

Dickson
Teacher's Bible

1 TIMOTHY



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WRITER

The author of this personal letter to one with whom Paul had made many journeys, was Paul, an apostle of Jesus (See “Writer” in intro. to Rm). He identified himself in the first verse of the letter, and thus, there is no reason to question Paul’s statement that he was the writer.

DATE

The first Roman imprisonment of Paul occurred around A.D. 61 to 63. It was either immediately before or during this imprisonment that he wrote this letter to Timothy. From statements that he made in 1 & 2 Timothy, and the letter to Titus, it is evident that he was released from this first imprisonment, and subsequently traveled to Crete (Ti 1:5), Corinth (2 Tm 4:20), Dalmatia (2 Tm 4:10), Nicopolis (Ti 3:12), Troas (2 Tm 4:13), Miletus (2 Tm 4:20), possibly Ephesus (1:3), and possibly Spain (See Rm 15:24,28; see comments at end of At 28). Paul was arrested and imprisoned a second time by Roman authorities. Immediately before this imprisonment, he wrote a letter to Titus (Ti 3:12), and then during the imprisonment he wrote 2 Timothy (2 Tm 4:6-8). It was during his final imprisonment around A.D. 66,67 that he suffered martyrdom at the hands of Nero after Nero had launched his personal vendetta against Christians.

THEME

Paul expressed the theme of the letter when he wrote, “*But if I tarry long, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*” (3:15). Paul wrote to Timothy to instruct him concerning his work and behavior as an evangelist.

PURPOSE

The instructions that Paul gives to Timothy can be divided into two major purposes. He wrote (1) to stop the influence of judaizing teachers who had adopted Gnostic philosophies, and (2) to give instructions to Timothy concerning the application of Christian behavioral principles in the function of Christians as the organic body of Christ. Since Timothy was a long companion of Paul as an evangelist, Paul wrote concerning his behavior and spiritual ministry needs of the disciples.

TIMOTHY’S BACKGROUND

Both 1 & 2 Timothy were directed to Timothy, whose name means “honor to

God.” He was an evangelist, teacher and companion of Paul who was born in Lystra in a cross-cultural marriage between a Greek father and a Jewish mother. He traveled with Paul as a fellow worker (At 16:1-3; 20:4). He was also with Paul when Paul was in prison during the first imprisonment (Cl 1:1; Pl 1). According to Hebrews 13:23, Timothy himself was evidently imprisoned for preaching the gospel. Timothy was with Paul during the last days of Paul’s second imprisonment (2 Tm 4:11,21). Timothy preached extensively in Ephesus and the surrounding area (1:3). However, he worked primarily as an evangelist in establishing and edifying new converts (See comments 1 Th 3:1-8). Concerning his person, Timothy was possibly a timid person who had some personal insecurities (See 2 Tm 1:6-8). He had some physical problems that may have originated from his stressful ministry in Asia (Compare 5:23). However, he was a very dedicated person, having been taught the Scriptures from his youth (2 Tm 1:5; 3:15), and as a disciple, was a zealous worker in his youth (At 16:1,2).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the 2nd century of the history of the church, the concepts of Gnosticism became more organized and prominent among the disciples. It was at this time that a distorted view concerning the nature of Christ was developing, and thus, many were led into a great apostasy from the truth of the gospel in the 2nd century.

In the decades preceding the establishment of the church in A.D. 30, the teachings of the Gnostic heresy had their beginnings in Greek, Roman, the Far East, and subsequently, Jewish religion and philosophy. When converts came from the religions of these cultural groups, it was only a matter of time before the religious beliefs and philosophies that later generated into the Gnostic Heresy would find their way into the church. At the time the New Testament letters were being written by the inspired writers, the invasion of Gnostic theologies had already started to come into the thinking of many Christians. It seems that one of the concerns of Paul in this letter, as well as other New Testament writers, was to write principles of truth that would guard the church against the great apostasy that would later come in the 2nd century (See comments Cl 1 & 1 Jn). The apostasy would be so great that we would assume that the Holy Spirit would have prepared the early church against the Gnostic heresy. When studying through the material of 1 Timothy, one is immediately made aware of the fact that Paul has in mind Gnostic theologies that had to be confronted at this time in the area where Timothy was ministering, for it seems that the Gnostic heresy first found its seat among the disciples in the Asia Minor area. From there it spread throughout the church to the point of causing the great heresy of the 2nd century.

The Greek word from which the word “gnosticism” is derived means “to know.” The basic teaching of Gnosticism is that all matter is evil. Only spirit is good.

Several different sects of Gnosticism developed by the middle of the 2nd century. Every sect, however, maintained the world view that matter was evil and stood opposed to the spirit which was the only thing that existed that was considered good. The world view of the Gnostic generally consisted of the following teachings:

A. God is light, good and eternal. Matter is also eternal. However, matter is evil. "Creation" of the world as it is resulted from matter which is evil. Since God is so good that He could not contact evil matter, then creation resulted from the last of a succession of "aeons" or emanations that digressed from God. God sent out the initial emanation ("aeon"). This emanation sent out another which in turn sent another. A digression of emanations occurred the further the emanations descended from the original realm of God. The result of this digression was that the last emanation ("aeon") formed (created) the world of evil matter. The genealogy of the emanations varied from one sect of Gnostics to another. In order for one to understand the genealogy of emanations, the Gnostic believed that one had to acquire the greatest level of inner knowledge, or become aware of one's inner most spiritual being (Compare 1:4; 6:4,5).

B. Some Gnostics also concluded that if matter is evil, then the body was evil, for the body was of the material world. This world view led to two opposing extremes. (1) Some Gnostics believed that the material, and thus the evil body, must be deprived of physical needs such as food and sex before one could attain a knowledge of the true spiritual being. In order to acquire this knowledge, the body had be subjected to severe discipline (See 4:1-3). The result of this belief was the teaching of asceticism, a total denial of the flesh in order to discipline the body. Judaistic regulations concerning foods were often combined with Gnostic beliefs. A syncretism of the two beliefs laid the foundation for the infiltration of asceticism into the church through the conversion of Gnostic Jews of Asia Minor. (2) Some Gnostics concluded that since the body was evil matter, then it was really not important. The body's desires could be fulfilled in any way, both physically and morally (See 4:3). This led to immorality among some who claimed that fornication was not a sin against the body since the body was of the material world, and thus, had no influence over the spirit.

C. The Gnostics also reasoned that if the body is matter, and therefore evil, then there can be no resurrection of the material body (See 2 Tm 2:17,18). Since matter is evil, the physical body is evil, and thus, will not be resurrected. Once it dies, then it is terminated. There was thus no resurrection of the dead (See comments 1 Co 15).

D. Redemption to the Gnostic was not redemption from sins. Redemption was through self-awareness or illumination to be redeemed from the material world. In order to acquire this redemption, one had to be enlightened to a higher knowledge that enabled one to understand true reality. He must become aware of the “divine spark” (*pneuma*) in himself to escape the material world at death in order to attain the spiritual realm of existence. The enlightenment of this knowledge was the key to the Gnostic’s “redemption.” He was “redeemed” from the material realm by being enlightened concerning the *pneuma*. One had to be enlightened of the *gnosis* (“knowledge”) before he could become aware of his own spiritual condition. In the Christian community, this enlightenment was associated with Jesus who descended from the spirit world in order to enlighten those who were confined to the physical world. Those who through knowledge (*gnosis*) were enlightened concerning their material condition, were thus “redeemed.” This special enlightenment led to an arrogance among Gnostic false teachers in the early church who had accepted Gnostic teachings (Compare 1:5-7; 6:4). This sect of Gnostics believed that only certain classes of people could acquire this secret knowledge, and thus, release themselves (“redeem”) from the confines of the material world when they died (See 2:4).

Jewish Gnosticism was a particular problem in the early church. The Jewish teachings concerning foods and genealogies were easily mingled with Far East mysticism that later developed into Gnosticism in the Near East. As Jews were converted, the Jewish Gnostics became a major problem in the church. Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus deal extensively with the problem of Jewish Gnosticism (See 1:4; 1:7; 2:4,5; 4:1-4,7,10; 6:4; 2 Tm 2:16-18,23; 4:4; Ti 1:14; see also 1, 2, 3 Jn). Since the Gnostic Heresy would cause a great apostasy in the latter part of the 1st century, and throughout the 2nd century, biblical interpreters must assume that the Holy Spirit prepared the early church for this heresy. Since the heresy had its roots in Asia Minor, we see in the New Testament letters that were addressed to individuals and churches in the region, principal teachings against what would later become formalized Gnostic teachings. In the 2nd century, these teachers would distort the incarnation, and thus, lead many disciples away from fundamental teachings of the New Testament.

CHAPTER 1

Charge to Timothy (1:1-20)

Outline: (1) Introduction (1:1,2), (2) Lawful use of the law (1:3-11), (3) Testimony of God’s grace (1:12-17), (4) Charge to Timothy (1:18-20)

INTRODUCTION

1:1,2 *By the commandment of God:*

The emphasis of the statement here is that God laid on Paul a dictate to accomplish a mission. His call into service took place on the Damascus road (At 9:11-15). He was thus put into service (1:12), separated from his worldly ambitions for the sake of preaching the gospel (Rm 1:1; At 13:2). He was made a prisoner for Jesus

(Ep 3:1). **Our Savior:** God the Father is the only one who can save us from our sin, for it is against Him that sin is committed (See Dt 32:15; Ps 24:5; Lk 1:46,47). **Our hope:** Jesus was raised from the dead in order to give us hope of being raised never to die again (Ps 43:5; Cl 1:27; 1 Jn 3:2,3; see comments 1 Co 15:20-22). **A true son:** Timothy was Paul's companion on many of his journeys (See At 16:1-3; 20:4; Cl 1:1; Pl 1; see 1 Co 16:10,11; Ph 2:19; 2 Tm 1:2; Ti 1:4). Timothy was converted by Paul. He was one of those converts who became the medium through whom the ministry of the evangelist could be continued (2 Tm 2:2). **Grace:** God's grace toward man was the result of a loving Creator who had mercy on our predicament of sin (Gl 1:3; see comments Ep 3:1-10).

LAWFUL USE OF THE LAW

1:3,4 Stay in Ephesus: When Paul was released from his first imprisonment, he made a hurried journey through Crete, and possibly Macedonia. He could not spend much time in either Crete, and thus, he left Titus in Crete (Ti 1:5). He sent Timothy to Ephesus. An alternative understanding of this time when Paul departed from Ephesus could possibly have been when he made a trip through Macedonia to Achaia sometime on his third mission journey. He wrote to the Achaians concerning this journey, though we have no record of this visit to Achaia in Acts (See 2 Co 12:14). **Teach no other doctrine:** The context identifies those who were teaching false doctrines. They were Jews who did not lawfully use the

Sinai law (vss 7,8). They used the law in an attempt to legally justify themselves before God. But they could not keep the law perfectly in order to either demand or deserve the grace of God (See comments Gl 2:16). Reference in this context would possibly be to judaizing Gnostic teachers who were binding circumcision and other teachings of the law on the Gentiles (6:3; Rm 16:17; 2 Co 11:4; see comments At 15:1,2; Gl 1:6,7).

Fables: Jewish Gnosticism was a mixture of speculative beliefs concerning gods and aeons that had been invented after the imagination of those who had distorted the truth of the incarnation of Jesus. Some Gnostics said that Jesus was only one of a series of aeons who digressed from God. Reference here could also refer to the recorded religious traditions of the Jews that were written in the Targums. Such traditions were handed down from one generation to another in the Jews' religion (See Ti 1:14; 2 Pt 1:16).

Endless genealogies: The Jews placed great importance on the keeping of correct ancestral records. They did such in order to determine tribal descendants in Israel, as well as to determine tribal inheritance of lands in Palestine. However, these discussions could have been over the endless genealogies of aeons that supposedly emanated from God in order to bring the world into existence. Whatever the case, Paul considered disputes over such things to be useless, and thus occasions for unnecessary disputes among the disciples (See 6:3,4,20; see Ti 3:9-11).

That cause disputes: Neither the fables nor endless genealogies were a part of

the New Testament covenant and law of Christ. Those who argued over these nonbiblical issues generated disputes among the disciples, and thus, they caused division over that which should be nothing about which Christians should debate. Such disputes over nonbiblical issues do not edify the church, and thus, brethren would do well to shun discussions over useless issues that do not promote edification or maintain unity. If a particular religious subject is not mentioned in the Bible, then it is not a subject for dispute. These are subjects where freedom of opinion must prevail. Those who would seek to dispute concerning nonbiblical issues, therefore, are those who are causing the division (See comments Ti 3:9-11).

1:5 Purpose of the commandment is love: The commandment is given on the foundation of love (Jn 3:16; 1 Jn 4:19), and thus, the reason for the giving of the commandment in the first place is love. The end result of God's law was to produce love in the hearts of men (Rm 13:8; Gl 5:14; see comments Gl 5:22,23). From a pure heart (Mt 15:18-20; Ep 6:24; 2 Tm 2:21-26), a good conscience (2 Tm 1:5), and an unwavering faith (Js 1:6-8), comes love for God and His people (1 Jn 4:19). Paul has here defined the spiritual nature of those who would be identified by the new commandment by which Jesus said His disciples would be known (See comments Jn 13:34,35). They would be known for their love of one another, and thus, love would be the bond that would keep them together. As they allowed freedom on the foundation

of love, they would be drawn together.

1:6 Swerved: When brethren stray from the new commandment of love, they will turn aside unto the idle talk of disputing over fables and endless genealogies. In other words, one can be identified as having strayed from the love that is to be characteristic of Christians by his desire to dispute over nonbiblical issues (See 6:4,20). **Meaningless discussion:** This would be vain or useless discussions that profit nothing toward the edification of the flock of God (2 Tm 4:4; see comments Ti 3:9-11). Those who would seek to maintain peace among the disciples, therefore, must know when a discussion is meaningless, and thus avoid the discussion.

1:7 Desiring to be teachers: These presumptuous judaizing teachers wanted the respect and honor that was given to teachers, but they were not willing to pay the price of humble service and diligent study (6:4; compare Rv 2:9). Their ignorance of the subjects they discussed manifested the insincerity of their motives. Since they did not understand that the purpose of the Sinai law was to lead men to Christ (Gl 3:23-25), they could not communicate correctly those things they affirmed. Their desire alone, therefore, did not qualify them to be teachers of the law. It is only through long hours of prayerful study and godly living that one learns the purpose of the law, and thus, is qualified to teach. Those who seek to be leaders in the church, but have little knowledge of the word of God, are dangerous leaders. They lead others astray because of their lack of example

in studying the word of God (2 Tm 2:15).

1:8 *Lawfully:* If one does not understand the purpose of the Sinai law, then he cannot interpret and apply it correctly. The law was meant to give moral direction to Israel until the Messiah and Savior was brought into the world (Gl 3:23-25; see comments Mt 5:17,18). Christians are now dead to the law by the body of Christ (Rm 7:1-4). Therefore, the law is no longer in force to be bound on men who have been made free from law by their obedience to the gospel. The Old Testament now functions in the capacity of being an encyclopedia of learning concerning God's work among men (Rm 7:12,16; compare Rm 15:4; 1 Co 10:11). However, if one enforces its statutes on Christians, he has used it for the wrong purpose for which God wants us to use the law today.

1:9,10 In this verse Paul defines the nature of the legalistic manner by which the judaizing teachers were seeking to bind the law (See comments At 15:1,10). ***Law is not made for a righteous man:*** The righteous person understands that the whole law hangs on the commandments to love God with the totality of one's being and to love one's neighbor as himself (See Mt 22:37-40). The commandment is based on love because when one loves God, he obeys the will of God. When one loves his neighbor, he responds to the needs of his neighbor with a loving heart (See comments Gl 5:22,23). The one who loves his neighbor as himself does not need a law to direct him in his relationship with his neighbor. He will do that which is good

toward his neighbor without the command of a law (See Js 4:17). He will not do that which is evil against his neighbor because he loves his neighbor. But the one who does not love his neighbor needs the law in order to direct his behavior with his neighbor. Therefore, under the Sinai law, the civil laws were given in order to bring punishment upon those who behaved unjustly with their neighbors in the Jewish society. ***Murderers of fathers:*** Paul here describes those sons and daughters who have lost all respect and gratitude for their parents. The behavior that he describes in these verses manifests the behavior of those who have given up any respect for the law of God and responsibility toward their neighbors. ***If there is any other thing:*** Paul did not have to continue to list those things that unloving people will do in order to violate a just relationship with their neighbors (See comments Gl 5:19-21). He gave only examples of what happens when men are not moved by loving their neighbor as themselves in the fear of God. ***Sound teaching:*** The Greek word for "sound" refers to that which is healthy. The wicked behavior that he has defined in these verses is contrary to healthy teaching that enhances one's life in his relationship with his fellow man (See 2 Tm 4:3; Ti 1:9).

1:11 *The glorious gospel:* The "glorious gospel" is not the sound teaching. The word "gospel" refers to an event in history. The gospel of the death of Jesus for our sins and His resurrection for our hope (1 Co 15:1-4) is the historical foundation upon which all sound ("healthy")

teaching is based. The healthy teaching finds its validity in the fact that the gospel event happened for our salvation. It is through the gospel that men are called out of sin (2 Th 2:14). It is through healthy teaching that one is fine tuned in order to walk according to the commandments of God (Jn 15:14; 1 Jn 5:1,2).

TESTIMONY OF GOD'S GRACE

1:12 *Enabled me:* Paul's thanksgiving for his salvation by God's grace empowered him to act on his personal calling by Jesus to be an apostle of Christ (1 Co 15:10). ***Counted me faithful:*** Paul was called while he was on a mission to continue his persecution of the disciples. Though he was wrong in what he was doing, he was conscientious about doing what he believed to be the work of God to crush a subversive movement against God's work through Israel. He was a trustworthy personality who would be responsible for what God would commission him to do. Therefore, he was called to be an apostle (Rm 1:1; Ep 3:1; Cl 1:25). He was thankful for his appointment (See 2 Co 12:9; Ph 4:13).

1:13 Paul here explains his former life when he was an enemy of the truth (See At 7:58 – 8:3; 9:1-4; Gl 1:13,14; Ph 3:6). He believed that Christianity was the work of Satan, and thus, he was a blasphemer (At 8:3; 1 Co 15:9). Because he believed that Christianity was a heretical sect of Judaism, he persecuted Christians throughout Judea. ***A blasphemer:*** He believed that the work of God through the church was actually the work of Satan. He thus believed that his

work in persecuting the church was the work of God to rid the Jews of a heretical sect. ***Ignorantly in unbelief:*** Though Paul was ignorant concerning that which he persecuted, his present knowledge of what he did in the past kept him humble. He was continually in gratitude to God for His great mercy that was extended toward him. Because he did not know that the church was actually the work of God, his heart was open for repentance once the truth was revealed to him through the personal appearance of Jesus on the Damascus road. If he had been an irreligious persecutor, then there would have been little room for repentance. His ignorance, therefore, did not justify his sinful actions. Because he had an honest heart and wanted to serve God in all that he did, when he encountered Jesus on the Damascus road, he was open to repentance.

1:14 *Grace ... exceedingly abundant:* Man's sin can never be greater than the grace of God (See Rm 5:20; 1 Co 3:10; 2 Co 4:15; Gl 1:13-16; Ep 3:20). Paul's life is proof that there is abundant grace for those who willingly repent. ***In Christ:*** In order to experience the grace of God, however, one must come into fellowship with Christ through immersion into His death, burial and resurrection (See comments Rm 6:3-6). Grace is not extended toward those who are outside Christ, and unwilling to repentantly come into a covenant relationship with Him (See Ep 1:3,7). Grace is extended to those who seek to obey God (Compare comments Rm 3:31). Grace is a gift, but the gift must be received through obedience.

1:15 *Jesus came ... to save sinners:* “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk 19:10; see Is 53:5; 61:1; Hs 6:1-3; Mt 1:21; 9:13). ***I am the worst:*** Paul used the present tense in making this statement. He emphasized that God’s grace abounded toward him when he became a Christian. It continued to abound in his life as he wrote this letter. God had extended and continued to extend His grace toward him who once violently persecuted God’s work. He reasoned that if God would forgive him, then certainly He would forgive anyone. Paul never forgot the injury he did to the church through his misguided persecution of Christians. Nevertheless, he found comfort in the fact that he stood in the grace of God in the present. He could calmly sleep in the present with memories of the past only because he trusted in the grace of God. It is this grace he wanted every person to experience in order that they also have the peace of God that surpasses all human understanding (See Ph 4:7). The one who brought the greatest persecution of the church in its early beginnings, was the one God chose to write the two most important books in the New Testament on grace (See Rm & Gl).

1:16 *Might show:* Paul certainly believed that God’s grace toward him would be extended to others also through his preaching (See 1 Co 9:16,17). If God would save him, then certainly He would save others (Compare 2 Co 4:15). ***An example:*** The example of how God saved Paul, who was a persecutor of the church, is an example that God can save

all those who willingly repent. ***Believe ... to eternal life:*** The Greek text here literally reads that one believes “to” or “unto” eternal life (See Rm 10:10,11). However, one is baptized “into” Christ where he obtains eternal life (2:10,11; Rm 6:3; Gl 3:26,27; 1 Jn 5:11). Belief must take one unto immersion into Christ for remission of sins (At 2:38; 22:16).

1:17 *King of the ages:* The Greek text literally reads “King of the ages.” Emphasis, therefore, is not on the eternity of the King—though He is eternal—but on the King’s relationship with all that is created. In this doxology Paul proclaims that God has always reigned over that which was created (See 1 Ch 29:9-11; Ps 10:16; 22:28; 24:10; 44:4; 103:9; Is 37:16; Dn 4:3; Mt 6:13; 11:11; compare Mt 5:10,17-19). ***Immortal, invisible:*** This is the nature of the King. God is not terminal as man. He is not physical in body as man (Jn 4:24). God is inherently eternal without beginning or ending, and thus, indigenous in eternity (Rm 1:23; Hb 11:27). There exists nothing that is of the same quality of being as God. Therefore, we would conclude that God alone is eternal and that all that exists maintains existence simply because He upholds all things by the word of His power (Hb 1:3). We will eternally exist after the end of this world only because we will be in the presence of God who will sustain our eternity (2 Th 1:7-9).

CHARGE TO TIMOTHY

1:18 *This charge:* As one who had committed himself to the preaching of the

gospel and edification of the church, Timothy is in this context given a command by the inspired Paul to carry out his work to teach in order to correct certain erroneous teachings (vs 3). **Prophecies:** These could have been prophecies in general in reference to the work of an evangelist. They could have been specific prophecies of New Testament prophets that were made in reference to Timothy at the beginning of his ministry (Compare At 13:2; 21:8-14). In this sense, prophesy was made at the time of Timothy's calling unto the work that he was now doing. Paul thus reminded Timothy that the Holy Spirit had blessed his ministry through inspired preaching that was prophesied through Joel in the Old Testament (See Jl 2:28; see comments At 2:17,18; compare 2 Tm 1:6; 4:14). **A good fight:** Christians are engaged in a warfare that is good for those who win over sin through obedience of the preached gospel (See 2 Tm 2:3; 4:7; compare 2 Co 10:3-5; Ep 6:10-20). Their ministry is good because it is the work of God to bring people into eternal dwelling.

1:19 Good conscience: Timothy had been instructed concerning what was right according to the word and will of God. Therefore, he is here charged by Paul to labor with a good conscience. He must not allow his faith to be led astray by a violation of what he conscientiously knows to be what is right. **Shipwrecked:** By compromising what they knew was right, some had destroyed their own faith. It was not that they gave up being religious. They accepted theologies that

were contrary to the fundamental truths upon which the church is established.

1:20 Hymenaeus and Alexander: These two brethren had allowed their conscience to be compromised, and thus, they lost their faith in the midst of uncontrolled doubt. In order that the leavening influence of their erroneous teaching not spread to other believers (See 2 Tm 2:3; 4:7), Paul personally exercised his apostolic responsibility with these two disciples (See comments 1 Co 5:1-5). Though we are not informed concerning their erroneous belief or behavior, whatever they were teaching or doing was injurious to the family of God. **I have delivered to Satan:** As a Christ-sent apostle, Paul had the responsibility to discipline personally those who persisted in sin that would harm the flock of God (Compare comments Jn 20:22,23). God gave this responsibility to the Christ-sent apostles in order to discipline the early disciples (See comments 1 Co 4:19-21; 5:5; 2 Co 12:14 – 13:10; compare At 5:1-6,10). As God had initially delivered miraculous discipline to those Israelites who rebelled when Israel came out of Egyptian captivity, so in the beginning of the church God worked through the Christ-sent apostles in order to discipline those who brought harm to the church (See At 5:1-11). **They might learn:** It is evident that in some way Hymenaeus and Alexander were delivered unto Satan in order to be inflicted in the flesh (1 Co 5:5; compare At 13:11). Since Paul here states that Satan was responsible for the infliction, then we would assume that God had allowed Satan the opportunity

of inflicting physical punishment as he was allowed by God to do such with Job (See Jb 1:11; 2:3-7; 42:11). However, the power to do such did not originate with Satan. God only allowed Satan to exercise the power at his command. God did such because He always uses Satan's work against himself. Paul affirmed that Satan's deeds here would work against him if the erring brothers learned the error of their way, and thus, repented. Such happened in the 1 Corinthians 5 case with the immoral brother. The brother repented and was restored to the fellowship of the church. Paul's deliverance of the two brothers in this context to the destruction of the flesh was for the same purpose. **Blaspheme:** The sin of the two

brothers was something that was associated with speaking against the work of God. The case could have been that they spoke against the apostolic ministry and inspiration of the apostle Paul. Such was the case with some in Achaia who were about to receive the same judgment if they did not repent as a result of the writing of the second letter to the Achaians (2 Co 12:14 – 13:10; see At 13:8-11,45).

Organic Function of the Church

(2:1 – 3:16)

Outline: (1) The ministry of prayer (2:1-7), (2) Special works for women (2:8-15), (3) Servanthood leadership of shepherds (3:1-7), (4) Servanthood leadership of menservants (3:8-13), (5) The mystery of godliness (3:14-16)

CHAPTER 2

THE MINISTRY OF PRAYER

In verses 1-7 Paul spoke of the general conduct of Christians in their communication with God. They are to be people who exemplify in their lives a continual communication with God who works in the lives of those who are His children (1 Th 5:17).

2:1 Supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks: In all things, disciples must be in prayer to God (See comments Ph 4:6). Through supplications, one makes his requests known to God (Ph 1:4). In this verse, the word "prayers" is used in a specific sense of maintaining daily communication with God. Intercessions are communications of petition with God on behalf of others. The emphasis is in entering into a close personal relationship with God in order

to lay a petition before Him. In thanksgiving, we express gratitude to God for what He has done in our lives. Our prayers of faith for things in the future are based on recognizing answered prayers in our lives that we have made in the past.

2:2 For kings: Christians must pray for those who are in civil authority in order that they live in a peaceful environment (See Er 6:10; compare Rm 13:1-7). In times of peace, the gospel can be easily preached. Where there is conflict, the preaching of the gospel is hindered because evangelists cannot move about freely in order to preach. In times of civil conflict, the minds of those to whom preaching is directed are often diverted from spiritual things to anxiety over things of this world. Therefore, Chris-

tians should pray that those who are in civil control of countries maintain peace in order that their work of evangelism not be hindered.

2:3,4 It is good that Christians maintain their communication with God. As His children, they must communicate with their Father (See Mt 6:5-15). God seeks to work on behalf of His children. Therefore, it is good for the children of God to call on their Father to help them by working in their environment. **Desires all men to be saved:** God does not wish that any perish (See comments 2 Pt 3:9; see 1 Tm 4:10; Ez 18:23,32; Jn 3:17; Ti 2:11). The fact that He does not wish that any perish teaches that all men can respond to the gospel. No individual is predestined to disobedience. **The truth:** This would be the truth of the gospel, that is, the truth concerning the death of Jesus for our sins and His resurrection for our hope (See comments 1 Co 15:1-4; Gl 5:2; Ep 1:13; Cl 1:5). It is through obedience of this truth that one is saved (See comments Rm 6:3-6).

2:5 One God ... one Mediator: Jesus stands as the intercessor between the Christian and the one true and living God (Rm 8:34; see Hb 9:15). He intercedes on behalf of those who are walking in the light (1 Jn 1:7-9). This teaching was contrary to the thinking of the Greeks who affirmed that there were many intercessors between God and man. Though the Gnostics did not believe that the aeons (emanations) that digressed from God were intercessors, the concept of Jesus being the only intercessor between God and man refuted the belief that

the Christian stands at a distance from God. It refutes the Gnostic belief that there were many emanations from God. The religious beliefs of the Greeks would place man in a struggle to search for what mediator to consult in order to appease the gods. The Gnostics would make us feel that God is distant from us because of their many supposed emanations from God. However, Paul is revealing that the brotherhood of mankind can be established on the fact that there is only one mediator through whom all mankind can approach the one God who is near (1 Co 8:6; Gl 3:20; see At 4:12). God is near because of the work of the mediator Jesus who works on behalf of all men as the justifier of all sin (Hb 4:8,9; 8:1-13; 1 Jn 2:1,2). Since Paul's statement here reaffirms the fact that there is only one mediator, it would be presumptuous on the part of any man to compete with the Son of God as a mediator between God and man. The functionality of the mediatorship of Jesus affirms that every individual Christian has access to God through Jesus. If we would assume that another mediator was necessary in order to approach Jesus, then we would deny the function of Jesus in His role as a mediator between God and man. **The man:** Jesus did not lose His deity when He became man. He gave up being on an equality with God, though He did not cease being the manifestation of God on earth (See comments Ph 2:5-11). In the same way, it seems that Paul is saying that He had not at the time of his writing lost His total humanity in His ascension to the right hand of the Father (Compare 1 Jn

4:2; 2 Jn 7). Since Paul places this statement in the present tense, he seems to indicate the present state of Jesus in His resurrected body, the spiritual body into which all will be transformed when He comes again (Ph 3:21; 1 Jn 3:2).

2:6 *Gave Himself:* Jesus was not offered in the sense that He had no choice. His offering was voluntary (Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45; 1 Co 1:6; Ph 2:5-11). ***A ransom:*** Jesus was the ransom price to be paid in order to deliver us from the bondage of sin and death (Ti 2:14). He willingly sacrificed Himself on behalf of those who could not purchase themselves out of sin (See comments Jn 10:17,18). Since verse 5 affirms the present humanity into which Jesus voluntarily incarnated in order to be the ransomed Lamb of God, then the sacrifice would have gone beyond the cross. It would have continued in the fact that He gave up being on an equality with God for eternity (Ph 2:6,7). His sacrifice was that He voluntarily chose to become in all ways as those whom He redeemed. His existence in His resurrected spiritual body, therefore, was an eternal, not temporary, sacrifice that He made on behalf of those whom he redeemed. ***Proper time:*** The plan that Jesus incarnate and ransom Himself for humanity was conceived and planned before the creation of the world (Rv 13:8). However, the plan was enacted at a predestined time in the world's history (Rm 5:6; Gl 4:4; Ep 1:9,10).

2:7 *Preacher ... apostle ... teacher:* As a preacher, Paul was a herald of the truth of the gospel event to unbelievers (1:11; At 9:11-15; Rm 1:1; Ep 3:1,7,8; 2

Tm 1:11). As an apostle, he was one who was sent forth into the world by the commission of Jesus to bear witness to the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead. As a teacher, he worked to edify and strengthen those who had obeyed the gospel that he preached (See At 22:21; Rm 11:13; Gl 1:16; 2:7). In the New Testament, the words "preacher" and "apostle" refer to one who delivers the gospel to unbelievers. The word "teacher" is used in reference to one administering the word of God to the saved. One is thus a preacher of the gospel to the lost, but a teacher for the saints.

SPECIAL WORKS FOR WOMEN

2:8 *Men to pray in every place:* The Greek word for "men" (*andras*) in this context is the word for males. It is not the generic word for man that would include women. Therefore, Paul here speaks of the male disciples in reference to what he states concerning his injunction that they pray in the general or public assemblies. ***Lifting up holy hands:*** There is no justification for a metaphorical meaning of this phrase, especially since those who would have read this statement commonly prayed with hands lifted toward heaven (See Ps 63:4; 134:2; 141:2; Ne 8:6; Lm 3:41). Lifting hands was a common custom among worshippers of the Jewish culture. However, Paul is not binding on the church a posture of worship that was a cultural practice among the Jews. Nowhere has God bound on Christians a certain posture that must be maintained in worship. Paul is simply using here the customary practice

of raising hands during prayer in order to emphasize the point he is seeking to teach. His point is that the brothers conduct the prayers of the disciples in an atmosphere of unity. ***Without wrath and doubting:*** Prayers should not be uttered out of a condemning spirit of brothers who are in disunity. Angry words should never be expressed in prayer (Rm 14:1). Neither should prayers come from doubting minds (Js 1:6-8). If one doubts when he prays, then his prayer is simply a mental exercise that has little profit.

2:9 *In like manner:* Paul now turns to special instructions concerning the sisters of the church. ***Modest clothing:*** If there is such a thing as “modest apparel,” then there is clothing that is immodest. What may determine that which is immodest may be subject to some discussion, but we must conclude that disciples must take a stand on what is determined to be modest or immodest. One would assume that a disciple would become immodest long before reaching the point of wearing skintight clothing that reveals the features of the body. What is determined to be immodest is to be shunned by Christians, for such clothing draws attention to one’s body, not one’s heart. A Christian’s desire to dress after that which is considered immodest manifests that he or she does not have a spirit of focusing on the adorning of the inward person (1 Pt 3:3). Their emphasis is on the outward person, and thus, if one’s emphasis is such, then he or she will not be focusing on developing the spirit of a meek and quiet character. Whether women or men, those who dress in order to stimu-

late the carnal thinking of others have immodestly dressed themselves for ungodly reasons. ***Decency and sobriety:*** This would be dressing oneself with dignity and discretion. The dress of a godly woman should manifest that she is focusing on the spiritual development of the inner person, as well as maintaining her God-ordained position in society among the brethren (See comments 1 Pt 3:1-6).

2:10 *Good works:* The clothing with which the godly woman adorns herself manifests the focus of her life. Her good works are the final indication that her attention is focused toward others and not on herself. She does not seek to draw attention to herself, but desires to help others through service (See 5:10-14; Ti 2:3-5; 1 Pt 3:4).

2:11 *Let a woman learn in silence:* There may be matters of opinion concerning the application of this principle. However, the principle stands as it is stated. Christian women are to work in a subjective relationship with the male leadership of the church (Compare 1 Co 14:33-35). Paul is not stating a cultural principle of the 1st century that could be brushed aside in a culture where women seek a dominant role of leadership either parallel to or over men. He is not stating a principle that would pass away as the early church grew out of the 1st century. He is stating a principle that has existed from the beginning of time with the creation of Adam and Eve (See comments Ep 5:22-24; Cl 3:18).

2:12 *Not ... teach or to be dominate:* The word “teach” would here be used in

the sense of assuming a dominant position of leadership among the disciples (See Js 3:1). Paul is thus emphasizing that the sisters not assume a role of authority among the disciples over the brothers. Since women are to teach younger women (Ti 2:3,4), Paul's statement here must be understood to refer to teaching in a situation where the woman would not be dominant over a man. Paul's emphasis is that Christian sisters not be placed in a position that would force them to usurp authority over men in the affairs of the church. They are to function in subjection in the sense of guarding the spiritual leadership of the brothers. In doing such, they maintain their honorable position of submission. In their submission, however, they could certainly be allowed the occasion to voice their opinions and share their wisdom in matters of the work of the church. Simply because a woman is allowed to voice her opinion and to share her wisdom does not mean that she has assumed authority. Wise leadership in the church will allow the sisters an opportunity to express their desires. Confident male leadership will not be intimidated by the wisdom and counsel of godly sisters who seek to do the work of the Lord.

2:13,14 *The woman being deceived:*

Eve was created to be in a protected relationship with her husband (See Gn 2:18ff; 1 Co 11:3-9). However, Paul here reveals that she left her realm of protection and acted on her own in reference to the temptations of Satan (See Gn 1,2). Her tender spirit as a woman presented the opportunity for Satan to take advan-

tage of her. She was thus deceived, and subsequently, fell into transgression (Gn 3:6; compare 2 Co 11:3). We must understand that these instructions of Paul were given on the foundation of how God created the emotional nature of women. God created woman to be emotional. Women can be emotionally vulnerable to the harsh deceptions of the world, and thus, they should remain in the protection of male leadership. When women chose to function outside the protection of male leadership, they subject themselves to the harshness of the world, and thus, the deceptions of Satan who would take advantage of their tender nature. Paul also reveals in this context that it was God's plan to first bring man into the world, and then, woman. This order in creation was God's illustration for the subjection of the woman to the spiritual headship of man (Compare 1 Co 11:3-9).

2:15 *Safe through childbearing:*

The word "childbearing" is here used as a metonymy. In other words, the word stands for all that is necessary for a woman to be saved. It is used in reference to her work as a woman in all aspects of life. Childbearing is not a part of the conditions for salvation. Paul is not saying that she will not be saved if she does not have children. However, it does mean that Christian women must maintain their God-appointed ministry in life in order to be saved. The word "childbearing," therefore, is figuratively used to stand for the God-ordained work of the woman that must be carried out in a Christian woman's life in order for her

to be saved. What Paul explains in this context concerning the work of women does leave much to the subjective interpretation of each culture of the world. He gave the principle, but he did not give the specifics to carry out the principle. We must not allow ourselves, therefore, to make laws where Paul said nothing. However, we must guard the principle of the submission of women to the spiritual leadership of the men in the church in order to give honor to the women. Since it is God who created man and woman, then we certainly assume that there are fundamental principles why God has established the spiritual headship of the man in the family and spiritual leadership among the disciples. There is a purpose for the establishment of the submissive ministry of the women (See com-

ments Ep 5:22-33). When both men and women step outside their God-ordained functions and relationships with one another, both the family and church are brought into confusion. Therefore, because God has instituted these principles, then we must assume that there is a purpose that stands behind them. God does not work without purpose, and thus, the purpose for which He has established principles that surround the conduct of the family assumes that these principles must be kept. We must maintain the principles in order to maintain the purpose of social order for which God established the principles. If we neglect God's purpose and principles of the family and the relationship among disciples, then we must expect to reap the results of social disorder.

CHAPTER 3

SERVANTHOOD LEADERSHIP OF SHEPHERDS

3:1 Aspires: Since Jesus taught that leaders among His disciples would be servants, then the first indication of one's desire to serve the needs of others as a shepherd is indicated by his service (See comments Mk 10:25-45; Jn 13:1-17). Therefore, the desire here is not something that is said in words, but something that is manifested in the life of those who are living as slaves to the needs of the flock of God (See comments 1 Co 16:15,16). A prospective shepherd is first seen to be doing the servanthood of an elder before he can be considered for designation by the church to be an elder. Serving others must be the nature of his

character. **To oversee:** This phrase would literally be translated, "if anyone aspires to see over." Spiritual leadership in the family of God is not an office as we would consider someone in a government office. Neither does the work come with an official title as we would entitle public officials. The word "overseer" is from the Greek word *episkopos*. The word means to see over for the purpose of identifying that which needs to be serviced. Emphasis is not on a position, but on a function of work. Those brothers who desire to see over the needs of the flock with tender loving care desire a good work. Throughout the New Testament the function of these men is defined by the words that are used to refer to them.

They are the *presbuteros*, that is, they are older in age (See At 11:30; 14:23; 20:17; Ti 1:5; 1 Pt 5:1). As stated in this context, they are the *episkopos*, that is, the ones who see over the needs of the flock (At 20:28; Ph 1:1; Ti 1:7). They are the *poimen*, that is, those who “pastor” or “shepherd” the flock with tender care (Ep 4:11; 5:2). And finally, they are the *oikonomos*, that is, the stewards of God’s flock. They are such because they have been designated by the church to be entrusted with the needs of the church (Ti 1:7). Paul also explains that the work of these men among the flock of God is in the ministry of teaching (3:2; Ti 1:9; At 20:31,32), guarding the flock of God against false teaching (At 20:28-32; Ti 1:9-11; compare Hb 13:17), spiritually leading the flock by the example of their lives (At 20:28-32; Ti 1:9-11; 1 Pt 5:2,3; compare Hb 13:17), and ministering to the needs of the flock (At 20:28; Ep 4:12-16; Ti 1:8; Js 5:14,15).

3:2 In this and the following verses Paul focuses on the nature of the character, behavior and the family of prospective elders. He does so in order that Timothy identify those qualified men the church is to designate in servicing the needs of the church of God. These points are not given in order to disqualify men, but to give positive principles by which faithful men should be designated among the disciples to function specifically in ministry to the spiritual needs of the disciples. These qualities in the lives of men qualify them for the ministry. Though any one individual may not excel in all the qualities, Paul sets forth these behav-

ioral qualities that must be to some degree manifested in the lives of those who would be considered for designation.

Blameless: The one who desires to be designated to the work of a shepherd must not be one against whom a just accusation can be made by any man (Ti 1:6). Reference is not to the prospective shepherd living a perfect life (Compare Rm 3:9,10,23). Reference is to unsettled injustices of his life that he might be committing that would reflect on his spiritual reputation. **Husband of one wife:**

Paul’s emphasis here is that the prospective elder be married. He must be a married man at the time of designation. He must be married to only one woman. **Disciplined:** He must have a character of self-control, and thus, he must be able to maintain control of his passions (Ti 2:2). He is a disciplined person. **Sober-minded:** He must have a sound and sane mind that is emotionally self-restrained. He must think and behave consistently without being emotionally or spiritually tossed to and fro by the environment in which he lives.

Respectable: He must have a well-ordered life by which he conducts himself with dignity in the community. He must thus be a respectable and honorable man. **Hospitable:**

Though his guests may be strangers, he must be willing to unselfishly share his house and food with others (1 Pt 4:9).

Able to teach: He must be studious of the word of God in order to be able to impart God’s will to the flock of God (Ti 1:9; see 1 Tm 5:17). Since part of his ministry is to guard the family of God against false teaching, he must be knowl-

edgeable of the word of God.

3:3 *Not an excessive drinker:* He is not to be given to drunkenness. Some translations render the Greek word here (*paroinon*) to mean that he not be given to wine (Ti 1:7). ***Not violent:*** The elder must be the type of personality that does not violently retaliate against those who would either mistreat or persecute him. He must be a man of peace. ***Not contentious:*** He must not be opinionated in a way that generates arguments with others (See comments Ti 3:9-11). He must be a gentle person who tenderly handles the misfortunes of others and is patient with the imperfections of his fellow man. ***Not covetous:*** An elder must not make it the purpose of his life to accumulate riches and things to consume upon himself (See comments Js 5:1-6). He should not be stingy with either his possessions or money. He must not be one who loves money in a way that he seeks to consume possessions upon his own lusts (See 6:10; 2 Tm 3:2). The focus of his life must not be for the purpose of accumulating wealth.

3:4,5 *Manages well his own household:* An elder must have proved his ability to work with people by his correct handling of the affairs of his own family (Ti 1:6). The ability of the elder to deal with people in close association is evidenced by his ability to earn respect from his children who honor his headship of the family. Whether one or more children, the character of the elder is under consideration in this statement, for the subjection of one or more children proves the point that the man can care for his own house.

(The word "children" can refer to there being one child in a family, see Gn 21:7; Mt 7:11; Ep 5:1,25; 6:1).

3:6 *Not a new convert:* He cannot be an immature new convert, lest his designation by the church to the work as a shepherd among the flock cause him to exalt himself. Since new converts rarely understand the nature of the church because of their lack of knowledge of the word of God, they cannot lead the disciples in their relationship with one another as the church of God.

3:7 *A good report:* He must have a good reputation among those who are in and outside the church. In reference to the designation of elders, Paul also wrote to Titus and gave him added instructions concerning personality characteristics that should be possessed by those who would be designated to serve as elders (See Ti 1:6-9). These qualities and qualifications he wrote to Titus would be the following: ***Not self-willed (Ti 1:7):*** He should not be one who ignores the desires of others in order to get his own way. ***Not quick-tempered (Ti 1:7):*** When confronted with that which is contrary to his wishes or will, the elder must have a personality that does not react to situations by the loss of his temper. ***A lover of good (Ti 1:8):*** An elder must be one who does not seek evil. He does not seek to associate with evil men, neither does he assume that others are evil. He looks for that which is good in all people. ***Just:*** He is fair in his dealings with all men. Because he is fair, his opinions can be trusted to be just. His decisions in matters of dispute among brethren can be

trusted. **Holy (Ti 1:8):** His behavior is patterned after God. He has separated himself from the desires of this world. **Holding fast the faithful word (Ti 1:9):** He is a person whose life is controlled by his obedient love of the word of God. He is thus knowledgeable of the word of God in order to be directed daily by the word. People will follow him because they see him as a man of the word of God.

SERVANTHOOD LEADERSHIP OF MENSERVANTS

3:8 Menservants: The Greek work *diakonos* here has been transliterated in most translations. However, there is no reason to transliterate the word “deacons” in this context when it is translated “servant” in other contexts by the same translations. Since it is masculine in gender here, and in Titus 1:7, the translation of “menservants” defines the word. The Greek word *diakonos* refers to one who gives himself in service to the needs of others. In its generic meaning, it refers to anyone who gives himself to serve the needs of others. It is used to refer to preachers who have given themselves to serve others through the preaching and teaching of the word of God (Ep 3:7; Cl 1:23; 4:7; 1 Th 3:2). Some Bible students affirm that the appointment of the seven men in Acts 6 to administer the distribution of food to widows was an occasion where special menservants were appointed. The word *diakonos* is used in Acts 6 as it is used here, that is, to refer to a specific group of men who fulfill specific needs. **Dignified:** Male servants must be spiritually serious and morally

honorable. **Not double-tongued:** They must have an honest and truthful character in which there are no hidden agendas of deceit. They must be men who can be trusted for what they say. **Not given to much wine:** They are to exercise self-control in their lives in order not to become drunken wherein they lose their senses. They are to maintain their dignity as reverential men of God (vs 3; Ti 1:7; see Ez 44:21). **Not greedy:** They should not be focused in life on making money in order to consume things and activities on their own lusts (vs 3). Since the church entrusts them with money in order to minister to others, they should be men who do not covet riches.

3:9 A pure conscience: They must hold to the gospel without being hypocritical in their behavior. Their lives must be worthy of the character of the gospel (Ph 1:27). Though a clear conscience does not necessarily prove that one is conducting his life according to the will of God, a guilty conscience would certainly prove that one is in error in reference to what he believes (1:19; compare Rm 14:23).

3:10 First be tested: A male servant must first show that he can cooperatively and eagerly work as a servant with others before he is set forth to do the work of a designated servant with others. Since his work involves working with other people, then he must be proved that he is capable of dealing with people. He must not be an inexperienced man. **Blameless:** As the elders, these special servants must be found without just reproach by those with whom they work.

3:11 Wives: Not only must the men-servants as husbands be qualified to serve in the capacity of ministering to the needs of the flock of God, their wives must also be of a reverential character. **Not slanders:** Since in the work of service one is working among the disciples, the wives of the designated servants must be able to bridle their tongue concerning their knowledge of the affairs of other disciples. The wives must not be of the nature of maliciously gossiping about the affairs of others. **Self-disciplined:** The wives must be serious minded in reference to their responsibility in their relationships with others. They must conduct themselves with self-control, controlling both their speech and behavior. **Faithful:** They must be consistent in their character and behavior in carrying out their responsibilities as Christian wives and active members of the body of Christ.

3:12 Husbands of one wife: Since it has always been God's plan that one man be married to one wife for life, maleservants, as elders, must manifest in their lives the model of a godly family. These men must be married because in their ministry they will be ministering to other women. **Managing ... well:** Male servants, as elders, must have the family skills to care for and lead their own homes (vs 4). They must manifest the spirit of a godly character with their wives in order to be an example to the rest of the disciples.

3:13 Good standing and great confidence: Those who serve as servants become known as great servants among

the brethren. They can have confidence in their service, not because they have meritoriously gained a spiritual advantage over others, but because they have manifested in their lives the servanthood that Jesus desires to be characteristic of the leaders of the family of God (Compare comments Mk 10:35-45).

THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

3:14 Hoping to come: Paul was probably released from his first imprisonment in late A.D. 62, or possibly early A.D. 63. He traveled to Crete, and then on to several other locations. This letter could have been written in A.D. 65 while he was on his way to Ephesus.

3:15 Ought to conduct yourself: Paul wrote of coming to Ephesus because of some serious problems that evidently affected the ministry of Timothy. He thus wrote to reassure Timothy in his ministry, and to correct problems concerning the designation of elders and servants. The teachings of verses 1-13 deal with the Christian behavior of the leadership of the church. Paul here concludes by emphasizing the fact that Christians must have the directives of God in order to walk according to the will of God. We must conclude, therefore, that one would not know how to behave according to the will of God if he did not have the inspired word of God. Our behavior as God's children must be according to His instructions, not according to our own will or traditions. Godly behavior must be directed by God, not tradition or emotions. Those who do not know God's word, and thus trust in their own feelings or reli-

gious traditions, will eventually stray from the will of God (See Jr 10:23; Pv 16:1; 20:24). **House of God:** Paul takes the figure of “house” from the Sinai law tabernacle. The use of the word here is metaphorical since the church refers to people and not a physical structure. It is the people in whom God dwells (Compare comments Lk 17:20,21). The church is the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy that people from all nations would flow unto the house of God (Is 2:2,3). **Pillar and ground of the truth:** Since God works through the medium of those who have come to Christ, then the church of God’s people is the medium through which the truth is proclaimed to the world (See Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15). The church is the manifestation of those who have obeyed the gospel.

3:16 Mystery of godliness: Jesus was the revelation of the mystery of God (See comments Ep 1:3-14; 3:8-13). **Manifested in the flesh:** God was manifested in Jesus to all men since Jesus was of God. The mystery of the gospel could be made known only through the revelation of God. Jesus was the revelation of that mystery (See 3:9,16; Jn 1:1,2,14; Rm 16:25; Ep 1:9; 3:4-6; 5:32; 6:19; Cl 2:2;

1 Pt 1:20; 1 Jn 1:2; 3:5). **Justified:** Jesus was proved to be the Son of God by the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Him at His baptism (Mt 3:16) and through the power of His resurrection (Rm 1:4). **Seen by angels:** He was recognized to be deity by angels who worshiped Him (Mt 28:2; Ph 2:9,10; Hb 1:6). **Preached:** He was preached to be the resurrected Son of God to all nations (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15; At 2:22-36; 10:34; Rm 10:18). **Believed:** People throughout the world believed on Jesus, and subsequently manifested their belief in their lives through their obedience to the gospel (Rm 16:26; 2 Co 1:19; Cl 1:6,23). **Received up:** After His resurrection, Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father in order to reign over all things (Dn 7:13,14; At 1:9-11; Ep 1:20-22; Ph 2:8-11).

The Conduct of Timothy

(4:1 – 6:21)

Outline: (1) Imminent apostasy (4:1-5), (2) The ministry of Timothy (4:6-10), (3) Command and teach (4:11-16), (4) Ministry to widows (5:1-16), (5) The work of elders (5:17-25), (6) Slaves and masters (6:1,2), (7) Healthy teaching (6:3-5), (8) Godliness and contentment (6:6-10), (9) Fighting the good fight (6:11-21)

CHAPTER 4

IMMINENT APOSTASY

4:1 The Holy Spirit had specifically moved inspired men to foretell the apostasy about which Paul here makes reference. This could have been the apostasy to which Jesus referred in the context of His prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem (24:23,24; see comments Mt 24).

This could have been also the apostasy about which Paul warned the Ephesian elders (At 20:23-30). Or, these heresies could have been the same as the one discussed by Paul when he was personally with the Thessalonians (See comments 2 Th 2:1-12). Whatever the specific apostasy, the Spirit revealed an imminent

apostasy from the truth (1 Pt 1:20,21; 2:1,2). We must assume, therefore, that the church is always threatened by apostasy. For this reason, the disciples must always be knowledgeable of the word of God in order to guard themselves from being led astray after erroneous teachings (Ep 4:11-16). **Latter times:** Considering the fact that Paul wrote this letter in the middle 60s, reference here is surely to those Christians who were drawn back into Judaism before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (See intro. to Hb). He is certainly not talking about something that would take place centuries later. Paul and Timothy were in the last days of the Jewish State (See At 2:16,17). God was about to physically bring to a close 1,500 years of history with the nation of Israel. Since this event was the fulfillment of a most profound prophecy of Jesus in Matthew 24, then we would correctly assume that the New Testament writers who wrote in the 60s would have mentioned this great historical event, both in their preaching and in their writing. The biblical interpreter who seeks to extract statements that were made concerning the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 in order to promote some modern-day speculation, has missed a very fundamental principle of biblical interpretation. The letters to the early Christians must first be understood in their historical setting. In the context of Paul's statements here, reference was made to an apostasy from the truth to follow after the deceptions of devious men who sought to lead men astray (vs 13; 1 Jn 4:1-3; Rv 16:14; compare 1 Kg 22:22;

Rm 16:17,18). Though such heresies from the truth have occurred at different times throughout the centuries, and will continue to the end of time, the immediate context of Paul's statements in this context refers to an apostasy in the time of the 1st century church.

4:2 Speaking lies: These would be the wolves in sheep's clothing (At 20:29,30). The apostasy, therefore, would come from within the church (See comments Mt 7:15-20). **Conscience seared:** These teachers would propose to speak the truth, but their conduct would be contrary to the principles of godly living. They would live ungodly lives because their consciences would be hardened wherein they could not see the unrighteousness of their speech and behavior.

4:3 Forbidding to marry: It is evident that Paul is here attacking some of the preliminary theologies of the Gnostic heresy wherein it was taught that matter was evil (See introduction). Since matter, including the body, was evil, then the body meant nothing in reference to spirituality. Therefore, some Gnostics believed that the body could be used to commit fornication without sinning. Marriage was not necessary because the lusts of the flesh could be satisfied outside the bond of marriage. This sect of Gnostics thus committed fornication without any feelings of guilt in reference to God's law. **Abstain from foods:** Asceticism was common among some sects of Gnosticism. The denial of the lusts of the flesh was opposite from those Gnostics who gave themselves over to the ful-

fillment of the flesh. **Created to be received:** All foods were created for the purpose of sustaining life. Therefore, God places no religious significance on any food, neither does He place any restrictions on what one can eat. Christians are free to eat anything that sustains the body.

4:4,5 Received with thanksgiving: We must always remember that all things were created by God. Therefore, all food that we receive to sustain life came from the creative power of God who produced an environment wherein our bodies could be maintained by God's created food. Those who believe that all things were created by God, give thanks to God for all things. **Sanctified:** God has spoken through His word in order to reveal the purpose of food. He has spoken that all food may be received with thanksgiving. In our receiving of His sustaining food with prayer, the food is set apart for our benefit.

THE MINISTRY OF TIMOTHY

4:6 In verses 1-5 Paul revealed to Timothy the certain apostasy that was imminent in the last times in which the church was at the time of writing. We would assume that Paul spoke to Timothy about this apostasy in order for Timothy not to be surprised concerning difficult times to come. **Instruct the brethren:** As a good servant of the body, it was Timothy's responsibility to instruct the disciples concerning the coming apostasy. It is thus the responsibility of evangelists to caution the brethren concerning heretical teachings that would

deny the fundamental principles of Christianity. Good evangelists continually caution the church about straying from that which is true. They do so with the word of God that is able to build up the church and guard it from false teaching (At 20:32; 2 Tm 3:13; 1 Pt 2:2; Rv 16:14). This was the sound teaching that Timothy had followed in his own life, and thus, the teaching that Paul here desired that Timothy impart to the church. The disciples were to be guarded from apostasy by the teaching of the word of God, not by dictatorial control over the church. When the church follows the word of God, then members' faithfulness is to God, not to man.

4:7 Refuse: Paul could have been referring to the Jewish fables that were recorded in the Jewish Targums (See 1:6). Discussions concerning fables and speculations have no place in obedience to the word of God (See 2 Tm 2:16; Ti 1:14). Those who would seek to argue over the idle speculations of imagined spirits or phenomenal happenings have turned from the truth of God's word. They have allowed their fantasies to distort their objective understanding of the truth of what God has communicated to us through His word. Those who would allow their beliefs and behavior to be controlled by the fables of men, have fallen from the word of God. **Exercise ... godliness:** Those who allow their thinking, and thus their lives, to be influenced and affected by the imaginations of nonexistent spirits are not allowing their behavior to be guided by the word of God. If one's focus is not exclusively on being directed in thought

and behavior by the word of God, then he will be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (See comments Ep 4:11-16).

4:8 Bodily exercise: It is not that bodily exercise is wrong. However, Paul seems to be writing from the viewpoint of the ancient Greek Olympic culture that focused on the admiration of the flesh as opposed to concentration on the spiritual development of the inner man (See 1 Co 8:8). Men should concentrate more on exercising the soul unto godly health than on the physical body (See Hb 5:13,14). Godly health profits one not only in this life, but also in the life to come. Those who focus continually on the flesh, have turned their thinking inward to themselves, and not on that which will dwell throughout eternity.

4:9,10 The “faithful saying” is the principle of verse 8. One’s focus on the inner man allows him the opportunity to focus on ministry to others, and thus, enjoy the abundant life (Jn 10:10). **Labor and suffer:** Paul’s life illustrated the willingness of the leader who would suffer the hardships of life in order to bring the abundant life to others. Sincere Christian leaders willingly labor and suffer in order that others have the opportunity of being saved (See Ps 36:6). **Savior of all men:** God is the Savior for all who will obey His conditions for salvation. Those who have complied with His conditions are in a saved relationship with Him (See Rm 8:1).

COMMAND AND TEACH

4:11 Command and teach: The evangelist has the responsibility to com-

mand insofar as he teaches the commandments of God. The authority is in the commandments of God, not in the evangelist who is God’s medium through whom the commandment is delivered. The evangelist does not have the right to bind where God has not bound. Therefore, that which Timothy was to command and teach is here limited to what God has spoken. His ministry is in his knowledge of and skill to explain the commandments of God. As an evangelist, Timothy had the responsibility to impart the word of God. When evangelists are ignorant of the word of God, they resort to their own assumed authority in order to take control of the church. They thus seek validation for their teachings through their feelings or personal experiences. In their absence of a knowledge of the word of God, they seek dreams, and thus assume that “God told them” oracles that they bind on the consciences of their adherents. All such teachers are false prophets who lead the people astray after the doctrines and commandments of men (See comments Jr 23; Mk 7:1-9).

4:12 Let no man despise your youth: It seems that Timothy was in an intimidating situation where some older brethren were not listening to his message. Timothy could have been anywhere from thirty to forty years old at the time he received this letter. What Paul is saying is that the authority of what he says was not in him as a man. The authority of his word was in the fact that it was from God. Those who were stumbling over his youth, were failing to understand the word of God that was coming from

his teaching. Evangelists should be able to discern between those who attack them personally and those who attack the word of God they teach. Some who attack the person of the evangelist are actually trying to intimidate the evangelist from teaching the word. However, the evangelist should never allow personal attacks against him to stop him from teaching the truth. This may have been what happened in the case of Timothy, and thus, Paul wrote this letter in order to stir up Timothy to fulfill his ministry of teaching (2 Tm 1:6). **Be an example:** When the life-style of the teacher conforms to the message he teaches, then there is power in his teaching (Ph 3:17; Ti 2:7; 1 Pt 5:3). Paul exhorted Timothy to manifest an example in daily communication in conversation and teaching (2 Tm 1:13; Ti 2:1), daily Christian behavior (3:15; Ep 4:22; Ph 1:27; 3:20), loving concern for the affairs of others (1:5; 1 Co 13), faithfulness or trustworthiness (2 Tm 1:5; Ti 2:10), and maintaining purity in his life (5:2,22; Gl 5:19,20).

4:13 Reading: Paul could have been exhorting Timothy to continue his reading of the Old Testament. However, emphasis could have been on public reading of the Old Testament before the disciples. There could have been some New Testament letters in the hands of Timothy, especially the epistles of Romans and Galatians that Paul had earlier written. The purpose for the reading was to continually remind brethren that they must listen directly to what God says in order that each member be his or her own interpreter of the word of God. **Exhorta-**

tion: Paul wanted Timothy to continue to encourage the disciples through the teaching of the word of God (Hb 3:13; 10:24,25). **Teaching:** The Greek word here (*didaskalia*) should be translated "teaching." Paul wanted Timothy to continue the teaching of the word of God. The evangelist works as a preacher in reference to the unbelievers. But his ministry is teaching in reference to the believers.

4:14 Do not neglect the gift: Timothy had received a miraculous gift through the laying on of the apostles' hands (See comments At 8:18; Rm 1:11; 1 Co 12; 13:8-10; 14). The miraculous gifts that came from the work of the Holy Spirit were distributed according to the will of the Spirit (1 Co 12:11). However, the exercising of the gift was subject to the will of the individual who possessed the gift. The gifts came as a result of the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel 2:28 (See comments Mk 16:17-20; At 2:16,17,38,39). **Laying on of the hands of the presbytery:** Paul did not contradict himself when he said in 2 Timothy 1:6 that the gift came by the laying on of his hands. The event of the laying on of Paul's hands in order that Timothy receive the miraculous gift simply happened at the same time the elders commissioned Timothy as an evangelist by the laying on of their hands. Paul explains this with the use of two different Greek words. Timothy received the gift by (*dia* - 2 Tm 1:6) the laying on of Paul's hands when Timothy was commissioned with (*meta*) the laying on of the hands of the elders (Compare At 13:1-3).

4:15 Give yourself wholly: A good

evangelist will focus on what he must teach. He will not be deterred from his commission (2 Tm 2:4). When an evangelist has determined that it is God's will for him to preach the gospel, his acceptance of this destiny will keep him focused on the preaching of the gospel in times of great adversity. People take notice of the determined faith of those who have set themselves to accomplish that which they personally feel is the will

of God in their lives.

4:16 *Take heed:* The evangelist must take seriously his work in order to be cautious about his conduct and teaching. In living that which he teaches, he will save both himself and those he teaches. Since there is always the possibility of falling from the grace of God, one must take heed to what he believes and how he behaves (At 20:28; 1 Co 10:12; see Cl 3:14; 2 Tm 4:10).

CHAPTER 5

MINISTRY OF WIDOWS

5:1,2 In the community of the disciples, respect must be taught to all. Younger men and women must be taught to respect older brothers and sisters. In teaching respect for the older brothers and sisters, the young people learn not to be arrogant. They thus learn to mold their characters after humble godliness in order to portray a spirit of meekness to all men.

5:3,4 *Honor widows:* The true widow is the widow who has no children or relatives to care for her (See Ex 22:2-24; Dt 24:17-19; At 6:1,2). This is the widow to whom special care must be given by the church. It is the responsibility of the church to take care of this widow (Js 1:27). ***Repay their parents:*** If a widow has either children or grandchildren, then it is their responsibility to take care of her. In caring for their mother or grandmother, the children learn gratitude in that they repay their parents and grandparents for all the sacrifices that were made in bringing them up as children (Compare Mt 15:4; Ep 6:1,2; see

Gn 45:10).

5:5 *Supplications and prayers:* A widow who is worthy of support from the church is an elderly lady who has set her hope in God, and thus, she continues in supplications and prayers to God (See comments Lk 2:36-38). Since she has no children or grandchildren to care for her, then the church must accept the responsibility of taking care of her. However, she must not be a worldly minded person whose interests are in the things of this world.

5:6,7 *Dead while she lives:* The church is not obligated to care for those widows who are not Christians, or those who are apostate Christians and spiritually dead. The one who is spiritually dead is spiritually dead in this life, and thus, will suffer the second death at the end of time. ***Command:*** Paul commanded Timothy to command the children and grandchildren to take care of their believing parents and grandparents. If the children and grandchildren fulfill this responsibility, then they will stand blameless before God.

5:8 *He has denied the faith:* The church should not be responsible for those widows who have believing children or grandchildren who can care for them (See Is 58:7; 2 Co 12:14). Those who do not care for their parents or grandparents have actually sinned against God. They are worse in understanding the principles of God than unbelievers who usually have enough moral values to care for their parents and grandparents. A Christian who does not care for his parents or grandparents is an apostate from the faith (See Mt 18:17; 2 Tm 3:5).

5:9 Paul now turns to the responsibility of caring for widows by the disciples as a group. ***Under sixty:*** Those widows who are sixty years of age or more, and who fulfill the preceding qualifications of verses 9 & 10, are to be listed to receive regular support from the church. This age limitation did not exclude younger widows. What Paul is saying is that those under sixty were not to be listed on the roll for regular support from the church. ***Wife of one man:*** She is to have been the wife of one man (See 3:2).

5:10 *Reputation for good works:* Paul places spiritual qualifications on those widows who are to receive regular support from the church. Those who are to be enlisted for regular support must (1) have a good reputation for being a worker for good, (2) have reared children, (3) have been hospitable to strangers, (4) have shown humility and servitude, (5) have been benevolent to those in need, (6) have washed the saints' feet (hospitality), and (7) have continued in suppli-

cations and prayers (faithful) (vs 5). Those widows who do not fulfill these qualifications are not eligible for enlistment in the continued care that the church gives to widows.

5:11,12 *Refuse the younger widows:* Those widows who are under sixty are to be refused enrollment in the regular distribution of care by the church if they either remarry or follow after the lusts of the flesh. The church in Ephesus possibly had problems with some younger widows who married after they had already been enrolled to receive support from the church. If they became unfaithful or remarried, they were to be discontinued from the support of the church. Paul did not discourage remarriage (vs 14). However, widows were to remarry only in the Lord (1 Co 7:39). Because of the society in which they lived in Ephesus, Paul evidently was in fear that the younger widows might marry outside the Lord, and thus, be led into rejecting their commitment to Jesus.

5:13 *Wandering about from house to house:* These young widows who had turned to unrighteous behavior became gossips among the house fellowships, and thus, they became sources of dissension (2 Th 3:11). Women who involved themselves in this sinful activity should be corrected by the leadership of the church. ***House to house:*** Since the early church met in the homes of the members, the houses of the members became the opportunity for undeserving women to go from house to house speaking those things they ought not.

5:14-16 *Marry:* Paul desired that

the young widows marry in order that they be directed by the headship of a husband who would guard them from falling into the hands of the adversary (1 Co 7:9). Their responsibility with children and home would keep them from idleness, and thus, going about from house to house (See comments Ti 2:4,5). **Some have already turned:** Some of the young widows of the church had already given themselves over to Satan at the time Paul wrote these words. Paul concluded this section by exhorting that all Christian men or women should continue to take care of those widows of their own households. This would make it possible for the church to care for those who were truly widows and had fulfilled the qualifications of verses 5,9,10. These would be widows with unbelieving children who refused to care for their Christian mothers.

THE WORK OF ELDERS

5:17 *The elders:* See comments 3:1-7. ***Direct well:*** Those elders who are actively working among the disciples are eligible for a double salary. This is especially true of those elders who are working in the area of study and teaching. The reason for the second salary is that they are among the flock, and thus, are in constant contact with the physical needs of the flock. They need the second salary in order to accomplish the benevolent work of elders in reference to those who are in need. They freely give as they have been freely given to. The nature of godly elders is that they are givers. Therefore, the church should take the opportunity

to care for the needy by paying elders double salary in order that they distribute to the poor. The second salary would not be used by godly elders to consume things upon their own lusts. It would be used to help the needy.

5:18 *Treads ... worthy:* The elder does a good work to service the needs of the church. Therefore, he must be sustained in order to continue. Because he is doing the work of caring for the flock of God, then he is worthy of the support (Lv 19:13; Dt 24:15; 25:4; Mt 10:10; Lk 10:7; 1 Co 9:14). While evangelists go about preaching the gospel to the lost, elders remain with the disciples in order to nurture them in teaching the word of God. God has ordained that the focus of attention of the elders be toward the flock for the purpose of building up the flock (At 20:28; 1 Pt 5:1-6). The focus of the elders is not primarily toward the unbelieving world. The more the flock is serviced by the labors of elders, the greater the flock spiritually grows, and subsequently, numerically grows.

5:19 If an accusation is made against an elder, there should always be two or three witnesses who can substantiate the accusation to be either true or false (See Dt 25:4; 1 Co 9:7-9). Since there are always envious and wicked men who seek to destroy the character of others through slander, Paul instructs Timothy not to receive criticism of an elder from any lone critic. If one who has an accusation against an elder that is a just accusation, then he should be willing to make his accusation in the presence of others who can verify his information.

5:20 *Rebuke before all:* If an elder is found to have sinned, he must be corrected before all those disciples among whom he has influence. Since the sin of an elder would affect many people, then the many people (disciples) must be brought into the occasion of dealing with the sin of any one brother. ***May fear:*** The purpose for the public rebuke of those who sin is to bring disciplinary fear into the hearts of everyone. A church that has no sense of reverential fear of God and abhorrence of sin is a church that is on its way to apostasy from the truth. In this context, fear should be understood in the sense that the disciples are to be motivated to be obedient to the will of God.

5:21 *Doing nothing by partiality:* As God who will judge without respect of persons, so evangelists must preach and apply the word of God without prejudice. In cases where there is sin, the rebuking is not from any one individual or group of disciples. The rebuking originates from the word of God against the sinner. The evangelist is only the messenger of God who must deliver the word of God to those who sin.

5:22,23 The practice of laying hands on someone was a cultural practice of giving one's approval to another. Timothy was not to give his approval quickly to men who would be elders or to those who might bring accusations against existing elders (See 3:6,10). ***Keep your-***

self pure: As a young evangelist who was probably not married, Paul here exhorts Timothy to keep himself away from that which might endanger his holiness. He should not become involved in practices that might compromise his reputation and character. ***For your stomach's sake:*** It seems that Timothy abstained from drinking wine, for here Paul had to instruct him to drink wine for medicinal purposes. ***Frequent infirmities:*** We are not told what these infirmities might have been, though the stressful situation in which Timothy ministered was certainly not the best. His infirmity had something to do with his stomach that may have been brought on by the stressful work of dealing with arrogant false teachers who were causing problems among the disciples.

5:24,25 *Clearly manifest:* The sin of some was so bold that they arrogantly paraded their behavior before others (See Gl 5:19-21). There are some hearts that do not manifest their ungodly motives until all things are brought to light at the judgment. ***Good works:*** Good works manifest the goodness of one's heart (See comments Mt 7:15-23). In contrast to what good works manifest, evil works manifest the ungodliness that is within the hearts of those who do such works (Js 3:10-12). One judges himself, therefore, by his works, for it is by our works that we manifest our hearts (See 2 Co 5:10).

CHAPTER 6

SLAVES AND MASTERS

6:1,2 *Bondservants:* Paul here uses the word *doulos* (slaves). In the economic and social culture of the Roman Empire, slaves were a part of a man's household (See Ep 6:5-8; Cl 3:11,22-24; Ti 2:9; 1 Pt 2:18). Christian slaves were to honor their masters in order that their true Lord and His teaching not be mocked. The economic system of the Roman Empire was built on the necessity of slaves. There is no condemnation of slavery in the New Testament. However, the New Testament writer foresaw the time when New Testament principles would eventually do away with slavery as they were practiced in society as a whole. Until that time, however, the New Testament writers exhorted those slaves who were converted to maintain Christian principles in their lives. ***Masters:*** The Christian masters of slaves were to deal justly with those who were in their trust. Believing masters and slaves must deal with one another in the context of being brothers in Christ. There must be a mutual respect between believing masters and slaves in order that both spiritually benefit (See comments Pl).

HEALTHY TEACHING

6:3 *Wholesome words:* The literal translation here would be "healthy words" (2 Tm 1:13; Ti 1:9). In view of those slaves who were possibly showing discontent, Paul here exhorts that they maintain their civil respect for their masters. This was a matter of sound doc-

trine (See vss 1,2). ***Words of our Lord Jesus Christ:*** Paul's claim here is that the words he writes are the same as the words of Jesus, for they are from the same source. Since the source of the words is the Holy Spirit, they carry the same authority (2 Tm 3:16,17; 2 Pt 2:20,21; see Mt 5:38; 22:21). ***Godliness:*** Obedience to the inspired teaching that Paul gives in this context is necessary in order to maintain a godly life.

6:4 Those who do not obey the inspired instructions that are given by the inspired writers are rebellious against the authority of God (3:6). They know nothing concerning what God would have one be in reference to submission to His will (1 Co 8:2). ***Obsessed with controversy and disputes:*** Arrogant religious people who presume to know the will of God, but behave arrogantly, seek to argue over nonessential and nonbiblical issues. Because of their opinionated thinking, they continually debate those matters that are not constructive for either building one spiritually or promoting unity. Their spiritual sickness is manifested in their willingness to create disputes and arguments over senseless subjects that produce division. The evangelist is not to engage himself in such senseless debates. Paul told Titus that one must avoid useless debates over matters of opinion (See comments Ti 3:9-11). In order to stop such useless debates over religious matters that have no bearing on one's salvation, disciples must simply not participate in such debates. It is sinful, there-

fore, to generate such debates, as well as to participate in them.

6:5 *Corrupt minds and destitute of the truth:* This is the mentality of those who enjoy arguments over those things that do not pertain to our salvation. Timothy is here warned that he will always have trouble with those who manifest their corrupted minds and lack of truth by their desire to engage in arguments and disputes over opinions and personalities. ***Gain:*** Those who manifest the arrogance of their hearts through senseless disputes and arguments seek to promote themselves among the brethren. As the Pharisees who loved money, they seek to maintain some influence in the church in order to maintain either financial support or their position (Lk 16:14; see 2 Pt 2:1-3). ***Withdraw yourself:*** Timothy is here instructed to withdraw himself from those individuals who would seek to cause division through their debates over issues and opinions that have no biblical basis, or have no reference to salvational matters. Paul instructed the Roman disciples to do the same (Rm 16:17). In this context, the evangelist as an individual is to do such (2 Tm 3:5). The evangelist is simply not to involve himself with those who are obsessed with disputes and arguments over words that are not the word of God. It is the task of every disciple to judge whether a potential dispute is over a matter of opinion, and thus, not an essential salvational teaching. If such is judged to be only a matter of opinion, then no meeting should be conducted on the matter, lest disputes are generated in the meeting and division is developed.

In differences of opinion or methodology that have no reference to salvation, disciples must agree to work in unity regardless of their differences (See comments 1 Co 1:10).

GODLINESS AND CONTENTMENT

6:6 *Great gain:* When one focuses his life on behaving after the directions of the word of God, he becomes content with life in that his purpose of life is not to consume the things of this world upon his own lusts (See comments Ph 4:12,13). In contrast to those who focus on gaining that which is of this world, the godly man will focus on spiritual things that will result in eternal life (Ps 37:16; Ph 4:11; Hb 13:5).

6:7 In order to acquire the mentality of verse 6, one must come to the realization that our passing through this world is too brief to focus on the things of this world (Js 4:14). God ordained that the things of this world are to sustain us on our brief stay here in preparation for that which is to come. Since we were born with nothing, when we die, we will have nothing. Since the Christian understands the purpose of the things of this world, he does not become obsessed with them to the exclusion of that which will pass beyond this world.

6:8 *Food and clothing:* Paul says that contentment can exist simply with clothes (“shelter”) and food (See Gn 28:20-22; Hb 13:5). The Christian must understand that God takes care of His people (Mt 6:25-34; 2 Co 9:8; Ph 4:11). The contented life comes from realizing

that possessions do not bring happiness. Treasured relationships are more important than any earthly treasure. And above all, one's relationship with God is the true foundation upon which the contented life is built.

6:9 *Want to be rich:* The brother who is seeking to be rich will lose his contentment with the necessities of life. In his worldly desire, he will lose sight of that which brings spiritual fulfillment. The snare into which he falls is the fact that he leads himself to believe that if he surrounds himself with possessions and involves himself in activities, he will be happy (See Pv 15:27). His thirst for financial affluence will bankrupt him spiritually (Compare Js 2:6; 5:1-5). It is not wrong to possess things of this world. However, one should never allow the possessions of this world to possess him.

6:10 *The love of money:* It is not money that is evil. What is evil is the materialistic heart that is obsessed with obtaining it (Dt 16:19). Some of the brethren in Ephesus had already strayed from the faith because of their desire to become rich. In their desire to satisfy their thirst for wealth, they had marginalized their relationships with friends, family and other disciples. The sorrows that they produced through their striving to be rich manifested the error of the greedy motives of their hearts. If one sacrifices his good works in relationships because he has no time for others as a result of running after riches, then his spiritual life is void of the very foundation of the community of God. One should never allow anything of this world

to hinder his relationship with his fellow Christian.

FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

6:11,12 *Flee:* As a man of God (2 Tm 3:17), Timothy must flee worldly thinking and practices (1 Co 6:18; 2 Tm 2:22). Paul urges him to follow after those things that characterize a righteous person (See Rm 9:30,31; 1 Jn 2:29; 3:7). ***Fight the good fight of the faith:*** This is the fight of the faith since the Greek article is present before the word "faith." Timothy must contend earnestly for the faith that has once and for all been delivered to the saints (1:18; Jd 3; see Cl 1:28,29; 3:1). The function of an evangelist among the lost is laborious. Anyone who is lazy and timid cannot carry out the struggles of warfare in which a disciple is constantly engaged. Godly passion is having goals and energy to accomplish those goals. Such is the thinking and life-style of the disciples of Jesus. ***Lay hold on eternal life:*** The encouragement that sustains the Christian is his hope of eternal life, not only for himself, but also for all those he can call into eternity through the proclamation of the gospel (Ph 3:12; Hb 6:18,19). ***A good confession:*** As all who could be called into the hope of eternal life, so Timothy was also called through the gospel (2 Th 2:14). As an evangelist, Timothy certainly had many opportunities to stand before men and confess his continued faith in Christ (See Mt 10:32,33; Ph 2:11; Hb 13:23).

6:13-15 Jesus had confessed before Pontius Pilate His sonship and kingship

(vs 13; Mk 14:61,62; Lk 23:2,3; Jn 18:37). **Keep this commandment:** Paul had already urged Timothy to fight the good fight of the faith with a life of purity and godly behavior. In order to continue his faithfulness, he must follow the inspired instructions that were given to him by Paul. **Appearing of ... Christ:** Paul's reference here is probably to the final coming of Jesus. Timothy and all evangelists must maintain the commandment to remain engaged in the spiritual warfare until the time when God reveals Jesus from heaven. **In His own time:** The revelation of Jesus will be according to His plan. We must not worry ourselves about the time of His coming since this is His business, not ours. Christians, therefore, should focus on preaching the gospel to the lost, not on endless speculations concerning the date when Jesus comes. **King of kings, and Lord of lords:** When Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father, He began His reign over all things (Dn 7:13,14; Ep 1:20-22; 1 Pt 3:22; see comments 1 Co 15:24-28). He is now King of all the kings of this world. He is Lord of all lords (See Is 9:6,7; Zc 9:9,10; Mt 2:1,2; 27:37; 28:18; Lk 22:29,30; 23:37,38; Jn 1:49; 13:3; 17:2; 1 Pt 3:22). Though we do not now see all things in subjection to Him, He still reigns over all things (Hb 2:8). Those who have submitted to His kingdom reign are members that make up His body, the church. Therefore, the universal church is the assembly of those throughout the world who have submitted to the reign of Jesus over all things (See comments Mt 6:9,10). We must keep in mind that

Jesus' kingship and lordship extend beyond the submitted (the church). Jesus is head over all things (Ep 1:21-23). Even Satan is a subject of His kingdom reign, though Satan exists in rebellion against all King Jesus would have him do (1 Pt 3:22).

6:16 Who only has immortality: Jesus as God was in eternity with God before the creation of the world. However, immortality refers to the resurrected body of Jesus that was raised never to die again (4:10; Rm 6:9; compare Ph 3:21; 1 Jn 3:2). Since Jesus is immortal in His resurrected body, then He has the right and power to give immortality to those who obey Him (Jn 5:21,26; 1 Jn 5:11,12,20). Eternality is characteristic only with God, for nothing exists forever outside His presence and control. Those who would seek to be immortal, therefore, must seek the source of immortality. That source is God through Jesus (See comments 2 Th 1:6-9). **No man can approach:** Jesus is now with the Father in light (1 Jn 1:5; 2:1). The light is unapproachable simply because no man can transcend his mortal state of being in order to become as God who is eternal (See 1:17; Jn 1:18; 4:24; 6:46; Cl 1:15). However, when Jesus comes again, we will see Him and be as He is (1 Jn 3:2). It is for this reason, therefore, that we must approach God through Jesus (See Rm 8:34; 1 Jn 2:1).

6:17 Rich ... not be high-minded: Reference here is to rich disciples. The rich often separate themselves from those they perceive in their minds to be seeking their wealth. They thus separate

themselves from the poor and often develop a spirit of arrogance because of their riches. It is difficult for them to condescend to men of lower financial estate because they have allowed their riches to separate them from others. **Uncertainty of riches:** The rich man often develops the attitude that there is security in riches. His faith in God diminishes as he exalts his security in riches (See Rm 11:20; 12:16; compare Pv 23:5; Jr 9:23; 48:7; Mt 6:19-34; Lk 12:21). In contrast to the insecurity of riches, one must trust in God who has created the world for the sustenance of the Christian. The material world was not created in order to provide an opportunity for the Christian to consume things upon his own lusts. It was created in order to be understood by man to be a temporary sustenance for man while he is in the flesh (See Ec 5:18,19).

6:18 Because rich brothers do have a talent for earning money, they should seek to use their riches to (1) be good workers, (2) do good deeds, (3) be willing to share, and (4) help the poor (See At 20:34,35; Rm 11:20; 12:16; see comments Ph 4:11-13). In having riches, the rich often distance themselves from hands-on ministry. Good works is not something that one can have hired done. Good works involve personal encounters with people, and thus the rich are here cautioned that they do not distance themselves from personal involvement in the lives of others. At the same time, the poorer disciples must help the rich disciples to maintain community with them in the good works of the church. The

poorer disciples must never take advantage of the rich disciples because they are envious of the wealth of the rich.

6:19 In carrying out in their lives the preceding works, wealthy disciples will develop a solid spiritual foundation of a good character that is fit for eternal dwelling. It is not that wealthy brethren have the opportunity to buy themselves into heaven (Mt 6:20; Lk 16:9). Their riches provide the opportunity for them to learn the character of giving. Those who are rich, and yet do not learn to give, cannot develop characters that are prepared for heavenly dwelling. It is not wrong for wealthy brethren to remain wealthy. Paul is not advocating that any brother give himself into poverty or even give in order to equalize his standard of financial status with every other brother (Compare comments 3 Jn 1-8). He is saying that the ability of some to generate wealth offers them the opportunity to excel in the ministry of giving. Poorer disciples must never expect that the rich should give themselves into financial equality with them. Paul began this section by saying that as long as he had shelter and food, then one was to be content with what he had (6:6-8). When those who have less are content with what they have, then they will not envy those who have more.

6:20 Paul concludes his letter to Timothy with deep feelings that Timothy be cautious about keeping what has been entrusted to him (2 Tm 1:14; compare Gl 1:6-9; Rv 22:18,19). In a culture of distorted religious beliefs, Timothy must be wise not to be turned aside unto fables. **Falsely called knowledge:** There

was evidently some Gnostic or sectarian intellectualism that was invading the church. These intellectuals hid behind the cover of either science or philosophies that were the accepted beliefs of the day. However, the Holy Spirit through Paul calls these false sciences and philosophies idle babblings and contradictions.

6:21 It seems that the great apostasy about which Paul had earlier warned was

in the process of happening. Timothy was in the seat of false sciences and philosophies that puffed up men. Paul's final warning to Timothy was that he not be deceived into following after any thinking of men that would contradict the revealed word of God. As a messenger of the truth of God to men, he must be bold in his proclamation of the word of God.