



1 Timothy: God of Youth

Memory Verse: 1 Timothy 2:5-6 "For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time."

Background

First Timothy is the 54th book of the Bible and the 15th book in the New Testament. It is one of Paul's three "pastoral epistles" that he wrote offering practical and pastoral advice to an individual, in this case Timothy. It is believed that Paul wrote this letter from Macedonia around 63 AD, after he had been released from his first imprisonment. Paul first met Timothy in the city of Lystra in Asia Minor where Timothy was well-known and respected by the Christians there (Acts 16:1-4). Timothy had apparently been acquainted with the Holy Scriptures since childhood and had a spiritual lineage through his mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois (2 Timothy 1:5 & 3:15). Timothy joined Paul on his second missionary journey becoming one of Paul's closest and most constant companions, helping him write several of his letters. At the time of this letter, Timothy was pastoring in Ephesus. The church at Ephesus had seen many converts to Christianity while Paul was there on his third missionary journey and it only continued to grow, becoming an important center of Christianity. The church in Ephesus did not meet as one large congregation. Instead, it met in hundreds of small groups in various homes with each congregation having its own pastor. Therefore, there were numerous pastors (also known as "elders" or "bishops" or "overseers") in and around Ephesus. It was these leaders that Timothy primarily worked with. Paul had hoped to join Timothy there, but was detained in Macedonia. Thus, Paul wrote this letter to Timothy giving him instructions for the work he was to do in Ephesus (3:14-15).

The Short Story

Instructions are given for order and leadership of the Church as the household of God.

What's the Big Idea?

In First Timothy, the aging Paul gives the younger pastor Timothy practical instructions for leading the church, strengthening and encouraging him in his work knowing the challenges he would face. Paul begins his letter by charging Timothy with the task of opposing false teachers. Timothy was to promote and teach "sound doctrine" in accordance with the gospel of Jesus Christ (1:3-11). Paul gives directions for the ministry, focusing on appropriate conduct during worship for both men and women. Paul writes about the importance of prayer in worship, urging that "petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." (2:1-3). He also educates Timothy on the proper organization of the church with pastors and deacons and the qualifications they were to have (3:1-13). Paul calls Timothy to be a "good minister of Christ Jesus" (4:6), setting "an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity" (4:12) devoting himself "to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching" (4:13), and exercising the spiritual gifts that God had given him (4:14). Paul gives Timothy sound advice for dealing with the different age and gender groups in the church, treating older men and women as his parents and younger men and women as his siblings, treating all "with absolute purity" (5:2). Instructions concerning widows, elders, slaves, and the wealthy are also given. Paul concludes charging Timothy to "fight the good fight of faith" (6:12) and "guard what has been entrusted to your care" (6:20).

So What? Why is this book so important? What was God's purpose for the book?

First Timothy gives the biblical vision for church leadership and organization. Leaders are to preach the Word of God, have purity in their personal lives, and live out their Christian faith by example. However, all people who put their faith in Christ should strive for godliness, for "...godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come...That is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe." (4:8-10). "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen." (1:17).

**Material taken from various sources.*

Teaching Text

1 Timothy 4:11-14 “Command and teach these things. Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, **but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.** Until I come, devote yourself to the **public reading of Scripture**, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.”

Sermon-Based Discussion Questions

- What did Paul mean when he wrote, “train yourself to be godly”? How would you accomplish it?
- Why is it so important to **not** let people look down on you? Where do you get your true identity from?
- How do you “set an example” with you life in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity? Who is your example?
- What are we supposed to devote ourselves to? Why would Paul stress this truth to Timothy?
- Why would Paul address the issue of “Do not neglect your gift”? Why is it so easy to pull back in ministry?

Practical Application

- What labels have kept you from living with confidence and fulfillment? What lies have you believed about yourself?
- Write out a paragraph on how God has defined you from His perspective? Remember to look through the glasses of grace.
- Where do you find it easy to be a good example to the world? Why does it take more effort to be a good example?
- What gifts has God deposited in your life? Are you managing them to their full potential? Where can you step it up?
- What do you need from the Lord to accomplish fulfillment in life? Where do you need the Holy Spirit to empower you?

Hitting the Highpoints

- 1:2 “Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- 2:1-2 “I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers... be made for all people... that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. “
- 4:7 “Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. “
- 5:21 “I charge you, in the sight of God to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism. “
- 6:11 “But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance..”

Bonus Features

“Men's youth will not be despised, if they keep from vanities and follies. Those who teach by their doctrine, must teach by their life. Their discourse must be edifying; their conversation must be holy; they must be examples of love to God and all good men, examples of spiritual-mindedness. Ministers must mind these things as their principal work and business. By this means their profiting will appear in all things, as well as to all persons; this is the way to profit in knowledge and grace, and also to profit others. The doctrine of a minister of Christ must be scriptural, clear, evangelical, and practical; well stated, explained, defended, and applied. But these duties leave no leisure for worldly pleasures, trifling visits, or idle conversation, and but little for what is mere amusement, and only ornamental. May every believer be enabled to let his profiting appear unto all men; seeking to experience the power of the gospel in his own soul, and to bring forth its fruits in his life.” Matthey Henry’s Concise Comm.

Personal Takeaways and Notes