

Letters to Lead By

1 TIMOTHY 1:12–20

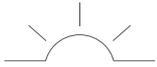
FIRST DAY: Introduction

Has God truly forgiven me of my past? Does God truly want to use my life for His glory? Paul answered both of these questions with a resounding, *Yes!* God saved Paul, entrusted him with the gospel, and enabled him to minister, so certainly God is willing and able to save, entrust with the gospel, and empower anyone! *But God had mercy on me [Paul] so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of His great patience with even the worst sinners* (1 Timothy 1:16 NLT).

Paul used his own testimony as a means to encourage Timothy. As a minister to the church of Ephesus, Timothy had been tasked with a huge undertaking. No doubt, without Paul's guiding presence, Timothy was feeling under-qualified, intimidated, and unworthy. Paul was reminding Timothy that it is God who saves, entrusts, equips, and enables.

Have you felt under-qualified, intimidated, or unworthy to serve God? Think again! Even as God greatly used Paul to minister His gospel, He wants to use you! It is God who will enable you and equip you with His power for service.

Ask God to enable you to serve Him.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Greek word for *enabled* is *endynamoo* and speaks of *strong empowerment and a great increase in strength*.

SECOND DAY: Read 1 Timothy 1:12–13

1. Following his opening exhortation concerning sound doctrine and the gospel (1 Timothy 1:3–11), Paul gave a personal testimony of the power of the gospel in his own life. In 1 Timothy 1:11 Paul spoke of the *glorious gospel* that God had *committed* to his *trust*. What was his response to this entrustment? 1 Timothy 1:12a

a. Why is the gospel a glorious entrustment?

2. In 1 Timothy 1:12b Paul declared that the Lord had *enabled* or strengthened him for his calling. Link this with the following verses and note what ministers to you:

a. 2 Corinthians 3:5

b. 2 Corinthians 12:9–10

c. Philippians 4:13

(1) Share a testimony of the Lord's enabling in your life.

- (2) How does the assurance of God's enabling inspire you?
3. The word *counted* means *commanded, deemed, or considered*. According to 1 Timothy 1:12c, how did God count Paul?
- a. Connect this with Matthew 25:23 and 1 Corinthians 4:2 to remark on the importance of faithfulness.
4. According to 1 Timothy 1:12d, the Lord had put Paul *into the ministry*. The Greek word used for *ministry* can also mean *service*. How does this help you have a clearer perspective of *ministry*?
5. Use 1 Timothy 1:13a to comment on why Paul's calling to *ministry* and qualification was so remarkable.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In Greek, the word *insolent (hubristes)* literally means *violently arrogant*, and is where we get our English word *hubris*.

a. According to 1 Timothy 1:13b, what was the source of Paul's *unbelief*?

(1) What does this convey to you about:

(a) Unbelief

(b) Blasphemers

(c) God's mercy

6. From your study today, share something from Paul's testimony that speaks to you.

THIRD DAY: Read 1 Timothy 1:14

1. Paul was aware of God's undeserved blessing upon his life. Use 1 Timothy 1:14a to complete Paul's statement identifying the source of this blessing:

And the _____ of our _____ was _____.

a. *Grace* is often defined as God's *unmerited favor*. Use the following passages to further comment on how God's *grace* was *exceedingly abundant* toward Paul:

(1) Acts 26:9–18

(2) 1 Corinthians 15:9–10

(3) Galatians 1:13–16a

(4) Ephesians 3:8–9

(a) What aspect of Paul's testimony most speaks to you?

(b) Share a way God's *grace* has been *exceedingly abundant* in your life.

2. According to 1 Timothy 1:14b, what accompanied God's *grace* in Paul's life?

a. What does this convey to you about the evidence of *grace*?

- b. Who is the source of these things? 1 Timothy 1:14c

 - c. Paul often joined these two things together in his epistles. What relationship do you find between them?
3. Share a way you could use Paul's testimony of *grace* to encourage someone else.

FOURTH DAY: Read 1 Timothy 1:15–17

1. In light of Paul's testimony, he declared a *faithful saying* that is *worthy of all acceptance*. Use 1 Timothy 1:15a to record this saying below:

_____ *came into the world to* _____.

- a. Link this with Romans 1:16 to describe the gospel committed to Paul.

- b. Share why you believe this statement is:
(1) *Faithful* (trustworthy)



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Paul used the phrase, *This is a faithful saying*, five times in the Pastoral Epistles to emphasize the factual truth and importance of his declaration.

(2) *Worthy* to be accepted by all

2. What was Paul's self-designation in light of this *saying*?
1 Timothy 1:15b

a. Observe that Paul called himself the *chief* of sinners in the present tense, not the past tense. What do you find noteworthy about this?

3. Paul believed he was the worst of *sinners*. Yet God could use him for a purpose. Read 1 Timothy 1:16 (NLT) and answer the questions that follow concerning this: *But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of His great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in Him and receive eternal life.*

a. For what reason did God have *mercy* on Paul?

(1) Share a way you have experienced God's *great patience* in your own life.

b. What hope would Paul's testimony give to *others*?

(1) Pastor Chuck Smith said, *God showed mercy to the chiefest of sinners so that no one would feel they were out of the reach of God's love and grace.* How does this encourage you?

(2) What do you find remarkable about Paul's declaration?

4. In light of all God had done for him, Paul broke out in praise. Use 1 Timothy 1:17 to briefly share how each attribute of God speaks to you:

a. *King eternal*

b. *Immortal*

c. *Invisible*

d. *God who alone is wise*

(1) How do these attributes highlight the greatness of:

(a) God's grace

(b) God's enabling power

5. List a few of the ways God's great grace is showcased in your life.

FIFTH DAY: Read 1 Timothy 1:18–20

1. Paul first met Timothy at Lystra. The brethren there had commended Timothy to Paul (Acts 16:1–2). Perhaps it was these brethren who saw God's hand on Timothy and prophesied over him; or perhaps Paul himself laid hands on Timothy and prayed for him (2 Timothy 1:6). In either case, prophecy is the affirmation and confirmation of God's Word and work in our lives. In consideration of these prophecies mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:18a, what military term did Paul employ toward Timothy?
 - a. *Prophecies* are what God says about us and His intentions for our lives. With this in mind, what would these prophecies enable Timothy to do? 1 Timothy 1:18c

(1) Considering Timothy was ministering in a very pagan city (Ephesus), why was this reminder important?

(2) Use Ephesians 6:10–18 to share how you can *wage the good warfare*.

2. In 1 Timothy 1:19 (NLT) Paul exhorted Timothy, saying, *Cling to your faith in Christ, and keep your conscience clear. For some people have deliberately violated their consciences; as a result, their faith has been shipwrecked.* Use this exhortation to answer the following:

a. What does the word *cling* suggest to you?

(1) Why is this exhortation so pertinent?

b. Suggest a way for believers to maintain a clear *conscience*.

- c. To *deliberately* violate the *conscience* is to persist in disobedience to God. Use Hymenaeus and Alexander to remark on the danger of this. 1 Timothy 1:19b–20a

3. What had Paul done with Hymenaeus and Alexander?
1 Timothy 1:20b
 - a. Notice that Paul did this in order that these men might *learn* a lesson. God’s discipline is always restorative—not punitive. Link this truth with Hebrews 12:10–11 and share your thoughts.

4. What lesson or warning from today’s study is foremost in your heart?

SIXTH DAY: Review

1. How has your study this week spoken to you concerning:
 - a. God's enabling
 - b. God's gospel
 - c. God's grace
 - d. God's goodness
 - e. God's greatness
 - f. God's discipline

2. Take a moment to pray for someone in the church to be encouraged, enabled, and equipped by God's exceedingly abundant grace.