about all kinds of meaningless ‘spiritual’ questions, and, even, efforts to trace their genealogies back to Old Testament Bible characters! These things are a waste of time, and only lead to counter-productive arguments, instead of building believers up in their faith in God.

5 The primary purpose of spending time together in our home group meetings is to help all the members to be filled with love — for God, for each other, and for the lost

around them — the kind of love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith.

6 But some members of your group have totally failed to grasp this fundamental purpose. Instead of working to build up the Body of Christ, they ruin every get-together with their endless, meaningless discussions about trivia.

7 They love to be in the spotlight, having everyone look up to them as being great Bible teachers. They especially like to show how much they know about “do’s and don’ts”. But the fact is that they don’t know what they are talking about, even though they speak with such assertiveness and self-assurance.

8 It can be helpful to review Biblical commands and principles, when appropriate.

9 But people who are doing what is right do not need to keep hearing about the law. The law is for people who are lawless and rebellious against God, who are ungodly and sinful, who are not interested in spiritual things and take pleasure in mocking what is holy, who murder their father or mother or others, 10 who are sexually immoral, or who practice homosexuality, or are engaged in human trafficking, liars, promise breakers, or who do anything else that contradicts the wholesome teaching 11 that springs from the glorious Good News entrusted to me by our blessed God.

12 I am so thankful to Christ Jesus our Lord for enabling me to do his work. He considered me trustworthy for this great task and appointed me to serve him — 13 even though I used to blaspheme His name! In my former arrogance, I had his followers put to death! But God had mercy on me because I did it in ignorance and was not a

Christian. 14 Oh, how generous and gracious our Lord was to save me, and then to fill me with the faith and love that accompany this new life in Christ!

15 It is a wonderful fact, and something I wish everyone would know and understand, that “the whole reason Jesus came to this earth was to save sinners”— I, myself, being the worst of them all. 16 But God had mercy on me so that Jesus could use me as a prime example of his extraordinary patience toward even the worst sinners, so that others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life.

17 I give all honor and glory to God for this, forever and ever! He is the eternal King, the unseen one who never dies; he alone is God! Amen.

18 Timothy, my “son”, this letter is my instructions for you as the spiritual leader you were ordained to be. May it help you be a good soldier in the Lord’s battles.

19 Be sure to hold fast to your faith, and keep your conscience clear from all sin. For some professing Christians have let go of their faith, and as a result, their walk with Christ and their value to the Body has been lost. 20 Hymenaeus and Alexander are two examples. I expelled them from the fellowship and spiritual protection of the local home church and handed them back over to the enemy, satan, so they might learn not to treat their relationship to Christ and to His Body so lightly.

FIRST TIMOTHY 2

The most important thing any of us can do is pray! And the most important thing we can pray about is people! For only God can save their souls, meet their needs, and come to their rescue. And, when we pray, let us pray in faith - thanking God for all He has done, is doing, and will do in answering our prayers.

2 We especially need to pray for the rulers of our countries, and for all government officials, to be able to maintain godly, reverent lives in a quiet and peaceful setting. 3 Sincerely praying for others is what God wants us to do, 4 since He desires everyone to be saved and to understand the truth 5 that there is only one God, and there is only one Intermediary who can reconcile sinful mankind to God: Jesus Christ - the One who became a man so He could pay for man's sin. 6 He gave his life to purchase salvation for every person who believes in Him.

Christ's death on the cross was the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose, at the exact time God appointed. I was hand-picked by God [and that's the honest truth] to proclaim this amazing message as a faithful and truthful missionary to gentiles throughout the world.

8 So, in all the house churches, let our men be characterized by their holiness and their intercessory praying for others; not by their anger and arguing.

9 And let our women be characterized by their modestly and good sense; not by the way they fix their hair or by their expensive clothes and accessories. 10 For women who claim to be devoted to God should focus more on making themselves attractive to Him by the beautiful things they do, rather than focusing on making

themselves attractive to everybody else by how beautiful they look.

11 Women should take the back seat to men in our House Churches. 12 I do not allow women to teach men or have authority over the men. The men should take the lead, and the women should quietly let them do so. 13 God set this precedent by creating Adam before Eve. 14 And had Eve submitted to Adam as God intended, she wouldn't have been so easily deceived by Satan, and sin would not so easily have come into the world. 15 Even though women don't take the leadership role in our House Churches, they fulfill a very important role in bearing children and in modeling to them a life of faith, love, holiness and modesty.

FIRST TIMOTHY 3

The saying is true that, "It is an honor to be a House Church leader." 2 A House Church leader must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be married, and faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be capable of teaching others God's truths. 3 He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not be materialistic. 4 He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. 5 For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of *God's* 'family'?

6 A church leader must not be a recent convert to the faith, because this might cause him to become proud, and the devil would use his pride to cause him to fall. 7 It is also important that the people of the community have respect for him so that he will not be discredited by them - another of the devil's trap.

8 In the same way, apprentices to the leaders and any other officers in the church must be well respected and have integrity. They must not be heavy drinkers or dishonest with money. 9 They must have a clear understanding of the gospel of the grace of God, and their lives must exemplify the message. 10 Before they are appointed to any church office, let them be watched closely. If their lives pass the test, then let them hold office.

11 And just as is true for the church leaders, the wives of other church officers must be well-respected and must be able to keep confidences - not talk about others behind their backs. They must be examples of self-control and faithfulness in everything they do.

12 Any church officer must be faithful to his wife, and must manage his children and household well. 13 Those who do well as church officers will be rewarded with respect from others and their authority in Christ will expand.

14 I am writing these things to you now - even though I hope to be with you soon - 15 so that if I am delayed, you will know the kind of leaders that are needed in the household of God. We are talking about *God's Church*, which is the buttress and foundation of the truth.

16 The truth we proclaim is undeniably amazing:

- God came down to this earth as a man: Jesus Christ!
- His deity was backed up with miracles by the Holy Spirit!
- His birth and resurrection were witnessed and proclaimed by angels!
- The good news of salvation by faith in Him was preached to the gentiles!
- People from all over the world believed in Him!
- They saw Him ascend back to heaven!

FIRST TIMOTHY 4

Now the Holy Spirit tells us explicitly that just before the end of this Age of Grace some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons. 2 These people are deceptive hypocrites, and their consciences are dead.

3 They will say it is wrong to be married and wrong to eat certain foods. But God created those foods to be eaten with thanks by faithful people who know the truth.

4 Since everything God created is good, we should not reject any of it but receive it with thanks. 5 For we know it is made acceptable by the word of God and prayer.

6 If you explain these things to the brothers and sisters, Timothy, you will be a worthy servant of Christ Jesus, one who is nourished by the message of faith and the good teaching you have followed.

7 Do not waste your time and energy arguing over nonsense and old wives' tales. Instead, exercise yourself to be strong in the Lord. 8 "It is good to be physically fit, but it's much more important to be spiritually fit, for it will benefit you not only in this life but also and in the life to come." 9 This is a fact, and everyone should take it to heart. 10 It is the reason we work-out so hard in being ministers of the Good News, and continue to push uphill against all kinds of opposition; for our focus is on eternity; on spending it with the only true God, who died to give eternal life in Heaven to all people - particularly those who believe.

11 Teach these things and insist that everyone learn them. 12 Don't give anyone cause to think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. 13 Until I get there, focus on reading the Scriptures to the church - finding encouragement and alignment with God in them.

14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift you received through the prophecy spoken over you when the elders of the church laid their hands on you. 15 Give your complete attention to these matters. Throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone will see your progress. 16 Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right and God will bless you and those who hear you.

FIRST TIMOTHY 5

Never speak impolitely to an older man, but entreat him respectfully as you would your own father. Talk to younger men as you would to your own brothers. 2 Treat older women as you would your mother, and treat younger women with all purity, as you would your own sisters.

3 Take care of any widow who has no one else to care for her. 4 But if she has children or grandchildren, their first responsibility is to show godliness at home and repay their parents by taking care of them. This is something that pleases God.

5 Now a true widow, a woman who is truly alone in this world, has placed her hope in God. She prays night and day, asking God for his help. 6 But the widow who lives only for herself is spiritually dead even though she's alive. 7 Give these instructions to the church so that no one will be open to criticism.

8 But those who won't care for their relatives, especially those in their own household, have denied the true faith - authentic Christianity. Such people are behaving worse than unbelievers!

9 A widow who is put on the list for support must be a woman who is at least sixty years old and was faithful to her husband. 10 She must be well respected by everyone because of the good she has done. Has she brought up her children well? Has she been kind to strangers and served other believers humbly? Has she helped those

who are in trouble? Has she always been ready to do good?

11 The younger widows should not be on the list for support from the church, because their physical desires will overpower their devotion to Christ and they will want to remarry. 12 Then they would be guilty of setting aside their earlier commitment to serve Christ and the Body.

13 And if all their material needs are met by The Church, they will learn to be lazy and will spend their time gossiping from house to house, meddling in other people's business and talking about things they shouldn't. 14 So I advise these younger widows to marry again, have children, and take care of their own homes. Then the enemy will not be able to say anything against them. 15 For I am afraid that some of them have already gone astray and now run with the devil's crowd.

16 If a woman who is a believer has relatives who are widows, she must take care of them and not put the responsibility on the church. Then the church can care for the widows who truly have no one else to care for them.

17 Elders who serve the Body well should be respected and paid well, especially those who work hard at studying and teaching God's Word. 18 For the Scripture says, "You must not muzzle an ox to keep it from eating as it treads out the grain." And in another place, "Those who work deserve their pay!"

19 Do not listen to an accusation against an elder unless it is confirmed by two or three witnesses. 20 Elders who are guilty of sin should be reprimanded in front of the

whole group of believers; this will serve as a strong warning to others.

21 I solemnly command you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus and the highest angels to obey these instructions without taking sides or showing favoritism to anyone.

22 Never be in a hurry about appointing a church leader. Do not do wrong things just because others are doing them. No matter what anybody else does, keep yourself pure.

23 Don't drink only water. A little wine will help your digestion and keep you from feeling poorly so often.

24 Remember, the sins of some people are obvious, leading them to certain judgment. But there are others whose sins will not be revealed until later. 25 In the same way, the good deeds of some people are obvious. And the good deeds done in secret will someday come to light.

FIRST TIMOTHY 6

Employees need to show full respect for their employers so they will not bring shame on the name of God and Christianity. 2 If the employers are Christians, that is no excuse for being disrespectful to them. Their Christian employees should work all the harder knowing that their efforts are benefitting other believers who are dear to them.

Teach these things, Timothy, and encourage everyone to obey them. 3 Some people may contradict our teaching, but these are the wholesome teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. These teachings promote a godly life. 4 Anyone who teaches something different is arrogant and lacks understanding. Such a person has an unhealthy desire to quibble over the meaning of words. This stirs up arguments ending in jealousy, division, slander, and evil suspicions. 5 Such people always cause trouble. Their minds are corrupt, and they have turned their backs on the truth. To them, gain is godliness! Withdraw from such people.

6 The truth is that godliness and being content with what we have is great gain. 7 After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it. 8 So if we have enough food and clothing to get by with, let us be content.

9 But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and have brought many serious sorrows upon themselves.

11 But you, Timothy, are a man of God; so run from all these evil things. Pursue righteousness and a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith - [the good fight of *BELIEVING*; keeping your faith in God, and doing what you know is right, as well as fighting *for* the true faith].
Hold tightly to the eternal life in Christ to which God has

called you, which you have declared so well before many witnesses. 13 And I charge you before God, who gave you this life, and before Christ Jesus, who set such a good example when on trial before Pontius Pilate, 14 that you obey this command without wavering. Then no one can find fault with you from now until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.

15 For, when the time is right, Christ will be revealed from heaven by the blessed and only almighty God, the King of all kings and Lord of all lords. 16 He alone has immortality, and he lives in light so brilliant that no human can approach him. No human eye has ever seen him, nor ever will. All honor and power to him forever! Amen.

17 Teach those among you who are wealthy not to act superior and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. 18 Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. 19 By doing this they will be creating a good foundation for themselves for the difficult times to come, and they will be living authentic Christianity.

20 Timothy, safeguard the group and the position God has entrusted to you. Avoid godless, foolish discussions with those who oppose you with their so-called knowledge. 21 Some people have wandered from the faith by following such foolishness.

May God's grace be with you all.

