

Title: *An Introduction to 1Timothy*

Scripture: 1 Timothy 1:1-2; 3:14-16

We open our Bibles, and we see 39 books in the Old Testament; 39 books, written over a period of 1100 or so years. And though the writing was done over a period of about 1100 years, it is recording history that covers at least 3500 years and maybe much longer. Then we can turn to our New Testament and we see another 27 books; 27 books written over a period of 40-50 years and written about events that took place over about a 75 year period. We can look at this whole Bible and it took about 40 authors to write all of it; 40 authors with one supernatural author, God, guiding the process. But all these authors, all these situations under which the various authors were inspired to write. It's kind of hard to keep up with all the details, isn't it? It's kind of hard to know all the details, isn't it? The Bible is one grand story, but there are many smaller stories in it. The Bible is one grand book, but there are 66 smaller books within it. It is hard for someone to simply pick up the Bible and read a book, for example, Daniel. But it is not as difficult if one reads the introduction to Daniel from a Bible dictionary or study Bible. That introduction will help one to understand that Daniel was exiled to Babylon around 605 BC and so he is writing as a devout Jewish man in a pagan nation. This is true in the New Testament as well.

Today, we will begin a series on the Pastoral Epistles, which are 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus. My purpose is to give you some background information about these three epistles, specifically 1 Timothy. In this study you will see the importance of 1 Timothy and you will see the importance of knowing how to conduct oneself in the church.

- I. First who wrote 1 Timothy and to whom was this letter written to?
 - a. The letter starts by saying: Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus...
 - b. So, Paul the apostle wrote this letter.
 - c. The second verse of the epistle says it is written "to Timothy my true son in the faith."
 - i. Letters in the first century would start with the name of the sender and then would state the name of the addressee.
 - ii. Something I read states:

iii. *Educated persons in antiquity often addressed a letter to a specific person, but intended for that letter to be published or to be an open letter to a group. [This is true also of this letter. Paul knew that this letter would be shared. Another New Testament letter we see like this is Ephesians.] Paul publicly supports Timothy's authority through this letter; it functions as an open "letter of recommendation" for him. (Patrons often sent letters of recommendation on behalf of their clients, or political dependents. Such letters, if meant to be used only once, would be sealed; Timothy's letter, however, could be publicly read in the house-church gatherings, reinforcing Timothy's apostolic authorization.)¹*

- d. Paul and Timothy go back a few years; probably 15 or more years. In Acts chapter 16 we find that Timothy is first mentioned. Timothy's mother was Jewish and she was a believer. His father was Greek and it doesn't say anything else about him.
- e. Since verse 2 says that Timothy is Paul's "true son in the faith," it is most likely that Paul led him to Christ.
- f. The book of Acts shows us that Timothy ministered with Paul in Berea (Acts 17:14), Athens (Acts 17:15), Corinth (Acts 18:5; 2Cor 1:19), and accompanied him on his trip to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4).
- g. In Phil 2 starting in verse 19 Paul uses Timothy as a positive example.
Look what Paul writes in verse 22:

But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.

- h. It is quite evident that Paul had enough trust in Timothy to leave him in Ephesus as the pastor of that church.

¹ Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament (1 Ti 1:2)*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

- i. But Paul was Timothy's mentor. He was his spiritual advisor.
- ii. Have you ever felt all alone while doing a certain task? Maybe you thought a certain task was simply too big for you?
- iii. When I was 21, I was promoted to be a shift manager at McDonalds. There were several days in the beginning when the thought hit me, "I'm all alone. My supervisor who has been training me has left." But you know what?
 1. But then again, I would have never learned to manage the shift on my own if I wasn't left alone. I could always rely on the supervisor who was in the back office.
 2. I remember one time, about a month into my time as a manager, one of the supervisors was in the back doing something (we had 3 supervisors who were all part owners of the franchise), but he was within ear shot. His name was Allen. Allen was a tall man who seemed more laid back than the other supervisors. He always had a good sense of humor and spoke respectful to the managers and the crew. This particular day, I saw something that needed cleaned up and so I looked towards a few people in the grill area and I said, "Can one of you clean that up?" Allen said, "Steve come over here." He continued, "Steve you can't just say 'someone,' you have to directly say a name. If you say, 'someone clean that up,' none of them will do it." Instead, I was to say, "Anthony, will you clean that up."
 3. That was good advice which I never forgot.
- iv. At one point when Mercedes was about 4 months old, I found myself alone for the first long day with our four month old daughter Mercedes. Meagan had to work, and I was off work, so for 8 hours I was in charge. Sure, I had watched her before for a few hours and even as much as three, but this was eight hours. I asked Meagan, "Is tomorrow bath day for Mercedes?" She said,

“You can give her a bath.” I shouldn’t have asked. In the end, the day came together quite well. I gave her some tummy time, which she hated; I gave her some applesauce, which she liked; I gave her some bananas, which she loved, and everything went smoothly.

- v. In 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy Paul writes to Timothy who is all alone as the pastor in Ephesus. Paul had mentored him and now it was time for Timothy to run the ship.
- vi. I am sure Timothy had many memories of Paul’s teaching. I am sure maybe he even had some special scrolls to help him, but he is still alone.
- vii. Here in 1 Timothy 4:12 Paul instructs Timothy not to let people look down on him because he is young. Then in 5:23 Paul tells Timothy to drink a little wine for his stomach because of his illnesses. Now, maybe his illnesses were simple coincidences, but maybe they were because of the stressful situations he faced as pastor at the church in Ephesus.
- viii. It is also quite likely that Timothy was an introvert. The New Testament describes him as someone shy and Paul is trying to motivate him. Look with me at 2 Timothy 1:6-8 says:

⁶ This is why I remind you to keep using the gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. Now let it grow, as a small flame grows into a fire.⁷ God did not give us a spirit that makes us afraid but a spirit of power and love and self-control.

⁸ So do not be ashamed to tell people about our Lord Jesus, and do not be ashamed of me, in prison for the Lord.

- ix. 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy shows us that pastors cannot afford to pull back from asking the tough questions. Pastors don’t have the luxury of ignoring problems. As we get into 1 Timothy and later 2 Timothy and Titus we will see Paul challenging these young pastors to persevere as pastors.

- x. Now, Timothy a young man of somewhere between 30 and 35 years of age is left in charge of this church by himself.
 - 1. Let me add, Obviously, Jesus said He would be with us and so Timothy does have the Holy Spirit with Him. When I say “all alone,” I am talking about a physical sense (Matthew 28:20).
 - 2. No longer can Timothy let Paul fight the battles.
 - 3. No longer can Timothy let Paul take care of the standards for church leaders (1 Tim 3).
 - 4. No longer can Timothy let Paul deal with the false doctrine creeping into the church (1:3-7; 4:1-3; 6:3-5).
 - 5. Timothy must deal with these things.
 - a. But Paul sends a letter to help.
 - b. Now, Timothy must rely on the Holy Spirit, his training, the Scriptures and Paul’s writings to help him.

II. So, Paul sends Timothy these letters, inspired by God, in order to give him instructions. We find Paul’s purpose statement in 1 Timothy 3:14-15. Let’s read those verses and talk briefly about them:

¹⁴ Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, ¹⁵ if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

- a. Paul says that he hopes to come to him soon. So, obviously, Paul doesn’t want to leave Timothy alone for too long. But, Timothy is alone.
- b. So, Paul writes this letter so “people will know how to conduct themselves in God’s household.” That is exactly what verse 15 says.

- c. 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus are what are called, *Pastoral Epistles*. This is because they deal with issues related to pastoring a church. If you read through 1 Timothy you will see that there were problems with false doctrine (1:3-7; 4:1-3; 6:3-5), disorder in worship (2:1-15), the need for qualified leaders (3:1-14) and materialism (6:6-19).
 - i. The church at Ephesus, where Timothy was at, had problems just like any other church. The letters of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus show that these problems must be dealt with.
 - ii. If we learn anything from these Pastoral Epistles it is that these problems cannot be ignored. Problems must be confronted and they must be confronted with the Scriptures.
 - d. Chapter two, three and most of chapter four are all about corporate worship and church leadership.
 - e. We will get into these passages in the next few months, but I do encourage you to read them sooner.
- III. Before we move on let's talk about location.
- a. Timothy is in Ephesus which was a wealthy and highly influential port city in the Roman province of Asia, renowned for its temple of Artemis (Diana).
 - b. Interesting that in verse 15: Paul says “*you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.* MacArthur writes: Paul’s image may have referred to the magnificent temple of Diana (Artemis) in Ephesus, which was supported by 127 gold-plated marble pillars. The word translated “support” (NASB) or “foundation” (NIV) appears only here in the New Testament and denotes the foundation on which a building rests. The church**

upholds the truth of God’s revealed Word. The Truth: The content of Christian faith recorded in Scripture and summed up in vs 16.²

IV. Now, why talk about the Pastoral Epistles now?

- a. What do you think?
- b. Do the issues that affected the church in Ephesus close to 2000 years ago apply to our church today?
- c. Do Paul’s instructions in chapter 3 to seek godly leaders in the church apply to us?
- d. Do Paul’s instructions in chapter 2 that relate to conduct in worship apply to us?
- e. Do Paul’s instructions about false doctrine creeping into the church apply to us? (1:3-7; 4:1-3; 6:3-5)
- f. Do Paul’s instructions about materialism in the church apply to us? (chapter 6:6-19)

I read of a father who was in his study reading, and he heard a commotion outside the window. It was his daughter who was outside playing with her friends. And it got louder and it got louder and more heated and more argumentative, until finally he could restrain himself no longer. And he pushed the window open and said, “Stop it. Honey, what’s wrong?” And after the reprimand she responded quickly, “But, Daddy, we were just playing church.”³

I find it terrible, such an insult that churches have these reputations.

For the next few minutes what I will say is not necessarily an attack on any of the leaders of this church. I am speaking more in generalities about the church overall. I will be speaking about the church’s need to

² MacArthur Study Bible page 1835

³ Swindoll, Charles R. Read in *Swindoll’s Ultimate Book of Illustrations & Quotes*. Thomas Nelson. Nashville, TN 1998. Page 95. Excerpted from Leslie Flynn, *Great Church Flights*

reflect the Scriptures back on our own lives and how we conduct ourselves in God's household.

- i. The answer to all the questions which I asked a minute ago is a resounding "yes." The whole of the Bible applies to us and especially the Pastoral Epistles which are First and Second Timothy and Titus. Don't take this to mean that the church is way off track.
- ii. Every church must be continually and consistently in check with the scriptures. Every believer must do this. The church is made up of believers.
- iii. The devil is trying to invade our churches.
 1. In the movie the Patriot, Mel Gibson's character is part of the militia during the Revolutionary War. His character orders his men to shoot the officers first.
 2. The devil is attacking our churches and one way that has been done is by attacking the leaders of the church.
 - a. The response has been lowering the bar for leadership. But we don't see that in Scripture.
 - b. In 1 Timothy you will see a high bar for leadership. This is a high standard, but everyone can rise to the occasion.
 - c. Why wouldn't we rise to the occasion? Why aren't Christ followers rising to the occasion? What an honor it is to serve the Lord? What an honor it should be to serve the Lord?
 - d. Yet, I know of churches with leaders who are rarely in worship. These are people serving on a church board, serving even on the diaconate boards that are not in the churches worship service. Not even once a month.

iv. The devil is at work now as much as he ever was and therefore, we must read and apply these Scriptures to our church.

1. You know how we do this?
2. One instruction, one person at a time.
3. This letter is written to a church. A church is a holistic body. This means we have several people making up an organization. So, as I teach through this letter, every leader, every person, including myself, must be applying the instructions to ourselves.
 - a. This is true whether you are called to be a church leader or not. Jesus said if we want to be a follower of Him we must carry our cross, meaning be that committed. (Luke 14:27) There is no PART-Time Christianity. Either you are a Christ follower, in process of being sold out for Jesus; or you are not a Christ follower at all.
 - b. So I want to stop any of you who might be thinking, “Oh well, I am not a church leader.” Every Christ follower is called to be committed to the Lord. The leaders simply MUST be held accountable to this commitment.
4. We will only be as good as our leaders.
5. As we walk through this epistle and the other two Pastoral Epistles you will see that Paul sets a high standard for church leadership. God sets that standard. We can't lower that standard. All of our leaders, all Christians are capable of being raised to the standard.

I love babies. I think others ought to have as many as they wish. I think it's a delightful, enjoyable experience to watch babies grow up and to become little people, little men and women, adolescents, and functioning persons. But you and I

know that there are some things about little babies that are not very attractive. We humor them because they're babies.

Here's a list of things: they are dependent and demanding. They are unable to feed themselves. They are unable to stay out of messes. They love to be the center of attention. They are driven by impulses such as hunger, pain, sleep. They're irritated when they are dirty, even though they made the mess, and you've gotta clean it up. They have no manners, no control. They have little attention span, no concern for others, no abilities or skills.

Now these are natural things that are part of babyhood. But when you see adults with those characteristics, something tragic has happened, something terribly unfunny. The Christian who is not interested in growing wants to be entertained. He wants a diet of milk when he cries for it. He wants his way. And he's gonna get it, no matter how many he will have to disrupt to get it.

You see, in order for a Christian to handle solid food, he has to have a growing, mature digestive system. He needs teeth. He needs to have an appetite that is cultivated over a period of time for deep things, for the solid things of God. Spiritual babies must grow up. Some of the most difficult people to live with in the church of Jesus Christ are those that have grown old in the Lord but haven't grown up in Him.⁴

6. All I can say is that in the American church we have Christians who are babies and refuse to grow up, they are capable, but they don't want to. They would rather say: "Everyone makes mistakes," "No one's perfect," "God forgives." And all that is true. But you are capable of more. Christians need to live in holiness and there are certain expectations in worship and in the church. We must get back to them.

So, 1 Timothy, do you know something about it? I hope you are challenged to study the background of these 66 books as well as the books themselves. I hope you are challenged to understand that the Bible gives instructions on how to

⁴ Swindoll, Charles R. Read in *Swindoll's Ultimate Book of Illustrations & Quotes*. Thomas Nelson. Nashville, TN 1998. Page 80.

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conduct oneself in the church. I hope that you will read through 1Timothy this week and begin the process of applying this letter to your life. Over the next several months I hope this short letter will continue to guide your growth in Christ.