

Letters to Lead By

1 TIMOTHY 1:1–11

FIRST DAY: Introduction

There is nothing quite like a personal handwritten letter from someone you look up to, love, and respect! This is, no doubt, how Timothy felt when he received two epistles (letters) from his mentor and father in the faith, Paul.

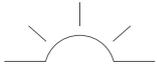
The relationship Paul had with Timothy was stronger than a mere apprenticeship. Timothy was like a beloved son to the aging apostle. Paul commended Timothy to the Philippians as one who was *like-minded* and would *sincerely care for your estate*, a man of *proven character*, and who served with Paul in the gospel as *a son with his father*.

In Timothy, Paul found a young man who shared his passion for Jesus, the gospel, and believers. Timothy had become the pastor of the church in Ephesus. It was a great undertaking because Ephesus was a large city heavily influenced by idolatry, the occult, and commerce. Though many had been saved during Paul's time of ministry there (Acts 19), opposition and persecution arose from the silversmiths who created idols.

Timothy not only had to deal with opposition, but he also had to choose and raise up leadership, protect the fellowship from bad doctrine, safeguard believers from false teachers, set an example, and continue to establish the congregants in the Word of God. The task was enormous, especially considering Timothy's youth. So Paul wrote Timothy a very personal and instructional epistle on how to lead the church in Ephesus.

As we study these epistles from Paul to Timothy, we will learn how to effectively pray for our church leadership, as well as become active participants in all God is doing in the church and the world today. Paul's charge to Timothy is applicable to all of us as we endeavor to serve the Lord Jesus in the specific callings He has given us.

*Ask God to show you wondrous things in His Word
as you study the epistles to Timothy.*



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

First Timothy 1:1 states that Paul was an *apostle by the commandment of God*. An *apostle* was one sent with a special calling or purpose. Paul was the only apostle commissioned after Jesus's ascension to heaven (Acts 9:15–17; 1 Corinthians 15:9–10). The Greek word *epitage* used for *commandment* denotes a royal commission.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Pastor David Guzik notes, *At this very time, the title savior was used in the worship of the Roman Emperor*.¹

SECOND DAY: Read 1 Timothy 1:1–2

1. As the book of 1 Timothy opens, we are introduced to Paul, the author of this epistle. According to 1 Timothy 1:1a, how did Paul identify himself?
 - a. *By* what means was Paul given this calling? 1 Timothy 1:1b

2. Use 1 Timothy 1:1c to fill in the blanks concerning Paul's description of the One who called him:
 - a. *God our* _____
 - (1) What does it mean to you that God is your *Savior*?

 - b. *The Lord Jesus Christ, our* _____
 - (1) How does this minister to you?

3. This epistle was written to a young man named Timothy. Use 1 Timothy 1:2a to remark on Paul's regard for him.

a. Use the following passages to describe Timothy:

(1) Acts 16:1–5

(2) 1 Corinthians 4:17

(3) Philippians 2:19–22

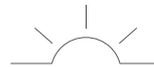
(4) 1 Thessalonians 3:1–2

4. As Paul opened his epistle to Timothy, he blessed him. Use 1 Timothy 1:2b to write a definition of each term and what this blessing from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord means to you:

a. *Grace*

b. *Mercy*

c. *Peace*



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Timothy means honoring God or honored by God. Perhaps this name was given to him by his godly mother, Eunice (2 Timothy 1:5).

5. Only in the pastoral epistles to Timothy and Titus does Paul include *mercy* in his opening blessing. Why do you think pastors and leaders need an extra measure of *mercy*?

THIRD DAY: Read 1 Timothy 1:3–4

1. Paul and Timothy had traveled and ministered together during Paul's second missionary journey. After Paul had gone *into Macedonia*, he *urged* Timothy to *remain in Ephesus* (1 Timothy 1:3a). Read Acts 19:17–20, 23–34 to note and remark on the environment Timothy was to *remain* and minister in.
2. As a minister in the church of Ephesus, what *charge* was Timothy to give to *some* errant members of the congregation? 1 Timothy 1:3b
 - a. The word *charge* implies *strict orders from a superior officer*. What does this convey about Timothy's task?
 - b. The Greek word for *sound doctrine* (*heterodidaskaleo*) refers to holding and not deviating from the truths of Scripture. How does this explain the seriousness of Paul's *charge*?

3. In 1 Timothy 1:4, Paul instructed Timothy to *charge* the people not to *give heed*, or attention, to *fables and endless genealogies*. *Fables* are urban legends or extra-biblical stories that are fabricated, embellished, or greatly exaggerated. *Genealogies* are a way of tracing someone's origins back to some notable figure in order to gain authority or prominence. Using this background, answer the following questions:
- a. Why are *fables* harmful to the church?

 - b. Why is an emphasis on sound *doctrine* imperative?

 - c. Why do you think a preoccupation with genealogies is dangerous to sound *doctrine*? See also Luke 3:8 and Galatians 3:28–29.

 - d. Why do you think *fables and endless genealogies* cause *disputes*?
4. *Rather*, what would be better to give heed to? 1 Timothy 1:4b

a. How do you think this focus can help believers avoid *disputes*?

b. To *edify* means to *build up*. Share a time you received *godly edification*.

(1) Suggest a few ways to impart *godly edification*.

5. Note something from Paul's exhortation to Timothy that you feel is an essential reminder for:

a. You

b. The church today

FOURTH DAY: Read 1 Timothy 1:5–7

1. Paul had essentially commanded Timothy to establish the Ephesian church in good doctrine. According to 1 Timothy 1:5a, *the purpose of the commandment is love*. It is always good to remember that the Ten Commandments are relational rather than just moral. How did Jesus sum up the law in Matthew 22:36–40?

- a. Link this with John 13:35 and remark on the essentiality of *love*.

- b. In 1 Timothy 1:5b, Paul stated the origin of this love. How do you see the relationship between love and:
 - (1) *A pure heart* (1 Peter 1:22)

 - (2) *A good conscience* (2 Corinthians 1:12)

 - (3) *A sincere faith* (Galatians 5:6)

2. In 1 Timothy 1:6a (NLT), Paul emphasized that *some people have missed this whole point* concerning love and were drifting into legalism. According to 1 Timothy 1:6b–7 (NLT), *They have turned away from these things and spend their time in meaningless discussions. They want to be known as teachers of the law of Moses, but they don't know what they are talking about, even though they speak so confidently.* Use this passage to list some of the effects of turning away from the ultimate *purpose of the commandment—love*.

- a. Why is this a vital warning for believers today? See also 1 Corinthians 13:1–3.
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3. Suggest a few ways you might endeavor to turn a person back to the *true purpose of the commandment*.

FIFTH DAY: Read 1 Timothy 1:8–11

1. There were those in Ephesus wasting time trying to teach the *law* without understanding its true purpose. What did Paul declare about the *law* itself? 1 Timothy 1:8
 - a. Link this with Romans 7:12,14 and share your thoughts.

2. According to 1 Timothy 1:9–10a the *law* is:
 - a. *Not made for* (verse 9a)

 - b. *Made for* (verses 9b–10a)

- a. Use the following verses to underscore Paul's passion for the gospel:

- (1) Romans 1:16

- (2) 1 Corinthians 9:16–18

- (3) 1 Thessalonians 2:4

6. As a believer in Jesus, you have been entrusted with the *glorious gospel*. How does this inspire you?

SIXTH DAY: Review

1. From your study this week, share an impression concerning:
 - a. Paul

 - b. Timothy

- c. The church in Ephesus
2. Record a brief takeaway concerning the following terms Paul used as he opened his epistle to Timothy:
 - a. Apostle
 - b. Charge
 - c. Sound doctrine
 - d. Love
 - e. Law
 - f. Gospel
3. Take a moment to apply what you have studied this week and pray for your church.