

1 Timothy 1:1-11

January 15, 2020

1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus, written from prison toward the end of Paul's life, are commonly called the "Pastoral Epistles." Many Christians would naturally read 1 Timothy as advice and instructions for a young pastor taking up his first post after ordination.

But (as we will later discuss) there is no reason to think that Timothy holds such a position, or that anyone did at the time. The epistles to the Thessalonians make no mention of an individual in charge. Other epistles assume there are multiple elders or overseers guiding the local assembly. We must view Timothy as a special apostolic representative, appointed by Paul at a critical time in the history of the young church.

We know from Ephesians 4:11 that a pastor was one with a particular spiritual gift. But Timothy did bear another title that can apply to all of us: "You, man of God" in 1 Tim. 6:11 (also including women of God in this context). Any believer and the assembly to which they belong can profit from Paul's detailed teaching on "how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

Concepts in this portion

- False teachers
- Love, faith, purity, and conscience
- Use and misuse of the law

Fill in the blanks:

1. Paul calls Timothy his _____.
2. Paul tells Timothy to keep people's minds off of _____.
(Also see 4:1-3, 7; 2 Tim. 2:23, 4:4)
3. The aim of telling people to stay away from these teachings is _____.
4. The law is for _____.
5. Paul has been entrusted with _____.

For study and discussion:

6. Why might Paul address this letter to Timothy alone, instead of the entire assembly as he did with the Thessalonians?

Notes

1:2 For some of the history between Paul and Timothy, see Acts 16:1-3, 17:14-15, 1 Cor. 4:17, 16:10. Timothy is cited as a co-author of 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Thessalonians, and Philemon.

1:3 The assembly at Ephesus has a positive portrayal in the book of Acts and the epistle to the Ephesians. Revelation 2:1-7 has mostly praise apart from the warning of having fallen from its first love. This epistle would have been written between Acts and Revelation. It would appear that Timothy's charge to avoid false teachers had an effect, at least in that the later Ephesians hated the practices of the Nicolaitans.

1:3 Macedonia was (and is) north of Greece and included the cities of Philippi and Thessalonica.

1:5 Verse 19 also connects faith with a good conscience. Mr Kelly observes, "Rarely, if ever does the heterodox [not orthodox] soul maintain a good conscience; and as there cannot be a good conscience without faith, so also on the other hand, *where the conscience becomes practically bad, the faith is lowered.*"

1:8 See Gal. 5:22-23.

1:9-10 Similar lists of sins appear in 1 Cor. 6:9-10, Gal. 5:19-21, Eph. 5:3-6, and Rev. 22:12-16. We know that the blood of Jesus covers all sins but it is instructive to see what acts are particularly unsuitable to Christians.

7. Can you think of real life examples of the unprofitable topics of verse 4? Is there a difference between false teaching and unprofitable teaching?
8. Paul says that love proceeds out of a pure heart, good conscience, and sincere faith. How does lack of any of these (or the practice of bad teaching) impair the love that we feel for each other?
9. Verse 8 says the law is good, but what is it good for as far as Christians are concerned?
10. The word “charge” appears seven times in this epistle. What are the circumstances that require Paul to make earnest and urgent appeals to his younger brother? Is the situation similar for us?