



I & II Timothy

A COMMENTARY OUTLINE

INSTRUCTIONS
FOR THE CHURCH

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Outline

or “A Bird’s Eye View of I & II Timothy”

I TIMOTHY

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Introduction

or “Preview of I Timothy”

I Timothy 1:1-2

The last two chapters of Acts tell of Paul’s arrival and imprisonment in Rome and bring us approximately to the year A.D. 62. Between this time and his death five or six years later, we have three New Testament books written: I and II Timothy and Titus. They share a common characteristic; each is written to an individual man rather than to churches. Both Titus and Timothy had a unique position in the early church in that they were authorized representatives of the apostle Paul. Titus represented Paul in the church on the island of Crete and Timothy in the church in the city of Ephesus. The dates of the letters would be A.D. 62-64 for I Timothy and Titus and about A.D. 67 for II Timothy.

It is to Timothy that Paul finally commits his ministry upon his death. I Timothy 4:12-14 and II Timothy 1:6 are indications that Timothy had some potential problems in conducting his ministry. He apparently had a tendency to neglect the exercise of his gift at times and allowed his youthfulness to be misused. From the tone of certain of Paul’s exhortations directed to him, Timothy seemed to need an occasional push.

The leading feature of I and II Timothy is their emphasis on the place of correct doctrine. I Timothy 1:3 instructs Timothy to “instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines.” In I Timothy 1:10 all improper conduct is seen as “contrary to sound teaching.” The word translated *sound* means *healthy* or *health producing*. I Timothy 4:13, 16 exhort Timothy to dedicate himself to *teaching* (doctrine). I Timothy 6:1 exhorts slaves to conduct themselves in such a way that *our doctrine may not be spoken against*. I Timothy 6:3-4 says one who advocates *a different doctrine is conceited and understands nothing*. Doctrine is also referred to as *the faith*, a reference to the entire body of Christian truth. Reference to *the faith* is made in I Timothy 1:19; 3:9, 13; 4:1, 6; 6:10, 12, and 21.

THE WRITER 1:1

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope...”

Though Paul had a very personal relationship to Timothy, this is set aside here; and his apostolic authority is stressed, giving the letter an official tone. I Timothy contains instructions for Christ's servants for all time. Paul had seen Jesus Christ, was commanded by Jesus Christ, and thus, had the authority of Jesus Christ. The way Paul expresses the divine relationship to his apostleship is unusual. In other places he speaks of being called (Romans 1:1), or of being commissioned by the will of God (I Corinthians 1:1); but here he relates it to divine commandment. He is an apostle by divine imperative. Paul opens with a reminder of his apostolic office because this is more than a personal letter; it is full of instruction for all future workers in the cause of Christ. That Paul was an apostle by commandment not only shows the importance of his writings, but also indicates their inspiration.

By the interchange of terms referring to God and Christ, Paul clearly implies that Christ is deity. When on earth, He was God in human flesh. God is also called Savior in Luke 1:47; I Timothy 2:3, 4:10; Titus 1:3, 2:10, 3:4; and Jude 25. When the expression *Christ Jesus* is used, the emphasis is on His Messiahship, not His humanity. When *Jesus Christ* is used, the emphasis is on His humanity. *Jesus Christ* is used only three or four times in this letter. All that the believer hopes for is so inseparably linked to Christ that our relationship to Him also involves our relationship to hope.

THE RECIPIENT 1:2A

“...to Timothy my true child in the faith...”

His name expresses parental hopes, meaning *to honor God*. Timothy is described in terms of his relationship to Paul by asserting that he is his *child*. Timothy is described in terms of his relationship to God by asserting that he is *true*, which means *legitimate and genuine*. This makes him a worthy minister of the word of God in Ephesus. The definite article with the noun *faith* makes it refer to the faith of the gospel as a body of truth. I Corinthians 4:17 presents a similar description of Timothy.

THE GREETING 1:2B

“Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”

To the usual *grace and peace*, Paul adds *mercy*. This points to the difficult task that Timothy faces in maintaining sound doctrine. It

was apparently even a life-threatening task, for according to Eusebius, when Timothy denounced immorality in worship of Diana, he was beaten to death by a mob. *Grace* is the unmerited response of God to man's need. *Peace* is that which one experiences when he responds to grace with faith. Once again, the uniting of God and Christ as the source of blessing suggests the deity of Christ.

NOTES

The Importance of Doctrine

or “Fighting the Good Fight”

I Timothy 1:3-20

THE PERSONAL CHARGE 1:3-11

THE NATURE OF THE CHARGE 1:3-4

“As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, ⁴nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith.”

Timothy’s Geographical Duty 1:3a

After Paul’s Roman imprisonment, harmful teachings began to appear in Ephesus. While Paul felt it necessary to go into Macedonia, he urges Timothy to remain at Ephesus to put an end to the doctrinal error. The verb *urged* could well point to Timothy’s preference to accompany Paul to Macedonia. At his departure, however, Paul had urged him to stay on at Ephesus; and now with this letter, he is urging him to continue to stay on at Ephesus. This reminds us that the maintaining of sound doctrine is more important than Timothy’s desire to accompany Paul.

Timothy’s Doctrinal Duty 1:3b-4

The Will of God Doctrinally Requires Right Teaching 1:3b

The word *instruct* in verse 3 is the verb form of the same word translated *command* in verse 18. In verse 18 it is used to describe the instructions (*command*) that Paul is sending to Timothy in this letter. Timothy, in turn, is to take this same instruction received from Paul and pass it on, intact, to those teaching error in Ephesus. This is true expository preaching—the passing on of the word of God exactly as it appears in the divine revelation of the Scriptures. The word *instruct* indicates a command with the authority and urgency of a military order.

The charge is two-fold. First, they are not to teach *strange doctrine*, which shows there was a body of fixed teaching that existed in the church to which nothing was to be added. Strange doctrine assumes the presence of correct doctrine from which it varies. Timothy is clearly charged with the responsibility of maintaining purity of doctrine, and he is to do so by the exercise of authority. Timothy is not told to discuss their error with those teaching error; he is told to take decisive and authoritative action to see that error is banished. Earlier a strange gospel had been taught in the Galatian churches, and Paul rebuked it in the sharpest terms (Galatians 1:6-8). The case of error in Ephesus consisted of extraneous or added teaching which will be defined by verse 4.

Those teaching error in Ephesus were apparently of two types. First, there were those who were misusing God's word through incorrect interpretation and application of it (1:6-8). These are characterized as ignorant and dogmatic. Second, there were those who had openly rejected God's truth (1:19-20). These are characterized as blasphemers.

The Will of God Doctrinally Requires Right Listening 1:4

What were the *myths and endless genealogies* to which some were giving attention? They most likely refer to Jewish legends and genealogical speculations. Titus 1:14 refers to *Jewish myths*, and Titus 3:9 speaks of "foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law..." which is a Jewish context. The word translated *pay attention to* has a basic meaning of *turning one's mind to something*. The believer is responsible to control that which occupies his mind. He is to deliberately turn his mind away from additions and fanciful speculations concerning the word of God.

Turning away from false doctrines has its reasons: False doctrine confuses and destroys; sound doctrine edifies. The noun translated *provision* is *oikonomia*, which refers to *the management of a household*, and then advances the meaning to *an arrangement, an order, a plan*. God's plan provides the word of God whereby the believer may grow and develop through a faith response to truth; false doctrine hinders this process. True doctrine inspires confidence; false doctrine inspires confusion.

THE PURPOSE OF THE CHARGE 1:5-11

The Purpose of Sound Doctrine Relative to Love 1:5

"But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."

The Presence of Love 1:5a

The word *instruction* in this verse ties directly to the word *instruct* in verse 3, both coming from the same root word. The instruction was to be directed toward those who were teaching the false doc-

trine, and the ultimate aim of this was love. False doctrine destroys and contradicts true Christian love. It is important to note that love is not achieved by minimizing doctrine; it is achieved by emphasizing accurate doctrine.

The Source of Love 1:5b

The preposition *from* is the Greek word *ek*, which means *out of as a source*. Each one of the three nouns is preceded by a modifier that indicates moral quality. The believer's *heart*, *conscience*, and *faith* gain their moral qualities through the influence of sound doctrine. First, the heart is said to be *pure*. Ephesians 5:26 speaks of the church as cleansed by the *washing of water with the word*. Second, the conscience is said to be *good*. A good conscience is one that relates the right standards, once again referring to the effect of sound doctrine. Third, the faith is said to be *sincere*. The word *sincere* is a negative word in Greek meaning *not hypocritical*. It is not hypocritical because it is founded in reality and truth, not speculation and imagination.

The Purpose of Sound Doctrine Relative to the Law 1:6-11

The Ignorant Teachers of the Law 1:6-7

"For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion,⁷ wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions."

It is important to note that the prelude to *fruitless discussion* was departure from sound doctrine. The teachers of error strayed before they turned aside. When true doctrine is neglected, error will soon be embraced. Man cannot live in a doctrinal vacuum; the alternative is truth or error, not truth or neutrality. The participle translated *straying* is literally *to miss the mark* and is followed by the verb *ektrepo*, which is a medical term meaning *to twist out of joint, to dislocate*.

Verse 7 further characterizes the parties of which Paul is speaking. First, they had ambition without knowledge. *Desire* to teach is not the same as *qualification* to teach. Second, they did not understand the true nature of the Law which they purported to teach. Since their teaching was connected to the Law, they were legalists in some sense of the word. But in what sense were they legalists? Certainly not in the same way as those who had disturbed the Galatian churches. These in Ephesus were apparently not trying to impose Jewish ritual or Old Testament observances on the church. They are charged, rather, with ignorance of the real significance and meaning of the Law. Third, though ignorant, they still spoke dogmatically. The verb *make confident assertions* goes as far as to mean *to insist on something*. Ignorance and silence often shy away from one another, as is the case here.

The Proper Use of the Law 1:8-11

“But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ⁹realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers ¹⁰and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, ¹¹according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.”

The Law has been commonly misused in several ways. First, the Law is misused when one treats it as a means of obtaining salvation (Romans 3:20, Acts 13:39, Galatians 3:21). Second, it is misused when one thinks it can sanctify (Galatians 4:9). Third, it is misused when it is buried in tradition as the Pharisees did (Matthew 15:3, 6). Fourth, it is misused when applied to the wrong people (Romans 6:14 and here in I Timothy 1).

When Paul says the Law is *not made for the righteous man*, what does he mean? Does he mean *the righteous* in the broad sense of moral people, or does he mean *the righteous* in the narrow sense of saved people—Christians? It seems best to say he is referring to saved people since the context of the false teaching is within the church of Ephesus.

The Law is *good* in the sense of its moral quality, revealing, as it does, the righteousness of God. It is also good in the sense that it was designed to show man the utter impossibility of man producing a righteousness that could merit salvation. The *glorious gospel of the blessed God* (verse 11) had an important place for the Law in its message. The Law is an effective means of demonstrating man’s helpless hopelessness apart from God’s grace seen in Jesus Christ.

The danger of the Law is in its misapplication. It is not for the man who has been made righteous in Christ; it is for the man who needs to be instructed in moral absolutes, who needs to be rebuked in such a way that he will turn to Christ for salvation. Paul catalogues those whom the Law can effectively serve. The *lawless and rebellious* refers to those who have ignored the Law. The *ungodly and sinners* points to those who have disregarded the will of God. The *unholy and profane* are those who have zeal only for the secular, and thus, have no place for the spiritual. Those who kill, kidnap, lie, and perjure are those whose relationship to other men is perverted in the direction of their own self-interest. The remaining are those who engage in sexual perversions of various types. The nature of these sins suggests that Paul had the Ten Commandments in mind as he wrote.

It is instructive to note that all of these sins are viewed as *contrary to sound teaching*. True doctrine demands a certain conduct. The two are inseparable; to sin is to sin against doctrine—all the more reason to maintain doctrinal purity.

THE PERSONAL TESTIMONY 1:12-17

AN EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE 1:12-14

The Tone of the Testimony

“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord...”

The opening two words of this paragraph show the attitude with which Paul speaks these words. First, the words *I thank* come first in the paragraph, making them emphatic. Second, *I* is the Greek verb *echo*, which means *I have*. The tense is present, meaning *I continually have*. The noun *thank* is the object of the verb and means *gratitude*. The translation of the two words would be “I have continual gratitude.” The paragraph then follows with various items for which Paul is continually grateful.

The Focus of the Testimony

Gratitude for Christ’s Strength 1:12a

“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me...”

Christ’s power was the support behind all that Paul did. First, it enabled him to see his weakness as his asset (II Corinthians 12:9). Second, it enabled him to adjust to all circumstances properly (Philippians 4:13). Third, it enabled him to stand firm when no one else stood with him (II Timothy 4:17). Fourth, it enabled him to perform his ministry in an effective way (I Timothy 1:12). It was not Paul’s natural ability, but Christ’s power, that made him the man that he was.

Gratitude for Christ’s Confidence 1:12b

“...because He considered me faithful...”

The verb *considered* is a word that refers to an appraisal based on the objective consideration of facts. This is not a prideful boast on Paul’s part; it is rather a statement of amazement that one as unworthy as he should be chosen. Trustworthiness is a prime requisite for a servant of Christ (I Corinthians 4:2, II Timothy 2:1-2).

Gratitude for Christ’s Appointment 1:12c

“...putting me into service...”

Paul is looking at his appointment in a broad sense, not in the narrow sense of his apostleship (though he doubtless has this in mind). The word *service* is very wide in scope and inclusive in coverage.

Gratitude for Christ's Mercy 1:13

"...even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. And yet I was shown mercy, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief..."

Paul begins by showing the things that make God's appointment so amazing and His mercy so unmerited. Paul, as a former *blasphemer*, shows the previous relationship he sustained to Jesus. According to Acts 26: 11, Paul not only blasphemed Jesus himself but attempted to get others to do so also. Paul, the *persecutor*, is a reference to the way he treated the followers of Christ. The word means *to pursue* and then *to hunt and chase down*. Paul had also been a *violent aggressor*, which is a reference to his insolent blasphemy of Christ and persecution of believers.

The words *and yet* introduce joyful contrast. They translate but one word in Greek, the strong adversative underscoring great contrast. The word *because* introduces the condition in which Paul acted in time past. He is not offering an excuse for his past; he is giving an explanation of his past. We could translate "because being ignorant, I acted in unbelief." This is not the reason why God extended His mercy; it is the reason why Paul needed the mercy of God.

Gratitude for Christ's Grace 1:14

"...and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus."

This verse opens with a verb that is translated *was more than abundant*. It is a compound word made up of a verb that means *to abound*, prefixed by a preposition that means *over*; and thus, we have "super-abound." This is grace out of its banks and overflowing. Paul attributed all that he was to the grace of God saying, "But by the grace of God I am what I am..." (I Corinthians 15:10). The reference to *faith and love* probably points back to the confidence spoken of in verse 12.

AN EXPRESSION OF ASSURANCE 1:15

"It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all."

By the end of Paul's life, the church had developed certain brief, to the point, doctrinal statements. There are five such statements in the pastoral epistles. The first is here in I Timothy 1:15, followed by the same in 3:1, 4:8-9, II Timothy 2:11-13, and Titus 3:5-8.

In this verse Paul expresses three fundamental ideas about the gospel. First, the dependability of the gospel is expressed by the word *trustworthy*. Second, the reception of the gospel is due to its inherent nature. The word *acceptance* in its verb form means *to receive something offered to one from the outside*. By usage it means *to*

receive into the mind with assent. The adjective *full* is the Greek word meaning *all*. It points to the totality of the message, nothing need be filtered out, and it shows the absence of doubt as to its truthfulness. Third, the verse tells about the content of the gospel centering in the person and work of Christ in relation to saving men.

AN EXPRESSION OF MISSION 1:16

“And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.”

Paul heads two lists. He is foremost as a sinner (1:15), and he is the number one trophy of God’s grace. Verse 16 begins with five words that defy all human viewpoint thinking in regard to salvation. Paul is the foremost sinner; *and yet for this reason*, God extended salvation to him. As a result, God gets all the credit; and this is why we have the doxology of verse 17. The treatment afforded Paul by the Lord is the prime example of “perfect patience.” This puts Paul in the position of an example, a model, a prototype, or standard. It demonstrates that one’s life may have an impact long after one dies.

AN EXPRESSION OF PRAISE 1:17

“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”

This is one of several Pauline doxologies such as those found in Romans 11:36, 16:27; Galatians 1:5; Ephesians 3:20-21; Philippians 4:20; I Timothy 6:15-16.

The eternity of God means that He is in no way limited by time. This is taught in passages stating that God has no ending (Psalm 9:7, 102:27) and those stating that He does not die (I Timothy 6:16 *immortality*). The eternal nature of God is sometimes expressed in terms of an extreme number of days or years (Daniel 7:9, II Peter 3:8, Psalm 102:27).

THE PERSONAL REAFFIRMATION 1:18-20

TIMOTHY’S FIGHT 1:18-19A

“This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may fight the good fight, ¹⁹keeping faith and a good conscience...”

The word *command* here in verse 18, the word *instruction* in verse 5, and the word *instruct* in verse 3 are all derived from the same Greek word; and each one refers to Paul’s instructions to Timothy to stop the false teachers in Ephesus. The prophecies mentioned concerning Timothy may refer to those made concerning him along

with the charge he received from the church at Lystra at the time of his ordination (Acts 16:2; I Timothy 4:14, 6:12; II Timothy 1:6). Paul, as he writes, is prophesying. The instructions given in this letter to Timothy are also part of his weaponry to be used in the *good fight*.

OTHER'S SHIPWRECK 1:19B-20

"...which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. ²⁰ Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme."

It is likely that Hymenaeus is the same man as is mentioned in II Timothy 2:17. Delivery to Satan probably refers to excommunication from the church. See *Outline and Commentary of I Corinthians* (I Cor. 5:5a) for a study of the meaning of delivery to Satan. As is always the case, discipline is meant to be remedial and bring the offender back to a proper relationship to the Lord.

rder in the Church

or “Worship and Workers”

I Timothy 2:1-3:16

THE WORSHIP OF THE LOCAL ASSEMBLY 2:1-15

THE PLACE OF PRAYER IN THE CHURCH 2:1-8

The Primacy of Prayer 2:1

“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made...”

Paul opens the chapter with the words *first of all*. What does this mean? It does not mean that he is beginning a list to be followed with a second and third, as can be observed by reading the paragraph. The word *first* refers to importance and primacy. Chapter 1 stresses the priority of doctrine; chapter 2 stresses the priority of prayer. Prayer is not to be treated as an emergency measure, but as a number one priority. The overall thrust of chapter 2 pertains to worship; and in considering worship, prayer comes first.

There are four synonyms for prayer in verse 1. The word *entreaties* is a prayer made with emphasis on personal needs. The word *prayers* is used of making requests of God with emphasis on reverence and worship. The verb form of the noun *petitions* literally means *to fall in with*. It carries the idea of intimacy and involvement in the cause of another. *Thanksgivings* refers to the appreciation of the privilege we have in approaching God's throne. This is the permanent part of prayer. The petition ceases when the answer comes, but thanks only begins when the answer comes. These four words form a circle: They begin by asking something *from* God and end by offering something *to* God.

The Subjects of Prayer 2:2a

“...on behalf of all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority...”

The Subjects in General

The reference to prayer for *all men* shows that we can never pray too widely. The reason this is true is found in verse 4 where we are told that God *desires all men to be saved*. Our prayers should be as wide as God’s desire. The word *all* should be taken in the most absolute sense—no one is excluded.

The Subjects in Particular

Kings and those in authority would represent the class of men most likely to be hated. In the *king* class would be Caligula, who believed he was a god and actively sought worshipers and set up an image in the temple at Jerusalem. He was followed by Claudius, who became offended with the Jews and drove them from Rome, among whom were Priscilla and Aquila. Contemporary with the writing of this epistle was Nero, the most cruel of all. He was so hated by the populace that he shifted the blame for his cruel actions to the Christians. History tells us that he illuminated his grounds by the flames of the burning believers. Later on, Domitian initiated a severe persecution that saw John banished to Patmos. It was for these that believers were to pray.

The Purpose of Prayer 2:2b

“...in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”

Here is a primary way in which a believer may effectively participate in politics. Our vote is important, but our prayers are more important because they can bypass the ballot box and enter the throne room of God. Scripture teaches that there are two forces behind every leader: Divine sovereignty (Romans 13:1) and prayers of believers (I Timothy 2:1-2). Usually the authority is oblivious to either, but also powerless over either. Our prayers may have an external effect, expressed by the words *tranquil and quiet*, as well as an internal effect, seen in the words *godliness and dignity*.

The Basis of Prayer 2:3-7

It Is Acceptable to God 2:3

“This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior...”

Though the grammar does not so demand, it is possible to link the words *this is good* to the believer who does the praying and link the word *acceptable to God our Savior*. Prayer is good for the believer because it serves as a constant reminder of whom we depend upon. The word *acceptable* carries the idea of being pleasing. Paul uses this idea as a motivation for conduct in I Timothy 5:4.

It Harmonizes with God's Will 2:4

"...who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

This verse picks up on the words *all men* and ties us back to the same words in verse 1. We pray for *all men* (verse 1) because God desires the salvation of *all men* (verse 4). Prayer is based on sensitivity to the heart of God; our prayers are to echo what He desires. God's desire is not satisfied merely with the salvation of men; God's desire is that all come to knowledge of the truth. God desires the salvation and maturity of all men.

It Honors Christ's Work 2:5-6

"For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time."

The word *for* introduces further reason why we should pray for all men. Three basic truths of Christianity are found here. First, there is only one God. Since this is true, all men must relate to Him or be left in a vacuum. Every man is accountable and responsible to one single God; it is He or nothing! Second, there is only one way to reach Him. There is not one way for slaves and another for kings. If there is only one Savior for all, it follows that we should pray for all. Third, there is redemption for all. Christ Himself is the ransom for sin. The stress is not so much on what He has done, as great as this is, but rather, on who He is—the absolute solution to the problem of sin.

It Recognizes Paul's Position 2:7

"And for this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth."

Paul emphasizes his truthfulness because some had questioned his calling to open the door of faith and salvation to the Gentiles. Paul is God's instrument to teach Gentiles the meaning of Christian faith and saving truth.

The Leaders of Prayer 2:8

"Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension."

Men and women have different functions in the church. In regard to position before God, men and women know absolute equality. On the other hand, the role and mode of operation of each within a local church is different. This verse excludes women from leadership in the realm of prayer. The men who lead in prayer are to lift up *holy hands*, which means *hands unsoiled by sin*. There is to be no *wrath or dissension*, meaning there is to be *unity and harmony and proper mental attitude*.

THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH 2:9-15

The Adornment of the Women 2:9-10

The External Adornment of the Women 2:9

“Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments...”

HER STYLE OF CLOTHING: ORDERLY AND NEAT

This idea is expressed twice in verse 9 by the words *to adorn* and *proper*. They both come from the same Greek root, which is *kosmos* and means *to put in order, to arrange in an orderly way*. Its antonym is the word *chaos*. *Cosmos* (order) is the exact opposite of *chaos* (disorder). Interestingly, our English word “cosmetics” comes from *cosmos*. Cosmetics transform disorder into order (usually).

HER FIT OF CLOTHING: MODEST

Here is a matter to be left to a Christian woman’s judgment. Paul could have been more specific and probably could have given concrete examples of immodest apparel.

HER TASTE IN CLOTHING: MODERATE

The word translated *discreet* means *reasonable, reflecting good judgment and moderation*. Paul refers to some of the extremes of the first century in the last half of this verse. A few words from Juvenal help us see how women of the Roman world viewed their external appearance. “The attendants will vote on the dressing of the hair as if it were a question of reputation or as though life were at stake, so great is the trouble she takes in quest of beauty; with so many tiers does she load, with so many continuous stories does she build high her hair. She is as tall as Andromache in front, and behind she is shorter and you think her another person.” Another writer notes that women would not even touch their heads and sleep came, he says, “with terror”

The Internal Adornment of the Women 2:10

“...but rather by means of good works, as befits women making a claim to godliness.”

Internal beauty forms the criteria for outer dress. External dress should complement, not obscure, inner beauty. Clothing that is so out of style and drab that it draws attention to itself is inappropriate, as is clothing that is extreme in style. Good works are not only beautiful, but enduring. Phoebe is an example (Romans 16:1-2); Mary exhibits inner beauty (Romans 16:6); and Dorcas left a legacy of good works (Acts 9:36-39).

The Decorum of the Women 2:11-15

Her Relationship to Instruction 2:11

“Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness.”

The major role of women in the church is learning, not teaching. The words *entire submissiveness* describe the mental attitude that accompanies the received instruction. Submission is not to be grudgingly given. Notice there is no restriction on her desire to learn truth; it may be fairly said that she is to learn all the truth she can.

Her Relationship to Authority 2:12-15

IN TERMS OF SILENCE 2:12

“But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.”

The tense of the infinitive *to teach* is present, which points to an ongoing activity. One who continually teaches is a teacher, a role not given to women in the local church. In New Testament times the office of teacher was an authoritative position for communicating doctrine to believers. In Acts 13:1 teachers are listed right along with prophets. It seems best to take this prohibition as applicable only within the context of public meeting of the church. Both Priscilla and Aquila were instrumental in instructing Apollos, but we are told they took him aside to do so (Acts 18:26). Paul reminds Timothy of his good legacy in the teaching of his mother and grandmother (II Timothy 1:5). Titus 2:3-4 exhorts the older women to encourage the younger.

IN TERMS OF WEAKNESS 2:13-14

“For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. ¹⁴And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression.”

As always, Paul does not command without giving accompanying reasons. Paul’s prohibition concerning women as teachers is sometimes explained as merely reflective of the position that women held in the culture of the first century, and thus, not applicable today. This explanation is patently false, as shown by these two verses. The reasons for Paul’s prohibition are derived from the book of Genesis, not Roman culture.

The connective *for* introduces Paul’s first reason for not allowing a woman to teach: The exercise of authority by women in the local church violates God’s order of creation. God does nothing arbitrarily; there is always purpose and wisdom in what He does. God created Adam, *then* Eve. The second reason for the prohibition is the woman’s propensity toward doctrinal error. Adam and Eve both fell, but they fell in different ways. Adam sinned with his eyes wide open; he knew exactly what he was doing. We are told that

Eve, however, was *quite deceived*. Eve is not an exceptional case because Paul views her as displaying that which will be characteristic of women to follow. The women of the first century church and today still bear the marks of Eve in this regard.

IN TERMS OF PROMISE 2:15

“But women shall be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self restraint.”

If a woman may not teach, where may she find a field of service? This verse points to the home as her sphere. The bearing and rearing of children is her opportunity. It seems best to take the pronoun *they* as a reference to her children. In the communication of truth to her children, she shall be preserved. She is preserved in the sense that her life is useful for the Lord.

THE WORKERS IN THE LOCAL ASSEMBLY 3:1-16

THE OVERSEER 3: 1-7

His Identity 3:1

“It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.”

Here is the second brief doctrinal statement that developed near the end of the New Testament era. One was introduced in I Timothy 1:15 pertaining to the saving work of Christ. I Timothy 3:1 is the second. The focal point is found in the words *office of overseer*. These three English words translate but one Greek word—*episkopos*. The compound word is *epi*, meaning *over*, and *skopos*, meaning *to see*. Thus, the translation *overseer* is quite literal. It came from secular life and was used, for example, to designate the foreman of a construction crew. Its synonym is *presbuteros*, translated *elder*. As seen by comparing Acts 20:17 and 28 and Titus 1:5-7, they are not two offices, but one. The noun *overseer* views the man from the standpoint of function and authority. The noun *elder* views him as to his age and maturity—*overseer* stresses duty; *elder* stresses maturity.

The word *aspire* means literally *to stretch* and pictures great effort. The verb *desire* involves making something one's ambition.

His Qualifications 3:2-7

“An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,³ nor addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money.⁴ He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity.⁵ (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of

God?); ⁶and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. ⁷And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

He Must Be “Above Reproach”

This is a triple compound word in Greek made up of *epi*, meaning *upon*; and *lambano*, meaning *to take*; and *a*, meaning *not*. He is to be one who *cannot be laid hold upon* in the sense of blame. This must be understood in a relative sense; if not, no one qualifies as an overseer.

He Must Be “the Husband of One Wife”

That this prohibits polygamy is obvious, but this is not what Paul really has in mind for two reasons. First, multiple wives were forbidden to all believers (I Corinthians 7:2). Second, polygamy was forbidden at this time in the Roman Empire, just as it is in our country.

Some take this to mean that an overseer must be married. If this is true, the verses indicate that he also must have children. While both of these things may be desirable, they are hardly mandatory.

The phrase in the Greek New Testament literally reads “a man of one woman.” The absence of the definite article before the noun *man* focuses on the kind of person he is—he is a “one woman kind of man.”

He Must Be “Temperate”

The word means *to be temperate in the use of wine* and is then used in a wider sense of being calm and in control. An impulsive disposition is not desirable.

He Must Be “Prudent”

The word refers to sound and balanced judgment. It is similar to the preceding quality in that it involves self-control or the rule of reason over emotion.

He Must Be “Respectable”

In discussing the adornment of the women, we noted the word *kosmos*, which means *orderly*. The word *respectable* is a similar word that also means *orderly*.

He Must Be “Hospitable”

This is a compound noun made up of *philos*, meaning *friend*, and *xenos*, meaning *stranger*. This was very important in the first century because the Roman persecutions required Christians to look out for one another. It often involved housing traveling Christians for the sake of their protection.

He Must Be “Able to Teach”

Once again, three words translate one. The word is *didaktikon*, from which we get our English word *didactic*. The word does not merely point to willingness to teach or desire to teach, but the actual skill in teaching. The overseer must teach well.

He Must Not Be “Addicted to Wine”

The idea is that he must not linger over the wine to the point that he ends up in a fight; he must not become quarrelsome because of his use of wine.

He Must Not Be “Pugnacious”

This is similar to the preceding but differs in that there is no wine involved. He must not be of a fighting disposition due to wine or due to his innate personality.

He Must Be “Gentle”

This word carries with it the idea of fairness and reasonableness. Approachability is also contained in the word.

He Must Be “Uncontentious”

Stated positively, this word means *peaceable* and refers to one who seeks peaceful solutions; he must not “have a chip on his shoulder.”

He Must Be “Free from the Love of Money”

He must not covet or be obsessed with the obtaining or maintaining of material possessions. This has nothing to do with his possession or lack of possession of money; it has to do with his attitude toward what he has.

He Must Be One Who “Manages His Household Well”

This is the only qualification to which Paul attaches a reason. Simply put, if he cannot manage his family, he cannot manage the church. His family must not only be managed by him; but he must do an exceptional job of it, as the adverb *well* requires. His children must be operating in submission.

He Must Not Be a “New Convert”

The Greek word *neophuton* is found in our English word *neophyte*. Experience in the Christian life is a must for an overseer.

He Must Have a “Good Reputation with Those Outside the Church”

Paul reasons that if the consensus of unbelievers is unfavorable, there must be something amiss in the man’s character.

THE DEACONS 3:8-13

Their Identity

“Deacons likewise...”

The noun *deacons* needs careful attention because it is not a translation of the Greek but a transliteration of the Greek. There are three allied words here. First, there is the verb *diakoneo*, which means *to serve*. Second, there is the word *diakonia*, which means *service*. Third, there is the word *diakonos*, which means *servant*. These are fairly routine words in the New Testament, occurring just over one hundred times. They were household words in the first century since the New Testament world was one in which servants and masters were a fact of life.

A *diakonos* could refer to a household servant, as in John 2:5, 9 where it is translated *servants*. Matthew 20:26, 23:11, and Mark 9:35 teach that servanthood is a position we must all assume in order to achieve true greatness. It also describes what our relationship should be to the Lord, as found in John 12:26. In Romans 13:4 government is described as a “minister (*diakonos*) of God to you for good.”

The English word *deacon(s)* occurs five times in our English Bibles, and four of them are found here in I Timothy 3. It is found as a noun in verse 8; as a verb in verse 10; as a noun again in verse 12; and as a participle in verse 13, translated *have served...as deacons*. The only other place where the deacon is mentioned as a functionary in the local church is Philippians 1:1. This passage recognizes that there are certain services to be performed in the local church, and there should be qualified men present to perform these services.

The Qualifications 3:8-12

“Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, ⁹but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. ¹¹Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. ¹²Let deacons be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households.”

Deacons Must Be “Men of Dignity”

While dignity is the inherent meaning of the word, the concept of earned and deserved respect is also part of it. The idea of nobility and seriousness is also included.

Deacons Must Not Be “Double-Tongued”

This qualification means he must not be one who tells different stories to others about the same thing. One must not alter his

account of a matter depending on who he is talking to. This does not mean that everything must be told to everyone, however.

Deacons Must Not Be “Addicted to Much Wine”

The word translated *addicted* is perhaps a bit strong. The word *prosecho* means *to pay attention to* or *to occupy oneself with*. Addiction seems to imply helplessness to free oneself, and this is not implied in the Greek word at all.

Deacons Must Not Be “Fond of Sordid Gain”

This is a single word in Greek, which means *to gain money in a dishonest or disgraceful way*. He must gain material things in an honest way.

Deacons Must Hold “to the Mystery of the Faith with a Clear Conscience”

The noun *faith* with a definite article refers *to a body of truth, a body of doctrine*. In what sense is it a mystery? First, doctrine is a mystery in that it is truth that would never be known to man unless revealed by God. Second, doctrine concerning the church was unknown in Old Testament times—church age truth is unique.

Deacons Must “Be Tested”

This parallels the requirement that an overseer must not be a new convert. He should not be given a place of service as an honor or to gain his interest in the church.

Wives or Women?

King James Version gives us the translation *even so their wives*, but NASB gives us *women likewise must be*. If *women* is the proper translation, then we have the concept of deaconesses, or women who serve the church in a special way. This has several things in its favor. First, the word *likewise* was used to separate the overseer and the deacon (3:8); it follows that here it separates the function of selected men from that of selected women. The word is also frequently used to introduce the second or third in a series. Second, the word *women* has no personal pronoun with it. These women are not designated as belonging to anyone. Third, it seems unlikely that deacons' wives have unique qualifications when there is no mention made of the overseers' wives. Fourth, Romans 16:1 designates Phoebe as a deaconess. See NASB marginal note.

Whether wife or deaconess, she must be *dignified*. This is the same requirement as that demanded of the deacon in verse 8 (translated *men of dignity*) except it is in the feminine gender. The women are not to be *malicious gossips*. This is the word *diabolos*, which is a word for Satan and could be translated “shedevils.” The word refers to slander, to the telling of false things about people. She is to be *temperate*, which is the same word as found in 3:2 in reference to

the overseer. Being *faithful in all things* means she accepts and fulfills responsibilities.

Deacons Must Be the “Husband of Only One Wife”

This is identical to the requirement of the overseer found in 3:2.

Deacons Must Be “Good Managers of Their Children and Their Own Households”

This does not mean that he must be married. However, if the deacon is not married, a very important measure of his character will be missing.

The Reward 3:13

“For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”

The pronoun *those* points to both men and women who have served well. Notice the idea of high quality service throughout this chapter. The overseer must be a *skillful* teacher, and he must manage his household *well*; and so the deacon must be a *good* manager. Externally these are rewarded with high standing in the church; internally, because they have done their job well, they gain great confidence.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS INSTRUCTION 3:14-16

Because of Timothy’s Responsibility 3:14-15

“I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; ¹⁵but in case I am delayed, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.”

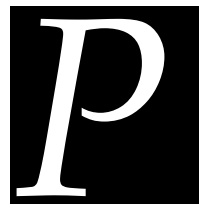
Paul emphasizes who the church is and what it is to do. First, it is the *household of God*, which refers to its membership. The church is never referred to as a building in the New Testament; in fact, the first “church building” did not come along until the third century. Second, the function of the church is the upholding of truth. The teaching, maintaining, and defending of doctrine is the major duty of the church.

Because of the Greatness of the Gospel 3:16

“And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, beheld by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”

Mystery means *the open secret*—that which is unknown until revealed. Six lines of simple statement are given in order to give proper honor to Christ. First, we have reference to the incarnation—God

the Son taking a human body forever. Second, His vindication by the Holy Spirit is found in His resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:4, 8:11, I Peter 3:18). Third, He was beheld by angels at His birth (Luke 2:13), at His temptation (Matthew 4:11), in the garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:43), at His resurrection (Matthew 28:2), and at His ascension (Acts 1:10).



Pastoral Duty

or “Caring for Yourself and Your Teaching”

I Timothy 4:1-6:21

A PASTOR IS TO PROCLAIM THE TRUTH 4:1-16

THE APOSTATE TEACHERS 4:1-5

Their Identity 4:1-2

“But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, ²by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron...”

The Prediction 4:1a

The prediction of departure from sound doctrine issues from the Holy Spirit and is therefore not the result of human research but divine revelation. The word *explicitly* emphasizes the clarity of the information. *In later times* points to the future with respect to Paul’s writing. While false teachers rise at various periods of church history, their presence intensifies as the return of the Lord nears. Epochs of false teaching crescendo toward the end times.

The Participants 4:2b

THE VICTIMS

These are found in the word *some*. One should not conclude from this word that the departure will be small. Luke 18:8 emphasizes the enormity of the departure when Jesus asks, “...when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” The word *faith* has the definite article *the* with it in the Greek. This means Jesus is referring to faith as a body of truth.

THE SOURCE

Demons are the invisible force behind the departure. Two forces are at work; the invisible force of demons, and the visible force of liars. This is an important verse showing that demons are the ultimate and supernatural source of doctrinal error. Five things should be

kept in mind about demons. First, they are spirits, and thus, immaterial beings (Matthew 8:16, Luke 10:17, 20). As spirit beings, they are invisible; but we can see their works manifested. Second, they have great intellectual capacity (I Samuel 28:6-7). Third, they have immoral character (Matthew 10:1, Mark 1:27, 3:11). Fourth, they have a system of doctrine (I Timothy 4:1-5). Fifth, they use human instrumentality to do their work.

THE DECEIVERS

These are the liars whose methodology is expressed by the word *hypocrisy*—the use of some kind of covering to hide the real. A seared conscience is one that has lost sensitivity to moral right or wrong.

Their Heresy 4:3-5

Its Content Stated 4:3a

“...men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods...”

The taboo concerning marriage and foods is perhaps explained by the ascetic Jewish brotherhood on the shores of the Dead Sea called the Essenes. They repudiated marriage except as a necessity for preserving the human race. They also abstained from wine and animal food. The prohibition concerning foods could also flow from a gnostic source since they believed that matter was evil. At any rate, the taboos supposedly marked one as spiritually elite and religiously superior.

Its Content Refuted 4:3b-5

“...which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude; ⁵for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.”

To question what God has created is to question God's wisdom in creating it. And further, to refuse to use what God has created compounds rebellion even more. For the divine creation of marriage, see Genesis 1:28; and for His creation of foods, see Genesis 1:29. Genesis 1:31 provides the support for the words *everything created by God is good* saying, “And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.” The concept of receiving *with gratitude* the things that God has created illustrates that God does not desire the practice of meaningless asceticism, but rather a proper heart and attitude. Marriage and food, when received on the basis of the truth of God's word, become sacred.

THE GOOD SERVANT 4:6-16

His Relationship to Truth 4:6

“In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.”

He Is to Point Out Truth 4:6a

These verses tell us something about how to handle false doctrine. False doctrine is defeated by teaching true doctrine. It is never enough to identify error; we must also teach truth. The simple word *servant* shows that Paul does not have in mind an official position but is pointing to things that should be true of every believer. The word *brethren* literally means *from the same womb* and points to the spiritual family to which all Christians belong. The term *pointing out* is sometimes as mild as suggesting. A good servant of the Lord does not try to force truth on others but is always present to point it out and give others a chance to respond based on positive volition toward the word of God.

He Is to Feed on Truth 4:6b

The first part of this verse tells what a good servant is to do for others; the second part of the verse tells what a good servant must do for himself. In many respects, a good teacher is nothing more than a good learner.

The words *of the faith* could well refer to those great doctrinal words such as justification, redemption, propitiation, reconciliation, salvation, grace, etc., which are infused with such meaning in the New Testament. The word *sound* translates the Greek word that means *good*. The word *following* is very strong and refers to the careful tracing out of something so as to have a meticulous understanding.

His Relationship to Trivia 4:7a

“But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women.”

If the servant is to be well nourished, he must have the right diet. Verse 6 has shown what must be included in that diet; verse 7 shows what must be excluded. This all assumes a very important idea: The servant is to exercise his will to control that which enters and occupies his mind.

The *fables* refer to superstitious stories having no ground in fact. The reference to *old women* alludes to their idleness and gossip nature, occupying themselves with empty stories.

Have nothing to do with is a single verb that means *to reject* but may include the idea of politely ignoring. To entertain silly doctrines by

giving them attention and consideration merely dignifies them. This is what we may call a holy disdain of verbal trivia.

His Relationship to Discipline 4:7b-9

“On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; ⁸for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. ⁹It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance.”

The word *discipline* is *gumnazo*, which is transliterated into English in the word *gymnasium*. The basic meaning of the word is *to be naked*, referring to the athlete who removed clothing for freedom of movement in exercise. Paul speaks of two kinds of discipline—spiritual and physical. Discipline is the self-imposed training that corrects, molds, strengthens, and perfects the physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects of our being. Discipline always involves self-control, change, and pain. Paul contrasts spiritual and physical discipline in two ways. First, they stand in contrast in terms of duration—physical discipline is for this present life; spiritual discipline is for the life to come. Second, they stand in contrast in terms of extent. Physical discipline is for the body only; spiritual discipline is for the soul and spirit.

Verse 9 adds the idea that this is to be treated as a dependable axiom among believers. This is the third of several axiomatic statements in I Timothy, the others being found in 1:15 and 3:1.

His Relationship to Effort 4:10-11

“For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

¹¹Prescribe and teach these things.”

In this verse, Paul is saying he actually practices what he exhorts in verse 9. The word *labor* carries the idea of work to the point of exhaustion. The words *Savior of all men* point to what we often call the doctrine of common grace. Common grace refers to the blessings of life bestowed on all men irrespective of their personal salvation. Matthew 5:45 says, “...He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” God is the Savior of all men in the sense of common grace, not in the sense of personal salvation. The verb *prescribe* carries much authority with it. It reaches far beyond the idea of suggestion or recommendation; it means *to give orders, command, direct*.

His Relationship to Personal Life 4:12-16

In Public Ministry 4:12-13

“Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who

believe. ¹³Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.”

The implication of the first part of this verse is that Timothy had a weakness when it came to insisting on respect for himself and consequently his ministry. The command to *let no one look down on* is constructed in such a way as to forbid a practice that was going on—“Stop letting any one look down on your youth” would bring out this idea. How young was Timothy? Age is relative; forty is old for a baseball player but young for a president. With the evidence we have, we can bracket Timothy somewhere between thirty-five and forty years of age. The word *look down* is *kataphroneo* and is a strong term for disrespect, meaning *to despise, to scorn, treat with contempt*.

Timothy is to take a positive approach, marked off in this verse by the strong adversative *but*. He is to launch a five point offensive to earn respect. This is to be done by being a model believer.

The word *example* is the first word following the adversative *but*, which means it is emphatic. Exemplary conduct is the chief idea. *Example* is the Greek word *tupos* (English *type*). It refers to the *visible impression of a stroke or pressure*. It is used in Acts 7:44 in speaking of the tabernacle that Moses was directed to make “according to the pattern (*tupos*) which he had seen.” It would not violate the meaning of the word to translate it with the noun *blueprint*.

The term *show yourself* is the word *ginomai*, which means *to become*. It is used to indicate movement from one state to another. In John 1:14 it is used of the incarnation of Jesus, saying “the word became flesh.” The tense is present, so this is to be an ongoing process. It is not a matter of creating an impression, but rather experiencing honest growth. Timothy is to manifest the qualities about to be listed. The words *of those who believe* could be clarified by translating *to those who believe*.

HE IS TO EXHIBIT A MODEL SPEECH

Timothy is to control his speech in terms of what he says and also in what he refrains from saying. The latter is perhaps hardest. James teaches that if one controls the tongue, he can control his whole body. See *Commentary and Outline of James* for the key New Testament passage on the tongue.

HE IS TO EXHIBIT A MODEL BEHAVIOR

Timothy is not only to be in control of what he says, but also in control of what he does. The word *conduct* refers to one’s total lifestyle.

HE IS TO EXHIBIT A MODEL ATTITUDE

Love is the chief moral quality of the Christian life. See *Commentary and Outline of I Corinthians* for an exposition of the key New Testament passage on love. Love is the mental attitude that always

does what is best for another, in the light of eternity, no matter what it costs.

HE IS TO EXHIBIT A MODEL FAITH

He is to display dependence on God and His word in an extraordinary way. We should remember that these qualities are expected of all believers, not just leaders.

HE IS TO EXHIBIT MODEL MORALS

Timothy's *purity* would have a primary reference to the way he relates to the female portion of the church in which he ministers. The word *purity* denotes sexual morality.

HE IS TO EXHIBIT MODEL PRIORITIES

The words *until I come* point to what should be going on in the church at Ephesus while Paul is on his way there. This is a prescription, therefore, for local church life. Timothy is to give attention to three items, each of which is particularized by the presence of the definite article (not reflected in our English translation). First, there was the *public reading of Scripture*. This is one single word in Greek that means *to read from a document to a group of assembled people*. In post-classical Greek, it was used of reading aloud with interspersed comments. This points to the absolute centrality of the word of God in the meetings of the assembly. Second, there was *the exhortation*. The order is important; Scripture is read first so the exhortation will have sound basis in truth. Every one of Paul's letters follows this same order. Exhortation makes an appeal to the will of the believer to act upon the word of God. Third, there was *the teaching*, which refers to the explaining of the text and involves an appeal to the mind of man to absorb the truths and doctrines of the Word.

This verse assumes four things about believers. First, it assumes they gather together in public meetings with regularity. Second, it assumes believers assemble with a learning attitude. Third, it assumes they are willing to put forth effort to think, and thus, learn. Fourth, it expects believers to act on what is learned.

The verse also assumes four things about Timothy (or any pastor-teacher). First, it assumes that the overseer is thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures. The second assumption is that he will exercise the leadership to see that they are faithfully taught. Third, it anticipates that the overseer has the gift of teaching. Fourth, it expects him to have the wisdom to see the application of the word of God.

In Private Practice 4:14-16

WITH RESPECT TO HIS GIFT 4:14

"Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery."

The verb *neglect* points to a practice that is actually going on. Timothy was neglecting his gift and needed to stop doing so. *Spiritual gift* is the word *charisma* and is used by Paul in a technical way to refer to the ability to serve that is not attained by one's own effort but that is sovereignly bestowed by the Holy Spirit. First, Timothy's gift was gracious for it was *bestowed* (literally, *was given*). Second, it was prophesied. God gave Paul divine revelation concerning the ability and ministry of Timothy. This is logical since Timothy was to be Paul's official representative. Third, it was symbolically recognized by others. The laying on of hands did not bestow a gift upon him, but rather recognized his gift.

WITH RESPECT TO HIS GROWTH 4:15

"Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all."

The verb *take pains* is *melo*, which means *to be caring*; and the verb *neglect* is *amelo*, which means *to be uncaring*. The expression *be absorbed in them* is literally *in these things be*. The verb *be* is *eimi*, which means *to exist*. Timothy's whole existence is to revolve around doctrine. The word *progress* is compound, made up of *pro*, which means *before*, and *kopto*, which means *to cut*. The word was used for the opening up of virgin territory, or blazing a trail.

WITH RESPECT TO HIS TEACHING 4:16

"Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you."

These things goes back to verses 13-15. The salvation spoken of should be understood in light of the context of chapter 4, which opened with words about demonic doctrine. The salvation spoken of is salvation from the clutches of demonic doctrine. Salvation, as used here, may also refer to good spiritual health.

A PASTOR IS TO SHEPHERD THE FLOCK 5:1-6:2

I Timothy 5 is highly personal in nature. This is exhibited by the second person singular commands such as "Do not sharply rebuke an older man." Verse 23 is personal in that it deals with some type of physical ailment that was peculiar to Timothy. This chapter deals with a problem that may never occur in the church again—the problem of widows. When the problem dealt with in a passage no longer exists, we are to seek out the principle of the passage. Why would the Holy Spirit leave us with instructions for caring for widows, knowing this was uniquely a first century problem? The answer is not difficult to see. The Holy Spirit shows us how and upon what principles the problem was to be handled so that we may apply these principles in similar situations. I Timothy 5 has some eternal principles to apply in the exercising of what we may call wise beneficence.

THE TREATMENT OF THE OLD AND YOUNG 5:1-2

“Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, ²the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity.”

The verb *sharply rebuke* is the single word *epiplasso*, which literally means *to bruise with words*. Our English expression “browbeat” catches the meaning well. It may be assumed that the older man needed correction; but by virtue of age, he is not to be treated harshly. On the positive side, Timothy is to approach him with an *appeal*. The word is a blend of exhortation, encouragement, and comfort. He is to be approached as if he were one’s father.

It should be noted that the whole framework is familial in nature—fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters. Homes were used in the first century as meeting places for local churches, and the setting is most appropriate. The prepositional phrase *in all purity* is attached as a reminder of the need for sexual propriety in the treatment of the women.

THE TREATMENT OF THE WIDOWS 5:3-16

The Problem

We do not know much about the problem of widows except that it existed. Our first bit of information comes from Acts 6:1 where the church assumed the responsibility to feed widows who were among her number. We also know there were no retirement homes, nursing homes, pension plans, or Social Security system. There were no organized institutions to care for these individuals. It is also true that honorable employment for a widow was a near impossibility. The question before the church was this: What should the church do when the problem touched her own widows?

The Principle

When one sees the detailed categorizing of the types of widows and the very high requirements for receiving assistance, a principle emerges. The church is to exercise great care and discrimination in dispensing aid to the needy in her midst—her benevolence is to be based on careful investigation, not mere emotion. This principle is supported by noting how carefully Paul distinguishes the types of widows.

The Categories

The Genuine Widow 5:3, 5, 16

“Honor widows who are widows indeed.”

Three times Paul refers to those who are termed *widows indeed*. There are three things characteristic of this kind of widow. First, she

must be totally alone. This is made clear by the words *who has been left alone* in verse 5. Second, she must be a believer, as shown by the words *fixed her hope on God*, also found in verse 5. Third, she must be highly dedicated spiritually. She is to be one who prays *night and day*, as verse 5 also states. Paul works from an outer circle inward: a widow, a believer, and very godly.

Paul guides the church carefully between two errors—the mistaken idea that the church is responsible for the social welfare of all men and the disgrace of letting its own sheep go destitute. The command is to *honor* the widow. We are not told specifically how this is to be done. In the Old Testament there was the extra sheaf provision (Deuteronomy 24:19-21). Those who mistreated widows received a special curse (Deuteronomy 27:19).

The Family Widow 5:4

“...but if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family, and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God.”

First, kindness starts at home. The words *let them learn* imply that this may not be a natural inclination but is something to be learned. It has been observed that it is easier for one poor father to raise ten children, than for ten wealthy children to help one poor father. Second, children are to help repay what parents have done for them. The words *make some return* are from a word that is used of paying a salary or repaying a debt. Third, children who fail at this point are worse than unbelievers. In what sense is this true? Because of the instruction of the word of God, a believer who fails here sins against known light, whereas the unbeliever might plead ignorance.

The Widow Indeed 5:5

“Now she who is a widow indeed, and who has been left alone has fixed her hope on God, and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day.”

See comments in 5:3 above.

The Pleasure Widow 5:6

“But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives.”

In the first century, widows were often tempted to immorality as a means of livelihood. Such a one is said to be *dead* (spiritually) while she *lives* (physically).

The Principle Involved 5:7-8

“Prescribe these things as well, so that they may be above reproach. ⁸But 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.”

The church must demand integrity of its members. The words *the faith* refer to the body of Christian belief. Unbelievers usually recognize the obligation of providing for their own household. Becoming a Christian does not obviate that responsibility, but rather leads to an understanding of its greatness.

The Enrolled Widow 5:9-10

“Let a widow be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man,¹⁰ having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints’ feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work.”

First, she is to be placed on a list. We know little about this list. Tertullian and Origen inform us that an order of widows had developed in some of the churches from the second to the fourth centuries. These women engaged in certain charitable tasks, such as caring for the sick. Second, there are three objective conditions, such as age, marital record, and reputation. The *good works* spoken of are specified by five “if’s.” She may not have had all the experiences listed; but if she had any or many of them, she would probably qualify.

The reference to bringing up children implies she had been an exemplary mother. Part of the hospitality of the East in these times was the provision of a servant to wash the dust from the feet of one entering the house. The idea conveyed here is her willingness to do menial service.

The Younger Widow 5:11-13

“But refuse to put younger widows on the list, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married,¹² thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge.¹³ And at the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention.”

The younger widow is to be refused for the list. What is the reason for refusing her? It is not because *sensual desires* are wrong, nor is it because they will lead to a second marriage. It is because the type of sensual desires in view here are those which are *in disregard of Christ*. For example, her sensual desire might involve an unbeliever; and she may marry him, which would clearly be contrary to God’s will. This in turn would bring them discipline (*condemnation*). The word translated *pledge* is the Greek word *pistis*, which is normally translated *faith*. If they marry against Christ, they are in practice denying faith in Him.

Further reason for not enrolling widows under sixty is the possibility that they might become idle. If the church gives them support, then the younger active widows would have time on their hands.

This verse brings out some very important facts about having time on one's hands. It opens the possibility of becoming *gossips*. The Greek term is *phluaros*, which means *to make empty charges*. The word *busybodies* is a compound of the preposition *peri*, meaning *around*, and the noun *ergos*, which means *to work*. It pictures busy activity, moving from place to place, prying into other people's affairs. The reference to *things not proper to mention* means to discuss things which are not necessary. The issue is really not whether they are true or false—the issue is rather that of propriety.

The Conclusion 5:14-16

“Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach; ¹⁵for some have already turned aside to follow Satan. ¹⁶If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, let her assist them, and let not the church be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed.”

The young widow should relate to God's basic plan for believing women. Her focal point is her husband, her children, and her home. This will eliminate the problems of conduct mentioned in verses 11-13.

Verse 16 makes the very important point that individual and personal assistance should be given where possible, leaving the church to give help where genuine need exists. The principles given here could have enormous implications for civil government. A responsible citizenry is always better than welfare government.

There is a slight textual problem in verse 16. Some manuscripts read, “If any woman or man who is a believer has dependent widows....” This makes the words more understandable since one does not have to seek an explanation of why Paul is addressing women only on the issue of dependent widows. The phrase *has dependent widows* means they are not immediate family but perhaps a distant relative or even a friend.

THE TREATMENT OF THE ELDERS 5:17-25

In Honoring Them 5:17-18

The Principle Stated 5:17

“Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.”

It is important to keep in mind the condition that existed in the church at the time Paul was writing. First, we must remember they were still in pre-canon days, which means that everything could not be governed solely by the written word of God since it was not yet complete. Second, the leadership involved the apostles, such as Paul, and their representatives, as was Timothy; under them were the elders or overseers. Third, the apostles and their representa-

tives were soon to be replaced by the written word of God, the completed New Testament canon. It would then become the responsibility of the elder to rule with the written word of God.

The elders are to *rule well*. There are three words used in the New Testament to express the concept of leadership. First, there is the word *proistami*, which is found here in verse 17 and means *to stand at the head of, to direct, to superintend*. It is also found in Romans 12:8, I Thessalonians 5: 12, and I Timothy 3:4-5. Second, there is the word *exousia*, which is a very strong word for authority and is found in Matthew 8:9, 9:6; II Corinthians 10:8, and 13:10. The third word is *hageomai*, which means *to lead and guide* and is found in Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24.

These leaders are to *work hard* in the teaching of God's word. The areas of hard labor are preaching, which refers to any speech and communication function, and teaching, which specifies how he uses his speaking ability. We are not to understand from this passage that there are two types of elders, the ruling and the teaching. I Timothy 3:2 shows that all overseers are to be good teachers.

The *honor* to be afforded the overseer involves deference and respect for the office that he holds and ample material support; in fact, the word *double* indicates more than ample material support. Respect and remuneration are the two ideas involved. The Greek word for honor is *tima* and is used of payment or price in Matthew 27:6 and Acts 4:34.

The Principle Supported 5:18

"For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing,' and 'The laborer is worthy of his wages.' "

The introduction of this verse as support for the *double honor* shows that Paul primarily has remuneration in mind. Paul uses this same Old Testament passage to support the same point in I Corinthians 9:9. The quoted passage is found in Deuteronomy 25:4. The second quote is from Jesus and is found in Luke 10:7 or Matthew 10:10.

In Accusing Them 5:19-21

"Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. ²⁰Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also may be fearful of sinning. ²¹I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality."

Paul is setting up a protective device for overseers that Timothy is to use. To what are the two witnesses required to witness—the sin or the accusation of sin? If it means they must witness the accusation only, then no protection at all is afforded. One person could make an accusation and then call others in to witness what he has

to say. The minimum of two witnesses means that at least two people must be able to bear eyewitness testimony to the sin of which the overseer is accused.

Is the accusation made here true or untrue? It obviously is true because verse 20 speaks of his continuing in sin. What is the nature of the accusation? This is important because all of us sin and stand guilty on many and frequent occasions. While sin is sin, Paul must be referring to the type of sin that would create serious scandal among believers.

What does it mean to *rebuke* an elder? The word is used in John 16:8-11 of the work of the Holy Spirit in producing conviction. Who is to deliver the rebuke? Apparently Timothy is the one to deliver it. The word *all* and the word *rest* may be taken in a narrow or a wide sense. In the narrow sense, they would refer to action taking place in the presence of other elders. If taken in the broader sense, they would refer to the entire assembly of believers.

Heavy emphasis is placed on impartiality. The word *bias* translates the compound Greek word *prokrima*, which means to *pre-judge*. The word for *partiality* is the compound *prosklisis*, which means to *lean toward* in the sense of favoring one over another.

In Recognizing Them 5:22-25

The Command 5:22

“Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thus share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.”

The laying on of hands refers to the practice of ordination or recognition of elders (Acts 6:6, 13:3). Timothy is to be very cautious in the selection of elders because he is held responsible for making good choices. When one recognizes another as an elder, there is a certain sharing of responsibility for their actions.

The Advice 5:23

“No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.”

How does this verse fit in—it seems very abrupt. This is probably due to the personal nature of the instructions in chapter 5. Here is a problem—Timothy’s physical ailments—that no longer exists today. When a problem ceases to exist, we should seek the principle by which the problem was solved. It means we should take advantage of whatever means are available to solve a physical problem. Maybe Timothy needed the wine before a meal in the interest of digestion. Maybe the water was so bad that he should occasionally use a little wine.

The Principle 5:24-25

“The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after.”²⁵ Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.”

Here is further reason for avoiding hasty ordinations. Both sins and good works have a way of revealing themselves, given time. This argues then, “Take your time, good works and sins will manifest themselves if you don’t rush.” Sin and good works have a self-revealing character about them.

THE TREATMENT OF MASTERS 6:1-2

The Responsibility of Slaves with Unbelieving Masters 6:1

“Let all who are under the yoke as slaves regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine may not be spoken against.”

The slave-master relationship in the Old Testament was entirely different than the same relationship in New Testament times. In the Old Testament, slavery was recognized and regulated. Exodus 21:2 shows that a slave could be purchased for no more than six years. If a master maimed a servant, he was to be set free (Exodus 21:26-27). There were many other regulations of this same type.

Our modern frame of reference for slavery is also inadequate. There is nothing in American history or culture that approximates slavery in the Greek-Roman world. Slavery was universally practiced and approved in ancient nations by both philosophy and law. The slavery spoken of here in I Timothy 6 was very oppressive as shown by the expression *under the yoke*, meaning a slave was hardly distinguished from oxen. The word for *master* is *despotas* (our English word *despot*). It points to absolute authority and ownership.

Since the slaves addressed here were believers, they had learned some new doctrines. First, as believers they had a new found freedom in Christ. Why, then, should they not rebel against their physical slavery on earth? Second, as believers they had a new relationship as sisters and brothers. If one’s master is a Christian, why should he not be treated as a brother instead of a master?

Paul’s solution to such things always comes around to the same thing—the importance of mental attitude. The verb *regard* is *hageomai*, which refers to an opinion based on objective fact. The slaves were not to act on what they felt or what they liked or disliked; they were to think objectively. The rationale behind this attitude is two-fold. First, we are never to do anything that would reflect on the character of God; and second, we are never to do anything that would reflect on the truth of God.

The Responsibility of Slaves with Believing Masters 6:2

“And let those who have believers as their masters not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but let them serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles.”

Every true doctrine is capable of being abused and misused. Here slaves are warned not to misuse the doctrine of the brotherhood of believers. As a matter of fact, the brotherhood of believers demands better service, not less. The New Testament never advocates the rebellion of slaves and for very good reason. Whether a slave or a master, the Christian life could be lived successfully in either condition.

A PASTOR MUST LIVE A GODLY LIFE 6:3-16

THE DANGERS OF FALSE TEACHING TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE 6:3-10

The Danger of Pride 6:3-5a

“If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, ⁴he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, ⁵and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth...”

Paul, in this last chapter, returns to the theme introduced in chapter 1—the importance of sound doctrine. The similarity can be seen by the following chart.

I TIMOTHY 1

1:3 “certain men”
1:3 “teach strange doctrines”
1:4 “mere speculation”
1:10 “sound teaching”

I TIMOTHY 6

6:3 “anyone”
6:3 “advocates different doctrines”
6:4 “controversial questions”
6:3 “sound words”

Paul begins with a first class conditional sentence introduced by the word *if*. This kind of sentence assumes something to be true. It may be safely assumed that false teaching will be introduced to the churches. True doctrine is linked to spiritual health (*sound words*) and Christian living (*doctrine conforming to godliness*).

Four things are said of one who departs from sound doctrine. First, he is *conceited*. The Greek word is *tuphoo* and means *to wrap in a mist, to raise smoke*. It refers to the beclouded state of mind that accompanies departure from truth. Second, this one *understands nothing*. The alternative to truth is not neutrality, but nothingness. Third, he finds himself occupied with questions and disputes. It is impossible to forsake truth without eventually embracing error.

The Danger of Avarice 6:5b-10

The Distortion of Money 6:5b

“...who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.”

These false teachers soon discover that their style of godliness is lucrative and therefore embrace it only to the extent that it furthers their worldly and materialistic interests. Titus 1:11 parallels this verse, speaking of those who are “teaching things they should not teach, for the sake of sordid gain.”

The Deficiency of Money 6:6-8

“But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment. ⁷For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. ⁸And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.”

THE QUALITY OF CONTENTMENT 6:6-7

The word *contentment* translates the Greek word *autarkeia*. First, it was used to refer to any person who was able to support himself without the aid of others. Second, it is used in the New Testament of one who has inner sufficiency and is independent of outward circumstances. Third, according to II Corinthians 9:8, it is God’s grace that causes us to experience *all sufficiency* (*autarkeia*). Philippians 4:11 teaches us that this sort of content is not innate, but is learned.

Verse 7 enunciates the fatal flaw of all material things. Material things all burn; they are all temporal, not eternal. This verse will get qualified later on by showing that material things can be used in such a way as to bring eternal reward.

THE REQUIREMENTS OF CONTENTMENT 6:8

Covering refers to both shelter and clothing. Paul is not teaching that if more than these things come our way, we may not appreciate and enjoy them. Our requirements for contentment should remain as simple as food, clothing, and shelter.

The Danger of Money 6:9-10

“But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.”

The verb *want* indicates that it is not the actual possession of material things that is in view here but the desire for them that is dangerous. It is possible to be very poor and still love money in the sense of a burning desire to obtain it. The very desire for material things creates temptation. The words *fall into* are present tense and refer to repeated action. We might say to desire material things is to be “forev-

er falling into temptation.” The noun *snare* refers to the type of situation where any way that one turns is wrong. The desire for material things creates a chain reaction—*harmful desires*. Along with desire for riches comes the desire for ease, the desire for power, and always, the desire for more. Continuing on, the desire for material things creates *ruin* and *destruction*. Finally, the desire consumes one; and the hunger for doctrine (*the faith*) languishes, along with the consequent pain that goes with its absence.

THE DUTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE 6:11-16

Relative to Evil 6:11a

“But flee from these things, you man of God...”

These things refers to the “commercial godliness” spoken of in verse 5. Big time Christianity is “big bucks” Christianity, and Timothy is to have no part in it. The present tense of the verb *flee* indicates that the fleeing is to be continual. The designation *man of God* means *a man who belongs to God* and is also used in II Timothy 3:17. In ancient times it was used frequently of the prophets, indicating the special relationship they bore to God.

Relative to Good 6:11b

“...and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.”

These six items constitute true riches. The concept of good works being called wealth is found also in I Timothy 6:18. The first two virtues are general, and *faith* and *love* are two of the fundamental principles of the Christian life. Finally, *perseverance and gentleness* describe the virtues necessary in a world hostile to Christ.

Relative to Warfare 6:12a

“Fight the good fight of faith...”

Paul’s metaphor of fighting is athletic, specifically boxing, not military. The vigor of boxing and wrestling is illustrated by noting two facts about them. First, Greek boxing gloves were lined with fur; but the outside was oxhide with lead and iron sewed on them. Second, it was not unusual for the loser of a wrestling match to have his eyes gouged out.

The word *faith* has a definite article *the* with it and therefore refers to the body of Christian doctrine. Truth is sturdy but, if not protected and defended, slips easily from one’s grasp.

Relative to Eternal Life 6:12b

“...take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”

The verb *take hold* means to *take possession of* and points to appropriation of great resources. This does not mean that Timothy did not have eternal life—he was unquestionably a believer. Notice that eternal life is not a prize at the end but is something to be possessed and enjoyed now. It is not the result of the contest but the substance of the contest.

Relative to Christ 6:13-16

The Charge 6:13-14

“I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, ¹⁴that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

Paul lives in the light of the omnipresent, omniscient God at all times and charges Timothy to do likewise. The charge is the one referred to in I Timothy 1:3, 5, and 18 that pertained to maintaining purity of doctrine in Ephesus. The *good confession* made by Jesus before Pilate concerned His Messiahship and, from a human standpoint, cost Him His life. This is included here to encourage Timothy to stand for the truth and is especially pertinent because of Timothy’s timidity.

That this faithfulness is to continue until Christ’s appearing shows that the charge is equally applicable to us as well as Timothy.

The Doxology 6:15-16

“...which He will bring about at the proper time—He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords; ¹⁶who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.”

This is the greatest ascription of praise to Jesus Christ found anywhere in Paul’s writings. First, He is the supreme ruler of the universe. Second, He is untouched by death. Third, He is perfect holiness. Fourth, He is invisible, but knowable. Fifth, He is the one to be honored for all eternity.

A PASTOR MUST WARN ABOUT MATERIALISM 6:17-19

THE DANGEROUS SIDE OF RICHES 6:17

“Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.”

Two types of riches are in view in verses 17 and 19. Verse 17 speaks of the riches of the present age; verse 19 speaks of the riches of the future age. The riches of this age may be used in such a way that

they will bring us treasure in the future age—in eternity. Wealth in this age is not condemned, but its dangers are pointed out.

The Danger of Pride

Wealth is not a mark of special divine favor. Only when this is kept firmly in mind will one be free of conceit. In a believer, humility and wealth should walk hand-in-hand.

The Danger of False Security

Verse 17 presents the perfect balance on material wealth. Since it is uncertain and always changing, it should not be trusted; but since it is God-given, it should be enjoyed. Material goods are for enjoyment, not security.

THE DESIRABLE SIDE OF RICHES 6:18-19

“Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.”

Two principles are found here concerning the proper place of material things. First, there is the principle of right use. We enjoy material things by sharing them with others. The word *generous* points to the lavish flow of good works, and the term *ready to share* emphasizes the continuous flow of good works. The term *ready to share* is a form of the Greek word *koinonia*, which means *joint-participation, fellowship*. Having personal wealth can be miserable when it is not shared with others. Second, there is the principle of investment. There is a definite sense in which we can take wealth gained on earth with us. If we are willing to let go of it now, we will gain it in the future—we may lay up “treasure” for eternity. Earthly treasure may be transformed into heavenly treasure by sharing it now.

A PASTOR MUST GUARD THE TRUST 6:20-21

THE POSITIVE SIDE OF THINGS 6:20A

“O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you...”

The faith—the body of doctrine, truth—is what has been entrusted to Timothy. As sturdy and lasting as truth is, it slips away if not zealously guarded.

THE NEGATIVE SIDE OF THINGS 6:20B-21

“...avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called ‘knowledge’ —²¹which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you.”

The *knowledge* spoken of here is not merely the gnosticism of the first century, though this may be the historical reference. It should be taken to be any anti-Christian philosophy found anywhere at any time. Once again, we are reminded that Christian truth and the wisdom of this world are mutually exclusive. Neutrality toward human viewpoint is not enough; we must actively turn away from it, viewing it realistically as a virulent enemy to the faith. As in all his letters, Paul begins and ends with a reference to God's grace. The pronoun *you* is plural, which reaches from the days of Paul to today and embraces us as well as Timothy.

The Salutation

or “*To Paul’s Beloved Son*”

II Timothy 1:1-5

CHRISTIAN GREETINGS 1:1-2

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus, ²to Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”

GREETINGS FROM PAUL 1:1

Paul’s Position 1:1a

Paul is now in prison in Rome for the last time, making II Timothy his “swan song.” He is now pushing seventy years of age, and his message is very unpopular due to the emperor worship encouraged by Nero. Paul is also very much alone and forsaken by most, telling us that “only Luke is with me (II Timothy 4: 11).” At his first defense in Roman court, he tells us that “no one supported me”; but even this is not a complaint, for he reminds us that “the Lord stood with me...(II Timothy 4: 16-17).”

Paul begins five of his letters by identifying himself as “an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.” An *apostle* is a specially commissioned messenger and representative of Christ. It is never a position taken upon oneself apart from direct divine calling. That Paul calls attention to his apostleship shows that this letter is not entirely personal, but carries full authority, and is not written for Timothy alone, but for all servants of Christ in the future.

Paul’s Message 1:1b

A promise concerning eternal life had been made by God, and the apostles were chosen by Him to proclaim this message. All spiritual life comes from Christ, and its nature is defined by the promises of the word of God.

GREETINGS TO TIMOTHY 1:2

Paul addresses Timothy as his *son* in two significant places. First, he is called *my true child in the faith* in I Timothy 1:2. This places emphasis on the genuineness of Timothy's salvation. Second, he is called *my beloved son* here in order to emphasize the affection that Paul had for Timothy. Timothy is addressed in these two epistles because he will be Paul's successor and will carry on his ministry. Timothy is Paul's son in a spiritual sense, meaning that Paul had been the instrument God used to bring him to a knowledge of Christ.

CHRISTIAN HERITAGE 1:3-5

PAUL'S FOREFATHERS 1:3-4

"I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, ⁴longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy."

The words *I thank God* should read, *Grateful I am to God*. Paul is expressing gratitude to God without expressing an object. The words *night and day* point out how Paul utilized the long nights of dungeon experience, making them occasions for prayer and thanksgiving.

Paul's own parents had not taught him what true Christianity was; they had, however, led him to the true God of Israel. It is possible that the reference to *forefathers* leads all the way back to Abraham. Paul had a deep appreciation for his heritage, as shown by Acts 22:3 where he says, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, just as you all are today." Likewise in Acts 24:14 he says, "But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law, and that is written in the Prophets...."

The reference to Timothy's *tears* may refer to the emotion expressed at their last parting. Acts 20:17-19, 36-37 recalls how the Ephesian elders, upon Paul's departure, "began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him" because they knew they would see his face no more. One of the fascinating aspects of the study of Paul's letters is the revelation of Paul's very real humanity; Paul was stalwart, but he also had a tender heart.

TIMOTHY'S ANCESTRY 1:5

"For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well."

Timothy had more to commend him than tears; he had a *sincere faith*. The words *I am mindful* translated more literally are *having received a reminder*. Some incident, though we do not know what it was, had brought the sincere faith of Timothy to Paul's mind. Mention of his mother and grandmother probably indicates that they had become Christians under the preaching of Paul on his first missionary journey. The adjective *sincere* means *unhypocritical*. Timothy was not play acting.

NOTES

NOTES

The Charge to be Bold

or “Kindling Afresh a Spiritual Gift”

II Timothy 1:6-18

TIMOTHY IS TO KNOW NO SHAME 1:6-11

HE IS TO REKINDLE HIS GIFT 1:6

“And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”

The *reason* refers to the content of verses 4 and 5. Verse 4 speaks of Timothy’s spiritual strength and sincerity; verse 5 points to his spiritual heritage. These are two reasons why he should rekindle his spiritual gift. Good background and healthy influences of our past increase our responsibility. The verb *kindle* literally means *to fan into flame*, and the present tense means *keep on stirring it up*. The tendency of fire is to go out, and the same is true of Timothy’s gift. Paul exhorts Timothy in a similar way in I Timothy 4:14 saying, “Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you.” The verb translated *neglect* literally means *to be careless about something*. The present tense indicates that Timothy was doing just that and could be translated, “Stop neglecting your spiritual gift.”

The *gift of God* refers to the divinely bestowed endowment that enabled Timothy to serve within the church, the body of Christ. Two observations may be made concerning his spiritual gift. First, it is possible for a gift to lie dormant and unused. Second, a gift must be continually exercised. The words *kindle afresh* are present tense, indicating continuous action. It should be remembered that the word for *gift* comes from the Greek word *charis*, which means *grace*.

The *laying on of my hands* points to the public recognition Paul had given of Timothy’s gift and position that he had received from the Lord.

HE IS TO OVERCOME HIS TIMIDITY 1:7

“For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.”

The Negative Reason for Paul’s Exhortation to Timothy 1 :7a

The word translated *timidity* carries with it the idea of cowardliness; it is an attitude that would allow one to shrink from duty. It points to the danger of changing convictions when it is perilous to hold them.

The Positive Reason for Paul’s Exhortation to Timothy 1:7b

God is the author and giver of *power*, which points to that which makes a gift effective. He is also the giver of *love*, which would assure that the exercise of Timothy’s gift would be properly motivated. *Discipline* refers to that which gives a gift sane direction and is a word meaning *self-control*. Gifts are always to be under control, both individually as here with Timothy, and corporately within the church, as in I Corinthians 14.

HE IS TO EMBRACE HIS SUFFERING 1:8-11

The Exhortation 1:8

“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God...”

Stated Negatively 1:8a

The negative and positive aspects of verse 8 are distinguished by the word *but*. The term *testimony of our Lord* should be taken to mean testimony *for* our Lord, not testimony *from* the Lord. The context shows the issue is not the testimony that the Lord made, but rather our testimony for Him. Furthermore, Timothy should not be ashamed of a testimony for the Lord or of anyone else who suffers for that testimony, such as Paul himself. Paul was in prison under Nero and was facing almost certain death. Timothy is not to be fearful and thus be ashamed to visit Paul in prison. The verb *ashamed* is an aorist tense, which forbids the beginning of an action. Paul is not implying that Timothy was ashamed but is rather warning him against letting this happen.

Stated Positively 1:8b

Timothy is to join with Paul in his testimony for Christ without hesitation. The request to *join with me in suffering* is one single triple compound Greek verb made up of *patheo*, meaning *to suffer*, plus *kakos*, which means *bad*, and *sun*, which means *together*. Put together in one word, it points to joint-participation and fellowship. The resultant meaning is *to bear bad treatment along with*. The policy of

the Roman government toward Christianity had grown unfavorable, and many days of persecution lay ahead; but they provide no grounds for “furling the sails” of testimony.

The Basis of the Exhortation 1:9-11

“...who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, ¹⁰but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.”

The basis of the exhortation given in verses 6-8 lies in the richness of our salvation. No shame is possible once we see the glory of the message and the greatness of the Savior. The mention of the power of God now causes Paul to linger for a moment with his favorite subject, the grace of God in salvation.

The Initiator of Our Salvation

God the Father is the one *who has saved us* (doctrine of justification); God the Father is the one *who called us with a holy calling* (doctrine of sanctification).

The Norm of Our Salvation

The words *according to* translate a single Greek preposition, *kata*, which is used to introduce a standard or a norm. God does not use our works as a standard for saving us, nor does God lay out our works to determine whether or not to save us. It is rather His own pleasure and self-giving love that moves Him to provide salvation. Nothing is more germane to the theology of Paul in regard to God's grace.

The Freeness of Our Salvation

The term *which was granted* is the Greek word meaning *to give* and is the same term used in John 3:16, which says that God “gave His only begotten Son....” The words *in Christ Jesus* show that God's superabounding grace must not be disassociated from Christ. All of God's blessing is channeled to us through Christ and because of Christ.

The Time of Our Salvation

This is seen in the words *from all eternity*. Literally the words read *before times eternal*. Grace is embodied in Christ, and we may gain it only through union with Him, and God the Father gave it to Him long before we were born.

The Enactment of Our Salvation

God's grace has been revealed by the incarnation of Christ. The verb *revealed* means *to make manifest or visible*, or *what has been*

hidden or unknown (Thayer's Greek Lexicon). The word *appearing* in this verse is an obvious reference to the incarnation. In places such as II Thessalonians 2:8, I Timothy 6:14, and Titus 2:13, it is used to refer to Christ's second coming.

The Provision of Our Salvation

On the negative side of things, He *abolished death*; and on the positive side of things, He *brought life*. The death that Christ abolished is not physical (though this is involved), but the spiritual death that separates us from God. Death is our only enemy, life is our only need, and it is all cared for by Christ.

The Proclamation of Our Salvation

Paul was a *preacher*, referring to one whose duty was to make a public proclamation of a message. The proclamation was usually read from a document. Paul was an *apostle*, which refers to his official and divinely given appointment. Paul was a *teacher*, which points to ability to communicate the word of God skillfully to others. These three functions, along with the same introductory formula, are found also in I Timothy 2:7.

PAUL KNOWS NO SHAME 1:12-15

PAUL WAS NOT ASHAMED BECAUSE HE RELIED ON THE LORD 1:12

"For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day."

The words *I have believed* are in the perfect tense, referring to a settled and fixed persuasion. The verb *convinced* is also in perfect tense, carrying the same idea of settled conviction.

What I have entrusted may be understood two ways. First, it can mean *the deposit which Paul gave the Lord*. Second, it can mean *the deposit which the Lord gave Paul*. The Revised Standard version goes with the latter and translates "what has been entrusted to me." New American Standard and King James opt for the first. Context argues for the first.

PAUL WAS NOT ASHAMED BECAUSE HE BELIEVED THE WORD 1:13

"Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus."

Timothy was in a position greatly different from that of Paul. Paul was an apostle, and thus, was in the position to receive revelation from God and pass it on. Timothy, on the other hand, was the

apostle's representative and therefore was to pass on only what Paul had taught him. The words *in the faith* express Paul's attitude to the word of God; and love expresses the attitude with which he proclaims the truth. The noun *standard* carries the idea of a sketch or outline. *Sound* means *healthful and health begetting*. It refers to that which is not diseased; applied to the word of God, it means free of the infection of error.

PAUL WAS NOT ASHAMED BECAUSE HE RELIED ON THE HOLY SPIRIT 1:14

"Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you."

The *treasure* refers to truth, which Timothy is to guard. While truth in itself is very potent, it must be remembered that it slips through our fingers very easily.

PAUL WAS NOT ASHAMED BECAUSE HE DID NOT DEPEND ON MAN 1:15

"You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes."

The term *Asia* in the New Testament does not refer to the continent, but rather the Roman province that came into being in about 133 B.C. Ephesus became its capital, where Paul preached for three years (Acts 20:31). According to Acts 19:10, the gospel reached every part of the province. This fact makes the statement of verse 15 one filled with deep pathos.

When Paul was arrested in Rome and accused of introducing a new religion, he apparently sent a request to certain ones in Asia asking that they come to his aid. The result of that request is stated here in verse 15. The bitter account of the cowardice of Phygelus and Hermogenes is all we know of them, or all we need to know. Paul is anxious that Timothy not be among those who display such disgraceful fear.

ONESIPHORUS KNOWS NO SHAME 1:16-18

"The Lord grant mercy to the house Of Onesiphorus for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains; ¹⁷but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me, and found me — ¹⁸the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day — and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus."

Onesiphorus was a simple early church believer; he was not an apostle, a teacher, or pastor. Moving from Paul, the apostle, to Timothy, his representative, and now to an ordinary believer, we learn that every believer is to be bold in his Christian testimony.

Onesiphorus shows some of the basic elements of true friendship. First, his loyalty did not depend on pleasant circumstances. Second, his loyalty did not depend on safe conditions. Third, his friendship did not smother, but rather refreshed. Fourth, a friend such as this is rare. All in Asia turned away from Paul, but Onesiphorus did not; he was one among many. Onesiphorus lived up to his name, which means *help-bringer*. Paul's circumstances were unpleasant—prison in the present, old age, almost certain execution in the days ahead, and no friends. But perhaps these should be viewed as blessings, for they left him with no one but the Lord.

The Charge to be Strong *or “Patterns for Service”*

II Timothy 2:1-26

THE PREPARATION FOR SERVICE 2:1

| “*You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*”

THE COMMAND FOR STRENGTH

The Tense of the Verb *Be Strong* Is Present

| The present tense means that the strength Timothy is to obtain is not a once-for-all matter, but rather a continuous day-by-day issue. The word *therefore* connects this command to the content of chapter 1. In the light of the courage of Paul and Onesiphorus, Timothy is to likewise be strong. This verse begins with an emphatic pronoun *you*, and thus, focuses directly and personally on Timothy.

The Mood of the Verb *Be Strong* Is Imperative

| The imperative mood is an appeal to the volition; choice is very much involved. Timothy is to choose to be strong, and the choice involves appropriation of the divine resources.

The Voice of the Verb *Be Strong* Is Passive

| The passive voice means the subject of the verb is acted upon. It is not a matter of muscle flexing, but rather a matter of allowing himself to be acted upon by God in such a way that he is infused with power. It points to the need for dependency upon Christ and His unlimited grace.

THE SOURCE OF STRENGTH

| The strength is not human in origin; it is the power that is available because of our union with Christ.

THE METHOD FOR SERVICE 2:2

“And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.”

THE APPLICATION OF PAUL’S TEACHING

The teaching of verse 2 is not necessarily a prescription for service in a local church today. First, one must note that verses 1 and 2 are addressed to Timothy; the word *you* is singularly and emphatically directed to Timothy. Second, one must remember that Timothy was an apostolic representative in a direct sense. We have no such representatives today except as we teach the words of the apostles.

THE OBLIGATION OF PAUL’S TEACHING

Timothy is made responsible for seeing that right doctrine is taught by others (I Timothy 1:3). II Timothy 2:2 tells how this is to be done. First, Timothy’s own understanding of truth must be correct. It is to consist of the things which he has heard from Paul. This alludes to II Timothy 1:13 where Timothy is commanded to retain the sound words that Paul has taught him. Timothy is not to be a creator of doctrine, but a protector of doctrine; Timothy does not receive direct revelation, but he is to pass on the direct revelation given to Paul. Second, there is to be no addition or modification of Pauline doctrine. The phrase *the things* and the word *these* refer to the same content of truth. The King James version brings this out very clearly by translating *these* as *the same*.

This verse is describing true apostolic succession. Apostolic succession is not succession of office, but succession of message. We are true to the apostles only when we are faithful to their doctrine. Verse 2 also shows that the chief qualification for a teacher is faithfulness, not success or outreach. To be faithful means to be one who can be depended upon to teach accurately and consistently regardless of circumstances.

THE PATTERNS FOR SERVICE 2:3-7

THE BELIEVER AS A SOLDIER 2:3-4

“Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.”

The Soldier Believer Maintains Separation

The Roman military system was comprised of two segments. First, there was the kernel of the military, which was the praetorian guard that was stationed in or near Rome. This segment was more

immediately under the emperor's control than were the units stationed in the provinces. Second, the army was made up of the legions. These were 28 to 30 in number, with each legion containing about 5500 men. It is probably the praetorian guard that Paul has in mind, since he is writing from Rome. The entire praetorian guard was aware that Paul was imprisoned for the preaching of the gospel (Philippians 1:12-13).

The command to *suffer hardship with me* repeats exactly the verb *join with me in suffering* found in II Timothy 1:8.

A recruit must dispose of civilian pursuits. His time belongs to the military, and he is to be constantly available for any and all service that it demands.

The Soldier Believer Maintains Affection

Although recruitment to the Roman army was theoretically by conscription, there was little difficulty in maintaining the army by means of voluntary enlistment. The typical soldier was a volunteer. To grasp the significance of the soldier metaphor, one would do well to consult the book *The Roman Soldier* written by G. R. Watson and published by Cornell University Press.

Affection for the Lord is the only valid motivation for service (Colossians 3:17). Paul considered himself a servant of the Lord alone (I Corinthians 4:1-4). The word *entangles* is passive voice. The soldier does not allow the affairs of life to weave a web of obligation that would interfere with his function as a soldier. Service for the Lord is always to be without distraction.

THE BELIEVER AS AN ATHLETE 2:5

“And also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.”

As an Athlete He Puts Forth Effort to Win

This is the only place in the Bible where the noun *athlete* appears. It is from the verb *athleo*, which means *to compete in the public games*. It is not merely a lap around the track, but an earnest effort that has winning as its goal.

As an Athlete He Practices a High Degree of Discipline

The Greek athlete was often required to spend as much as ten months in preparation for the contest. During this time, he had to engage in prescribed exercises and live a completely separated life. He was also placed on a very rigid diet; and if he broke training rules, he was disqualified and barred from engaging in the contest. The keeping of rules included the training rules; and thus, one could lose the contest without ever getting into the arena!

The words *win the prize* translate a single Greek verb. There are two words for a crown. First, there is *diadama* (*diadem*), which refers to the ruler's crown. Second, there is the *stephanos*, which refers to the victor's crown. The latter is the word used here. *Win the prize* could be translated *receive the victor's crown*.

THE BELIEVER AS A FARMER 2:6-7

"The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops. ⁷Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything."

This verse carries the idea of remuneration and reflects the truth of I Corinthians 9:7 that asks, "Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard, and does not eat the fruit of it?" There is another possible idea here: Taking the first share of the crops could be indicating that the farmer must be able to vouch for his produce.

THE SUFFERING OF SERVICE 2:8-13

THE PERFECT EXAMPLE 2:8

"Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel..."

The present tense command indicates this is to be Timothy's continual practice. That Christ is risen from the dead stresses His deity; that He is a descendant of David stresses His humanity. Timothy is to contemplate, not a dead Christ, but rather the risen, living Lord.

THE SAVING PURPOSE 2:9-10

A Fundamental Fact 2:9

"For which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal, but the word of God is not imprisoned."

Paul's only crime was loyalty to the truth of the gospel. The hostility of the world to the message of truth is directed toward the bearer of the message—a fundamental fact that is as true now as it was then. The encouraging thing, however, is the truth that the word of God can never be bound. The verb *imprisoned* expresses this in the form of a perfect tense showing finished, completed action; the word of God can never be bound.

An Eternal Glory 2:10

"For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory."

Paul does not hesitate to assert the doctrine of election while, at the same time, affirming his own suffering as a means to bring these chosen ones to salvation. The sphere in which salvation is found is expressed by the term *in Christ Jesus*, and the ultimate end of salvation is *eternal glory*.

The Faithful Saying 2:11-13

“It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him, ¹²if we endure, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will also deny us; ¹³if we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.”

These words comprise a short doctrinal readout. They may have been taken from an early hymn, for they have the rhythm of poetry. The saying comes in two parts—positive and negative. All four statements are first class conditional statements. This means the *if* statement is assumed to be true and could be translated *since*. Notice then, that the denial spoken of is not potential but real in Paul’s mind. In Luke 22:61 Peter denies the Lord, and yet he was a genuine believer. The Lord’s response of denying us must be understood within the context of the chapter. The subject under discussion is that of service, which would point to denial of reward and blessing, not salvation.

THE DISCIPLINE OF SERVICE 2:14-26

REMINDING OTHERS 2:14

“Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, and leads to the ruin of the hearers.”

About Trivial Matters 2:14a

Timothy is to charge teachers as though they were looking in the face of God. The issue is not to be focused on human personality; the issue is divinely given responsibility. The present tense of the verb *remind* shows this responsibility is ongoing and is always to be part of his ministry. The expression *wrangle about words* is a single compound word in Greek made up of the term *word* and the term *battle*. They are not to engage in “word battles.”

About Disastrous Results 2:14b

The word *ruin* is literally *turn upside down*, transliterated in English as *catastrophe*. This points to the disastrous results of engaging in word battles.

SEEKING APPROVAL 2:15

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.”

The Command Given 2:15a

The verb *be diligent* translates a word that literally means to be speedy, to make haste, to hurry, and thus, conveys the idea of diligence and zeal. The illustration is that of a workman who has nothing to fear when his work is carefully examined.

The Means Expressed 2:15b

The word *handling accurately* is *orthotomeo* and has been taken in several ways. It is a compound word made up of *ortho*, which means *straight*, and *tomeo*, which means *to cut*. First, it has been translated *rightly dividing*, as if it referred to the proper analysis of the word into its parts. Second, others have translated it *holding a straight course*, as if it referred to not comprising the truth. It seems it would be best to retain both ideas and translate *handling aright the word*. It is by means of the proper handling of the word of truth that the command to be a diligent workman is carried out.

SHUNNING BABBLINGS 2:16-18

The General Application 2:16-17a

“But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness,¹⁷ and their talk will spread like gangrene...”

The words *empty chatter* translate a single word *kenophonias*, which is a compound of *empty* and *sound*. This chatter will be shown to be the teaching of erroneous doctrine concerning the resurrection. As is true of all error, it has the tendency to spread, and thus, the forceful metaphor of *gangrene*. It is found in medical literature of a sore that eats into the flesh. It is for this reason that it must be brought to an immediate halt. The word translated *spread* is literally *will have pasture*.

The Specific Application 2:17b-18

“...Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,¹⁸ men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and thus they upset the faith of some.”

We know of Hymenaeus from I Timothy 1:20, where Paul excommunicated him or gave him over to Satan. We do not know exactly what error they taught concerning the resurrection, but apparently they spiritualized it rather than anticipating a literal bodily resurrection.

FORSAKING UNRIGHTEOUSNESS 2:19-22

The Firm Foundation 2:19

“Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness.’ ”

Timothy can be confident God has laid a *firm* (literally *solid*) foundation. This is all true in spite of the subversive teaching in which some were engaging. The verb *stands* is a perfect tense, showing a finished and enduring condition. The foundation probably refers to Christ and the apostles, as in I Corinthians 3:11, Ephesians 2:20, or Revelation 21:14. The one seal bears two inscriptions, each of which complements the other. The objective fact of God’s perfect knowledge of His own is expressed in the first inscription, taken from Numbers 16:5 in the Septuagint. The second is the consciousness of each believer of his relationship to the Lord with its imperative of holiness, supported by either Numbers 16:26 or Isaiah 52:11.

The Differing Vessels 2:20-21

“Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. ²¹Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.”

The Illustration Given 2:20

The vessels found in a house varied in two ways. First, they differed in the material from which each was made. Second, they differed in purpose for which each was used. The same expressions are found in Romans 9:21.

The Application Made 2:21

The illustration takes an interesting turn with this verse, for we find one may become a vessel of honor by purging himself of dishonor. The servant of God must keep himself useful, or honorable, in God’s sight. Thus, he will be prepared for every good work.

The Single Duty 2:22

“Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”

What Paul means by one cleansing oneself is now specified by a negative and then a positive statement. It is not enough that we flee evil; we must also pursue good. The pursuit of the latter is the means of fleeing. The noun *faith* here means *faithfulness*. It is interesting to note that purging the church of false teachers is not a

violation of love and peace. It is, as a matter of fact, the truest expression of love and the only true road to peace.

CORRECTING GENTLY 2:23-26

In Relationship to Himself 2:23-24

“But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. ²⁴And the Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged...”

The verb *refuse* means *don’t have anything to do with*. It is a strong word and refers not only to avoidance, but to actual and vigorous rejection. There are certain things that should not receive the dignity of one’s attention. The adjective *foolish* is used of dull or sluggish nerves and of a dull mind. The word *ignorant* is a noun meaning *instructed or taught* plus an alpha privative, which negates it, and thus, means *uninstructed and untaught*.

The requirement that he be able to teach is found also in I Timothy 3:2. The words *patient when wronged* are a positive translation of a negative concept. The Greek term is *anexikakos* and means *not resentful*. Resentment to wrong treatment is not to be part of a servant’s character.

In Relationship to Others 2:25-26

“...with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, ²⁶and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”

The Action to Take 2:25a

The presence of opposition is assumed. Where truth is taught, resistance will be experienced. The word translated *correcting* means *to instruct or to school*; and while this involves correction, the emphasis is positive. Teaching the word of God is the way to handle error. This action is not taken in response to their attack, but is to be viewed as a necessary action for their own good. Only when this is seen can it be done in gentleness.

The Hope to Maintain 2:25b-26

The verb *come to their senses* literally means *to return to soberness*. To hold to error is to do the will of Satan and thus be his servant.

The Charge to Stand

or “The Coming of Decadent Men”

II Timothy 3:1-17

THE PRESENCE OF DECADENT MEN 3:1-9

THEIR CHARACTER 3:1-5

Their Arrival 3:1

“But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.”

What is meant by the expression *last days*? If it is understood in the sense of Hebrews 1:1-2, it refers to the period between the first and second coming of Christ. It also has a prophetic sense in that epoch after epoch of evil men will be going from bad to worse, reaching a point of highest intensity before the Lord returns. This interpretation harmonizes with II Peter 3:3 and Jude 18. II Timothy 3:13 notes that these men will *proceed from bad to worse*.

The word *difficult* means *stress, hard to deal with*. It is used only one other place in the New Testament in Matthew 8:28, where it is rendered *violent* and refers to the activity of demons. The word *times* refers to epochs of time extending through church history, but becoming more intensive and extensive as the end nears.

Their Perversity 3:2-5

“For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, ⁴treacherous, reckless conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; ⁵holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these.”

Here are some eighteen vices characterizing men of the last days. The noun *men* should be taken in a generic sense, meaning mankind. It is interesting to note self-love is the first characteristic mentioned. The prime perversion is found in the area of man’s affections. The description of these men as *lovers of self* is the first of

three areas of perverted affection. The areas are self, money, and pleasure. The philosophy is that of “I love myself first, and I need money to purchase my pleasures.” All of this is set over against love for God. To be self-centered, money-centered, and pleasure-centered is proof that one is not God-centered.

To be *boastful* and *arrogant* is really a manifestation of self-love in that these characteristics center in one’s supposed accomplishments and imagined superiority to others. To be a *reviler* means *to speak evil of another*. The characteristic of being *disobedient to parents* shows that the self-love starts in childhood. It also shows the seriousness of this sin. It is spoken of here as one of the signs of the last days, and is used in Romans 1 in the company of sins such as slander, hating God, and murder, along with others.

The words *ungrateful*, *unholy*, *unloving* and *irreconcilable* are four single Greek words with an alpha privative attached to each (an *a* attached to a word negates it, such as the *a* in *atheist*). The emphasis, therefore, is on what is absent in their character. One who is self-centered would obviously be *ungrateful*, for thankfulness would be an admission of dependency on someone other than oneself; and after all, whatever comes to the self-centered person is his due anyway. To be without holiness means one has no respect for anything sacred. The word *unloving* is found only here and in Romans 1:31 where it means *they do not have the natural attachment for their kind which even appears in beasts of the field*. To be *irreconcilable* means *to refuse to make any binding agreement*.

The term *malicious gossips* translates the Greek word *diabolos*, from which we get the noun *devil*. It means *to slander*. The next three descriptions each return to the use of the alpha privative. To be *without self-control* is literally *no power to hold in*. To be *brutal* is to be *driven by passion*. The word *treacherous* is the word for a *traitor or betrayer* and points to the successors of Judas Iscariot. To be *reckless* means to be *rash, thoughtless, and impulsive*. The word *conceited* comes from the word for bellows and means *to be puffed up*.

With verse 5 we learn that all of these things are embodied in men who are religious, for they do hold a *form of godliness*. Timothy is to have nothing to do with (*avoid*) these kinds of men.

THEIR ACTIONS 3:6-8

Directed Toward Weak Women 3:6-7

“For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

The translation of the Greek verb *enduno* by the English *enter* does not really give us the vivid picture that is there. It means *to creep into, insinuate oneself into* or, as we might paraphrase, “worm one’s way in.” The expression *weak women* is a single word that means

little women. It is a contemptuous diminutive carrying the idea of being weak-willed.

Paul now lists the things that make these women little. First, they are *weighed down with sin*, which means the impostors appeal to their guilt complex, knowing that a sin-laden conscience is always seeking relief. The impulses may or may not be sexual.

Verse 7 indicates that these women apparently want to appear as learned people. These two verses reveal a cycle: guilt, desire, and endless search.

Illustrated by Jannes and Jambres 3:8

“And just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected as regards the faith.”

Jannes and Jambres are not mentioned in the Old Testament, but Jewish tradition holds that they are the two magicians who withstood Moses and Aaron. They are mentioned in *Targum of Jonathan* commenting on Exodus 7:11. Why, however, would Paul choose these two since there are many other examples of those who opposed truth? First, they are a good choice because they opposed Moses by imitating him (Exodus 7:11, 22). Second, they are a good choice because their defeat was so certain (Exodus 8:18-19, 9:11).

The word *depraved* is a perfect passive participle and means *to be utterly depraved*. The passive voice points to an act of judgment performed upon them, and the perfect tense indicates they have arrived at a permanently fixed state.

THE PRESENCE OF DELIVERED MEN 3:10-17

THE PRESENCE OF PAUL 3:10-11

“But you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, ¹¹persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord delivered me!”

The pronoun *you* is an emphatic personal pronoun and serves to separate Timothy from the kind of men Paul has been talking about. Think of the word *you* separating the depraved men of verses 1-9 from the godly men of verses 10-17. This section is charged with emotion as Paul recalls the past. His son Timothy has shown none of the weaknesses of the decadent men. The verb *followed* is a compound of the verb *follow* plus a preposition meaning *beside*, referring to a very careful and meticulous action.

Nine areas are presented where Timothy has carefully followed Paul. Each one is introduced by a separate definite article which is translated *my*. First, Paul's teaching refers to his doctrine. Second,

the word *conduct* is used only here in the New Testament and means *way of life or lifestyle*. Third, the noun *purpose* is most often used by Paul of God's purpose. Paul had adopted God's purpose as his own. Fourth, the word *faith* means *faithfulness*. Fifth, *my perseverance* brings the idea of patient longsuffering. Sixth, *my love* refers to the basic fruit of the Spirit produced in Paul's life by God. Seventh, *my patience* refers to load carrying capability. Eighth, *persecutions* literally means *pursuits*. Ninth, the *sufferings* that Timothy would know about are now listed. The persecutions from which Paul was delivered were at Antioch (Acts 13:14, 45, 50), Iconium (Acts 14:1-5), and Lystra (Acts 14:6-19).

THE PRESENCE OF OTHERS 3:12-13

"And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.¹³ But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived."

The Godly 3:12

The word *persecuted* means *to pursue*. The figure is that of Christians being hunted down like wild beasts. This world is hostile to Christ, and one cannot live in a way that truly honors Him without persecution.

The Evil 3:13

The Greek word for *impostor* originally meant *a wailer, howler*, and then *a juggler, enchanter* and eventually *a deceiver or impostor*. It is interesting to note that those who deceive others eventually fall victim to self-delusion.

THE PRESENCE OF TIMOTHY 3:14-17

The Place of God's Word 3:14-15

"You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them;¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Timothy is now reminded of his childhood training in the word of God. That Timothy is uniquely different is introduced by the emphatic personal pronoun that begins verse 14. Timothy was made unique by his early training in the word of God.

Timothy had four lines of defense working for him. First, Timothy knew doctrine and had settled convictions concerning it. Second, Timothy had a heritage of good teachers in his mother and grandmother. These two women had fulfilled this responsibility without the aid of Timothy's father. They were women who were known to have genuine faith (II Timothy 1:5). Third, the training he had received in the word of God was started at a very early age. The

noun translated *childhood* is the Greek word *brephos*, which is used to describe an unborn child, or one just born—a *baby*. Fourth, Timothy had been raised under the influence of the right literature. These are here called *sacred writings*, which is a direct reference to the written word of God, the Old Testament.

The latter part of verse 15 shows us the word has inherent power by saying it is *able*. We also are taught that the word of God provides true wisdom, for it is *able to give you the wisdom*. That wisdom which it provides *leads to salvation*, which in turn demands faith for appropriation.

The Nature of God's Word 3:16-17

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

The Origin of Scripture 3:16a

The words *inspired by God* translate the single Greek word *theopneustos*. It is a compound word meaning *God-breathed*. The word is probably built on the concept of Deuteronomy 8:3, which says that man lives "by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord." The stress is on the origin of the word from the mind of the Lord, not the mind of man. The word *inspired* is a little misleading in that it means *to breathe in*, whereas *theopneustos* means *to breathe out*. Nothing could be more closely associated with a person than his breath, and nothing is more a part of God than His word.

The Use of Scripture 3:16b

Paul begins with a general statement that Scripture is profitable for *teaching*, which refers to teaching content or teaching material; it refers to Scripture as the curriculum. The next three items specify the areas where the teaching material applies.

IT IS PROFITABLE FOR REPROOF

The word used here is found in Luke 3:19 and John 3:20 and indicates the pointing out of sin. It is used in John 16:8 and translated *convict* for the work of the Holy Spirit in producing conviction in men.

IT IS PROFITABLE FOR CORRECTION

This means *to restore to an upright state*.

IT IS PROFITABLE FOR TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

The word *paipeia* shows up in our English word *pedagogy*. It includes teaching, correction, rebuke and admonition.

The Sufficiency of Scripture 3:17

This verse plays on the words *adequate* and *equipped*, which are the same Greek root. The first is the Greek word *artios*, and the second

is the same word with a preposition prefixed to it in order to intensify is meaning. We could paraphrase “that the man of God may be adequate, yes, completely adequate for every good work.” There is no good work that God requires of us that His word does not prepare us to produce.

NOTES

The Charge to Preach the Word

or “Paul’s Last Commands”

II Timothy 4:1-8

PREACH THE WORD BECAUSE CHRIST IS GOING TO RETURN 4:1-2

THE SETTING FOR THE COMMAND 4:1

“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom...”

Jesus Christ had committed a message to the apostle Paul by direct revelation (Galatians 1:11-12). Now, in II Timothy 4, Paul tells us that he has faithfully proclaimed that message and is soon to die. Timothy is to be responsible for the continuation and protection of Paul’s teaching. We thus have Jesus Christ, Paul, and Timothy standing here together as Paul charges Timothy with his duty.

To show the solemnity of the occasion, Timothy is reminded of three things about Jesus Christ. First, He is to appear. There are several words for the return of Christ. There is *parousia*, which emphasizes personal presence. The one used here is *epiphaneia* which stresses visible presence. Second, He is going to judge. Timothy will have to account for his faithfulness in serving the Lord. Third, He is going to reign. His reign means that His will is going to be executed on earth. Timothy’s ministry will see that believers are prepared to reign with Him.

THE CONTENT OF THE COMMAND 4:2

“...preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.”

What Timothy Is To Preach 4:2a

The *word* refers to the total body of revelation communicated by God to Paul (I Thessalonians 1:6, Galatians 6:6). This both defines

and confines the message to divine revelation. The verb *preach* is the Greek word *karusso*. Unfortunately, in the minds of many, the idea of a preacher is that of a clergyman giving a message with much animation. For Timothy, the image conveyed by this word is that of an imperial herald, a spokesman for the emperor. As such, kingly authority is implied. A herald does not choose his message; he declares precisely the one given him.

When Timothy Is to Preach 4:2b

The words *in season* mean a *favorable time*, and *out of season* means an *unfavorable time*. He is saying that there is no time when the preaching of the word is not appropriate. It is to be proclaimed any time and all the time, anywhere and everywhere.

How Timothy Is to Preach 4:2c

He is to *reprove*, which carries the idea of pointing out sin and convincing the hearer. See the same word in connection with II Timothy 3:16. To *rebuke* refers to strong and serious language intended to bring an activity to an end (Matthew 8:26) or to prevent it from occurring in the first place (Matthew 16:22). To *exhort* is a blend of encouragement and admonition.

This is all to be done with *great patience and instruction*. The word *patience* carries two ideas with it. First, it refers to the kind of person who does not easily succumb under suffering and pressure. Second, it refers to the kind of person who has the self-restraint not to retaliate when wronged. The method to be used is expressed by the word *instruction*. Men are not won to truth by scolding them; they are won to truth by teaching them. John Calvin said, "Those who are strong only in fervor and sharpness, but are not fortified with solid doctrine, weary themselves in their vigorous efforts, make a great noise, rave...make no headway because they build without a foundation."

PREACH THE WORD BECAUSE APOSTASY IS GOING TO ARRIVE 4:3-5

THE DEPARTURE OF THE MASSES 4:3-4

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; ⁴and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths."

The Time Will Be Characterized by an Intolerance of Doctrine 4:3a

The word *endure* is a legal technical term for accepting a complaint. Here it means *to tolerate, to put up with something*. The word *sound* means *healthy and health bestowing*.

The Time Will Be Characterized by Desire for Personal Gratification 4:3b

Having one's ears tickled means that personal gratification is one's only desire. Since man's desire for self-gratification is insatiable, the following statement is a logical follow-up.

The Time Will Be Characterized by Many Teachers 4:3c

The word *accumulate* literally means *to accumulate in piles*. To qualify as a new teacher, all one needs to do is find a new place to scratch ears. The criteria will not be truth but the hearer's own desires. Satan always serves his food cafeteria style—go through the line, pick what you want—there is always something for everyone's taste.

The Time Will Be Characterized by an Embracing of Error 4:4

There are two ideas presented about those who wish to have their ears tickled. First, they turn their ears toward the false teacher. Second, they position their ears in such a way as to be assured of never hearing truth even if it should pass their way.

The first verb of verse 4 is translated *will turn away*. It is the active voice, meaning the subject is the producer of the action. The second verb of verse 4 is translated *will turn aside* and is passive voice, meaning the subject is acted upon. The second verb is showing the consequences of the action taken in the first verb. The verb for *turn aside* is a medical term for dislocating a limb.

THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE FEW 4:5

"But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."

The words *but you* are a breath of fresh air as Timothy is now directly addressed. The word *sober* means *to be serious, alert, and calm*. To *do the work of an evangelist* means the gospel is to be the center of his ministry. The fulfilling of his ministry points to full concentration on the will of God concerning service.

PREACH THE WORD BECAUSE PAUL IS ABOUT TO DEPART 4:6-8

PAUL ANTICIPATES HIS DEATH 4:6

| *“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.”*

His Life Is an Offering for God

| The *drink offering* was the lesser part of the offering poured out on the major part (Numbers 15:1-10). Paul uses the word one other time in Philippians 2:17 where the major sacrifice is viewed as the Philippian believer’s faith; the minor sacrifice was the ministry of Paul toward them. This points to the great and genuine humility of Paul.

His Death Is a Departure to God

| Paul’s consciousness that death is near shows that the believer is immortal until the Lord’s work for him is through. Nero never could have taken Paul’s life if God’s work for him had not been over. Paul knows that there is a time to die, and he faces it with grace.

PAUL REFLECTS UPON HIS LIFE 4:7

| *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith...”*

He Has Lived Like a Greek Wrestler 4:7a

He Has Lived Like a Greek Runner 4:7b

| The word translated *course* refers to a race course, a track.

He Has Lived Like a Roman Soldier 4:7c

| *Kept the faith* refers to the protection of it against the enemy—the Judaizers, the legalists, the gnostics, the philosophers, etc.

PAUL FORESEES HIS FUTURE HOPE 4:8

| *“...in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.”*

It Will Be a Coronation Day for Paul the Apostle

| Eternity is viewed as a prince walking into the coronation room. In the next few days he will stand before one of the cruelest, most unrighteous judges one could ever face—the dreaded Nero! Notice,

however, how unconcerned Paul is over this prospect. Paul has mastered the technique of looking past the unrighteous judge to see the righteous judge. He looks past the suffering, the pressures, and injustices of this life to the perfection of eternity, living in the presence of God.

It Will Be a Coronation Day for All Who Love Christ's Appearing

| The privilege of which Paul speaks may be ours too.

NOTES

Paul's Last Words

or "Deserted by Men but Upheld by God"

II Timothy 4:9-22

PAUL'S URGENT REQUEST 4:9-15

"Make every effort to come to me soon; ¹⁰for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service. ¹²But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. ¹³When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments. ¹⁴Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. ¹⁵Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching."

CONCERNING TIMOTHY 4:9

Paul had already said that he longed to see Timothy (1:4), and now that longing takes the form of a request. As independent as Paul was as an apostle, he still knew the need for the companionship of a fellow believer. Paul's ministry was nearly over, and he doubtless wanted to see his successor face to face.

CONCERNING DEMAS 4:10A

Demas had been a fellow-worker in past years (Colossians 4:14, Philemon 24). The Greek word translated *deserted* carries the idea of *leaving in the lurch* or *abandoning another*. Demas was not willing to pay the price of hardship in the cause of the gospel and chose rather the comforts that this world has to offer.

CONCERNING CRESCENS 4:10B

This is the only place that Crescens is mentioned, and therefore we know only that he had gone to Galatia for reasons unknown. He was one of the relatively unknown believers who was of service to Paul.

CONCERNING TITUS 4:10C

The mention of Titus as having departed from Rome shows that he had completed his work in Crete (Titus 1:5). There is no word of censure concerning the departure of Crescens and Titus as there was with Demas. This would lead us to believe that Paul had sent them off on some sort of special mission. Titus had been a faithful associate of Paul at the Jerusalem conference (Galatians 2:1-3); he had helped Paul with some of the problems at Corinth (II Corinthians 7:13-16, 8:6, 16-18, 12:18) and had represented Paul in Crete.

CONCERNING LUKE 4:11A

Luke may have been a fellow prisoner with Paul. As a doctor he may have been instrumental in prolonging Paul's life. There is great pathos in the words *only Luke is with me*.

CONCERNING MARK 4:11B

Mark had a varied career. He first appeared in Acts 12:12 and went to the house of Mary when Peter was delivered from prison. Paul had taken him along as his helper on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:5), but he later forsook Paul (Acts 13:13). Later he joined Paul in his first Roman imprisonment (Colossians 4:10). Mark is an example of one who failed at first but later succeeded, and Paul desires his presence in his final days.

CONCERNING TYCHICUS 4:12

The numerous references to Tychicus in Paul's letters show he was a trustworthy companion. He was the bearer of Paul's letters to the Colossians (4:7-8) and the Ephesians (6:21-22). Some of Paul's workers had brought grief through their lack of dedication, as in the case of Demas. Others made good after initial failure, as with Mark; and yet, still others were faithful all the way, as with Tychicus and Luke.

CONCERNING ALEXANDER 4:13-15

The cloak was a circular blanket with a hole for the head to pass through. We do not know the contents of the books and parchments. Perhaps they were important papers, such as documents proving Paul's Roman citizenship. On the other hand, they may have been copies of the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament. Paul's request for a cloak and books was reiterated by William Tyndale in 1536 who, when in prison, asked for a woolen shirt but, above all, his Hebrew Bible, grammar, and dictionary.

The words of verse 14 are all we know of Alexander the copper-smith. Since it is a common name, it would be perilous to associate him with Alexander of Acts 19:33 or I Timothy 1:20. The words *will repay* are not a wish, but rather a prophecy. Alexander had apparently opposed Paul in both his preaching and at his trial in Rome.

PAUL'S PRESENT CONDITION 4:16-18

THE DELIVERY HE EXPERIENCED 4:16-17

"At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. ¹⁷But the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth."

Paul's first defense may refer to the preliminary examination made in connection with his second imprisonment, or it is also possible to connect it with his first imprisonment mentioned in Acts 28:20, which resulted in his release. The word *defense* is *apologia* and is transliterated in English as *apology*, saying, "I was wrong." The word in Greek, however, is a speech in defense and says, "I was right."

The magnanimous character of Paul is shown by his desire that those who deserted him not be held accountable. Paul realizes that prison can become a pulpit for the proclamation of the gospel.

It is not likely that the lion refers to Nero because Paul had not yet escaped his power, nor does it mean Paul had been thrown to the lions because this could not happen to a Roman citizen. The lion is probably a figure of great danger.

THE DELIVERY HE ANTICIPATED 4:18

"The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen."

The mention of God's heavenly kingdom shows that the delivery that he anticipated was spiritual, not physical. Upon death, Paul is certain of his immediate place in the eternal kingdom of Christ. This very thought causes a benediction of praise to rise from his lips. The verb *will deliver* is the same as found in the Lord's prayer (Matthew 6:13).

PAUL'S SINCERE GREETINGS 4:19-22

"Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. ²⁰Erastus remained at Corinth, but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus. ²¹Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, also Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren. ²²The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you."

Prisca and Aquila were tent makers with whom Paul had fellowship in the gospel. When Paul first arrived in Corinth, he was short of funds and found both employment and lodging with these two. In four of the six places where they are mentioned, Prisca's name comes first, perhaps showing she was the stronger character.

Erastus was probably the man mentioned in Romans 16:23 as the city's director of public works. The closing benediction is in two parts. The first part is for Timothy alone, as shown by the singular pronoun. The *you* in the last sentence is plural, however, and thus directed toward all believers.

NOTES

Observations on Church Organization

The virtues of the overseer should be true of all believers with the exception of two.

All believers are not required to be skillful teachers, and all believers cannot avoid being new converts. Verse 8 begins speaking of deacons as to their qualifications but does not tell us what their duty is other than to serve. This is the case because their modes of service will vary; the duty of the overseer does not. Wherever he serves, he is to superintend and teach. This is unchanged by time and place.

In no place do we find either overseers or deacons formed into what we know as a board or committee.

Whether in the nation or in the church, there are always great leaders; but there are never great committees. No one can see a committee finding a place in a hall of fame. Unfortunately, the church has structured itself after corporate America.

Within a local assembly there may or may not be a plurality of elders.

The number of overseers depends upon how many men God equips to meet the requirements of I Timothy 3:1-7. Even where there is a plurality of elders, there must be a single head. According to Acts 20:17, there was a plurality at Ephesus; and yet when the churches are addressed in Revelation 2-3, it is to a single messenger (probably pastor) in each case. This harmonizes with the fact that all the relationships involving more than one person have single headships. Even in the Trinity, God the Father is the first person, with the Son and Spirit in submission. This has nothing to do with equality, for each is deity in the most absolute sense of the word. Marriage involves only two people, but only one is head. Why should we think that God abandons the concept with the church?

The key issue in the church is not its organization, but its mission.

| It is the power of the word of God, not the power of a board, that makes the church effective. It is not the compounded wisdom of many but the simple adherence to the word of God that is needed.

A major feature of the New Testament church organization was simplicity, not complexity.

The fundamental principle of church organization is this: Organize only as ministries arise that need organization.

| In II Corinthians 8:19ff, there was a ministry to fulfill in delivering money to the poor Jerusalem church. They organized in order to get the money delivered. In Acts 6:1 a ministry arose—there were widows to feed—and the church chose seven men to get the job done. Offices were never created in order to give believers a chance to serve.

Operation of a local church by democratic rule makes a fatal assumption: The majority of the church is spiritually mature.

| Rule by the majority is inevitably the rule of carnality. This is unfortunate, but in most all cases it is true.

As can be seen in all passages dealing with deacons, deacons have no ruling authority at all.

| The very word means *servant*, and servants take orders; they do not give them. The greatest service that a deacon can render is to help create the kind of atmosphere in the church that will be conducive to edification through the teaching of the word of God. He should be ever alert to that which he can do to enhance and preserve this priority. Only when he has done this can he say he has truly served.

Observations on the Believer and Old Age

This doctrinal readout is presented here because Paul is nearly seventy years of age, and death is near. It is appropriate that we look to Scripture for our viewpoint on old age.

THE PREPARATION FOR OLD AGE: NUMBERS 13-14

Preparation for old age is rooted in the decisions of one's youth. In Numbers 13:25-31 we are told how the land that God had promised Israel was spied out. The spies had returned with an encouraging report about the land but a discouraging report about its inhabitants: They were strong and the cities were fortified. The people were in consternation, but "Caleb quieted the people...and said, 'We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we shall surely overcome it.'"

Here is the the key to the long life and vitality of Caleb: determination to believe the promises of God. At this point, he is forty-five years old; he will still believe God at age eighty-five. For Caleb, difficulties were challenges on the way to goals. Given a promise and a problem, Caleb always saw the promise. Along with Joshua, he represented two out of two million that thought this way. A theme runs throughout passages commenting on old age: The quality of old age is determined by the commitments of youth.

Several times God repeats the truth that Caleb *followed me fully* (Numbers 32:11-12, Deuteronomy 1:36). As a result of forty years of believing God's promise, Caleb says, "I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me... (Joshua 14:11)." God supernaturally preserves those who trust His word. Scripture knows nothing of declining years!

THE PRAYER OF OLD AGE: PSALM 71

The psalmist speaks of his past of faith (71:1-8), his present of faith (71:9-16), and his future of faith (71:17-24). We must remember that the quality of our old age is determined by the commitments of

youth. Looking back he says, “O Lord God, Thou art my confidence from my youth.”

The psalmist addresses God concerning three of the concerns of old age. First, the problem of declining strength—“Do not forsake me when my strength fails....” Second, the prospect of being abandoned—“Do not cast me off in the time of old age....” Third, the fear of being victimized is expressed in the suggestion of his enemies who say, “God has forsaken him; pursue and seize him, for there is no one to deliver.” Note that each fear is expressed to God—fellowship is always maintained, he knows how to trust.

The psalmist is aware of three things he can continue to do until the day he dies. He can trust (*I will hope continually*); he can grow (*And will praise Thee yet more and more...*); and he can witness (*My mouth shall tell of Thy righteousness...*), 71:14-15.

Our bodies may age but our volition does not; we can always choose to honor the Lord.

THE SUPPORT OF OLD AGE: ISAIAH 46:3-4

Change is an obvious feature of old age. There is physical change, a daily increasing of things one can no longer physically accomplish. Along with this comes social change; lifelong friends and associates are dying—even one’s lifelong mate is lost, and one’s own years are numbered.

Losses increase with age—loss of sight, hearing, appetite, abilities, friends, etc. In this context, nothing is more needed than a constant—an unchanging something or, more specifically, an unchanging someone. God relates Himself to the aging believer by speaking of them as those “...who have been borne by Me from birth, and have been carried from the womb; even to your old age, I shall be the same, and even to your graying years I shall bear you! I have done it, and I shall carry you; and I shall bear you, and I shall deliver you.”

Here is the dual support of old age: the constancy of God and the care of God. Old age is a rare opportunity, for it is only when we see things slip away that we appreciate the unchangeableness of God. Old age teaches us to appreciate the immutability of God who says, “I, the Lord, do not change... (Malachi 3:6).”

THE FRUIT OF OLD AGE: PSALM 92:12-15

First, the psalmist establishes imagery pointing to the palm tree, the cedar in Lebanon. The palm tree referred to is the date-bearing type. A single tree of this kind has been known to produce as many as six-hundred pounds of dates per season! It is also a tree that remains green in both winter and summer. The secret of the fruitfulness lies in that they are planted in the house of the Lord. This is the important thing to note. In fellowship with the Lord, we are fruitful at any age and abundantly so! Second, the psalmist applies

this truth to man saying, “They will still yield fruit in old age....” Old age is a climactic opportunity for fruit-bearing; it is as though all of life has been prelude to the fruit-bearing of old age. In light of this, age is not to be feared but anticipated, for it can be a time of great fruitfulness.

THE PERIL OF OLD AGE: ECCLESIASTES 4:13

Here is a person who never fully committed himself to wisdom. Three things picture this man. First, he is old but not mature. Second, he is foolish. Third, he has stopped learning. The words *no longer* indicate that he once learned, but somewhere along the line he stopped—he retired! He retired intellectually, and he retired spiritually. As a result, he has now become irascible. The Hebrew text is a bit stronger than our English translations in saying, *who will no more be admonished*. He adamantly resists instruction. The old saying, “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks” hardly stands up to the teaching of the word of God. Growth is incumbent on God’s children at nine and ninety. The command to grow in grace is never rescinded because of age.

THE SECRET OF OLD AGE: PROVERBS 10:27

Typical of Proverbs is the poignant, terse statement; and we have such a statement in the words that say, “The fear of the Lord prolongs life....” Our relationship to the Lord is the single most important issue in life, and it touches everything else—here it relates to our age. To fear the Lord means to respect His authority. When we so honor God, we promote our own well-being and health. We are meant to glorify God, and doing so brings nothing but well-being to ourselves.

THE CULMINATION OF OLD AGE: II TIMOTHY 4:6-8

It is instructive to note some of the dying words of those who spent a lifetime honoring the Lord. Concerning the death of Abraham, we read, “And Abraham breathed his last and died in a ripe old age, an old man and satisfied with life; and he was gathered to his people (Genesis 25:8).”

The same quiet dignity and sense of fulfillment is present in the death of Isaac for we read, “And Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, an old man of ripe age... (Genesis 35:29).” The death of David is the same: “Then he died in a ripe old age, full of days, riches and honor... (I Chronicles 29:28).”

Finally, recorded in II Timothy 4:6-8 are Paul’s words concerning his imminent death, “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.” Once

again, peace in death rests on a life of obedience to the will of God and the good choices of earlier years. May it so be with each of God's own children.

NOTES