



**1 TIMOTHY 1-3 AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS; MINISTERIAL QUALIFICATIONS**

With the study of 1 Timothy, we begin a section called “the Pastoral Epistles” since Paul wrote to two of his young ministers instructing them on how to pastor a church. They include both Epistles to Timothy and one to Titus. Paul directs this letter, probably from Macedonia, to Timothy, who was in Ephesus, and was written around the years A.D. 62-66, after Paul is released from a Roman prison.

He begins, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope, To Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith” (1 Tim. 1:1-4). The phrase “godly edification” is better translated as “God’s work” which *Expositor’s* brings out, “Paul declares such teachings ‘promote controversies rather than *God’s work*--which is by faith.”

Paul addresses this Epistle to young Timothy, one of his closest assistants. On his second trip to Lystra, where he already knew his mother and grandmother, he then hired Timothy on.

He also mentions God the Father in this context as “our Savior.” So it is *not* only Jesus who is our Savior, but *also* God the Father. Paul states this *five times* in his Pastoral Epistles – 1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3, Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4, and is also found in Jude 25. Yes, God the Father is our ultimate Savior—He sent His Son to die for our sins and bring us salvation. He was the one who instructed His Son to do this because of the love He had for humanity (John 3:16), and this is a very important truth to remember--to include Him as our Savior and not just Jesus Christ.

The main reason for sending this letter was the false teachings going on in Ephesus that Timothy now had to quell. They had to do with “fables and endless genealogies” which are further explained in verses 5-7: “Now the *purpose* [or goal, from *telos*, see Rom. 10:4] of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, from which *some, having strayed*, have turned aside to idle talk, *desiring to be teachers of the law*, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.”

Paul also mentioned this same problem in Titus 1:14, of “not giving heed to *Jewish fables and commandments of men* who turn from the truth.”

So some brethren in Ephesus (probably with Jewish backgrounds) were trying to show off their Jewish genealogy and using Jewish fables and traditions to impress members of their knowledge and pedigree to become the church’s leaders.

*The Jewish New Testament Commentary* notes, “If those leading the movement were misguided Jewish believers, they were following the pattern of unjustifiable pride seen earlier in the antagonists of John the Baptist (Mt. 3:9), of Jesus (John 8:39) and Paul (2 Cor. 11:22). Also they were rejecting Paul’s teaching that Gentile believers are already children of Abraham through trusting [or faith in Christ], (1 Tim. 2:4; Rom. 4:11–12, 16; Gal. 3:29) and therefore have no need to produce a family tree with Jews in it.” Since these false teachers were using God’s law wrongly by focusing on O. T. genealogies, legends and traditions (especially as found in the Midrash), Paul now shows the right approach to God’s law, not as based on legalism.

He says, “But we know that the law is good *if one uses it lawfully* [for its right purpose], knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust” (1 Tim. 1:9-11).

Notice he equates here the law with “sound doctrine” which is included in the “glorious gospel of the blessed God.” Of course, when you are keeping God’s law through God’s spirit, there is no fear of punishment. For instance, when you keep the Sabbath, you are not “worried” about God’s law, just as when you are driving normally, you are not aware of the enforcement of traffic laws. Only when you break them does the law have power to condemn and then there is a fear of punishment.

So, apparently, these false teachers were teaching God’s law as an end in itself [legalism], instead of it being a means to an end. For the “law” cannot save you, it can only show you what you should do and of the punishment if you don’t obey.

Paul says it clearly in Gal. 3:21-22, "Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there *had* been a law given which *could have given life*, truly righteousness would have been by the law. But the Scripture has confined all *under sin*, that the promise *by faith* in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe." So the Law cannot save since it *can't forgive sin*. Only through Jesus Christ's sacrifice can sin be truly forgiven. That is Paul's point: Law and grace each have a part to do.

It is interesting that the list of sin-breakers includes "sodomites." *Expositor's* explains, "Paul goes on to say that law is made for adulterers and 'perverts.' The last term is *arsenokoitais*, which means 'male homosexuals.' The word occurs only once elsewhere in the N.T., in 1 Corinthians 6:9, where it is stated that 'homosexual offenders' will not inherit the kingdom of God. Despite its condonation by some church leaders today, homosexuality is categorically condemned in both the O.T. and N.T. It is the peculiar sin for which God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. It is widely recognized as one of the causes for the downfall of the Roman Empire, and its rapid increase today in Europe and North America poses a threat to the future of Western civilization."

Paul continues, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen" (1 Tim. 1:12-17).

After talking about law-breakers, Paul focuses on himself and how God had so much mercy on him. He recognized his former sins, which included killing Stephen--and many more people. Yet, he said he did it in ignorance, thinking he was doing God a service. Paul considered himself the worst of sinners, and kept humble by remembering this, so he could show

a lot of mercy and love to others. As Jesus said of the sinful woman who repented and washed his feet with her hair, "Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little" (Luke 7:47).

Paul then says, "This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have *suffered shipwreck*, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1 Tim. 1:18-20).

Here, Paul specifies two of those false teachers, Hymenaeus and Alexander. Hymenaeus is mentioned again in 2 Tim. 2:17-18, "Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some." This idea is mentioned in 1 Cor. 15:12 and 2 Thes. 2:2, where some thought Christ had returned "in spirit" but not bodily. Alexander is mentioned later in 2 Tim. 4:14-15, "Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm."

These two were suspended from the Church and left to be on their own in Satan's world until they repented. Sometimes Church discipline is needed to remove those sowing wrong teachings.

Next, Paul says, "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

Here are four different words used to describe prayer – (1) supplications (Gk. *deeseis*) expressing a desire or a need. He wants us to bring our 'requests' to Him and always has a listening ear. (2) prayers (Gk. *proseuche*) the addressing of God (3) intercessions (Gk. *enteuxis*) to intercede for someone who needs God's help (4) thanksgiving (*eucharistia*) is thanking God for what He has done in the past for us and it strengthens our faith to believe He will meet our needs in the future.

Paul exhorts the brethren to pray for those who are in authority so members can live peaceably and

unmolested. *Expositor's* comments, "Prayers of these varied types are to be made 'for everyone,' but especially 'for kings and all those in authority.' The Gk. term *basileus* ('king') was applied in that day to the emperor at Rome, as well as to lesser rulers. When it is remembered that the Roman emperor when Paul wrote this Epistle was the cruel monster Nero--who later put Paul and Peter to death--it will be realized that we should pray for our present rulers, *no matter how unreasonable they may seem to be.*" It is a good reminder for us.

He says, "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control" (1 Tim. 2:5-15).

Here, Christ is shown to be the *only* mediator we have with God the Father. The idea of priests as mediators hearing confessions and determining what "act" or penitence has to be done to forgive the sin is clearly wrong. He is our only Mediator.

Next, Paul mentions women should attend Church in modest apparel, showing good judgment in dress and not wear showy or enticing outfits. Barclay mentions, "In Greek society there were women whose whole life consisted in elaborate dressing and the braiding of the hair. In Rome, Pliny tells us of a bride, Lollia Paulina, whose bridal dress cost the equivalent of 432,000 British pounds (US \$600,000). Even the Greeks and the Romans were shocked at the love of dress and of adornment which characterized some of their women." This still frequently happens in our day!

Paul also doesn't want women to "rule" over the Church, becoming pastors or elders. *The Tyndale NT Commentary* mentions, "That women should learn in silence is in full accord with 1 Cor. 14:34-35...[this] was designed to curb the tendencies of newly emancipated Christian women to abuse their new-found freedom by indecorously *lording* over men. Such excesses would bring disrepute on the whole Christian community, as had probably happened in Corinth, and called for firm handling."

Paul then mentions that one of the greatest roles a woman can play, if possible, is the privilege of motherhood, for then she can learn so many godly virtues through caring for children--such as selflessness, humility, patience, love and mercy.

He now focuses on the qualifications of a minister. "This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (1 Tim. 3:1-7).

The first thing he mentions is that it is not an embarrassment to aspire to the ministry, but a noble desire. After all, a member is called to serve God in whatever capacity God wants, and that includes, for men, being a minister. Then Paul lists 15 qualifications, which of course, are general guidelines and not meant to be fulfilled perfectly, or you would then need a "perfect" person who never sins. But they are, nonetheless, general "fruits" that a potential minister should show.

The first is being "blameless" or having a good reputation with those on the outside and not being known as rowdy. Next time we will continue with these important prerequisites for the ministry.