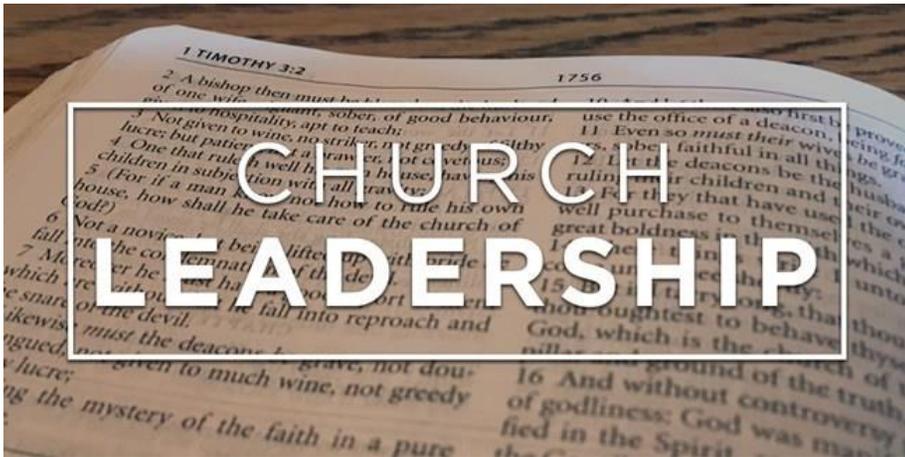


I Timothy

Life and Leadership in the Local Church



Grace Baptist Church

Winterset, Iowa

2010

Grace Baptist Church, Winterset Iowa

I Timothy

I Timothy is the first letter of the “Pastoral Epistles”, written in the order of I Timothy, Titus, and II Timothy. These three epistles are the last known writings of Paul, as he would be executed by Nero at the end of his second imprisonment in Rome. These letters were addressed to two young men, Timothy and Titus, who were functioning in a pastoral role to a church. These letters were very personal and practical in nature as they deal with matters of church order. These letters point to the evolving need for structure and leadership in the early church because of the passing of the stability provided by the apostles.

Paul wrote his letter to Timothy, who was a beloved “son” in the faith to Paul. Timothy was a young man at the time the letter is written. It is believed that he was in his very early twenties (possibly in his late teens) when he received this letter from Paul. Timothy was the son of a Greek Gentile father and a devout Jewish mother...named Eunice.

Timothy’s mother and grandmother, Lois, were possibly saved during Paul’s first missionary trip to Lystra. They became deeply involved in Paul’s ministry during his second missionary trip to Lystra. It was on the second missionary trip that Timothy, as a young teenager, became directly involved in Paul’s ministry. It is not known if Paul personally led Timothy to Christ, but it is believed that Paul personally ordained Timothy into the ministry.

It is believed that Timothy had a gentle, even timid, nature that was passive and easily intimidated. Paul writes his letter in such a manner to spur Timothy into action and to encourage him in his ministry. Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus during his period of freedom from prison and was led to write this letter to Timothy after hearing about the issues in the church at Ephesus. Paul advises Timothy in the letter concerning the issues that were arising in the church at Ephesus.

I Tim. 1:1-2: Paul begins his letter to Timothy with a typical Pauline salutation, which identifies the author (Paul) and the recipient (Timothy). Paul identifies himself as “an apostle of Jesus Christ” by the “commandment of God, our Savior”. This last phrase of the salutation is unique to I Timothy....and it calls attention to the authority of God in Paul’s life and Paul’s obedience to God. This is the foundation for the commands and tasks that he will charge Timothy with to address the issues in the church at Ephesus.

Paul also includes the phrase “Jesus Christ, our hope” in the salutation. This brings focus to Timothy that Christ is his hope as he deals with the church issues. Hope is a term of encouragement because it provides courage to move forward in difficult circumstances.

Paul addresses Timothy with a simple greeting, “to Timothy, a true son (child) in the faith”. Paul is clearly indicating his genuine love for and the special relationship with Timothy by this greeting. The use of the word “true” speaks to the genuineness of Timothy’s faith in the eyes of Paul.

Paul closes his greeting with “grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord”. This is typical of a Pauline greeting but it is interesting to note that Paul has added the term “mercy” to his standard “grace and peace” greeting. It is the mercy of God that frees the believer from the consequence of sin – eternal death and separation from God. Mercy can only come from one who has authority to give mercy, and Paul refers to God as Father and Jesus Christ as Lord, which establishes the authority needed to provide mercy....and it supports the authority of the instructions that Paul would be writing to Timothy.

I Tim. 1:3: Paul gives Timothy instructions prior to his leaving Ephesus. Paul urged Timothy to stay in Ephesus to complete what he

had started, which was dealing with those who were false teachers. This urging by Paul was not a command to Timothy, but it does indicate a possibility that Timothy’s desire was to go with Paul and not stay in Ephesus.

Paul instructs Timothy to “charge” (a military term meaning a demand to a subordinate to obey an order from a superior) “some certain men” not to teach false (different in kind) doctrines; doctrines which were different from those taught by Paul. The false doctrine of these “certain men” was a different kind of gospel, not the true gospel of God.

These “certain men” were small in number but were influential, which leads to the possibility they were elders or deacons in the church. This thought is supported by the focus on the qualifications of elders and deacons in the church....and the discipline of elders in the letter to Timothy.

I Tim. 1:4: Paul states that Timothy should not devote any time to fables (myths) or long, involved genealogies. The term “fables” is a negative term which characterizes beliefs as being fanciful, untrue, and deceptive. The reference and description of “genealogies” appears to refer to the speculative use of genealogies of characters in the O.T. and their family trees. Whatever the nature the fables and genealogies were, it appears that the false teachers were tying mythical legends and stories to O.T. history, which were empty of any spiritual value and only led to further speculation, questions, and arguments. These things were to be avoided by Timothy because they did not further God’s plan, which is grasped and understood by faith.

I Tim. 1:5: Paul restates his “charge” to Timothy that the goal of his instruction is love. The love Paul is referring to is a love of choice and the will, which is characterized by self-denial and self-sacrifice for the

benefit of others. This love is the mark of a true believer. This love comes from a pure (cleansed) heart, a good (untainted) conscience, and a sincere (unhypocritical) faith, which comes from an internal, Spirit-filled heart – a heart change by faith in Christ.

I Tim. 1:6-7: Paul believed such love (internally true, publicly exhibited) should be the goal of each believer as they lived their life and worked in the ministry of the gospel. Yet, this was not true for some believers in Ephesus; believers who were teachers and leaders in the church who had wandered away from the love that Paul taught and had turned aside to false teaching and meaningless talk. This vain and idle talk refers to speech that is aimless and has no logical end; talk that was essentially irrelevant and did not accomplish anything spiritual or edifying to believers.

These false teachers desired to be respected teachers of the Law. They sought the prestige of a Jewish rabbi, but they were not concerned about truly learning the Law and teaching it to others. They were motivated by their personal ego, and in their arrogance and ignorance, they imposed on the believers in Ephesus a legalistic false teaching. Instead of recognizing their inadequacies and the untruth they were teaching, they went on babbling as if with great authority...never understanding the Law or what they were saying about it.

I Tim. 1:8: Paul wanted to make sure that he was not misunderstood regarding his reference to the Law. Paul tells Timothy that the Law is good and useful. The Law is useful, if it is used properly as a reflection of God's holy and righteous standards that identifies sin. The Law condemns every person of sin and sentences them to eternal death in hell. Paul's desire was for the Law to be used properly, not in an inappropriate, legalistic way.

I Tim. 1:9-11: Paul instructs Timothy that the Law is designed to identify sin in the lives of people; therefore the Law is not for the believer but for the unbeliever. The Law is intended for the unbeliever who is unconvinced of the sin in their own life.

Paul lists the sins that are identified by the Law:

1. Lawlessness (Lawbreakers) = no commitment to law
2. Disobedient (Rebels) = insubordinate to authority
3. Ungodly = no regard for anything holy
4. Sinners (Sinful) = disregard for God's laws
5. Unholy = indifferent to what is right
6. Profane (Irreligious) = public disregard and disrespect for what is sacred
7. Murders of fathers
8. Murders of mothers
9. Manslayers = murders
10. Fornicators (Adulterers)
11. Homosexuals
12. Kidnappers (Slave traders) = forced enslavement
13. Liars
14. Perjurers

Paul concludes this inventory of sins with an all inclusive reference to any behavior that is contrary to "sound doctrine". This would have included the actions and behavior of the false teachers.

It is important to note that "sound doctrine" refers to that which is healthy and wholesome. It is the truth, when taught properly, that produces spiritual life and growth in a believer. It is "sound doctrine" that flows out of the gospel message.

Paul closes his thought by establishing a standard for what is and is not "sound doctrine", which is the gospel...God's great good news in Christ. It is this gospel message that Paul had been entrusted with...and which he faithfully preached through out his life.

I Tim. 1:12: Paul had just completed a description of the purpose of the Law, including an inventory of sin identified by the Law (I Tim 1:8-10). It was at this point that Paul wrote of his gratitude because Christ was willing to appoint him to ministry in Christ despite his past sins. God's sovereign purpose for Paul worked through Paul's personal faith; but until Paul was turned from self-righteous works by the Holy Spirit to faith alone in Christ, he could not be used by God. Paul marvels that God graciously considered him worthy of trust in spite of the fact that he was still an unbeliever.

I Tim. 1:13: The reason Paul marveled at God's mercy and trust was because of who he was prior to salvation. Paul states that he was a "blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man" prior to salvation. A blasphemer is one who speaks evil of God and slanders God. A persecutor is one who overtly attacks Christ and those who believe in Him. A violent man is one who purposely executes acts of violence on innocent people. Paul was all of these, yet he was shown mercy because his actions were the product of ignorance.

Paul's point was his salvation was undeserved. His ignorance did not excuse his sin or warrant God's mercy. Paul was drawing a contrast between himself and the false teachers. His actions occurred before he knew Christ as personal Savior; the false teacher's actions occurred after they professed to know Christ as personal Savior. The conclusion of this through is that if you profess Christ and still live in an evil manner, you become dangerously close to being cut off from God's mercy.

I Tim. 1:14: Paul was drawn to God despite of his past sins; therefore he received God's mercy, not His wrath. God's grace was greater than Paul's sins. Where there was unbelief in Paul, God poured out faith in Christ. Where there was persecution and violence, God poured out the love of Christ. Everything Paul had lacked, God's

grace had amply supplied in "super abundance". It was this love and faith that empowered the ministry of Christ in Paul (I Tim. 1:12).

I Tim. 1:15: Paul expresses his personal testimony by using a common phrase in the churches of the day ("this is a faithful saying") which summarized key doctrines – "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners". In support of this phrase, Paul used another phrase "worthy of all acceptance", which provides additional support on the truth of the statement.

Paul makes a summary statement that he is the "worst" ("chief") of all sinners. The word "worst/chief" means "first in rank", which someone who blasphemed God, misled people, and persecuted believers in Christ would be.

I Tim. 1:16: Nevertheless, Paul states, he was saved so God could display His gracious and merciful patience to all – to the worst of all sinners. Paul represents the extreme example of God's grace and patience; for if He could save Paul, He could save anyone. Paul was living proof that God could save any sinner, no matter from what sin(s) that they had done. Paul was a pattern that could be looked on as an example: the ultimate sinner became the ultimate saint; the greatest enemy of God became His finest servant. Paul had served the Law but the Law had proven him to be a sinner; but the gospel had transformed his life and relationship with God.

I Tim. 1:17: The contemplation of God's grace, love, and patience of God in Paul's life caused him to write of one his typical doxologies. Paul was filled with awe and adoration of the Lord because of what He had done. Paul gives glory to God as the transcendent King who is eternal, immortal, and invisible; yet One who intervenes personally in this world to save His people.

I Tim. 1:18: Paul returns from his personal digression (I Tim 1:8-17) to the specific matters before Timothy in Ephesus by resuming the “charge” (command) to Timothy which he had begun in I Tim. 1:3. This command refers to the teaching of the false teachers. Paul’s instruction to Timothy was made in accordance with the “prophecies” made earlier about Timothy’s call and fitness for service. Nothing specific is known about when and by whom these prophecies were made.

Paul was aware of them and referenced them in this “charge” to Timothy – to be a fit soldier to conduct the battle; the battle against the false teachers and their teachings in Ephesus.

I Tim. 1:19: Paul explains to Timothy that there are two essential items to conduct this warfare – faith and a good conscience. Faith and a good conscience work together; each one strengthens the other. Since this is a truth, the opposite is also true; failure in one will create failure in the other. The false teachers in Ephesus had “thrust away” (rejected/put away) their faith and conscience and in so doing had destroyed their faith and conscience. The false teachers had once known the truth, but had thrust it aside causing their faith to be destroyed (“shipwrecked”).

I Tim. 1:20: Paul identified two men who illustrated the principle found in I Tim. 1:19 – Hymenaeus and Alexander. These men were excommunicated out of the church (“turned over to Satan”). This action illustrates the power of the church to be the source of God’s protection and blessing. To be excommunicated from church puts the person under the control of Satan by being back in the world only.

Paul’s leadership to excommunicate these men was to chasten them with the hope that God would reach them and change them as He did with Paul. They were also excommunicated from the church to protect the purity of the church so God could bless the church.

I Tim. 2:1: Paul turns Timothy’s attention to the need for prayer as he deals with the false teachers. It is possible that the false teachers had created an atmosphere that had caused the church in Ephesus to stop praying. Paul exhorted Timothy to put prayer first as a priority for himself and all believers....and that their prayer should be for the salvation of all men.

The terms Paul used for prayer; supplications (requests), prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings are terms written by Paul to build on one another for emphasis rather than distinction. Having said that, it is interesting to look at the meaning of these words to better understand what prayer is and entails.

- 1) Supplication: from the Greek root word that means “to lack”. This is a prayer that focuses on need.
- 2) Prayer: from the Greek word that means to pray earnestly in worship.
- 3) Intercession: from the Greek root word that means “to draw near so as to speak intimately”.
- 4) Thanksgiving: the expression and act of giving thanks, expressing gratitude and appreciation.

I Tim. 2:2: Paul went on to specifically identify government leaders as a group to pray for. The infamous Nero was Caesar of the Roman Empire at the time that Paul wrote this letter to Timothy. Because of his hostility to God and believers, it was easy for believers to be bitter and angry against Nero and his government officials. Paul encouraged Timothy and believers on the necessity of praying for them and their spiritual need of salvation.

Paul was keenly aware of the deteriorating political atmosphere for believers within the Roman government having just been released from prison. Yet he urged the believers to pray for the salvation of the government leaders so a stable, non-interfering political environment might prevail for all.

Paul's desire was to live a quiet (absence of external disturbances), peaceable (absence of internal disturbances) life; a life that was godly and dignified in every way. This desire of lifestyle was consistent with living a life modeled after the life of Christ. There is thought that the lifestyle described by Paul was not the lifestyle being exhibited by the false teachers. Paul was exhorting Timothy not to be like them but rather to set an example before the believers at Ephesus like Paul had.

I Tim. 2:3: Paul encourages Timothy that this prayer – the prayer for the salvation of unbelievers and leaders in government – is good and pleases God. A literal interpretation of the Greek indicates this type of prayer is “acceptable in the presence of God”.

I Tim. 2:4: Paul explains that God desires (wants) all men to be saved (come to the knowledge of the truth). Paul is countering the “exclusive” teachings of the false teachers. God desires that all men come to know the truth so they do not perish (II Peter 3:9). This is known as God's will of desire, which is different than God's will of decree. God has provided a free and universal offering of salvation to every human being; it is God's desire to make this offering, which shows that the offer is a bona fide expression of God's will.

I Tim. 2:5-6: Paul supports his statement in verse 4 (God wants all people to be saved) by providing theological support and foundation in verses 5 and 6. Paul cites unquestioned truths of the gospel to support the offer of salvation to all human beings.

- 1) There is only one God, therefore God seeks all people.
- 2) There is only one way for people to approach God; through the man and mediator (one who intervenes between two parties to resolve a conflict) Christ Jesus.
- 3) Christ Jesus gave Himself up to die on the cross as a ransom (the purchase for someone's release) for all people.

- 4) The sacrifice of Christ Jesus (as a substitute for people – Matt. 20:28) is a clear testimony, offered at just the right time, of God's desire to save people.

I Tim. 2:7: Paul declares his own commission as the apostle to the Gentiles; a messenger of the gospel to all, specifically to the Gentiles. Paul declares emphatically that it was the truth that he had the authority to be the proclaimer (preacher) of the gospel to the Gentiles; and his teaching was based in faith and truth. This was in contrast to the message of the false teachers.

***I Tim. 2:8-15:** Paul, by taking up the issues he addresses in I Timothy 2:8-15 immediately following I Timothy 2:1-7, is directly addressing the way the church conducts itself in corporate worship and teaching. The church's unity, modesty, and submission directly impact its effectiveness in presenting the gospel to a lost world.*

I Tim. 2:8: Paul specifically addresses the male believer. Paul exhorted all believers to prayer (I Tim. 2:1) yet here he focuses in on men praying. Paul stated that men are to pray “everywhere”; “everywhere” is a direct reference to a public assembly.

Paul addresses two specific issues regarding this public prayer. One – these prayers are to be offered with lifted hands. There is some debate if this posture is a prerequisite for effective prayer but such an emphasis cannot be overlooked. The lifted hands are to be holy (devout, undefiled) signifying an internal cleanness of the man praying. Two – the prayers offered are to be offered without anger (outburst of temper) or dissension (disputing) within the life of the man praying. This is a direct reference to the state of human relationships of the man praying, as the state of the relationships he has with others impacts the effectiveness of his prayer.

I Tim. 2:9-10: Paul now specifically addresses female believers. Paul's writing indicates that there was an issue with the women in the church at Ephesus where they had become a distraction to the ministry of the church and of the gospel message. Paul begins by addressing the external adornment of the women; they were to dress modestly with decency and propriety. The emphasis here is on their public appearance that it be simple, moderate, judicious, and free from ostentation. Specifically Paul mentions braided hair, gold, pearls, and expensive clothes. These things are not wrong in themselves but are inappropriate when coupled with the wrong attitude....they become an indicator of misplaced values. There is an indication that the adornment that Paul refers to were styles and attitudes associated with the temple prostitutes of Diana.

Paul wanted the women in the church to focus on the internal values through the adornment of themselves with good deeds. The women who profess to worship God were to exercise and depend on their faithful service to make them attractive. This is not a plea by Paul to have the women make themselves unattractive, but rather it is an exhortation to reject the world's standard for measuring beauty and adopt God's standard for beauty (I Peter 3:4).

I Tim. 2:11-12: Paul confronts the women who profess to believe in Christ with a series of commands based on his being an apostle.

- 1) Women are to be taught in the church.
- 2) Women are to receive instruction from male leadership with quietness and submission. (Note: the word translated "silence" or "quietness" does not mean no talking, it means "settled down, undisturbed, not unruly".)

The concept of women being taught was unique, new, and radical for Paul's day. Women were not provided opportunities for education, but Paul was instructing Timothy to provide them with this opportunity; they now had the opportunity to learn and be taught in a public setting. Paul instructs the women in their role as a learner

(student); they were to be quiet by not being the teacher, they were to be submissive by not usurping the authority of the teacher (which would have been the pastor, deacon, or elder).

Paul calls on his apostolic authority (when he states – "I do not permit") as he provides instruction on church order and practice.

- 1) Women are not to publicly teach, as a pastor or teacher, Scripture or doctrine to men in the church.
- 2) Women are not to exercise authority (hold office) over men in the church.

Paul was instructing the women in the church to be in quietness (settled down, undisturbed, not unruly) and to line up under the authority of the men in the church.

I Tim. 2:13-14: Paul explains the foundation of his statements made in verses 11 and 12. Why was it so important that the women exhibit a quiet and submissive spirit? Why is a quiet and submissive spirit in a woman of great worth in the sight of God? Paul answers those questions; because it manifests a clear understanding and acceptance of God's design for role of the male and female. Paul explains God's design for the male / female relationship through Adam and Eve, God's original creation of male and female.

Paul explains that God's fundamental design created the role for the man and the woman – God made the man to be the leader and the woman to be his helper. The Fall was Eve usurping the authority of leadership from Adam....and then Adam failing in his role as a leader by following after Eve. The actions of Adam and Eve plunged the human race into sin because they violated God's plan. Eve was deceived; Adam willfully disobeyed God's command. Ultimately the responsibility for the Fall rests with Adam since he chose to disobey God apart from Eve being deceived.

I Tim. 2:15: This verse is considered one of the most difficult verses in the N.T. to interpret. Paul does not have Eve in mind here, but rather all women after Eve. This is indicated because of the future tense of

the verb translated “will be saved” and the use of the plural pronoun “they”. The phrase “will be saved” is better translated in context as “will be preserved” or “kept safe”.

Paul is not advocating that women are eternally saved through child birth, which would be a clear contradiction of salvation by grace alone through faith. Most commentators believe Paul was teaching that even though a woman was the instrument who led mankind into sin, it is women, thorough child bearing, who are feed from that stigma by raising godly children (I Tim. 5:10).

Paul uses a conditional phrase at the end of the verse – “if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety”. This means the first part of the verse is true if the woman is willing to abide by these four virtues. A woman will find her greatest satisfaction and meaning in life, not in seeking the male leadership role, but in fulfilling God’s design for her as a wife and mother with all faith, love, and holiness with self-control.

I Tim. 3:1: Paul begins his instructions on how the church should conduct itself beginning with leadership. The leadership and leadership qualifications Paul sets out will show a sharp contrast to the leadership demonstrated by the false teachers.

Paul begins with the validation of the desire of a male believer to aspire to leadership. The first Greek word translated “desire” means “to reach out after”. This word describes an external action but it does not refer to an internal motive. The second Greek word translated “desire” means “a strong passion”. This word describes the internal motive. Taken together, these two words describe the man who belongs in the ministry – one who outwardly pursues leadership because he is driven by a strong internal desire.

The Greek word translated “bishop” is better translated “overseer”. The N.T. terminology – pastor, elder, bishop – all have a root meaning of “overseer”, which is why they are used interchangeably. The

“overseer” is responsible to lead the church, which Paul describes as a noble task (good work).

I Tim. 3:2-7: Paul instructs Timothy that more is required of an overseer than just willingness and desire to hold the office. Paul identifies the requirements on an overseer – they must....

- 1) Be blameless. This is an emphatic requirement that is an absolute requirement for an overseer. He must be above reproach in his behavior, which means he must have nothing evident in his conduct on which someone could base a charge or accusation; no valid accusation of wrong doing can be made against him. This is the overarching requirement of leadership of the overseer. The rest of the qualifications elaborate on what it means to be blameless.
- 2) Be the husband of one wife. The literal translation of the Greek means “a one-woman man”. The interpretation of this phrase is widely debated and has numerous conflicting interpretations. Following is a capsule of the various interpretations:
 - a. This phrase prohibits a polygamist from being an overseer.
 - b. This phrase focuses not on the marital status on the man but on the moral and sexual purity of the man.
 - c. This phrase means the affections of the overseer must be exclusively on his wife while he is married to her.
 - d. This means that a man who is divorced and remarried is permanently prohibited from being an overseer.
 - e. This phrase means a man who remarries is disqualified from being an overseer, even if the man is a widower.
 - f. This phrase disqualifies a single man from being an overseer.

It is my personal interpretation that a one-woman man is a man who is exclusively devoted to his wife, maintaining a singular devotion to her in affection and sexual purity in

both thought and deed....and it is not a reference to marital status.

- 3) Be temperate. The Greek word translated “temperate” means “wineless” and is used here to mean “watchful, vigilant, and clear-headed”. “Sober-minded” is a good translation of the Greek here as well. The overseer is to be clear-headed and sober-minded when dealing with the matters of leadership of the church.
- 4) Be self-controlled. The Greek word translated “sober-minded” means “self-controlled”. The meaning here states that the overseer is disciplined, knows how to properly order his priorities, and is serious about the spiritual matters of the church.
- 5) Be of good behavior. The Greek word translated “of good behavior” could be translated as “respectable” and/or “orderly”. The overseer is not to lead a chaotic life but a life of order and discipline.
- 6) Be hospitable. The compound Greek word translated “hospitable” means “love of strangers”. The overseer is to set the example of the virtue of hospitality before the church.
- 7) Be able to teach. This is a distinguishing requirement of the overseer. This is a distinguished, specific skill that is an exclusive requirement of the overseer. A man who desires to be an overseer must have the aptitude and ability to handle the Word of God with skill; it is the required duty of the overseer.
- 8) Not be given to wine. A clearer translation of this Greek phrase is “not a drunkard”. Another translation is “not given to much wine”. There is a debate if this phrase requires abstinence from drinking or not. While that can be debated, the clear interpretation of this requirement is that the overseer must not have a reputation of being a drinker or a drunkard. The implication is that the overseer’s lifestyle is to be different from the world’s standards of conduct for the purpose of leading others to a life that reflects Christ.
- 9) Not be violent. The literal translation of the Greek is “not a giver of blows”. The overseer must react to difficult situations calmly and gently...and under no circumstances should they react with physical violence from an angry temper. The overseer’s self-control is to extend to his emotions. It is my personal belief that this also extends beyond the physical violence to verbal abuse as well (I Peter 1:19), for it is rare that physical violence occurs separately from verbal abuse. Often verbal abuse leads to physical violence so the two are companions.
- 10) Not be greedy for money. Most early manuscripts do not have this phrase included in I Timothy 3:3. The principle stated here is stated clearly in Titus 1:7 and I Peter 5:2. Paul covers this issue in Timothy when he lists the requirement of not being covetous.
- 11) Be gentle. The overseer is to be considerate, gracious, quick to pardon failure, and no who does not hold a grudge. The overseer is to “make room for others”, which is the meaning of the Greek word used here.
- 12) Not be quarrelsome. The Greek word means “peaceful, reluctant to fight”. The overseer is to have a calm temperament and quiet speech that does not promote disunity or disharmony.
- 13) Not be covetous. This means that the overseer is not to be a lover of money. The overseer is to be motivated by love for God and His people (the church). He is not to be in the ministry for the purpose of monetary gain, which would show a heart set on the world’s standards and desires.
- 14) Be one who rules his own house well. The overseer’s family life, like his personal life, must be exemplary. He must be the one who rules and has authority over his own home. This means everything connected with his home, such as finances,

business relationships, wife and children, is be managed well / good / excellently. Paul's specific focus on children is because this is generally a reliable measure of the quality of the overseer's leadership. The children in the home of the overseer are to demonstrate a proper respect by submitting to the father's authority without unnecessary disrespect. The skill and success of the overseer in leading a family generally demonstrates their ability to lead a church. Paul's emphasis here is properly used to support the interpretation that a divorced man cannot be an overseer because he had demonstrated an inability to rule his own house well.

- 15) Not be a novice. The overseer must not be a recent convert. Putting a new or recent convert into a leadership position many times tempts him to be filled with pride and conceit. When this occurs they are easily deceived and must fall very hard, which leads to their exit from the ministry. This is the same kind of pride and conceit that occurred in Satan, which resulted in his fall from honor to condemnation. This can and does occur to novice believers who are placed to early into leadership. The spiritually mature men are to be the overseers. It is the responsibility of the overseer to lead men to become spiritually mature.
- 16) Be a good testimony to those who are outside. The overseer of the church must have an unimpeachable reputation in the unbelieving community, even though there are people within the community that disagree with his moral and spiritual standards. The world is watching and Satan likes nothing better than to disgrace God's work and the leaders of God's work by trapping them in sin. Therefore it is important that the overseer achieve and maintain a good reputation before unbelievers.

I Tim. 3:8-9: Paul changes focus from the overseer to the deacon as he continues his instructions on the qualifications of leadership within

the church should. Paul changes focus with the word "likewise" (In like manner), which directly links the required qualifications of the overseer to the deacon.

The word "deacon" comes from the Greek root word that means "to serve" and "a humble servant". The role of the deacon is to serve the church but Scripture does not clearly define the service responsibilities of a deacon. Deacons are to serve under the leadership of the overseer as they serve the church. The deacon shares most of the required qualifications of the overseer with one notable exception; the deacon is not required to demonstrate an "apt to teach". The deacon is in a public position in the church and must...

- 1) Be reverent / dignified. The deacon is to be serious in mind and character, not flippant about important matters.
- 2) Not be double-tongued / sincere. The deacon must not say one thing to some people and another thing to others; their speech must be honest and consistent without hypocrisy.
- 3) Not be given to much wine / not a drunkard. A deacon is not to be a drunkard. There is a debate if this phrase requires abstinence from drinking or not. While that can be debated, the clear interpretation of this requirement is that the deacon must not have a reputation of being a drinker or a drunkard. The implication is that the deacon's lifestyle is to be different from the world's standards of conduct for the purpose of leading others to a life that reflects Christ.
- 4) Not be greedy for dishonest gain. A deacon is not to be a lover of money and is to be honest in all his dealings. The deacon is to be motivated by love for God and for people. He is not to serve for the purpose of monetary gain, which would show a heart set on the world's standards and desires.
- 5) Hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. A deacon must understand and hold fast the truths of the faith. The word "mystery" refers to the entire revealed content of God's plan to bring salvation through Christ to man. The term "clear / pure / good" refers to that which is perfect and

produces pleasure and satisfaction. God created man with a “conscience”, which serves as a self-judging faculty. Because God has written His law on the hearts of men (Rms. 2:15), man knows the basic standard of right and wrong. When he violates that standard, his conscience produces guilt, shame and doubt as warnings of threats to the soul’s well-being. When he does God’s will in concert with God’s law, he enjoys the affirmation, assurance, peace and joy of a good conscience.

I Tim. 3:10: Paul instructs Timothy that a deacon must demonstrate their maturity before they are placed in the position of deacon. A man must prove their genuineness for the gospel over time in the ordinary activities of life and ministry.

After they have demonstrated their “blamelessness”, then they can serve as a deacon. As with the overseer the deacon is to be blameless. He must be above reproach in his behavior, which means he must have nothing evident in his conduct on which someone could base a charge or accusation; no valid accusation of wrong doing can be made against him.

I Tim. 3:11: Paul abruptly changes the flow of his instruction by introducing a new group through the use of the term “likewise”. Paul addresses the conduct of the wife of the deacon or of a woman who serves in a deacon role. There are three interpretations of this verse. The text refers to:

- 1) The wives of deacons.
- 2) Women who are deacons.
- 3) Women who assist deacons but are separate from deacons.

There are a number of churches who have the office of deaconess based on this scripture and Rms. 16:1 (Phoebe). Paul defines the required qualifications of a deacon’s wife or a deaconess. They are...

- 1) To be reverent / dignified. The deacon’s wife or deaconess is to be serious in mind and character, not flippant about important matters.
- 2) Not to be slanders. The deacon’s wife or deaconess is not to be a slander or a gossip.
- 3) To be temperate. The Greek word translated “temperate” means “wineless” and is used here to mean “watchful, vigilant, and clear-headed”. “Sober-minded” is a good translation of the Greek here as well. The deacon’s wife or deaconess is to be clear-headed and sober-minded when serving others and those within the church.
- 4) To be faithful in all things. The deacon’s wife or deaconess is to be absolutely trustworthy in all aspects of their lives and ministries.

I Tim. 3:12: Paul abruptly changes the flow of his instruction again by returning to the required qualifications of the deacon. Paul states that the deacon is to...

- 1) Be the husband of one wife. The literal translation of the Greek means “a one-woman man”. The interpretation of this phrase is widely debated and has numerous conflicting interpretations. Following is a capsule of the various interpretations of this phrase:
 - a. It prohibits a polygamist from being a deacon.
 - b. It focuses not on the marital status on the man but on the moral and sexual purity of the man.
 - c. It means the affections of the deacon must be exclusively on his wife while he is married to her.
 - d. It means that a man who is divorced and remarried is permanently prohibited from being a deacon.
 - e. It means a man who remarries is disqualified from being a deacon, even if the man is a widower.
 - f. It disqualifies a single man from being a deacon.

It is my personal interpretation that a one-woman man is a man who is exclusively devoted to his wife, maintaining a singular devotion to her in affection and sexual purity in both thought and deed....and it is not a reference to marital status.

- 2) Rule his children and home well. The deacon's family life, like his personal life, must be exemplary. He must be the one who rules and has authority over his own home. This means everything connected with his home, such as finances, business relationships, wife and children, is be managed well / good / excellently. Paul's specific focus on children is because this is generally a reliable measure of the quality of the deacon's leadership. The children in the home of the deacon are to demonstrate a proper respect by submitting to the father's authority without unnecessary disrespect. The skill and success of the deacon in leading a family generally demonstrates their ability to lead a church.

I Tim. 3:13: Paul closes his teaching regarding the qualifications of a deacon by highlighting the value and importance of deacons. For deacons who serve well, they gain two things....

- 1) Good standing. This refers to the respect and appreciation of the church to the deacon who has served with humility and selflessness.
- 2) Great confidence (boldness / assurance) in the faith. This refers to the building of confidence in the genuineness and sincerity of his faith in Christ. This confidence comes as a result of serving with humility and seeing the power of the gospel proven in his ministry.

I Tim. 3:14-16: *These verses mark a transition between the instruction of the first three chapters and the warnings of the final three chapters. In this transition Paul states the purpose of his letter*

and its central focus, which is the behavior of the believer in church; and the church's mission and message.

I Tim. 3:14: Paul writes to Timothy – “these things I write, although I had hoped to come to you sooner”. Paul was delayed in Macedonia, which created the circumstance for him to write a letter to Timothy. Paul's letter was an instructional letter to Timothy.

I Tim. 3:15: Paul states his reason for writing to Timothy – “how to conduct yourself in church” – and provides a key description of the church's identity and mission. Paul writes that the believers are members of God's household; the church is God's family. The term “house” is not a reference to a building, rather a family. Specifically the reference to household is a reference to the authority and responsibility of those within the church and home. The church is God's possession; the church is a gathering of believers where God most clearly manifests His presence and work. The reference to God as a “living God” refers to His reality and presence in the local community of believers.

Paul identifies and describes the church as a pillar and buttress (ground / foundation) of the truth. This means that God has entrusted the church with the task of promoting and protecting the Gospel (the “truth”). It is the church's responsibility to “hold up” the truth of the Gospel before a watching world; but it is not the “source” of God's truth as some churches teach. This picture of the church clearly shows that the role of advancing the Gospel and divine truth of Scripture is divinely given to the church – not to any other body or organization.

I Tim. 3:16: Paul uses a hymn of the early church to present the “truth” that the church is to advance and support. The “truth” is the “mystery of godliness”, which is a reference to the truth hidden in the O.T. that is now revealed; the revelation of the entire content of God's plan for salvation. This revealed truth is “great”, meaning

“large and important”, and it is presented by Paul as a “confession”, being without controversy.

As stated earlier, Paul uses an early hymn to support the “truth of the mystery of godliness”, which is Christ. There are six elements within the hymn which describe Christ.

- 1) God was manifest in the flesh – the incarnation of Christ.
- 2) Justified in the Spirit – Christ was vindicated through the Resurrection that He is Lord and Messiah.
- 3) Seen by angels – Christ was exalted as victorious before the angels.
- 4) Preached among the Gentiles – the message of Christ is proclaimed among the nations.
- 5) Believed in the world – the proclamation of Christ is effective in the progressive fulfillment of God’s redemptive plan.
- 6) Received up in glory – Christ’s ascension and the future presentation of the ultimate exaltation of Christ.

***I Tim. 4:1-5:** After declaring the purpose of his letter and a celebration of the church and the advancement of the Gospel, Paul returns to the challenge of the false teachers within the church.*

I Tim. 4:1-2: Paul begins by repeating to Timothy the warning he had given to the Ephesians years earlier (Acts 20:29-30), through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Paul writes that the Spirit explicitly and clearly states that in “latter times” some will depart from the faith. “Latter times” refers to the time that began with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit after the work of Christ was finished; the time from Pentecost to the return of Christ. Those who will “depart from the faith” is a reference to individuals who profess to be believers, who associate with believers, but who will defect from the faith by believing in lies and deception of false teachers; they are those who never know the “truth”.

Spiritual error is seldom due to innocent mistakes. Spiritual lies and deception occur due to conscious strategies of God’s spiritual enemies. The “teaching of demons” are false doctrines being taught by false teachers whose views are instigated by demons. These false teachers do not directly confront individuals with error. Instead they work through speaking lies in hypocrisy. The hypocritical lying of the false teachers results in their conscience being “seared” and desensitized to the truth. The “seared” conscience is a conscience that has been “cauterized with a hot iron” – meaning they have no resistance to not do Satan’s bidding.

I Tim. 4:3: Paul now states some of the content of the false teaching that was being taught. The false teachers were teaching that all appetites relating to the body (matter) were evil and should be rooted out of one’s life. They ...

- 1) Forbid people to marry.
- 2) Enforced abstinence from certain foods.

Paul countered that teaching by stating that all appetites relating to the body (matter) were not inherently evil; it is what God created. Those who believe and know the truth can gratefully receive and use the things that God has created; which were designed to be received.

I Tim. 4:4-5: Paul taught a contrary teaching to the false teachers – everything God created is good. Paul stated that since God created both marriage and food, they are intrinsically good and to be enjoyed with thanksgiving. Paul said that nothing is to be rejected that God has created.

It must be noted that man can abuse what God has created, but God’s creation are all good and should be received with thanksgiving, not with asceticism. God’s creation is to be sanctified (consecrated) by the Word of God and prayer, meaning everything created by God is a gift and is to be considered “made holy” by God. As believers we are to worship and praise God for all He provides.

I Tim. 4:6-16: *These verses are Paul's personal exhortation to Timothy as the "overseer" of the Ephesus church.*

I Tim. 4:6: Paul begins his exhortation to Timothy by stating that he is to put "these things" (I Tim. 4: 1-4) before those who are the "brethren", as a good minister (servant) of the Christ Jesus. Paul tells Timothy that he is a faithful conduit of the truth to other believers; and the maintenance of the conduit of truth requires him to faithfully follow his training and be careful in his spiritual "nourishment". Spiritual health is based on the continued nourishment provided by the reading and meditating on the Word of God. Only by reading, studying, meditating, and mastering of the Word of God can a pastor fulfill his calling.

Timothy was nourished by the objective truth of the faith and the truth of the teaching that he had followed. Timothy was found faithful in the truth of God since he was a young man.

I Tim. 4:7: Paul instructs Timothy to have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives tales. The believer is to be committed to the Word of God and is to avoid profane (godless, worldly) fables (myths) and uneducated, worthless philosophy (old wives tales). Paul encourages Timothy to exercise (train) his spiritual life for godliness. The believer is to devote themselves to rigorous, self-sacrificing training to develop a proper attitude and response toward God.

I Tim. 4:8: Paul challenges Timothy: "For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also the life to come". As valuable as physical exercise is, godliness is much more valuable. Godliness is profitable for all things, not just here in this present life, but in the life to come for all eternity.

I Tim. 4:9: Paul reinforces his challenge in verse 8 by calling the saying regarding the value of godliness, "a trustworthy saying" that deserves "full acceptance" by the believer. This is a statement that we are to believe and act upon.

I Tim. 4:10: Paul tells Timothy that the goal of his labor is for people to attain godliness and its eternal value. Paul describes his labor in the ministry of the gospel as "toiling, striving, and agonizing". Why this type of labor? Because of the hope and trust he has in the "living God". Paul knew his struggle was worth it because his hope was set in the "living God".

Paul then exclaims that the "living God" is "the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe". This scripture has created an interpretation challenge as some have used this scripture passage to teach "universalism". Here are some of the interpretations of this passage...

- 1) It means that Christ died for all people but only those who believe in Him are saved.
- 2) It means that Christ was offered to all people, though not all will believe in Him.
- 3) It means that Christ is the Savior of all people, namely, those who believe.
- 4) It means that Christ is the helper of all people by which God helps and protects people in need.
- 5) It means that Christ is the Savior of all kinds of people, not Jews only, but both Jews and Gentiles.

Paul is not teaching "universalism" – which states that all men will be saved in the spiritual and eternal sense. God is the "Savior all men" since He desires that all be saved and He provided Christ as the ransom to make that salvation possible (I Tim. 2:2-6). Yet God is the Savior of those who believe in Christ though faith, only in them has His desire for their salvation come to fruition.

I Tim. 4:11: Paul exhorts Timothy to insist on (command) and teach “these things”, which is a reference to Paul’s instruction to Timothy in this letter.

I Tim. 4:12: Paul continues his exhortation to Timothy that he should not let anyone despise his youth, which is between the ages of 30 to 35 years old. The Greek and Roman culture of the day placed great value on age and experience. Since Timothy was considered young by the standards of the culture for leadership, he would have to earn the respect of those over whom he was leading.

Paul is instructing Timothy not to be intimidated by his youth or by what others think. Instead, Paul was encouraging him to demonstrate his maturity by living a godly life, which would be an example (a pattern) for other believers to follow. Paul lists 5 areas in which Timothy was to be an example to the church... [Note: most high quality manuscripts do not include “spirit”.]

- 1) Word, Speech
- 2) Conduct, Behavior
- 3) Love, Self-sacrificing Service
- 4) Faithfulness, Commitment
- 5) Purity, Moral Cleanness.

I Tim. 4:13: Paul exhorts Timothy to pay attention to his public ministry in addition to his private life...and to pay attention until he was there in person. Paul describes the public ministry as...

- 1) Public reading of Scripture.
- 2) Exhortation – the exposition and application of the Scriptures read.
- 3) Teaching (doctrine) – the systematic instruction from the Scriptures.

I Tim. 4:14: Paul reminds Timothy of the fact that God had given him the ability to minister and lead. Paul tells Timothy not to ignore or neglect the gift of ministry and leadership that had been given to him; a gift identified by revelation from God. This gift in Timothy was

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confirmed by public affirmation and the “laying on of hands” by a board of elders – “a presbytery”.

The “laying on of hands” is commonly associated with the continuity of leadership. The “board of elders” is a group of spiritual leaders of the local church, which is noted throughout the N.T. through the use of the Greek word “presbytery”. It is interesting to note that there is not a single reference in the Bible to deacons functioning as a board.

I Tim. 4:15: Paul gives Timothy a positive set of commands, which will allow him to demonstrate his fitness for ministry and leadership.

- 1) Meditate and practice the things Paul had instructed him to do (I Tim. 4:6-14).
- 2) Give yourself wholly to the things Paul had instructed him to do (I Tim. 4:6-14).

The result of Timothy doing these 2 things would be a demonstration and advancement in maturity that all observers of his life would be able to see.

I Tim. 4:16: Paul closes his exhortation to Timothy with a challenge to “Watch yourself and your teaching!” Paul was concerned about Timothy’s personal holiness and his public teaching. Paul tells Timothy to persevere in his “watching” for in doing so he will demonstrate genuine salvation (conversion) and God will use him to save others who will observe and listen to him.

I Tim. 5:1-2: Paul instructs Timothy on how to deal with individuals in the church of Ephesus as a young overseer (I Tim 4:12). He was to deal respectfully with older men, just as if they were his father. As a young overseer he was not to use sharp or harsh words (rebuke = to strike upon, to chide, to blame, or to reprove) when dealing with older men; he was to gently exhort them when correction and/or guidance was needed.

Paul goes on to tell Timothy that he should treat young men as his brothers, the older women as his mother, and the young women as his sister. Paul added that he should treat the younger women with absolute purity to avoid temptation or scandal. By doing what Paul advised, Timothy would be safeguarded from reproach; he would be blameless.

I Tim. 5:3-4: Paul addresses Timothy's relationship as an overseer to the widows in the church of Ephesus. Timothy was instructed to honor (give proper respect, to show respect or care, to treat graciously) those who were truly widows; these were women who were alone and without any resources.

Paul instructs Timothy that widows who have children or grandchildren still living were to be taken care of by the family. The family of the widow should learn first to put their religion into practice by taking care of the financial and physical support needs of the widow on their own. By doing this the family members repay their parents for the indebtedness they owe to them for bringing them into the world, raising them, and loving them. Such recognition of responsibility is pleasing to God; it is the mark of godly obedience (Ex. 20:12).

I Tim. 5:5: Paul continues his instruction on widows. The widow who is left alone with no one to support her and with no resources has nowhere to look for help but to God. She actively puts her hope in God and continues in petition and prayer day and night. The indication here is that a widow who dedicates herself to service to the Lord is worthy of support from the church to meet her needs.

I Tim. 5:6: Paul states in contrast the widow who seeks sensual pleasure....it produces a woman who is dead even though she is alive. There is a suggestion here that the widow without resources or support may turn to a loose lifestyle or prostitution to support

herself. Such a lifestyle produces spiritual emptiness and will ultimately lead to spiritual death.

I Tim. 5:7-8: Paul instructs Timothy to "command" these instructions regarding widows to the church. The amount of time Paul is spending on the issue of widows indicates that this was a major problem within the church of Ephesus that was impacting the church's spiritual health and ministry. Paul wanted to pass along these instructions regarding widows so no one may be open to blame – the widows, their families, the overseer and elders, and the church.

Paul focuses on the family leadership (emphasis on male leadership) if they fail to provide for the widow within the family or the family as a whole. If the family leadership fails to provide (to think ahead, to provide by seeing needs in advance) for the family needs, they are denying the faith they claim to have. So strong is this failure that Paul writes that they are worse than an unbeliever. For believers who have God's command and power to plan for the support of the family when there is need but do not....their behavior is worse than an unbeliever as most unbelievers in Paul's day did plan ahead for the support of their family.

I Tim. 5:9-10: Paul instructs Timothy to create a list of qualified widows who were in need of the church's support. To be placed on this list, the widows were to meet the following qualifications:

- 1) She must be over 60 years old.
- 2) She must have been faithful to her husband ("a one-man woman").
- 3) She must be well known for her good works...
 - a. In raising children.
 - b. In hospitality.
 - c. In humble service (washing the saint's feet).
 - d. In helping people in trouble.
 - e. In various other kinds of good works.

The women on the widow's list must be those whose reputations for godly living were well known.

I Tim. 5:11-15: In the creation of the "widows list" there were widows under the age of 60 who would have petitioned the church to be on the list. Paul instructs Timothy not to put the younger widows on the list for two primary reasons:

- 1) The younger widow may face normal sexual desires which would overcome their dedication to Christ, which they pledged to the church to get on the list. As a result, they would want to marry, which would bring judgment on themselves because they had broken their pledge of service ("first faith") to Christ and the church. Also in context – if the widow married an unbeliever, she would take the religion of her husband as that was the culture of the day.
- 2) The younger widow may be tempted with idleness and would be more susceptible to going from house to house being an idle gossip and a busybody saying things they should not say.

Paul's counsel to Timothy was that the younger widows should not make a pledge to Christ and the church to be placed on the widow's list, but instead they should seek to remarry, manage their homes, and in so doing give the enemy no opportunity for slander. The importance of Paul's counsel is supported by the fact that it comes too late to preserve some of the widows and members of the church, who in fact had already turned away to follow Satan.

I Tim. 5:16: Paul closes with a restatement of the instructions in verse 8 of chapter 5. Paul wanted to make sure that it was understood that a woman who had the means to support a widow had the responsibility to do so; just as it was the man's responsibility to provide for his family as outlined in verse 8. It was and is the individual responsibility of the man or woman who is leading a family to support the widow in the family. By doing this, this would relieve the members of the church of this responsibility so they could help

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those widows who were truly in need with no available family or resources.

I Tim. 5:17: Paul instructs Timothy that the overseer/elder(s) in leadership who rules well be considered worthy of double honor. "Ruling well" means "to direct affairs with competence that creates respect from those being ruled." The overseer/elder(s) who rules is a clear statement on the authority of leadership in the local church. The overseer/elder(s) of a church are to have oversight of the affairs of the congregation with the deacons providing the support wherever it is needed or is appropriate.

The overseer/elder(s) who rules well are the ones who set the example of Christ before the church in their personal life and who demonstrate the gift of leadership. Those who excel in this ministry of leadership were to be considered worthy of double honor. The expression "double honor" does not mean that these men must receive twice-as-much money as others. It does mean that they are to be amply provided for in addition to receiving proper respect.

The "double honor" is especially applicable to the overseer/elder(s) who labor hard (exertion to the point of exhaustion) in preaching and teaching. The primary emphasis here is for the overseer/elder(s) who labor to preach the truth of the gospel along with exhortation and admonition to those they oversee. The secondary emphasis is on the teaching of truth (doctrine) to protect against heresy. These two areas are at the core of the ministry of the overseer/elder(s).

I Tim. 5:18: Paul supports his point that the overseer/elder(s) should be paid (and certain ones more than others) by quoting scripture – "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain" (Deut. 25:4) and "The worker deserves his wages" (Luke 10:7). Though Paul reserved the right not to receive support from his ministry's work, he clearly believed and repeatedly taught that a congregation did not have the right not to offer it.

I Tim. 5:19-20: Paul was aware of the command that the overseer/elder(s) are to be blameless. He was aware of the opposition to the overseer/elder(s) who stood for truth; the opposition being the false teachers. Here he provides Timothy with a procedure to separate valid accusations from false accusations. The procedure is based on the scripture found in Deut. 19:15 and Matt. 18:16.

An accusation should be considered against an overseer/elder(s) only when two or three witnesses testify to the validity of the accusation. When an accusation is proven to be true, the overseer/elder(s) were to be rebuked publicly before the church congregation. The public rebuke is necessary because of the leadership position of the overseer/elder(s) in the church. This action assures the congregation that disqualifying sin on the part of the overseer/elder(s) will not be covered up.

As a result of this public rebuke, the rest of the overseer/elder(s) are to stand in fear of a public rebuke of sin. Such fear is a healthy thing for church leadership. This also teaches that a church cannot ignore church discipline and to do so puts the offender and the church in peril of public rebuke from God.

I Tim. 5:21: Paul punctuates his instructions with a strong charge to Timothy – “Guard these instructions without prejudging or favoritism”. The strength of this charge is underlined by Paul’s invocation of the authority of God, Christ Jesus, and the elect angels – all of whom are associated with righteous judgment.

I Tim. 5:22: Paul turns his attention to the selection of the overseer/elder(s). Paul counsels Timothy to be careful when affirming a man’s suitability for and acceptance into public ministry; which is referred to as “the laying on of hands”. Such affirmation is not to be hasty; referring to proceeding without a thorough

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investigation and preparation period to be certain of a man’s qualifications.

To be hasty in ordaining an unqualified man into the public ministry makes those responsible of their action and they will share the blame for the man’s sin and the negative consequences on the work of God. Paul was telling Timothy to be careful in approving men who would be ordained; and he was to keep himself from sin. Paul wanted Timothy to be untainted by other’s sin as well as personal sin.

I Tim. 5:23: Paul creates a parenthetical thought in verse 23 when he provides Timothy with some personal advice. It appears that Timothy was inclined to an asceticism which was associated with purity – the total abstinence from alcohol. Drinking only water was often an indication of an ascetic practice in the time of Paul. It appears that Timothy avoided drinking alcohol so he would be above reproach and blameless.

Paul was clarifying for Timothy that there would be nothing wrong with using a little wine for the sake of his health; the emphasis here was on the medicinal purpose of wine being used to purify water. Many times water was the source for many illnesses and wine was poured into the water to purify it.

It is interesting to note that how Paul wrote this note to Timothy validates that practice that those in leadership of a church should be above reproach on the issue of drinking alcohol or the use of wine as a daily habit or practice.

I Tim. 5:24-25: Paul comes back to the theme of verse 22 here – “Do not rush to ordain men”. All men are heading toward judgment carrying with them their sins and their good works. For some their sin and/or good works are obvious and observed by others. For others their sin and/or good works trail behind them, hidden from

observation by others....but they will eventually come into view to be observed.

Paul was emphasizing the difficulties inherent in choosing men who were qualified to be an overseer/elder(s). Paul was restating to Timothy that he not be hasty but patient in ordaining men into the ministry. Time and truth go hand-in-hand; so Paul instructs Timothy to be patient, fair, impartial, and pure when ordaining a man into public ministry. Such an approach will usually yield the right choice.

I Tim. 6:1-2: Paul addresses the relationships of slaves and masters in Ephesus. The Roman economy was built upon slavery and day labor, very similar in concept to the indentured servants and masters used in the early American colonies. Today this relationship is reflected in the employee – employer relationship.

Under normal circumstances slaves and masters had no associations outside the master-slave working relationship. However, with the advent of the gospel, the two groups of people found themselves together in the same group of believers who had joined together to worship and praise God. This created challenges. In this new environment there were slaves who had come to know Christ as personal Savior but their master had not. And there were slaves who had come to know Christ as personal Savior as well as their master. Paul instructs the slaves who have come to know Christ to view their masters as worthy of full respect. Such honor and respect was to be demonstrated by their attitude so that God's reputation and the Christian faith would not be slandered by observing unbelievers. It was the responsibility of the slave to give a good impression of the faith to unbelievers. How a believer acts while under the authority of another affects how the unbeliever views the gospel and the Christian faith.

Paul goes on to tell the believing slave that if their master was a believer they were to produce more loyal and diligent service out of love for the believing brother or sister who was the master. There

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may have been a tendency for the believing slave to reduce their work effort and respect of authority of the master if they were a believer. Paul encourages the believing slave to serve their master with a Christlike attitude.

Paul closes with an exhortation to Timothy to insist on these principles (and the following principles); to teach them to others as an overseer.

I Tim. 6:3-5: Paul turns his instruction to Timothy back to the false teachers. He begins by identifying the characteristics of a false teacher.

- 1) They teach a different doctrine that contradicts God's proven and accepted revelation.
- 2) They do not agree to the sound instruction of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3) They do not consent to godly teaching that corresponds to godliness.
- 4) They seek to have a public form of godliness that they can leverage for monetary gain.

False teaching is seldom an innocent mistake. Most times an individual has made choices to believe a false truth. In light of this, Paul describes the false teacher in light of the choices they have made; they are ones who are:

- 1) Proud, understanding nothing.
- 2) Diseased with controversies and arguments.
- 3) Envious.
- 4) Quarrelsome.
- 5) Malicious.
- 6) Suspicious with an evil suspicion.
- 7) Creating constant friction.
- 8) Motivated for monetary gain.

Paul instructs Timothy to withdraw himself from these teachers.
(Note: This is a phrase that is not in most high quality manuscripts.)

I Tim. 6:6-8: Paul continues with the theme of godliness and gain. He tells Timothy that godliness does not give financial gain; godliness itself is gain when accompanied by contentment. Believers are to be satisfied and self-sufficient, not seeking for more than what God has given. They are to be content with what God has given.

Paul states a truth that we did not bring anything into this world and we will not take anything with us when we die. The thought conveyed is that material things should be freely used and enjoyed to the glory of God...but they do not contribute to godliness or contentment. The provision of the basic necessities of life, food and clothing, ought to be enough to create contentment in the life of a believer. Paul does not condemn possessions as long as God graciously provides.

I Tim. 6:9-10: Paul contrasts the proper attitude of contentment with the self-indulgent desire for money, which comes from discontentment. Those who desire to get rich means a “settled wish born of reason”. They have made a choice because of their love their love for money....the two (desire and love) work together to create greed. Paul writes that greed leads to:

- 1) Temptation.
- 2) A trap.
- 3) Foolish and harmful desires.

All of these work together to lead to ruin and destruction.

To illustrate this point, Paul refers indirectly to individuals that Timothy knows; individuals who have fallen away from the faith because of greed. Eager for money, these individuals have wandered away from the faith by either falling into a false teaching or by

walking away from the faith. In either case, their greed had caused them to be pierced with many griefs and pains.

I Tim. 6:11: Paul begins his conclusion of his letter to Timothy by directly refocusing on Timothy. Timothy, as a man of God, was to do the opposite of the men described in I Tim. 6:3-5, 9-10. He was to flee those things (proud obsessions and love of money) and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness.

I Tim. 6:12: Paul challenges Timothy to “fight the good fight of faith”. This phrase was used in both military and athletic endeavors to describe concentration, discipline, and effort needed to succeed. Timothy was to give his best effort to further the faith.

Paul challenges Timothy to “get a grip” on the reality of the matters associated with eternal life because he possessed eternal life. To Paul, Christ’s life is the possession of each believer, not only throughout eternity but now – today. Timothy, just as all believers, is and was called to this new life. Timothy had confessed a good profession of this new life in the presence of many witnesses; this profession likely occurred at his baptism and later at his ordination.

I Tim. 6:13-14: Paul charges Timothy, in his strongest charge in the letter, to keep “this commandment” without spot or blame. “This commandment” is a reference to the entire Word of God. Paul exhorts that “this commandment” be kept before God, who sees all and gives life to all, and Christ Jesus, who confessed before Pontius Pilot that He was the King and Messiah – knowing that such a confession would cost Him His life. Paul challenges Timothy to keep “this commandment” without spot or blame until the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I Tim. 6:15-16: Paul instructs Timothy that the time of the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ is known to God; who will bring it about in His own time. Paul ends these focused exhortations and challenges with

an inspired doxology to God; the One who is the Sovereign Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is God alone who is immortal, the Eternal One; the one who dwells in unapproachable light, where no man can survive, approach or even see. It is God who deserves to be revered by man with complete humility; to Him be honor and everlasting power...forever.

I Tim. 6:17-19: Paul now counsels Timothy what to teach those who are rich in money and/or material possessions; those who have more than the essentials of food, clothing, and shelter. Paul instructs that those who are rich should not be arrogant; because riches and pride often go together. Nor must they put their hope and trust in their money or material possessions because they are uncertain and transient. The believer is to put their trust and hope in the living God; the One who is the Source of all riches and material things. These riches and material things are among those things God has given for our enjoyment. It is interesting to note that Paul does not condemn those who are rich nor does he command them to get rid of their wealth; but He does call on them to be good stewards of their God-given resources.

Paul instructs Timothy to teach the rich to do good so they will be rich in good deeds. They are to be generous and willing to share what they have. If they do this, they will invest in treasure in heaven; a treasure that will produce dividends in heaven. This eternal treasure becomes a firm foundation for the future. It has been said – “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose” (Jim Elliot). The believer to whom God has provided riches and material possessions is to be generous. They are to be generous so they may take hold of the life that is truly life; they are to “get a grip” on the realities of the matters associated with eternal life.

I Tim. 6:20-21: Paul’s final exhortation to Timothy is to “guard” the “trust” (deposit) given to him by Paul. The deposit Timothy was to guard is the truth – the truth of the Word of God. Timothy was to

turn away from godless chatter (profane empty utterances) and from opposing ideas (counter assertions) of what is false called “knowledge”. This “knowledge” was the supposed key to the mystery of religion and faith; but it was a false knowledge that demonstrated ignorance and an infantile understanding of truth. The false teaching of “knowledge” had impacted some so they had wandered from the faith; they had “missed the aim”.

Paul closes his letter to Timothy with a simple benediction – “Grace be with you”. The “you” is plural and means “you all”, which means that Paul’s closing was meant for more than just Timothy; it was meant for all those who listened to or read the letter.

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