



# 1 TIMOTHY

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## **INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY**

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## BACKGROUND

In the New Testament we find that Paul wrote several letters to various congregations, but he also wrote four letters to three different individuals: Timothy, Titus and Philemon. Paul's first letter to Timothy is the first of two letters written by the apostle to the young evangelist Timothy. In this letter Paul is instructing Timothy on many practical things concerning the Christian life and the service of a preacher in the local congregation. To gain a better understanding of the close relationship between Paul and Timothy please note the following passage:

Philippians 2:19-23, "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me."

When this letter was written Paul was a mature and experienced apostle of Jesus Christ writing to this young preacher who was a fellow-laborer in the work of preaching the gospel. Although Timothy is referred to as being in his "youth" (1 Timothy 4:12), he is probably about 30 years old at this time. Paul wrote this letter to encourage and instruct Timothy concerning the work he would need to do to fulfill his role as an evangelist in the years to come.

Timothy was an interesting young man who was born in Lystra of a Jewish mother and a Greek father. It appears he had been raised in the Jewish faith and was taught the Scriptures by his mother and grandmother from his early childhood (2 Timothy 3:15; 2 Timothy 1:5). The name Timothy, which was probably given to him by his mother, means "honoring God" or "honored by God."

Paul first partnered with Timothy at Lystra (Acts 16:1-3). It was at the beginning of Paul's second missionary journey that Timothy joined Paul to assist in spreading the good news of salvation and he continued to share in Paul's work throughout the rest of the apostle's life. Timothy was a helper to Paul during Paul's first imprisonment at Rome (Colossians. 1:1; Philemon 1:1) and then following Paul's release Timothy traveled with him as far as Ephesus where he was left to teach and encourage the brethren.

In this letter to Timothy we first find a short introduction followed by an emphasis on the importance of sound doctrine. In the first chapter Paul also gives a warning to Timothy concerning the dangers of false teachers. In the next chapter (two) he provides instructions on certain aspects of worship like prayer as it relates to both men and women and their roles in the Lord's church. In chapter three Paul goes into great detail concerning the qualifications of church leaders (elders and deacons) and their responsibilities in serving their respective congregations. In chapter four the apostle

warns Timothy of the rise of false doctrines and he encourages him to defend the faith while maintaining the proper character and example. The many subjects of chapter five include providing care for both the younger and older members of the congregation (including the widows), submitting to the elders and avoiding prejudice. Finally in chapter six Paul emphasizes true godliness by providing instructions on living a devoted life to the Lord while avoiding covetousness and the dangers of wealth.

## INTRODUCTION

### Writer

We should make it clear that God is the author of this book, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21). The writer whom God used to reveal this epistle was the apostle Paul (1 Timothy 1:1). It was never questioned that God used Paul to write this letter until late in the seventeenth century. A few modernist and liberal "scholars" foolishly question whether or not Paul was the actual writer of this epistle to Timothy. However, when we consult the writings of historians who lived much closer to the time of Paul the evidence is overwhelmingly supportive of Paul as the writer. For more information concerning this please consult the following sources: Clement of Rome (A.D. 30-100); Polycarp of Smyrna (A.D. 115-156); Irenaeus (A.D. 130-200); Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-215); Tertullian (A.D. 155-223); the Muratorian Canon (A.D. 180-190) and Eusebius (A.D. 260-340).

### Language

This letter was originally written in Koiné Greek. The word "Koiné" means "common." This is a fitting name because it was the common language used by the people in that day.

### Date

The letter to 1 Timothy was written sometime in the period from A.D. 63-65. This timeframe would place it after Paul's release from his first two years of imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:30-31). [For additional information concerning Paul's release from this first imprisonment please see the appendices - AN HISTORICAL PROBLEM.] There seems to be good evidence which shows that after he was released, Paul continued his missionary efforts going to such places as: Philippi, Ephesus, Crete and Spain (Romans 15:26-28).

### Key Verses

1 Timothy 1:3  
1 Timothy 2:1-2  
1 Timothy 2:5  
1 Timothy 2:11-14  
1 Timothy 3:15  
1 Timothy 4:1  
1 Timothy 4:16  
1 Timothy 6:12

### Key Word

"godliness" (used nine times) - 1 Timothy 2:2, 10; 3:16; 4:7-8; 6:3, 5-6, 11

### Key Phrase

"Fight the good fight of faith" - 1 Timothy 6:12

### Purpose of the Epistle

Timothy had been left by Paul at Ephesus to help the church which was facing threats from various false doctrines. Several years earlier (Acts 20) Paul had warned the elders of Ephesus of the coming problems.

Paul's purpose for writing this letter can be summarized with the following points:

1. To teach Timothy (and indeed all men who decide to preach) the responsibilities of a preacher of the gospel.
2. To emphasize the importance of teaching and preaching only sound doctrine.
3. To encourage Christians to fight the good fight of faith.
4. To provide instructions concerning prayer.
5. To explain the proper role and manner of conduct for women.
6. To specify the qualifications men must possess to serve as elders or deacons.
7. To present instructions on the proper treatment of older and younger men, women, widows and slaves.
8. To give a warning concerning the dangers of riches.

### Is Second Timothy a "Pastoral" Epistle?

Many in the religious world today refer to the epistles Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus as "Pastoral" epistles. This title comes from a misunderstanding concerning the term "pastor" in the Scriptures. Some in the religious world mistakenly refer to preachers as "pastors" and since these epistles contain instructions for preachers they call them "pastoral" epistles. However, the Bible is very clear that pastors and preachers do not fulfill the same role. In the New Testament, the Greek word (POIMĒN) translated as "pastor" refers to elders not preachers.

According to W. E. Vine in his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, the word POIMĒN means, "a shepherd, one who tends or herds flocks (not merely one who feeds them)." This makes it clear that pastors are shepherds and shepherds tend to and oversee God's spiritual flock (the church). In the Scriptures shepherds (1 Peter 5:2) are called bishops (1 Timothy 3:1-2), elders (1 Timothy 5:1), overseers (Acts 20:28), pastors (Ephesian 4:11), rulers (Hebrews

13:7, 17) and the presbytery (1 Timothy 4:14). The different terms are used to emphasize different aspects of the same office.

We find in the New Testament that the pastors (elders) are to be the overseers of the local congregations (Acts 20:17, 28). We also notice that there was always a plurality of men at each individual congregation serving as elders or the presbytery (Acts 14:23). In the Scriptures the preacher (minister, evangelist) is under the oversight of these men. In order to stay true to God's word we must always make the distinction between pastors and preachers very clear.

However, we also see in the scriptures that a preacher can be "a" pastor of the local church. Notice that we have emphasized "a" pastor and not "the" pastor. A preacher can be selected to serve as one of the elders in addition to being the local preacher if he meets the qualifications for an elder, but he cannot serve as the only elder (pastor) over a congregation. Peter was an apostle, an elder and a preacher of the gospel. He noted his diverse roles in 1 Peter 5:1 when he wrote, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." If a preacher meets the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-11, he can serve as an elder. He is then part of the eldership. He is only one of several who shepherd the local flock. His role as the preacher is totally separate from his role as an elder.

## 1 TIMOTHY OUTLINE

- I. Introduction (1:1-2)
- II. Sound Doctrine (1:3-20)
  - A. False Teachers (1:3-11)
  - B. Paul's Experience (1:12-17)
  - C. Wage A Good Warfare (1:18-20)
- III. Worship (2:1-15)
  - A. Prayer (2:1-7)
  - B. Men and Women (2:8-15)
- IV. Church Leaders (3:1-16)
  - A. Elders (3:1-7)
  - B. Deacons (3:8-13)
  - C. The House of God (3:14-16)
- V. Defending the Truth (4:1-16)
  - A. The Coming Apostasy (4:1-7)
  - B. The Preacher's Character and Work (4:8-16)
- VI. Caring For the Members of the Church (5:1-6:2)
  - A. Care for the young and old (5:1-2)
  - B. Care for the widows (5:3-16)
  - C. Submitting to the elders (5:17-20)
  - D. Avoiding Prejudice (5:21-25)
  - E. Care for the slaves (6:1-2)
- VII. The Minister Himself (6:3-19)
  - A. Adversaries (6:3-6)
  - B. The Danger of Riches (6:7-10)
  - C. Fight The Good Fight (6:11-16)
  - D. Words For The Rich (6:17-19)
- VIII. Conclusion (6:20-21)

## EXPOSITION

### I. Introduction (1:1-2)

1:1 **"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ"** - Paul was an apostle by the command of God and the authority of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:1; 1 Corinthians 15:8-9). The word "apostle" is defined by *Thayer's Greek Definitions* as "a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders." Paul was chosen by Christ and sent forth with a specific mission. He refers to himself as an apostle to leave no doubt concerning his authority and the assurance of the things written in this epistle. Notice the description of Paul's conversion concerning his role as a messenger:

"So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me'" (Acts 26:15-18).

**"Christ, our hope"** - Paul preached Christ, as the one and only hope of salvation for sinners (Colossians 1:27; 1 Timothy 2:5).

1:2 **"Timothy"** - Timothy was a young man who was born in Lystra of a Jewish mother and a Greek father. It appears he had been raised in the Jewish faith and was taught the Scriptures by his mother and grandmother from his early childhood (2 Timothy 3:15; 2 Timothy 1:5). The name Timothy, which was probably given to him by his mother, means "honoring God" or "honored by God." Although Timothy is referred to as being in his "youth" (1 Timothy 4:12) he is probably about 30 years old at this time.

**"a true son in the faith"** - Timothy was not his physical son, but his spiritual son. Timothy may well have been converted by Paul (1 Corinthians 4:14-15)

**"Grace, mercy, and peace"** - "Grace" is defined as the unmerited favor of God. "Mercy" is compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm. This is especially seen in the compassion shown by God in His patience and forbearance with mankind (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). "Peace" is the inner calm and tranquility which comes from being right with our God through obedience to His will (Romans 5:1).

## II. Sound Doctrine (1:3-20)

### A. False Teachers (1:3-11)

1:3 **"I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus"**  
- We know this is not talking about Paul's first journey into Macedonia because Timothy was with him for that trip (Acts 16:3). Therefore, this is a journey which occurred later and was not recorded in the book of Acts.

**"that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine"**  
- The word "doctrine" is a translation of the Greek word DIDASKALOS which means "teaching or instruction." The Scriptures often warn us concerning the importance of teaching the one true doctrine (1 Timothy 1:10-11; Philippians 1:27; Ephesians 4:5; Galatians 1:6-9).

"Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds" (2 John 1:9-11).

1:4 **"nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies"** - The fables spoken of here were imaginary, fictional stories which were often told by both the Jews and Greeks which were vain, trivial and unprofitable (1 Timothy 4:7; Titus 1:14). The Jewish Talmud is filled with such fictitious legends.

A genealogy is a record of ancestors. Under the law of Moses genealogies of the tribes were kept to determine land ownership and who could serve as a priest. However, Christ did away with the old law having "nailed it to the cross" (Colossians 2:14). There was no longer any importance or need to rely on genealogies.

**"disputes rather than godly edification"** - Disagreements and arguments over such unimportant matters will always tear down the church. Paul tells the church,

"That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head— Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:14-16).

Edifying comes from the word "edifice" and means "to build up or strengthen." The Scriptures teach that in order to build up (strengthen) the Lord's church we must teach, preach and live the true doctrine of God's word (Acts 20:32).

1:5

**"Now the purpose of the commandment"** - The word "commandment" is a translation of the Greek word PARAGGELIA which means an "announcement, a proclaiming or giving a message to, a charge, a command." The "commandment" spoken of here is the same as the "charge" in verse 3. The same Greek word is used for both. The purpose of the commandment was love.

**"love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith"** - True biblical love includes love for God and our neighbor (Matthew 22:37-39; John 13:34-35). Everything we do should be done with love (1 Corinthians 16:14). Love comes from a pure (sincere) heart (mind - Proverbs 23:7; Matthew 5:8), a good conscience and a sincere (genuine) faith (Hebrews 11:6; Galatians 5:6). In Romans 10:17 Paul explained, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

The word "conscience" comes from the Greek word SUNEIDĒSIS which is defined as part of our inner being which either accuses us or excuses us of wrong doing (Romans 2:15; Acts 22:4-5; 23:1). If the conscience is not educated it will not serve as a good guide to make decisions. A man should educate his conscience (with God's word) and guard it so it will serve as a good regulator for his actions. If

he does not do this the conscience will no longer function properly (1 Timothy 1:19; 4:2).

- 1:6 **"from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk"** - The word "strayed" is a translation of the Greek word ASTOCHEŌ which is defined by *Thayer's Greek Definitions* as "to deviate from, miss (the mark)." "Idle talk" is vain or empty talk that does not edify (build up) and strengthen Christians.
- 1:7 **"desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm"** - Teachers have a greater responsibility. James 3:1 says, "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment." In this verse Paul is addressing those who wanted to be teachers but they did not even understand what they were talking about.
- 1:8 **"the law is good if one uses it lawfully"** - This was Paul's answer to those who were saying that he was teaching against law. In this verse "the law" refers to the Law of Moses. The key is "if" it is used "lawfully" (Romans 7:12, 16). The law was designed to show the awfulness of sin (Romans 7:7, 13).

It is important that law is always balanced with love. In Ephesians 4:15 Paul said, "but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ." In 1 Peter 3:15 Peter said, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."

It would be wrong to use this verse as Paul's encouragement to follow or bind the old law on Christians today. In all of Paul's writings he makes it abundantly clear that the law of Moses was wiped out, taken out of the way and nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14). He explained to the Romans that Christians are "dead to the law through the body of Christ" (Romans 7:4).

- 1:9 **"the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate"** - It should be noted that in this verse the article "the" is not in the original text. Therefore, all law is being addressed. One of the main purposes of law was to reduce crime and sin (Romans 7:7-16). This is the reason we find this verse saying law is NOT for the righteous, but for the disobedient. One of

the main reasons law is given is to reduce crimes (sins) committed by placing restraints on those who are disobedient. This is not needed for the righteous because they make the effort to restrain themselves from the sin so as to do what is right. The word "insubordinate" means those who are disobedient and unruly. They cannot be subjected to control.

**"the ungodly and for sinners"** - The "ungodly" are those without piety who lack reverence or awe for God.

**"the unholy and profane"** - The "profane" are those who are heathenish or wicked.

**"for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers"** - The ESV has "those who strike their fathers and mothers" which may be the correct translation, however, the point is the same. The verse describes a shocking and unnatural lack of basic care and affection for one's parents.

**"for manslayers"** - A "manslayer" is a murderer (a slayer of men).

1:10 **"for fornicators"** - This is one who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse.

**"for sodomites"** - This is one who is an abuser of self with mankind, one who lies with a male as with a female, homosexual.

**"for kidnappers"** - This is a slave-dealer or one who takes others against their will to sell or to obtain a ransom payment.

**"for liars, for perjurers"** - The word "liars" means those who do not tell the truth. A "perjurer" is someone who lies while being under oath.

**"any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine"** - This phrase adds to the list all other sins. The word "sound" is a translation of the Greek word HUGIAINŌ which is defined by *Thayer's Greek Definitions* as "to be sound, to be well, to be in good health." The implication of this phrase is that unsound doctrine will make one spiritually sick.

1:11 **"glorious gospel of the blessed God"** - In this context the word "glorious" means splendor or brightness. The glorious gospel shines brightly to lead sinners out of the darkness of sin and into the light of salvation. The Gospel is glorious! Paul understood that

obedience to the gospel message allowed those who were blinded by their wickedness and sins to find their way to forgiveness.

"Whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

**"committed to my trust"** - God had entrusted Paul with the gospel (Acts 9:15; 2 Corinthians 4:7). Paul fulfilled this trust by preaching the gospel message accurately. He did not add to or take away from the truth (Acts 20:24; Ephesians 3:8).

#### B. Paul's Experience (1:12-17)

1:12 **"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me"** - In this section of the epistle (1 Timothy 1:12-17) Paul expresses his thankfulness for the mercy God has shown to him. We can learn more about Paul's conversion in the book of Acts (Acts 9:1-18; 22:1-16; 26:16-18).

**"He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry"** - The Bible often teaches us about the faith we must have in God, but it also explains the faith God has in us to carry out His will. Paul's ministry was to preach the gospel to the lost. To minister means to serve. Some mistakenly use the term "minister" as if it is a title to exalt their position, but it is actually a designation of service.

1:13 **"I was formerly a blasphemer"** - To blaspheme means to speak against that which is holy. Paul had done this before his conversion when he was called Saul and he zealously persecuted the Lord's church (Acts 9:1-2). His persecution of Christ's church was a persecution of Christ (Acts 9:4-5). Those who speak against the Lord's church today are guilty of blasphemy.

**"a persecutor"** - To persecute means to attack, mistreat, molest, harass or trouble someone in whatever way to cause their retreat, discouragement or loss of influence. Paul realized the damage he had done in the past to the Lord's disciples. We must constantly guard our actions to make sure we are using our influence only for good.

**"and an insolent man"** - This is one who is puffed up with pride, treating others cruelly with insults and shameful acts of harm.

**"but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" -** Paul is not saying that because he "did it ignorantly" he was not responsible for his sin, or that his actions were not sinful. In verse 15, he makes his guilt clear by saying, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15). His point is that because he did not realize that what he was doing was wrong, he was willing and eager to repent once he learned the truth. He would have never done the evil things in his past if he had known they were wrong. He had a good and honest heart which was always seeking to obey God's will. This shows us that having a good heart alone is not enough. We need to be educated so we understand the truth and obey God.

1:14 **"the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant" -** From the context we can see that the "Lord" mentioned here is God the Father. God's grace is the unmerited favor we receive through the gift of His Son (Romans 5:8).

**"with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus" -** All spiritual blessings are in Christ. Ephesians 1:3 tells us, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."

1:15 **"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" -** The word "chief" is a translation of the Greek word PRŌTOS which is defined by *Thayer's Greek Definitions* as "first in time or place" or "first in rank." We can well imagine the pain and heartache Paul must have felt for his past actions. However, we must understand that he did not allow his past mistakes to hamper his future faithfulness. In Philippians 3:13-14 Paul said, "Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

1:16 **"for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life" -** The mercy (longsuffering) God showed to Paul serves as a pattern to all future converts. God was merciful to Paul, who in his past had been Saul the persecutor of the church, so we can have confidence that God will also be merciful to us when we obey. We should never think that we have been so sinful in our past that we cannot be forgiven if we obey God's plan for salvation.

1:17 **"to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever"** - Here we see several characteristics or attributes of God. God has been and is the King (1 Samuel 8:6-7), eternal (Deuteronomy 33:27; Revelation 1:8), immortal (Revelation 4:8) and invisible (John 1:18; Colossians 1:15).

**"Amen"** - The word "Amen" started as a Hebrew word (Numbers 5:22), which was transliterated into Greek and then eventually into English. The word comes from a Hebrew root word which means "to build up or support; to be firm or faithful, to trust or believe; to be true or certain." It is also used as an adverb at the beginning of a speech to mean "surely, of a truth, truly" (Matthew 5:18; Mark 3:28; John 3:3). At the conclusion of a sentence it is used to mean "so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled." When the word is used as an adjective it means "firm or true." Some dictionaries claim that when "Amen" is used at the end of a prayer it means approval of what is being said. However, our approval does not make it true. It is more correct to think of it as "this is true, or may it come to pass, or may it be fulfilled."

#### C. Wage A Good Warfare (1:18-20)

1:18 **"This charge I commit to you, son Timothy"** - The word "charge" is a translation of the Greek word which means "mandate" or "command."

**"according to the prophecies previously made concerning you"** - This may refer to Acts 16:1-3 or actual prophecies which had been made.

**"that by them you may wage the good warfare"** - The prophecies should encourage and motivate Timothy to "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:12). The Christian's war is a spiritual battle, not a physical conflict (2 Corinthians 10:3-6; Ephesians 6:11-12).

1:19 **"having faith and a good conscience"** - Two elements needed by the Christian soldier to fight the spiritual battle is "faith" and a "good conscience" (for more see Ephesians 6:10-18). In Romans 10:17 Paul says, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." In Romans 14:23 he goes on to say that, "for whatever is not from faith is sin." This tells us that not only do we need authority from the scriptures for all that we teach and do

(Colossians 3:17), but it also tells us that if we have any doubts of conscience concerning some action then it should not be done. We should never violate our conscience. A biblically educated conscience will serve as a valuable tool in this life. If our conscience is not educated it cannot guide us away from acts of sin (Acts 23:1).

**"which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck"** - Some foolishly reject faith and a good conscience resulting in their own destruction. The foolishness of this is clearly seen. It would be like a sailor steering his ship into the rocks because he refuses to use a compass and sextant.

1:20

**"Hymenaeus and Alexander"** - More information concerning these men can be found in 2 Timothy 2:17-18; Acts 19:33 and 2 Timothy 4:14.

"Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17-18).

**"I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme"** - Paul's action were not motivated by spite. He desired their repentance and eventual salvation. This is the purpose of all biblical church discipline (1 Corinthians 5:1-5). The discipline of withdrawing fellowship from them may be painful but the goal is righteous and motivated by a love for souls.

Such examples leave no doubt that a Christian CAN fall from their place of grace and salvation. Consider the following verses:

Romans 11:22, "Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off."

1 Corinthians 10:12, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."

Galatians 5:4, "You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace."

1 Timothy 4:1, "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons."

2 Peter 3:17, "You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked."

There are many who choose to believe the "once saved always saved doctrine." But, the scriptures clearly teach it is possible for Christians to fall away and lose their salvation. We must accept what the Bible plainly teaches (John 15:1-6; Romans 8:12-13; 2 Peter 2:18-22; Hebrews 6:4-8; 10:26-39).

III. Worship (2:1-15)  
A. Prayer (2:1-7)

2:1 **"supplications"** - A supplication is a petition or request. This can include praying for food, clothing, shelter, health, safety, etc. When a supplication is made we may be praying for ourselves or for others to have these things.

**"prayers"** - The Greek word here is PROSEUCHĒ which is defined as "prayer addressed to God" or "a place set apart or suited for the offering of prayer." We pray that we might have all-sufficiency in the necessary things of this life, both spiritual and temporal. "Prayers" is the general word for our humble requests addressed to almighty God

**"intercessions"** - This word emphasizes that in our prayers we often intercede for others. Prayers are frequently motivated by care compassion and concern for others. "Intercessions" are prayers in behalf of other people.

**"giving of thanks"** - Prayers should always contain thanksgiving to God for all the wonderful blessings He provides to us. A drifting away from God begins when we lose our thankfulness (Romans 1:21).

2:2 **"for kings and all who are in authority"** - It is important to pray for leaders. The Scriptures teach, "there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God" (Romans 13:1). Does this mean we should even pray for bad rulers? Yes, we should pray that they change their evil ways and rule with compassion bringing peace and prosperity to the land.

**"that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life"** - It is an obvious blessing to have a peace in our own lives, but we should also consider the benefits which come when a nation is at peace. In the first century there was peace in the land because of the rule of the Roman government. This allowed Christians, especially the apostle Paul, to easily travel to various regions spreading the good news of salvation.

**"in all godliness and reverence"** - This phrase which is often neglected by commentators is of the utmost importance. Notice this is clearly showing the responsibility Christians have to live a godly life showing complete reverence to the heavenly Father. Psalms 34:15-16 states, "The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their cry. The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth" (see also 1 Peter 3:10-12).

2:3 **"good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior"** - It is "good and acceptable" to live soberly, righteously and godly praying for all men and for those in power that we might live peaceably and quietly under the government which has been appointed by God.

2:4 **"who desires all men to be saved"** - Some may question this statement. They wonder, "If God really desires all men to be saved, why aren't all men saved?" It is true God desires all men to be saved (2 Peter 3:9), but God also has given mankind freewill. God will not use His power to overcome the freedom of choice He has given us.

**"and to come to the knowledge of the truth"** - Man must not only choose to "come to the knowledge of the truth," he must also choose to obey it. Titus 2:11-12 explains, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age." God's grace teaches us that we should choose to live godly lives. Therefore, the choice is ours to make.

2:5

**"For there is one God"** - Jesus and the apostles taught clearly there is only one God and that one God is over all men (Mark 12:29; Romans 10:12).

You can open the New Testament at almost any page and find out something about God and the Godhead, where God is truly revealed as having three persons in one.

The Godhead is sometimes called the "Trinity" but this word is nowhere found in the Bible. It is a word used by man to mean, the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit as three persons in a single Godhead.

If you use a Bible concordance you will not find the word "trinity" there, but you will find the word "Godhead" which has a much deeper spiritual meaning. Godhead means three distinct Persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in one distinct God.

We must not view the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as "attributes" of God, for each of these three Persons in the Godhead are called "God." So you see the three Personages in the Godhead are not attributes of God, but they each have all the attributes of God. The Bible tells us there is only one God, and yet there is distinctly God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit.

I know this can be confusing. It is hard to understand what we have never seen. We can understand one person in one body as we are, but we cannot understand three distinct Persons in a single Godhead that is the one and only true God. We cannot fully understand the essence of God. We can only know what He reveals to us in His Word, the Bible.

In the Bible the word Godhead is used three times in the KJV and twice in the NKJV, see Acts 17:29, Romans 1:20, Colossians 2:9. Other versions (NIV, NASB, NRSV and once in the NKJV) substitute the words Deity, Divine, Divine Being, Nature or Divine Nature for Godhead in these verses. Nearly all versions including KJV use Divine Nature in 2 Peter 1:4.

Please notice the Scriptures where the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all mentioned in one passage: Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19, John 6:62-65, Philippians 2:5-11, 1 Peter 1:2. In others two but not all three are mentioned, such as in Acts 1:4-5,7-8, where we see the Father and Holy Spirit, in 1 Corinthians 12:3-11, where we see the Holy Spirit and God, and in 1 Timothy 2:3, where we see God our Savior.

What can we conclude from these verses? There is only one essence of God (Deity), but there are three Persons within that essence. The Godhead means three distinct Persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit in one distinct God.

**"and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ**

**Jesus"** - The prayers of the Christians are to be directed to God the Father through Jesus Christ who is the only mediator (Matthew 6:9-13). A mediator is one who goes between two separated parties with whom he is familiar to bring them back together again. Since, there is one mediator, and only one, between God and man Christians should not pray to Mary or any departed "saint." Also, notice the verse emphasizes that our mediator is "the Man" Christ Jesus. Jesus is the perfect mediator for man because He lived as a man and therefore can understand what we face in this life (Hebrews 4:15).

2:6

**"who gave Himself a ransom for all"** - Ransom is a price paid to buy the freedom of a slave or captive. When a man sins he makes himself a prisoner or slave of the devil. However, Jesus came to this earth, lived the perfect life as a man and then gave His life as a sacrifice on the cross to purchase mankind's freedom from the devil (Matthew 20:28; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Hebrews 2:9).

**"to be testified in due time"** - The time was right to proclaim this message of redemption once Jesus had died on the cross and risen from the grave (Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:7-8).

2:7

**"for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle"** - Not only was Paul selected to proclaim this great message of salvation but he was also chosen to be an apostle. All Christians may and should proclaim the great news of man's redemption (Acts 8:4), but only an apostle could speak with miraculous inspiration and lay hands on other Christians to give them the ability to perform miracles (Acts 8:17-18). Therefore, when the last of the apostles died and the last person they laid their hands on died the miraculous gifts ended (1 Corinthians 13:8-10).

**"—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—"** -

Obviously as an inspired apostle all of Paul's words were and are truth. However, he needed to emphasize this point to those who would read this in the first century. These words were written not only in response to those who questioned his apostleship, but also to those who questioned his claim that the gospel message of salvation was for all people, both Jews and Gentiles.

**"a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth"** - Paul was chosen by Christ to take the gospel message to Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15). He was able to have great success preaching to the Gentiles because he was guided by his strong faith and complete dedication to the truth. We would do well to remember that there can be no success in an evangelistic effort that lacks these two fundamental elements.

## B. Men and Women (2:8-15)

2:8

**"I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere"** - It is important to note here that the Greek word for "men" in this verse is not ANTHRŌPOS (mankind - both male and female) but is instead ANĒR which refers specifically to males. Since God desires both men and women to pray (1 Timothy 2:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Corinthians 11:5, 13), this limitation can only mean that public prayers are being discussed. God wants the men (not women) leading the prayers when both men and women are present. This is made even more clear later in the context which shows that God does not want women having authority over men (1 Timothy 2:12). Therefore, leading in prayers (where both men and women are present) is a position of authority reserved for men.

**"lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting"** - Paul's use of the expression "lifting up" hands hearkens back to the practice of presenting uplifted hands in respect and reverence to God (Nehemiah 8:6; Psalm 141:2; Lamentations 3:41). The point being made is that it is "holy" hands that are to be lifted up. Paul is not talking about the posture of the one offering the prayer, but the character of the one who is praying. Psalm 24:3 asks the question, "Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? The next verse answers, "He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully." The character ("hands") of the one praying is to be pure, not dirtied with "wrath" or "doubting."

- 2:9 **"in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel"** - The Greek word translated as "modest" is KOSMIOS which means orderly. In this context it is that which shows decorum, propriety and appropriateness. The warning here is for a woman not to dress in such a way that distracts others or arouses attention. God commands women to dress modestly.
- "with propriety and moderation"** - The literal meaning of the Greek word translated here is with "downcast eyes." The idea is a kind of bashfulness and regard for others. In other words a woman should realize her appeal to men. God did intend for women to be attractive to men (1 Corinthians 11:7-9), but His word also teaches the dangers of immodesty and lusts (Matthew 5:27-28).
- "not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing"** - This does not teach that it is a sin for a woman to braid her hair or wear jewelry. There was a common practice in that day of worldly women wearing an abundance of jewelry and interweaving into their hair strands of gold, silver and pearls so as to attract the attention of others. This haughty practice is being condemned just as it was condemned in the Old Testament (Isaiah 3:16-23).
- 2:10 **"but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works"** - Peter told the Christian wives, "Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God" (1 Peter 3:3-4). Good works come from a good heart (Matthew 12:35), and they shine like a bright light before others bringing glory to the Father above (Matthew 5:16).
- 2:11 **"Let a woman learn in silence with all submission"** - This does not mean it is a sin for a woman to audibly use her voice in the worship assembly. If it did mean that, then it would be a sin for a woman to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Colossians 3:16). The Greek word which is translated as "silence" here is HĒSUCHIA which means "quietness." The use of the word "silence" is explained in the same verse as "with all submission" (1 Corinthians 14:33-34). The overall meaning is that women should conduct themselves in a spirit of quietness and humility, not acting as one who is in authority (see verse 12).
- 2:12 **"And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man"** - Paul makes it clear that a woman is not to teach

over a man or to have authority over a man. Public teaching puts one in an authoritative role. However, in a private setting a woman could conduct herself in such a way to teach a man while not usurping the man's authority. In Acts 18:26 Priscilla assisted her husband Aquila in the teaching of Apollos. The verse says, "they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately." The word "they" includes both Aquila and Priscilla. Priscilla was able to do this with the proper meek and quiet spirit. [For additional information concerning Women preachers please see the appendices - WOMEN - PASTORS AND PREACHERS.]

**"but to be in silence"** - Again we have the Greek word HĒSUCHIA which is defined by *Thayer's Greek Definitions* as "quietness, description of the life of one who stays at home doing his own work, and does not officiously meddle with the affairs of others."

- 2:13 **"For Adam was formed first, then Eve"** - The first reason the woman is not to have authority over the man is the priority of Adam in the creation (Genesis 2:18, 22). In 1 Corinthians 11:8-9 the apostle Paul explained, "For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man." This does not mean that women are inferior to men (Galatians 2:27-28). God's word is simply describing the different roles for each.
- 2:14 **"And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression"** - The second reason the woman is not to have authority over the man is her part in the first sin (Genesis 3:6, 12, 16-17). Adam and Eve were both guilty of sin, but Adam was not deceived by the devil. He followed Eve into sin. She failed in her role as a helper to her husband. She allowed herself to be deceived and influenced her husband to follow her example. Therefore, the woman is not to be the leader, but to be in subjection.
- 2:15 **"Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing"** - The "she" in the context of this verse must refer to Eve. However, in the rest of the verse we notice that the application extends beyond Eve. It is important to note that this is not saying women must give birth to a child in order to be saved. What about those who are barren? Do they have no opportunity for salvation? Obviously they do. The point is Eve was saved in childbearing. How? Through her offspring would come the Messiah (Genesis 3:15). He would provide the

opportunity for salvation to her and all those who would choose to obey Him.

**"if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control"**

- Notice the word "they" is used here to alert us that Paul is not just talking about Eve at this point.

Dr. James Macknight explains the meaning of this verse well in his paraphrase: "*However, though Eve was first in transgression, and brought death on herself, her husband, and her posterity, the female sex shall be saved equally with the male; through child-bearing; through bringing forth the Saviour; if they live in faith, and love, and chastity, with that sobriety which I have been recommending.*"

#### IV. Church Leaders (3:1-16)

##### A. Elders (3:1-7)

3:1 **"This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work"** - Bishops (1 Timothy 3:1-2) are also referred to as elders (Acts 20:17; 1 Timothy 5:19), overseers (Acts 20:28), pastors (Ephesian 4:11), rulers (Hebrews 13:7, 17), shepherds (1 Peter 5:2) and the presbytery (1 Timothy 4:14). The different terms are used to emphasize different aspects of the same office. [For additional information concerning these terms please see the appendices - THREE DIFFERENT GREEK WORDS USED FOR THE SAME OFFICE]. Desiring the position is not one of the qualifications, but obviously a man cannot be forced to serve as an elder against his will. All should know that there is not a job more important than serving as one of the elders overseeing a congregation.

There is no sin if one desires to serve as an elder, if he desires it for the right reasons. It is a "faithful" (true) saying that desiring to serve in this role is a desire to do a good work. We also notice here that it is a "work" and not simply a position or title (Acts 15:6; 20:28-31; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 1 Timothy 3:2; 3:4-5; 5:17; Titus 1:9-11; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:2-3).

3:2 **"A bishop then must be"** - The word "must" makes it clear that the following are requirements and not mere suggestions or ideals.

**"blameless"** - The elders must be men whose character is beyond reproach. They must be held in high regard being known for their purity and faithfulness. Being "blameless" means that there can be

no legitimate accusation made against their character or conduct. There is no outstanding flaw in his character or life and he is morally upright, honorable and has deep integrity.

**"the husband of one wife"** - First, we see by the language used here that only a man can serve as an elder. A woman cannot be the "husband of one wife." Second, we see that a bachelor or polygamist cannot serve as an elder. An elder must be married. Some religious groups falsely teach it is somehow more righteous and holy to be unmarried. However, the Bible teaches that marriage is an honorable state (Hebrews 13:4).

**"temperate"** - The word "temperate" means being sober. It comes from the Greek word NĒPHALIOS. This word can be used to mean abstaining from wine. This idea will be more clearly emphasized by the apostle Paul in verse 3. This word includes the idea of having self-control, being watchful, cautious and on guard which is not possible when one is under the influence of alcohol.

**"sober-minded"** - This word comes from the Greek SŌPHRŌN which means having a sound mind or being sane in one's senses. It can also be used to mean to curb one's desires and impulses (being self-controlled or temperate).

**"of good behavior"** - This comes from the Greek word KOSMIOS which means orderly or well arranged. The root of this Greek word is KOSMOS from which comes our word "cosmos" which is used to describe the universe which is well-ordered and arranged. The obvious design of the universe proves there is a designer.

**"hospitable"** - This characteristic would be seen in one's generosity to guests. The Greek word here literally means making oneself a friend to guests. Guests would include friends, associates, strangers and foreigners.

**"able to teach"** - Like most of the characteristics listed in this section this is an ability all Christians should possess. 2 Timothy 2:24 says, "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient." This does not mean that all Christians, or even the elders, are required to stand before an audience and preach a sermon. It should be understood that preaching is not the only way or method of teaching others the gospel.

3:3

**"not given to wine"** - [For additional information concerning the word "wine" in the Scriptures please see the appendices -

ARGUMENTS USED FOR SOCIAL DRINKING.] This is a phrase which is almost never taught correctly. There are many who say this means that an elder can have wine as long as he is not "given to" it, which they define as being drunk. However, that is not at all what this teaches. This phrase comes from the Greek word PAROINOS which means **not even being near wine** (*Strong's Greek Dictionary of the Bible*, by James Strong). Therefore, not only should an elder abstain from any drinking of wine (or any alcoholic beverage - see "temperate and "sober minded" above), but he should not even put himself in a situation where he is near wine. Please see the following verses from the book of Proverbs concerning wine:

Proverbs 20:1, "Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise."

Proverbs 23:20, "Do not mix with winebibbers, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat."

Proverbs 23:29-31, "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, Those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it swirls around smoothly."

**"not violent"** - The Greek word here is PLĒKTĒS which describes a person who is contentious and quarrelsome. We have all seen those people who are always eager to pick a fight or disagree.

**"not greedy for money"** - Greed is defined as an intense selfish desire for something, especially wealth or power. This does not mean if we have money or wealth we are guilty of sin. It is the love of money, not money itself, which is a root of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6:9-10). The money we have should be thought of as belonging to God. We are merely the stewards of God's blessings which we should use for good. This will be explained in more detail in 1 Timothy 6:17-19. In the Bible there are four authorized ways to get money: you can earn it, you can be given it as a gift, you can find it or you can inherit it.

**"gentle"** - This comes from the Greek word EPIEIKĒS which includes the idea of being equitable, fair, patient, mild as well as gentle.

**"not quarrelsome"** - This means not being contentious or always eager to start an argument. There are some who seem to always want to cause controversy. Such an individual would not be qualified to be an elder. It is true that Jesus was often involved in controversy, but He was never quarrelsome.

**"not covetous"** - To covet something is to have a strong desire for something that belongs to someone else. In the law of Moses the last of the ten commandments was, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's" (Exodus 20:17). In the New Testament we find the following:

1Corinthians 5:11, "But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioners —not even to eat with such a person."

1 Corinthians 6:9-10, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God."

Ephesians 5:5, "For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."

2 Peter 2:14, "having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children."

3:4

**"one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence"** - In Paul's letter to Titus concerning qualifications for elders he wrote "if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination" (Titus 1:6).

This qualification concerning having "faithful children" has sometimes caused confusion. The word "faithful" is used universally in the New Testament to refer to a person who is faithful to God and therefore a Christian (Ephesians 1:1;

Colossians 1:2; 4:9; Revelation 2:10). The apostle Paul never uses this word to describe a person who is a non-Christian.

We can gain a better understanding of this requirement when we consider it in conjunction with the parenthetical statement found in verse 5.

3:5 **"(for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?)"** - It seems clear that if a man's children, especially while under his direct control, are wild and unrestrained, he would not make a good elder. We notice in Ephesians 6:4 that it is the fathers who are told, "do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."

When we consider this qualification we should first consider the kind of father he was when he was raising his children. It is not simply a matter of if his children are now faithful as adults. He could have been a terrible father while the children were at home, but they obeyed the gospel later in life despite his poor job as a father.

We must also take into consideration the conduct of the children once they are grown. We know there is no guarantee the children will obey the gospel and live a faithful life even if the father did a perfect job raising his children in a godly manner. Some would say therefore the conduct of the children once they are grown does not matter. However, we must consider how their conduct might impact the man's effectiveness to serve as an elder if one or more of the children are living lives filled with sin.

3:6 **"not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil"** - The Greek word for "novice" is NEOPHUTOS which literally means newly planted. This is used to describe a new convert who has recently become a Christian. The new convert has not grown in the faith enough to overcome temptations such as pride if he is selected for a role in the leadership. The illustration given suggests that being "puffed up with pride" caused the devil to rebel against God's rule and authority. Proverbs 16:18 states, "Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall." Proverbs 29:23 explains, "A man's pride will bring him low, But the humble in spirit will retain honor."

3:7 **"Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside"** - The phrase "good testimony" is referring to the reputation the man must have to be qualified to be one of the elders for the congregation. The example being set is very important. In 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 Paul wrote, "that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing." In Colossians 4:5 we find, "Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time." Building a good reputation begins when we are young. Paul told Timothy, "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

**"lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil"** - The word "snare" is used to describe a trap. The devil will use temptations as a trap to cause us to get entangled in sin (2 Timothy 2:22-26).

#### B. Deacons (3:8-13)

3:8 **"Likewise deacons must be reverent"** - The word "deacon" means a servant, attendant or one who ministers. Deacons serve the church under the rule of the elders. They are special servants with unique responsibilities assigned to them by the elders. Jesus Christ organized His church to have deacons to carry out certain tasks within the work and organization of the local church as directed by the elders. The first qualification we find is that they were to be "reverent." This word means venerable, honorable, grave, dignified and honest.

**"not double-tongued"** - "Double tongued" is saying one thing when you are with one person or a group of people, but saying another thing when you are with another person or group of people. Being "double-tongued" carries with it the intention to deceive.

**"not given to much wine"** - Some say this means the deacons can have a little bit of wine, but not "much" wine. However, they fail to realize that the word "much" in this verse is used as an adverb which is modifying the word "given" not the amount of wine (Strong's Concordance with Greek and Hebrew Lexicon).

The Greek word (PROSECHŌ) translated as "given" in this verse means to hold the mind towards, pay attention to or think about.

Therefore, the deacons have the kind of character that doesn't even think about drinking wine.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8 God commands every Christian to be sober which means being free from the influence of intoxicating beverages. Therefore, the requirement to be free from the influence of intoxicating beverages includes elders, deacons and every other Christian. Beyond this the elders are not even to be near intoxicating beverages (1 Timothy 3:3) and the deacons are not even to be thinking about drinking intoxicating beverages (1 Timothy 3:8).

**"not greedy for money"** - Proverbs 15:27 states, "He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house, But he who hates bribes will live." Ecclesiastes 5:10 adds, "He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; Nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity." The danger of having a love of money will be covered in greater detail in chapter 6.

3:9 **"holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience"** - The "faith" is the system of salvation provided to man by God (Jude 1:3). The phrase "mystery of the faith" is not saying that faith is mysterious. The word "mystery" means those truths which could only be known by man through revelation from God. Man could not know or understand these truths without God providing the information to us. Ephesians 3:1-6 explains more concerning one aspect of this mystery of the faith.

3:10 **"But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless"** - The deacons must not be new converts who are inexperienced in the faith. They must have had time to study and grow in the word of God.

Like the elders (1 Timothy 3:2) the deacons must also be men whose character is beyond reproach. They must be held in high regard being known for their purity and faithfulness. They must be "blameless" which means that there can be no legitimate accusation made against their character or conduct.

3:11 **"Likewise, their wives must be reverent"** - In this verse the apostle Paul begins to enumerate the qualifications of the wives of the elders and deacons. In the context we find that both the elders and deacons were required to be the husbands of one wife (1 Timothy 3:2, 12). Please notice that their wives were to be

"reverent." This word means venerable, honorable, grave, dignified and honest.

**"not slanderers"** - It is interesting to note that the Greek word used here for "slanderers" is the same word used to describe the devil (DIABOLOS) as a false accuser. In John 8:44, Jesus said to the Pharisees, "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it." The wives must not be guilty of following the devil's example.

**"temperate"** - The word "temperate" means being sober. It comes from the Greek word NĒPHALIOS. This word can be used to mean abstaining from wine and would include the idea of having self-control, being watchful, cautious and on guard which is not possible when one is under the influence of alcohol.

**"faithful in all things"** - This character trait describes being trustworthy, true and sure in all that is said and done.

3:12 **"Let deacons be the husbands of one wife"** - Like the elders (1 Timothy 3:2) we find by the language being used that only a man can serve as a deacon. A woman cannot be the "husband of one wife." We also see that a bachelor or polygamist cannot serve as a deacon. A deacon must be married. Some religious groups falsely teach it is somehow more righteous and holy to be unmarried. However, the Bible teaches that marriage is an honorable state (Hebrews 13:4).

**"ruling their children and their own houses well"** - Like the elders (1 Timothy 3:4), the deacons demonstrate their ability to care for the church by showing the care they have provided for their own families.

3:13 **"For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus"** - The word "well" means excellent in its characteristics and well adapted to its purposes. The deacons who serve well "obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness." This means they secure for themselves a good reputation and influence in the church. They have great boldness which means courage and confidence in those things which are

right. The deacon's faith is strengthened when he witnesses the fruits of his labors for the Lord's church.

D. The House of God (3:14-16)

3:14 **"These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly"** - Paul was giving Timothy important instructions which needed to be taught and carried out. Paul was hoping he could come to Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3) to help but his travel plans were uncertain.

3:15 **"but if I am delayed, 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"** - Even if Paul could not come himself he had confidence that Timothy could do the necessary work.

Paul describes the church as the "house of God" not to say that the church is a physical building, but to emphasize that it is the spiritual house and dwelling place of God. The New testament is clear that the church is the people (Christians) not the building (1 Peter 2:5).

Paul also emphasizes the importance of the work being done explaining the role of the church as the "pillar and ground" of the truth. These architectural terms describe the support needed for the structure. The church is God's institution which is designed and constructed to uphold and support the truth in this world.

3:16 **"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness"** - The word "mystery" means those truths which could only be known by man through revelation from God (Ephesians 3:3-4). Man could not know or understand "godliness" without God providing the information to us.

**"God was manifested in the flesh"** - Jesus came to this world as God in the flesh. He manifested or showed to the world a living example of the true nature of Deity.

We must not view the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as "attributes" of God, for each of these three Persons in the Godhead "are called God." The Bible tells us there is only one God, and yet there is distinctly God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit. The three Personages in the

Godhead are not attributes of God, but they each have all the attributes of God.

Please notice the Scriptures where the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all mentioned in one passage: Matthew 28:19, John 6:62-65, Philippians 2:5-11, 1 Peter 1:2. In others two but not all three are mentioned, such as in Acts 1:4-5,7-8, where we see the Father and Holy Spirit, in 1 Corinthians 12:3-11, where we see the Holy Spirit and God, and in 1 Timothy 2:3, where we see God our Savior.

What can we conclude from these verses? There is only one essence of God (Deity), but there are three Persons within that essence. The Godhead means three distinct Persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit in one distinct God.

**"Justified in the Spirit"** - Jesus worked miracles by the Spirit of God (Matthew 12:28) showing Himself as the Son of God. By this same Spirit He was raised from the grave and carried into heaven (1 Peter 3:18).

**"Seen by angels"** - The angels, as ministering spirits, played an important role throughout the life, death, burial and resurrection of the Lord (Matthew 4:11; 28:2; Mark 16:5; Luke 22:43).

**"Preached among the Gentiles"** - One great aspect of the mystery of the faith was that the Gentiles would be made fellow heirs with the Jews, and be admitted into the kingdom of God (Ephesians 3:1-6). Beginning with Peter's preaching to Cornelius and his household in Acts chapter 10 the Gentiles were told the wall of partition between them and the Jews had been pulled down through the sacrifice of Christ (Ephesians 2:4). God had granted unto them repentance unto life (Acts 11:18).

**"Believed on in the world"** - Many believed the message of salvation.

**"Received up in glory"** - Jesus ascended from the earth to go back to His Father in heaven (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9) which was a fulfillment of prophecy (Psalm 24:7-10).

V. Defending the Truth (4:1-16)

A. The Coming Apostasy (4:1-7)

4:1

**"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith"** - The apostle Paul spoke by the direction of

the Holy Spirit. He was given this exact message "expressly" or distinctly. He warned that in "latter times" there would be those who would leave the faith. The "faith" is the system of salvation which had been once delivered to mankind from God (Jude 1:3). A careful study of the New Testament reveals that the "latter times" ("last days" - 2 Timothy 3:1) started when God began to speak to man through His beloved Son and will last until He comes again (Acts 2:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-2). Therefore, we are currently living in these "latter times" or "last days."

**"giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons" -**

This explains to us what it was that caused them to leave the truth (1 Timothy 1:19-20). These "deceiving spirits" were false teachers who deceived the people into believing that their message was from God. 1 John 4:1 states, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." False teaching is the "doctrine of demons" because its source is the devil who is the father of lies (John 8:44). James 3:15 explains, "This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic."

4:2

**"speaking lies in hypocrisy" -** Hypocrisy comes from the Greek word HUPOKRISIS which literally means "to answer from under" which refers to the days in the first century when actors would use different masks to show different emotions while acting on the stage. The mask concealed the truth underneath. Some may wonder why these false teachers would speak things they knew to be false. The answer is found in the next phrase.

**"having their own conscience seared with a hot iron" -** When our flesh is seared it becomes less sensitive to touch. The flesh is then unable to serve one of its main purposes to protect us from touching things that will bring pain. This figurative language is being used to express what can happen to our conscience over time when the truth is denied (1 Timothy 1:19; Titus 1:15). If the conscience is not protected it will no longer be able to serve as a good guide in making decisions. We must educate (with God's word) and guard our conscience so that it will serve as a good regulator for our actions. If we do not do this the conscience will no longer function properly.

4:3

**"forbidding to marry" -** Just as Paul prophesied there are those religious groups today who deny marriage to the "clergy" in a misguided attempt at holiness. They ignore the Scripture which clearly teaches that "marriage is honorable among all" (Hebrews

13:4). Like many today they follow their own false doctrines while ignoring the truth of the Holy Scriptures.

The New Testament never teaches that there is a "clergy/laity" organizational structure in the Lord's church. This is a doctrine invented by men which is contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures. We are commanded to teach the pure word of God without adding to or taking away from it (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19).

**"and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth"** - There are certain religious groups today who command that we should abstain from certain foods. Some teach that we should not eat the flesh of animals on Fridays (except fish). Once again they follow their own false doctrines while ignoring the truth of the Holy Scriptures.

4:4 **"For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving"** - God created all things on earth and everything will bring good to man if it is properly used. Unlike the law of Moses which forbade the eating of certain creatures (Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14), the law of Christ sanctifies the eating of all creatures if they are received with thanksgiving. The law of Moses has been replaced by the law of Christ (Colossians 2:13-16).

4:5 **"for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer"** - "Sanctified" means to be set apart or devoted for a righteous purpose. The word of God teaches it is not sinful to use these creatures for food. The prayers of thanksgiving set apart or devote these creatures to be used as food according to the righteous plan and purpose of God.

4:6 **"If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed"** - In this case, the word translated "minister" refers to one who preaches the glorious gospel of Christ (Colossians 1:23). The phrase "these things" refers to God's warnings about those who would fall away from the gospel, including false teachers who use deceit. Thus, it is necessary for preachers to warn the brethren about false teachers and false doctrines (1 Timothy 1:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:17-18; 4:1-4, 14-15).

A good preacher will also make sure he is, "nourished in the words of faith." This means he will study and meditate on the word of God daily, just like he nourishes his physical body daily. All Christians should study and meditate on God's word daily (Matthew 4:4; 1 Peter 2:2; Acts 20:32; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Psalm 119:130; Psalm 119:11; 1 John 1:4; 2:14; James 1:21). The proper spiritual nourishment is the good, sound, healthy doctrine which is the gospel of Christ (1 Timothy 1:10-11). Those who claim that doctrine is not really important have ignored the clear teaching of the Scriptures (1 Timothy 1:3; 2 Timothy 1:13; Titus 2:1, 7-8).

4:7 **"But reject profane and old wives' fables"** - The word translated "profane" means that which was common, not holy or not truly religious. "Fables" are myths or fictional stories which are not based in fact. A good preacher must have nothing to do with such nonsense. Such myths and legends are not worthy of a preacher's precious time.

**"and exercise yourself toward godliness"** - Instead of spending time on such worthless stories, the good preacher exercises himself spiritually to develop godliness.

The Greek word translated as "exercise" is the one from which we get the English word "gymnasium." The word means to train one's body or mind. Furthermore, the verb tense of the Greek word for "exercise" indicates that this is to be a continual process. Therefore, the good preacher continually exercises his mind with God's word. The goal is an ongoing developing of godliness (Hebrews 5:12-14).

"Godliness" is religious devotion and dedication to God. The good preacher continually trains his mind by meditating upon and applying God's word to his life so he can develop a deep religious dedication to God.

#### B. The Preacher's Character and Work (4:8-16)

4:8 **"For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come"** - Bodily exercise does produce some temporary benefits in this life. However, exercising our minds to develop godliness will produce outstanding results in this life and beyond.

Thus, exercising our mind to develop godliness will produce outstanding results in all areas of our life upon this earth. And, in addition to these benefits in this life, godliness will also result in benefits in the "life to come."

Godliness is "profitable in all things." First, it provides benefits in this life (Isaiah 26:3-4; Romans 5:1-4; James 1:2-4; John 10:10; Philippians 1:20-21; Hebrews 3:6; Matthew 6:33; 1 Corinthians 15:54-58). Second, godliness provides benefits in the life to come (Matthew 25:21, 23, 46; Mark 10:28-30). The receiving of the crown of life is the greatest reward (Revelation 2:10; 2 Timothy 4:6-8; James 1:12).

4:9 **"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance"** - This phrase is often used by the inspired apostle (1 Timothy 1:15; 3:1; 2 Timothy 2:11; Titus 3:8). Paul uses this expression to emphasize that his words are truth and that accepting and living these words will bring good.

4:10 **"For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe"** - The Greek word translated as "labor" in this verse means to work hard, to work until one is weary.

Today, our love for the Lord should also motivate us to work to the point of weariness for Him (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). We should also be willing to suffer for Him (1 Peter 4:12-16; 2 Corinthians 11:23-28). We must follow the example of Paul, as he followed Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Notice that Paul referred to God as the Savior of "all" men. However, we know from the Scriptures that all men will NOT be saved because some will CHOOSE to disobey the Lord (Matthew 7:13-14, 21; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). So how could it be said that God is the Savior of ALL men? This can be said because God has made salvation AVAILABLE to all men (Titus 2:11-12). Paul makes it clear that action is required to be saved when he added that God is the Savior of all men, "ESPECIALLY OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE." Therefore, we know that faith is essential to salvation. We also know that saving faith includes works of obedience to the Lord, including baptism in water for the forgiveness of sins (James 2:17-26; Galatians 5:6; Mark 16:15-16).

4:11 **"These things command and teach"** - This is the obligation of each man who preaches the gospel. He is to command and teach the gospel of Christ without adding to or taking away from it (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19). The preacher has no authority of his own to command people to do anything. However, he does have the authority and indeed the obligation to speak the word of God (2 Timothy 4:1-2).

4:12 **"Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers"** - Most scholars believe that Timothy was between 35 to 40 years old at this time. Paul told Timothy that if he set the proper example his fellow Christians would not despise his youth. The word translated "example" means a type or a pattern. Thus, the gospel preacher's life should serve as a pattern for his fellow Christians to follow. Truly, a preacher must live what he teaches.

**"in word"** - A gospel preacher, like every Christian, must guard his speech. People will be watching to ensure that he sets the proper example. Christians need to remember that we will be justified or condemned by our words (Matthew 12:36-37). Christians must avoid corrupt speech speaking only that which is good for edification (Ephesians 4:29) and which imparts grace to the hearers, seasoned with salt (Colossians 4:6).

**"in conduct"** - A gospel preacher's conduct must be worthy of the gospel of Christ (Philippians 1:27). A gospel preacher will not be effective unless he applies God's word to his daily life.

**"in love"** - This includes many things:

1. This includes loving the Lord with all his heart, soul, mind and strength and his neighbor as himself (Matthew 22:37-40).
2. It includes loving his brethren fervently with a pure heart (1 Peter 1:22).
3. It even includes loving those who would make themselves his enemy and who would persecute him (Matthew 5:43-46).
4. It also includes loving those who are spiritually dead in their sins. This means loving them enough to teach them the gospel so they can obey it and be cleansed by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2).

**"in spirit"** - The preacher must be gentle, able to teach, patient and humble (2 Timothy 2:24-25). He is to be without prejudice or partiality (1 Timothy 5:21). He must be willing to endure all things for his brethren so they can obtain the salvation which is in Christ (2 Timothy 2:10).

**"in faith"** - A gospel preacher's faith in the Lord should inspire others to have such faith. Others must be able to see that he is fully persuaded in the faith. They must see that he is fighting the good fight of faith (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

**"in purity"** - A gospel preacher must provide a shining example by his purity. Like all Christians, he must flee from fornication and sexual immorality of all kinds (1 Corinthians 6:18). He must not only be pure in actions, but also in his thoughts (Matthew 5:8). He must maintain the purity of his thoughts and actions to protect the reputation of the precious message which he preaches and teaches.

In fact, that is the primary reason why the gospel preacher is to provide the right example in each of these areas. Proper speech, conduct, love, spirit, faith and purity are things for which each Christian must strive. However, the gospel preacher must set the example in these areas because of his close connection with the word of God. Unfortunately, if he fails in any of these areas, the effect is worse than if other Christians fail. If he fails, it will decrease the effectiveness of the precious words of life which he speaks (James 3:1).

4:13

**"Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine"** - The reading Paul mentioned to Timothy could have been either his private reading of the Scriptures or the public reading of the Scriptures in the assemblies of the church. Both of these would have been very important. Like all preachers, Timothy needed to spend much time in reading and studying God's word (2 Timothy 2:15).

To "exhort" is to encourage others to do that which is right. Again, this could apply to both public and private exhortation. In addition to reading the scriptures in public, it was (and still is) necessary for the gospel preacher to encourage people to do what God commands in the Scriptures (2 Timothy 4:1-2; Hebrews 10:25). This encouragement to do what is right must also be done individually, in private (Hebrews 3:13).

The word translated "doctrine" means teaching or instruction. The importance of the right teaching cannot be over emphasized.

4:14 **"Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership" -** Paul warned Timothy not to neglect the gift that was in him. This "gift" could have been a natural talent or ability (Romans 12:6-8) or it could have been a supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4-10) by the laying on of Paul's hands (2 Timothy 1:6).

Such supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit could only be received two ways:

1. Either by the laying on of the hands of an apostle of Christ (Acts 8:14-18).
2. Or by Holy Spirit baptism which was limited to the apostles and Cornelius' household (Acts 2 and 10).

From 2 Timothy 1:6, it appears that Timothy's gift mentioned in this verse was a miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit. Paul said that Timothy's gift was given by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. The word translated "presbytery" refers to the elders of the Lord's church. Thus, the elders of the congregation where Timothy was located were with him when Paul laid his hands on Timothy to give him the miraculous gift.

At this point, it is critically important to notice a significant difference between the wording in this verse and 2 Timothy 1:6.

1. "the gift of God which is in you **THROUGH** the laying on of my hands" (2 Timothy 1:6)
2. "the gift that is in you ... **WITH** the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (1 Timothy 4:14)
3. The Greek word translated "through" in 2 Timothy 1:6 is DIA and according to Thayer, means the following:

- 1) "through; of the means or instrument by which anything is effected; because what is done by means of a person or thing seems to pass as it were through the same."
  - 2) Thus, in 2 Timothy 1:6, Paul said that the gift was in Timothy through or by means of Paul's laying his hands on Timothy.
  - 3) This is entirely consistent with Acts 8:14-18 where it is clear that the apostles of Christ were the only men who could pass miraculous gifts on to others.
4. On the other hand, the Greek preposition translated "with" is META. Rienecker and Rogers has the following to say concerning this word:
- 1) "The preposition does NOT express instrument or means, but merely ACCOMPANIMENT."
  - 2) In other words, the laying on of the hands of the elders was NOT the instrument or means by which Timothy received this miraculous gift.
  - 3) Instead, as we have already seen, the laying on of the apostle Paul's hands was the means or instrument by which Timothy received this miraculous gift.
  - 4) Thus, the laying on of the hands of the elders merely ACCOMPANIED the laying on of Paul's hands.
5. Then, what purpose did the laying on of the elders' hands serve?
- 1) In both Old and New Testament times, this procedure was used to send one forth on a journey or a new work (Numbers 27:22-23; Acts 13:2-3).
  - 2) Thus, apparently the elders laid hands on Timothy to send him forth with their best wishes as a preacher of God's word.

- 3) At the same time, the apostle Paul laid his hands on Timothy to enable him to work miracles to confirm the word of God which he spoke (Hebrews 2:3-4; Mark 16: 20).

Paul also said that Timothy's gift was given "by prophecy."

1. The meaning of this seems to be that the Holy Spirit, speaking through a prophet, identified Timothy as the man whom God wanted to do a particular work.
2. A similar situation arose when the Holy Spirit separated Saul and Barnabas for a special work in Acts 13:2-3.

Although miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit ceased with the completion of the New Testament, gospel preachers still need to be careful to avoid neglecting their natural gifts, talents and abilities.

1. They should use those abilities to glorify the Lord (1 Corinthians 10:31).
2. They should always strive to grow and add to their abilities (2 Peter 3:18).
3. They should always press forward toward the goal of heaven (Philippians 3:12-14).

4:15 **"Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all"** - The Greek word translated "meditate" means "to take care, to practice, to cultivate, to take pains with something, to think about." Not only was Timothy to meditate upon these things, but Paul told him to, "give yourself entirely to them." Literally, he was to be IN them, IMMERSE himself in them, and be totally ABSORBED in them. Rienecker and Rogers said this concerning the phrase: "The mind is to be as immersed in these pursuits as the body in the air it breathes."

4:16 **"Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine"** - Paul exhorted Timothy to take heed (pay very close attention) to two very important things. First, he was to pay very close attention to HIMSELF and second, he must pay very close attention to THE DOCTRINE.

Therefore, careful self-examination must be a regular part of every gospel preacher's life (2 Corinthians 13:5). He must constantly look into the mirror of God's word to make the necessary changes to his life (James 1:22-25).

He must also be careful to teach only that which is sound, healthy doctrine, which is the one true doctrine of the gospel of Christ (1 Timothy 1:3, 10-11; Titus 2:1). He must take great care to teach only the doctrine of God, not the doctrines of demons (1 Timothy 4:1). He must diligently nourish himself with and teach only the good doctrine (1 Timothy 4:6).

**"Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you"** - If the gospel preacher continues living a godly life and teaching sound doctrine, wonderful results will follow. He will save himself and those who hear him. It can be said that he will save those who hear him in that he preaches the gospel of Christ which is God's power to save precious souls (Romans 1:16; Ephesians 1:13; James 1:21).

VI. Caring For the Members of the Church (5:1-6:2)

A. Care for the young and old (5:1-2)

5:1 **"Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers"** - The Greek word which is translated "rebuke" in this verse is only found once in the New Testament. It means to strike upon, to strike at or to rebuke sharply. It contains the idea of severe and harsh criticism that strikes the one spoken to like lashes from a whip.

We know that a preacher must preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:20, 27) which includes the obligation to reprove, rebuke and exhort (2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:13; 2:15). However, he must not do so in a harsh and severe manner. Instead, he must encourage older men to do what is right, showing them the same respect he would to his own father. Similarly, Timothy and indeed every preacher must exhort younger men as brothers.

5:2 **"older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity"** - The preacher is to treat the older women like his own mother with gentleness, kindness and longsuffering (Galatians 5:22-23). The preacher will also make sure that he treats them and his spiritual sisters in a way which protects and maintains their purity.

B. Care for the widows (5:3-16)

5:3 **"Honor widows who are really widows"** - The word translated "honor" means to show respect. However, it means even more than that. It includes the giving of material support, help or assistance as needed (Matthew 15:4-6).

According to the context:

1. A true widow is a woman whose husband has died and who does not have children and grandchildren to take care of her (1 Timothy 5:4)
2. She is one who trusts in God (1 Timothy 5:5).
3. She is one who prays to God both night and day (1 Timothy 5:5).

The proper treatment of widows has been commanded by God in both the Old Testament and New Testament (Isaiah 1:17; James 1:27; Acts 6:1-4).

5:4 **"But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God"** - In such cases, God commands the children and grandchildren to show "piety" by fulfilling their obligations at home which includes the need, "to repay their parents."

1. When the children were younger, the parents made sure they had the necessities of life.
2. This included the love and care to bring children up properly.
3. It included food, clothing, shelter, etc.
4. Now, the father has died, leaving the mother without his support and care.
5. As a result, the children and grandchildren are obligated to repay their parents by making sure that the widow receives the necessities of life.

5:5

**"Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day" -**

Notice in this verse that a true widow in the Bible sense of the word is described in three ways:

1. She is left alone (without any family to help her with her needs).
2. She trusts in God (as the One who will provide for her needs).
3. She prays to God night and day.

This description makes it clear that the "true widow" is a faithful Christian who has placed her life in the hands of God.

5:6

**"But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives" -** In contrast with the true widow, there were and are some widows who give themselves up to a life of pleasure. They only live to satisfy their selfish desires and lusts. Such a widow is described as "dead" while she lives. That means although she is alive PHYSICALLY, she is SPIRITUALLY dead in her trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1).

5:7

**"And these things command, that they may be blameless" -**

Paul tells Timothy to command these things concerning widows so that the church can be blameless. If the church does not take care of her widows, the church would be to blame in the eyes of God and the world (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:15-16). By not taking care of true widows the world would see that Christians did not have the love of God living in them (1 John 3:17; John 13:34-35).

5:8

**"But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" -**

God condemns anyone who will not provide for his own, especially for his own household. When God says that the head of the family must provide for "his own," it is apparent He means those who are dependent upon him. This could include close and distant relatives, depending upon the circumstances. In this context, the needs being considered are material needs such as food, clothing, shelter, etc.

If the head of a family does NOT provide for his own, God says two things about him in this verse.

1. First, he has denied the faith. That is, by his actions, he has denied the gospel. By neglecting his responsibility to take care of his own, he has acted contrary to the basic principles of Christianity. He has failed to act in accordance with the love which God commands and which He has shown to us (Romans 13:8-10).
2. Second, he is worse than an unbeliever. God's point here is that even unbelievers know that it is right for one to take care of their own family. For one who claims to be a follower of Jesus to act worse than an unbeliever is a tragedy which brings reproach on the Lord's church (Romans 2:21-24).

5:9

**"Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man"** - In these verses, Paul identified a special class of widows. These certainly were true widows or widows indeed as studied in verses 3-5. However, they were even more than that. Paul referred to these widows as those who were, "taken into the number" (KJV / NKJV) or "enrolled" (ASV).

In this context, it appears that this was a special class of true widows which received material help from the congregation on a regular basis. And it is highly likely that in return, these widows performed particular good works of the church which older widows could do best such as teaching and working with younger widows, wives and children (Titus 2:3-5).

These conclusions are strengthened when we analyze the qualifications which a true widow must meet in order to be enrolled on the list. These qualifications are as follows:

1. First, she must be at least sixty years old. As we saw in verse 3 Christians are to give material help to true widows in their times of need, regardless of their age. However, for a true widow to be enrolled to receive material help from the congregation on a regular basis, she must be at least sixty years old. Reasons for this kind of age restriction will be given in verses 11-14.
2. Second, she must have been the wife of one man. These words mean that she must not be guilty of

polygamy or adultery. She must have lived by the marriage law of the New Testament (Matthew 5:32; 19:1-12; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18).

5:10 **"well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work"** - The qualifications which a true widow must meet in order to be enrolled on the list continue in this verse:

3. Third, she must be "well reported for good works." She is a lady who is well known for the good works she does in her home and elsewhere. Examples of some of those good works are given in the next several phrases in this verse.
4. Fourth, she must have "brought up children." Of course, this is one of the primary responsibilities of parents, including mothers (Titus 2:3-5).
5. Fifth, she must have "lodged strangers." That is, she must have shown hospitality by taking visitors into her home. Hospitality is commanded by God as a sign of our love for people (Hebrews 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9).
6. Sixth, she must have "washed the saints' feet." The washing of dirty feet was an act of kindness in the ancient world, particularly for travelers (Genesis 18:4). It was a sign of love (Luke 7:38). It was an humble service provided for others (1 Samuel 25:41). However, it was just one of the "good works" listed in this section, NOT a religious ceremony or an act of worship to God. The point of listing it here is to show the importance of cheerful, humble service to others. In order for a true widow to be enrolled, she must be a cheerful, humble servant of others, as shown in such good works.
7. Seventh, she must have "relieved the afflicted." She must have helped those who were sick or distressed. Helping others under such conditions is characteristic of those who are faithful Christians, including widows (Matthews 25:36; Romans 12:15; Galatians 6:1).

8. Eighth, she must have "diligently followed every good work." She does not wait for good works to come her way. Instead, she actively and energetically looks for and seeks such good works. Indeed, she is zealous for good works and ready for every good work (Titus 2:14; 3:1).

5:11 **"But refuse the younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry"** - This means the church must refuse to enroll those true widows who are younger than 60 years old. Please notice that Paul says to refuse to ENROLL these younger widows, NOT refuse to HELP (1 Timothy 5:3). These younger widows would feel the need for the physical companionship and intimacy which they had once shared with their husbands. This wantonness was "against Christ" because these would be desires for the kind of physical intimacy which Christ only allows in marriage. This would in turn lead to the widows getting married again.

5:12 **"having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith"** - Why would it be wrong for younger widows to remarry. Especially since the scriptures teach that remarriage of widows is authorized as long as they marry a person who is an eligible marriage partner according to God's word (Matthew 19:1-12; 1 Corinthians 7:39; Romans 7:1-3). Also, in this very context, Paul says that younger widows SHOULD remarry (1 Timothy 5:14). Then why would they have condemnation?

The key to understanding this dilemma is to remember that Paul was explaining why younger widows should not be enrolled in the number taken care of by the church (verses 9-11). Apparently those true widows who were enrolled had to give their pledge or word of faith that they would not marry again. This was so they could devote all of their time and talents to the service of the Lord in return for their being materially supported by the church. The true widows who were at least 60 years old would normally not face a strong desire to remarry.

On the other hand, the true widows who were younger would normally face a strong desire to remarry. And if they remarried, they would violate their pledge or "their first faith." Thus, having "cast off their first faith," they would be subject to condemnation. For this reason, the inspired apostle commanded that the younger widows not be enrolled in the

number of those who were to be supported materially by the church.

5:13 **"And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not"** - Here Paul identified several other problems which would occur if younger widows were enrolled in that number.

1. First, they would "learn to be idle." There would be a temptation for younger widows who were materially supported by the church to avoid being actively involved in the work they were supposed to do for the church. Rather than visiting, encouraging and teaching other women and children, they would be doing the things specified in this verse.
2. Second, they would be "wandering about from house to house." That is, wandering around, not doing anything profitable for the Lord.
3. Third, they would be "gossips and busybodies." The word translated "gossips" means those who speak empty and foolish things. In going from house to house they would spread news and information which they had no business spreading. This could harm the reputation of innocent people and cause strife among the brethren. The word translated "busybodies" refers to those who are not happy to just take care of their own business. Instead, they find it necessary to interfere in the business of others in a way which is not helpful (2 Thessalonians 3:11).

5:14 **"Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully"** - As we studied in verse 11, it is not wrong for widows to remarry (Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:39). Of course, implied in this statement is that they marry a man who is eligible for marriage according to the scriptures (Matthew 19:1-12; 1 Corinthians 7:39; Romans 7:1-3).

In addition to remarrying, Paul teaches the younger widows to do several things:

1. First, they should "bear children." Of course, the bearing and proper upbringing of children is one of the major purposes of marriage (Genesis 1:28; Ephesians 6:4).
2. Second, they should "manage the house." This tells us that God expects the wife's primary sphere of activity should be in the home. This includes her responsibility to love her husband and her children and to be a good homemaker (Titus 2:3-4). This is entirely consistent with the fact that God created woman to be a suitable helper for man (Genesis 2:18). Thus, the modern philosophy that being a housewife and homemaker is undesirable is completely contrary to the word of God! Instead of being undesirable to be a homemaker, it is pleasing to God and commanded by Him. Therefore, it ought to be pleasing to godly women to serve the Lord and their family in this way. Of course, she is to do these things keeping in mind God's command that she be obedient and submissive to her husband (Titus 2:4; 1 Timothy 2:11-12; Ephesians 5:22-24).
3. Third, they should "give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully." The adversary mentioned here is an enemy of Christianity. If younger widows conducted themselves as mentioned in verses 11-13 they would bring reproach on the Lord's church. This would encourage the enemies of Christianity to speak reproachfully against the Lord. On the other hand, if younger widows conducted themselves as mentioned in this verse, their actions would bring honor and glory to Christ.

5:15      **"For some have already turned aside after Satan"** - That is, they had done those things mentioned in verses 11-13. They may have even quit following Jesus, perhaps by living a life of immorality. This is just one more reason given by Paul for not enrolling the younger widows in the number.

5:16      **"If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows"** - If a widow has children or grandchildren living, she is not a true widow in the Bible sense of that word (1 Timothy 5:3-5). If a Christian man or woman has a

mother or grandmother who is a widow, the Christian is obligated to, "relieve them." The word translated "relieve" means to help, to assist, to give aid to. Thus, each Christian who has a widowed mother or grandmother is obligated to help, to assist, to give aid to that widow.

C. Submitting to the elders (5:17-20)

5:17 **"Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine"** - When Paul used the word "elders" in this verse, he was talking about the overseers of each local congregation. Obviously, each Christian is commanded to love and highly honor each elder who serves the Lord (1 Thessalonians 5:13). However, Paul meant something more when he said "double honor." He was talking about those who, "labor in the word and doctrine."

It is clear that God is talking about an elder who is giving all of his time and talents to teaching and/or preaching God's word. Elders who work full time as both elders and preachers are worthy of double honor. As we studied in verse 3 the word translated "honor" means more than to show respect. It also means the giving of material support, help or assistance (Matthew 15:4-6). Therefore, men who work fulltime as elders, including teaching and/or preaching God's word, are worthy to receive material support for their work.

5:18 **"For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,' and, 'The laborer is worthy of his wages.'"** - The illustration being used here teaches that just as the ox is entitled to receive something in return for his work so too is the elder entitled to receive material support for his labors if he works full time in the Lord's work. This same passage was quoted by Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:4-14 to justify the payment of compensation to those who preach the gospel. If a person works, they are entitled to payment for that work.

5:19 **"Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses"** - The principle that no accusation should be accepted unless there are two or three witnesses is well established, even in Old Testament times (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15).

It should be remembered that only the most highly qualified men can rightfully serve as elders (1 Timothy 3:1-7). Since they have met such strict requirements, accusations against them should not be accepted unless they are very well documented by several witnesses (not gossip, hearsay, etc.).

One of the responsibilities of the elders is to reprove and convict those guilty of sin (Titus 1:9-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:12). Some who were rebuked might be tempted to strike back at the elders. Such a person might make false accusations to harm the reputation of the elders. The requirement to have the testimony of two or three witnesses would protect the eldership from such slanderous attacks.

5:20 **"Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear"** - The Bible teaches that each Christian (including elders) should be given a chance to repent before such actions are taken (Matthew 18:15-18; Revelation 2:21). If they do not repent they should be publicly rebuked. This should be done to keep the church pure (1 Corinthians 5:6-8), and so others may see this example and "fear" that the same thing will be done to them if they continue in sin.

#### D. Avoiding Prejudice (5:21-25)

5:21 **"I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality"** - In the context, the phrase "these things" appears to refer primarily to the treatment of elders just discussed in verses 17-20. However, there is no doubt that this charge applies to ALL matters.

Prejudice is making a judgment before all the facts are available or considered. The word translated "partiality" means to show favoritism to one person or group over another person or group.

5:22 **"Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure"** - There are two possible explanations of this verse, either of which is consistent with this context and the rest of the Bible.

1. The first explanation involves the appointing of men to serve as elders. In effect then, this is God's warning

not to appoint any man as an elder hastily. In other words, we must take time to carefully evaluate each man to ensure that he meets God's qualifications.

2. The second possible explanation of this verse is that it refers to the accusation and trial of elders. In this case, the laying on of hands would refer to taking such action against an elder (1 Timothy 5:20). In other words, Timothy and other Christians are told not to hastily accuse elders and place them on trial for their sins.

5:23

**"No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities"** - Paul advised Timothy to use a little wine for the benefit of his stomach and his frequent illnesses. In other words, Paul was recommending that Timothy use wine as a MEDICINE to help him with some particular health problems.

Some people attempt to use this verse to justify the drinking of alcoholic beverages in moderation, often called "social drinking." However, the truth is that neither this passage, nor any other in the New Testament can legitimately be used to justify the drinking of alcoholic beverages. In fact, this verse actually teaches AGAINST the general drinking of alcoholic beverages, or "social drinking."

1. First, it is obvious that Timothy was deliberately avoiding the drinking of wine, which was clearly available to him. Timothy was drinking ONLY water. He was steadfastly resisting the drinking of wine. Please notice - Paul did NOT rebuke Timothy because he avoided drinking wine. Instead, Paul encouraged Timothy to use a little wine for a specific purpose.
2. Second, Paul exhorted Timothy to use a "little" wine. It is an accepted fact that the wine which they had available in their day was much less concentrated and less potent than the distilled liquors which are used today. Thus, a "little" of that wine would be equal to a very, very little of the potent alcoholic beverages available today. How many "social" drinkers today can sincerely and legitimately claim that they drink very, very little of alcoholic beverages? Therefore, to try to

use this verse as justification for "social" drinking is to misuse this verse severely!

3. Third, Paul exhorted Timothy to use a little wine for MEDICINAL purposes. It was to help his stomach and frequent illnesses. But it appears that even with these illnesses; Timothy had refused to use wine to help before Paul wrote to him. Why did Timothy refuse to use any wine before? I believe he refused because he knew it was SINFUL to use wine or any alcoholic beverage for general purposes. He refused to use wine because to do otherwise would damage his precious influence and example as a Christian. Therefore, it is clear that it was and is expected that Christians today must also abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages.

In this particular case, at that particular time, Paul advised Timothy to use a LITTLE wine for MEDICINAL PURPOSES. He did NOT advise Timothy to use a little wine as a beverage, to enjoy himself, to feel better mentally, to relieve stress from the difficulties of life or to be sociable.

Paul advised Timothy to use a little wine as treatment for some specific MEDICAL problems which Timothy had. Today we have more and better medicines to treat such health problems. Therefore, the use of wine to treat such problems is no longer appropriate. There is NO justification in this passage or any other in the New Testament for the drinking of alcoholic beverages, even in moderation.

5:24

**"Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later"** - The comments in these verses certainly apply to men and women in general. However, in this particular context, it appears that these comments were meant to be applied more specifically to those men who are considered to be appointed as elders. This verse explains why it is necessary to avoid laying hands hastily on a man to appoint him to serve as an elder (1 Timothy 5:22).

Some men's sins are clearly seen by all. Their evil character is well understood by all who know them. If they do not repent of these sins their sins will lead them to "judgment" (condemnation by almighty God). There are some men who

are able to hide their sins so that they are not seen by all until later.

How does this apply to the appointment of elders?

Those men whose sins are clearly seen by all are clearly NOT qualified candidates to serve as elders. On the other hand, since the sins of some men can be hidden from others for some period of time, it is important to carefully observe men over a long period of time. Thus, it is essential to avoid laying hands on any man hastily to appoint him as an elder (1 Timothy 5:22).

5:25 **"Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden"** - Some men's good works are clearly seen by all who observe these men. Thus, their good character is well understood by all who know them.

#### E. Care for the slaves (6:1-2)

In these two verses God gives instructions for slaves and masters. In studying these verses we must keep in mind that slavery was widespread in the Roman world at this time. For example, scholars have estimated 30-40% of the population of Italy were slaves in the 1st century. That would be upwards of two to three million slaves in Italy alone not including the slaves in the rest of the empire which are estimated to be around 10-15% of the total population. [For additional information please see the appendices - DID PAUL ENDORSE SLAVERY? by Eric Lyons, M.Min.]

6:1 **"Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed"** - God gave similar instructions to Christian slaves in Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-4:1. If Christian slaves were poor workers, rebellious, disrespectful, etc., this would harm the cause of Christ. The masters and others who saw this poor behavior might think that Christianity promoted this conduct. Obviously, this would cause tremendous damage to Christianity. Therefore, God commanded slaves to avoid such behavior.

6:2 **"And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved"** -

A Christian slave might be tempted to despise, i.e., look down upon, his Christian master. He might be tempted to think that since his master was also a Christian, he should release him from serving as a slave. Then if the slave was not released, he might begin to despise his Christian master. God commanded each slave to avoid the temptation to despise his master.

The master was a brother in Christ and God commanded each Christian including the Christian who was a slave to love their brothers and sisters in Christ (John 13:34-35; 1 Peter 1:22). The slave was also to provide his service to his master as if his service was for the Lord (Ephesians 6:6; Colossians 3:23). He was to do that knowing that no matter what happened on earth, he would be rewarded by the Lord (Ephesians 6:8; Colossians 3:24).

Other passages tell us that God also commanded the master to avoid threatening his slaves (Ephesians 6:9) and to give his slaves what was fair, realizing that he also had a Master in heaven (Colossians 4:1).

**"Teach and exhort these things"** - Paul told Timothy to teach and exhort these things taught in these verses.

[Although slavery is not as widespread now as it was then, the principles in these verses can still be applied to our daily life. For example, these principles can be applied to the employer/ employee relationship.]

Christian employees should:

1. Treat their employer with honor and respect (1 Timothy 6:1).
2. Be obedient to their employer, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ (Ephesians 6:5).
3. Work diligently always, not just when the employer is watching as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart (Ephesians 6:6; Colossians 3:22).
4. Serve with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men (Ephesians 6:7).

5. Work heartily, as unto the Lord (Colossians 3:23).

Each Christian employer ought to give their employees what is just and fair, knowing that as employers they also have a Master in heaven (Colossians 4:1). The employer should treat each employee the same way he/she would want to be treated (Matthew 7:12).

VII. The Minister Himself (6:3-19)

A. Adversaries (6:3-6)

6:3 **"If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness"** - False teaching is teaching anything other than the pure word of God. We must not add to or take away from God's word (Revelation 22:18-19). The word translated "wholesome" means healthy and sound. Again, we see the critical importance of teaching the sound, healthy, good doctrine (1 Timothy 1:3, 10-11; 4:6, 16; Titus 2:1). Wholesome, sound, healthy words include those spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ and those of His inspired apostles and prophets recorded for us in The New Testament (John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 14:37).

Therefore, to teach anything other than the gospel of Christ is to teach that which is false, not wholesome, not healthy and not sound. Those who do such things and continue to do so have no fellowship with God or His Son and will face sure destruction (2 John 1:9-11; Galatians 1:6-9).

6:4 **"he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men"** - False teachers are puffed up with false pride. They think of themselves more highly than they should (Romans 12:3). Pride has been one of man's problems from the beginning and one of Satan's tools he uses to destroy us spiritually (1 Timothy 3:6; 1 John 2:16; Proverbs 16:18).

False teachers think they know more and are wiser than others. However, they actually know nothing of real importance. That is true because they choose to reject the only knowledge of real importance - the knowledge of God revealed in His word.

The false teacher is obsessed with disputes and arguments about meaningless words. The word translated "obsessed" means to have a sick, diseased, constant desire for something. The false teacher has a sick, diseased, constant desire to dispute and argue about empty words.

Does that mean, as some claim, that it is ALWAYS wrong to argue and dispute about words? Clearly, the answer to that question is "NO."

1. Timothy was told to charge some that they teach no other doctrine (1 Timothy 1:3-4).
2. Timothy and Paul waged the good warfare against false teachers (1 Timothy 1:18-20).
3. Profane and old wives' fables must be rejected (1 Timothy 4:7).
4. We must contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3).
5. Elders must exhort, convict, rebuke sharply, and stop the mouths of those who contradict the truth (Titus 1:9-14).
6. We must be set for the defense of the gospel (Philippians 1:17).

The false teachers have a sick desire to argue and dispute about idle speculations, theories and other words which are not important and not according to God's word (1 Timothy 1:4; 2 Timothy 2:23; Titus 3:9).

There are a number of bad results that come from such arguments and disputes:

1. "Envy" is the displeasure produced by seeing the good fortune or prosperity of others. It is one of the works of the flesh that will keep a person out of Heaven (Galatians 5:19-21).
2. "Strife" is rivalry, struggle, fighting which expresses a bitter dislike for another person or group. This is also one of the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21).

3. "Reviling" is the abusive, slanderous, evil speaking against another person or group.
4. "Evil suspicions" are evil doubts about the righteousness or faithfulness of others. The word includes the idea of assuming one is guilty without adequate proof.
5. "Useless wranglings" are lengthy, noisy fights, quarrels or disputes. They are described as "useless" in that they produce no good or profit as far as God is concerned.

6:5 **"men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain"** - The "truth" is the word of God (John 17:17). To be destitute means to be without something.

False teachers believe they can use religion to make a personal financial gain for themselves. God is condemning false teachers who deceive, make merchandise of and make dishonest gains from people by teaching things which they should not (2 Peter 2:1-3; Titus 1:11).

**"From such withdraw yourself"** - This is consistent with God's instructions found in other passages (1 Corinthians 15:33; Ephesians 5:11; Romans 16:17-18; 2 John 9-11; Titus 3:9-10). Such strong actions are commanded by God because of the destructive effects of such false teachers and doctrines. Their message spreads like a deadly cancer. They do much harm to the work of faithful servants of the Lord.

6:6 **"Now godliness with contentment is great gain"** - The word translated "contentment" has to do with a person's state of mind. A person is content when he is satisfied with what he has in life. He does not allow EXTERNAL circumstances like wealth, possessions, health, etc., to discourage or control him in any way. He realizes that the key to having true joy, inner peace and cheerfulness is in being right with God, no matter what the EXTERNAL circumstances might be (Philippians 4:4, 11-13; Hebrews 13:5-6).

#### B. The Danger of Riches (6:7-10)

6:7 **"For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out"** - In this verse we find one of the best

reasons why godliness with contentment is great gain. The reason is that we brought no material goods into this world when we were born and we will just as certainly not carry any material goods OUT of this world when we die (Job 1:21, Ecclesiastes 5:15; Psalm 49:17).

Many Christians place so much emphasis upon acquiring and enjoying material things. The Scriptures tell us where our priorities should be:

1. God's people must learn to lay up treasures in HEAVEN, not on earth (Matthew 6:19-21).
2. Christians ought to love the Lord supremely, NOT the world and the things of the world (1 John 2:15-17).
3. The child of God's true citizenship is in HEAVEN (Philippians 3:20).
4. We must set our minds upon and seek things ABOVE, not things on the earth (Colossians 3:1-4).
5. We need to remember that covetousness is IDOLATRY (Colossians 3:5).
6. We are supposed to be sojourners and PILGRIMS on this earth (1 Peter 2:11).
7. We should be seeking for a better country - the HEAVENLY (Hebrews 11:10, 16).

6:8 **"And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content"** - It is apparent that food and clothing are used to represent the basic necessities of life. God has promised to provide us with these necessities if we put Him first in our lives (Matthew 6:25-33; Proverbs 30:8-9).

6:9 **"But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare"** - Those who desire to be rich are never content with what they have. They always want more of this world's goods. Their main goal and aim in life is to get riches. They are tempted to do things which are wrong in order to get riches (e.g., lying, stealing, cheating, etc.).

The word translated "snare" means a trap like what might be used to catch a bird or small animal. Once the bird or animal is trapped, it is very difficult to get out. Thus, the desire to be rich is a trap and once a person falls into that trap, it is very difficult to escape.

**"and into many foolish and harmful lusts"** - Lusts are excessive and unlawful desires. The Christian is commanded to deny and crucify the flesh and its lusts (Romans 6:12; Galatians 5:24; 1 John 2:16).

**"which drown men in destruction and perdition"** - The word translated as "destruction" means ruin, perishing or death. The word translated "perdition" means the loss of an eternal life of blessedness after death (i.e., eternal separation from God in a life of eternal misery - 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). God's word is saying that giving in to such lusts will ruin a person in this life AND it will result in eternal separation from God in the life to come. This is entirely consistent with what God says about the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21).

6:10

**"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil"** - Please notice God DOES NOT say that MONEY is a root of all kinds of evil. Instead, He says the LOVE of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Money by itself is neither good nor evil.

Obviously, it is sinful to OBTAIN money by illegal or immoral means. It is sinful to WANT money to use it for the wrong purposes and it is sinful to USE money for ungodly purposes. However, money CAN be used to for good. For example, it can be used to spread the soul saving gospel and to do acts of kindness and benevolence for those in need. Therefore, money by itself is neither good nor evil.

**"for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness"** - As a result of their greedy love of money, some have strayed from the faith (i.e., cease being a faithful Christian). They allowed their love for money and evil actions to lead them away from the Lord and His cause.

**"and pierced themselves through with many sorrows"** - Literally, they will stab themselves all over their body with penetrating wounds. That is, their sinful life will cause them tremendous pain. It will cause them pain now because the way of

the transgressor is hard (Proverbs 13:15) and it will cause them pain later where they will face eternal punishment (Matthew 25:30).

### C. Fight The Good Fight (6:11-16)

6:11 **"But you, O man of God"** - Notice that Paul addressed Timothy as "man of God." This is a beautiful description! In the New Testament, it is only found in this verse and 2 Timothy 3:16-17. It describes a man who belongs to God and who is totally dedicated to the Lord and His work. In the Old Testament, it was used to describe Moses and Samuel (Deuteronomy 33:1; 1 Samuel 9:6).

**"flee these things and pursue righteousness"** - Obviously, "these things" include the desire to be rich and the love of money (1 Timothy 6:9-10). However, in this context, "these things" also would include false teaching, pride, strife, envy and evil suspicions (1 Timothy 6:3-8). We are to avoid such things and get as far from them as possible (1 Corinthians 6:18). However, the Christian is not to be content with just avoiding such evil. He must also "pursue" those things which God defines as good. Such as the following:

**"righteousness"** - Righteousness is doing what is right, as defined by God's word (Psalm 119:172). It is being right with God and man. The person who does righteousness is accepted with God (Acts 10:35).

**"godliness"** - This is religious devotion and dedication to God (1 Timothy 2:2; 4:7-8).

**"faith"** - Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). And the gospel preacher must provide a true example of faith (1 Timothy 4:12).

**"love"** - This includes love for God, neighbors, brethren, enemies, etc. (see notes on 1 Timothy 4:12 for more).

**"patience"** - The Greek word translated as "patience" means endurance, perseverance or steadfastness. It is an active bearing up under difficult circumstances. Such patience and endurance is developed by meeting the trials and difficulties of life with a faithful and joyful attitude (James 1:2-4; Romans 5:2-4).

**"gentleness"** - The Greek word translated as "gentleness" means meekness or mildness. However, gentleness is not to be confused

with weakness. Actually, it is strength under control. The best example is Jesus, who described Himself as gentle or meek, yet He certainly was not weak (Matthew 11: 29). He was the Lamb of God, but He was also the Lion of Judah (John 1:29; Revelation 5:5). Therefore, while the preacher is to reprove, rebuke and exhort, he is also to be gentle and patient while he is dealing with others (2 Timothy 4:1-2; 2:24).

6:12

**"Fight the good fight of faith"** - Here Paul was talking about the SPIRITUAL battle which each Christian must fight against Satan and his forces. The Christian must use the whole armor of God, including the Sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, to fight this battle, NOT physical weapons (1 Timothy 1:18; Ephesians 6:10-13, 17; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

**"lay hold on eternal life"** - The Greek word translated as "lay hold on" means to grasp and get a good grip on. Therefore, Timothy and indeed every Christian, is exhorted to get a good grip on eternal life (2 Peter 1:10-11; Philippians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 2 John 8; 2 Timothy 4:7-8; Revelation 2:10).

**"to which you were also called"** - Of course, the way God called Timothy and every other person since the cross is through the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14). The gospel must be preached, heard and obeyed (Romans 10:14-15). Each individual is allowed by God to choose either obedience or disobedience to that glorious gospel call (Romans 10:16). Those who obey that gospel and continue to do so will receive the blessings of eternal life (Hebrews 5:9).

**"and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses"** - This is probably a reference to Timothy's confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of God before his baptism (Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37). But it could also be a reference to the confession of Christ (with words and actions) which each Christian must make daily (Matthew 10:32-33).

God's plan for man's salvation has two parts.

God's Part:

1. Great love for man (John 3:16)
2. Giving His Son, Jesus Christ, as the Savior (Luke 19:10)

3. The Gospel as "the power" unto salvation (Romans 1:16)
4. He provided atonement (forgiveness of sins) by the blood of Christ (Romans 5:9)

Man's Part:

1. Hear (John 8:32; Romans 10:17)
2. Believe (John 20:31; Hebrews 11:6)
3. Repentance (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30)
4. Confession (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:10)
5. Baptism (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27)
6. Be faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10)

6:13 **"I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate"** - Here he described God as the one who gives life to all things (Acts 17:25). Notice, Paul refers to Jesus as the one who made the good confession before Pontius Pilate. This is probably a reference to Jesus' admission before Pilate that He was the King of the Jews, but His Kingdom was NOT of this world (John 18:36-37).

6:14 **"that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing"** - In this context, the commandment was to flee the evil, pursue the good and fight the good fight of faith (verses 11-12). We know the phrases "without spot" and "blameless" do not mean perfect or without sin (Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8). The word "blameless" means that no legitimate charge can be made against a person. The person is morally upright, honorable and has deep integrity. Therefore, Timothy was to continue to keep this commandment in an honorable way where no one would have any legitimate grounds to rebuke him.

6:15 **"which He will manifest in His own time"** - That is, God will do that when HE is ready and ONLY when He is ready. God is the only one who has the POWER and AUTHORITY to determine when His Son's final coming will occur (Matthew 24:36). This is the first of a series of phrases which describe the great supreme power and authority of God.

**"He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords"** - The word translated "Potentate" means one who is a mighty ruler who rules with great authority and power.

When Paul described God as the ONLY Potentate, he was referring to the fact that God is the MIGHTIEST of rulers who rules with the GREATEST of power and authority

This verse also makes it clear that all of the kings of the earth are subject to almighty God as the highest of kings, whether they will admit it now or not. God has the authority and power to rule over all kings. Similarly, He is the highest Lord of all the lords (masters) in the world. This great title is also applied to the Lord Jesus Christ, indicating His divine power and authority (Revelation 17:14).

6:16

**"who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see"** - The word translated "immortality" means not able to die. Only God has the power to avoid death - He is not subject to death. This is one of His divine characteristics which make Him different from man. In contrast with God, each of us must die (Hebrews 9:27). Even men like Enoch and Elijah, whom God removed from earth before they died, were ABLE to die, since they were human (Genesis 5:24; 2 Kings 2:1-12; Hebrews 11:5). However, since God is not even ABLE to die, He is immortal.

This is consistent with God's description of Heaven as a place of continuous light where there is no need for the sun or moon (Revelation 21:23-24; 22:5).

No man has seen or can see God. This is stated several other times in both the New Testament (John 5:37; 6:46; 1 John 4:12) and in the Old Testament (Exodus 33:20). There is no doubt that on rare occasions in the Old Testament men did see MANIFESTATIONS of God, but they did not actually see Him in all His glory. That is, God appeared to men in various forms, including as men, in dreams, visions, etc. However, since God is spirit and no spirit has flesh and bones, it is clear that no man has actually seen God in His true essence and nature (John 4:23; Luke 24:39). This is consistent with the fact that God is INVISIBLE (1 Timothy 1:17; Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:15; Numbers 12:8; Genesis 18:1-3).

**"to whom be honor and everlasting power"** - Because of God's divine characteristics and attributes, "honor and everlasting power" are due to Him (Romans 11:33-36).

**"Amen"** - The word "Amen" started as a Hebrew word (Numbers 5:22), which was transliterated into Greek and then eventually into English. The word comes from a Hebrew root word which means "to build up or support; to be firm or faithful, to trust or believe; to be true or certain." It is also used as an adverb at the beginning of a speech to mean "surely, of a truth, truly" (Matthew 5:18; Mark 3:28; John 3:3). At the conclusion of a sentence it is used to mean "so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled." When the word is used as an adjective it means "firm or true." Some dictionaries claim that when "Amen" is used at the end of a prayer it means approval of what is being said. However, our approval does not make it true. It is more correct to think of it as "this is true, or may it come to pass, or may it be fulfilled."

#### D. Words For The Rich (6:17-19)

6:17 **"Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty"** - The word "haughty" means to be high-minded, proud or arrogant. One who is rich might be tempted to think he is better than those who are poor, thinking more highly of himself than he ought to (Romans 12:3). He would be refusing to recognize that every good and perfect gift comes from God above (James 1:17). Such pride and arrogance is a sin which is terribly destructive to the soul of man (Proverbs 6:16-17; 16:18; 1 Peter 5:5-6).

**"nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy"** - The Scriptures often teach concerning the uncertainty of the riches (Luke 12:16-21; 15:11-13; Matthew 6:19-21; 19:23-24; 1 Timothy 6:9-10; Proverbs 23:5). Rather than trusting in uncertain riches, we should trust in the living God. In contrast to uncertainty of riches, almighty God is absolutely faithful and dependable (Deuteronomy 7:9).

6:18 **"Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share"** - This command to do good is one which applies to EACH Christian, not just the rich (Galatians 6:10; Titus 2:14; 3:1; Hebrews 13:16). However, in this context, the command to do "good" is directed to those who are rich in this world's goods.

This special warning to the rich was probably given because they might be tempted to use their riches solely for SELFISH purposes (James 5:1-3; Luke 16:19-25; 12:16-21). One impressive thing about the early Christians was their willingness to share with others (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35). The

fact is that whatever material possessions we have ultimately belong to the Lord, not us (Psalms 24:1; 50:10).

6:19 **"storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life"** - Being rich in good works and willing to share will make a good preparation for the judgment day. Indeed, this MUST be done so "that they may lay hold on eternal life." In other words, those who are rich must do the things mentioned in verses 17 and 18 if they hope to spend eternity in Heaven. Therefore, in spite of the obvious spiritual dangers of being rich (1 Timothy 6:9-10), it is still possible for a rich person to go to Heaven. Money can be used to for good in the Lord's Kingdom (Matthew 6:19-21).

#### VIII. Conclusion (6:20-21)

6:20 **"Guard what was committed to your trust"** - Like Paul, that which had been entrusted to Timothy was the glorious gospel (1 Timothy 1:11). Every gospel preacher is charged with the heavy responsibility of guarding the gospel to maintain its purity and this includes the need to wage the good spiritual warfare against false teachers, including withdrawing from them (1 Timothy 1:18-20; 6:3-5).

**"avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—"** - The words translated, "profane and vain babblings" mean common, empty talk which is of no value to anyone. Therefore, Timothy was to avoid such common, empty talk (1 Timothy 1:4; 4:7).

In addition, "contradictions" are to be avoided. That is, avoid any teaching/preaching which contradicts the glorious gospel of Christ (1 Timothy 1:3). The source of such empty, useless talk and contradictions is that which is, "falsely called knowledge." That is, people who falsely claim to have superior knowledge which others do not have. This was a problem in the first century with a group known as Gnostics, whose teaching is known as Gnosticism.

The Gnostics taught there was certain secret knowledge which only a few people possessed. And they taught the only way to receive salvation was to obtain that secret knowledge from them. Of course, this teaching directly contradicts God's word which tells us that He wants ALL to be saved through the

knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). The truth may be learned by continuing in the word of Christ, NOT through some secret knowledge held by a few men (John 8:31-32). That is why God referred to such systems as Gnosticism as, "falsely called knowledge." [For additional information concerning Gnosticism please see the appendices - GNOSTICISM.]

Today, the problem of "falsely called knowledge" is still with us in forms such as:

1. "Intellectuals" who claim that God is dead.
2. Scientists who teach evolution.
3. Philosophers who teach the religion of humanism.
4. Denominational religious leaders who teach the doctrines of men.

6:21

**"by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith" -**

That is, they had fallen away from Christianity (1 Timothy 1:6-7, 18-19; 4:1-3).

**"Grace be with you" -** This was also the way the apostle Paul began this epistle (1 Timothy 1:2).

**"Amen" -** The word "Amen" started as a Hebrew word (Numbers 5:22), which was transliterated into Greek and then eventually into English. The word comes from a Hebrew root word which means "to build up or support; to be firm or faithful, to trust or believe; to be true or certain." It is also used as an adverb at the beginning of a speech to mean "surely, of a truth, truly" (Matthew 5:18; Mark 3:28; John 3:3). At the conclusion of a sentence it is used to mean "so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled." When the word is used as an adjective it means "firm or true." Some dictionaries claim that when "Amen" is used at the end of a prayer it means approval of what is being said. However, our approval does not make it true. It is more correct to think of it as "this is true, or may it come to pass, or may it be fulfilled."

**FINIS**

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## AN HISTORICAL PROBLEM

Now admittedly, the three epistles do constitute a historical problem. To illustrate, when did Paul and Timothy make that special trip to Ephesus? When did Paul and Luke teach and preach on the island of Crete? Was Paul put to death at the end of his two year imprisonment in Rome, as many scholars hold? If so, can the visit of Paul and Timothy to Ephesus and the visit of Paul and Titus to Crete be fitted into Luke's itinerary of Paul's travels and works? All who have tried to fit Paul's visits to Ephesus and Crete into Luke's itinerary have failed and theologians with a mind-set that Paul was put to death at the end of his two-year imprisonment at Rome have sought out other explanations for the existence of Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus. Their primary conclusions have been that either those epistles are fragments of materials which Paul left with an associate or that they are outright pseudonymous writings.

Some brethren have not given this problem a thought; others contend that Paul was put to death at the end of his two year imprisonment in Rome; and others (hopefully the majority) have given serious study to the question and have concluded that Paul was necessarily released from his two year imprisonment and that he continued his ministry for some five to six years longer during which time he visited Philippi, Ephesus and the island of Crete, and also made his long purposed journey to Spain.

Luke closed his Acts of the Apostles in the following words: "And he (Paul) abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and none forbidding him" (Acts 28:30-31). In this conclusion to his Acts of the Apostles, Luke did not say that at the end of the two year imprisonment Paul was put to death, nor did he imply it. In fact the necessary implication is that Paul had been set free.

When Paul had been in Rome for approximately a year (A.D. 60), he had an occasion to write Philemon, a longtime acquaintance, relative to Onesimus, Philemon's runaway slave. In closing his letter to Philemon, Paul wrote: "But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you" (Phile 22). The point to be stressed is that Paul expected an early release from prison. A year later (A.D. 61), he wrote the Philippians relative to the possible outcome of his approaching trial before Nero as follows: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if to live in the flesh, – if this shall bring fruit from my work, then what I shall choose, I know not ... and having this confidence, I know that I shall abide, yea, and abide with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith ... But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly ... him I hope to send forthwith, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me: but I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall come shortly" (Phil 1:21-25; 2:23).

The fact is that Paul's case was before the court. He felt reasonably certain that he would be released, but perhaps not as certain as a year ago when he wrote Philemon. He seems to have been much more guarded in his expectation. Some have reasoned

that the difference lay in the fact that Nero had in the meanwhile married Poppea who used their influence with Nero in behalf of the Jews. Josephus described Poppea as a religious woman and that she had requested favors on behalf of the Jews.

According to Josephus, Poppea became a proselyte to Judaism. One historical fact known is that she exerted her influence over Nero relative to the wall which the Jews built to intercept Agrippa's view of the temple. While Josephus referred to Poppea as a religious woman, the case is that she induced Herod, her paramour, to divorce his young wife, Octavia, and marry her. Later she demanded of Nero that he cause his mother, Agrippina, to be "accidentally" killed. She also demanded the death of her rival, Octavia, and gloated when she received the head of her victim, which had been forwarded from Pandataria to her at Rome.

Probably the marriage of Nero to Poppea had nothing to do with Paul's caution relative to whether or not he would in reality be released. The fact remains, however, that through Poppea the Jews could wield a stronger position against Paul, their considered enemy.

Anyway, the fact remains that Paul still anticipated that he would be released and he promised that upon his release he would pay the Philippians an immediate visit. Thus his promise was out to visit in the area of Ephesus where Philemon dwelt and in Philippi with a church that had contributed to his financial support from its very beginning. Paul's first epistle to Timothy shows beyond reasonable doubt that Paul had been released from his Roman imprisonment; that he did fulfill his promise to visit Philippi; and that he also fulfilled his promise to visit Philemon, for he (Philemon) lived fewer than a hundred miles from Ephesus.

Someone is bound to ask: "Is there external evidence that bears on the question of Paul's release, or non-release from prison, and if so, what does the evidence show, and how relevant is it?" There is external evidence!

To illustrate, one source of external evidence is from the writing of Clement of Rome. Clement (A.D. 30-100) wrote the Corinthians, and the salutation reads as follows: "The Church of God which sojourns at Rome to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth, to them that are called and sanctified by the will of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, from Almighty God through Jesus Christ, be multiplied." In this epistle, written about A.D. 97, Clement admonished: "Let us set before our eyes the illustrious apostles. Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two, but numerous labours; and when he had at length suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to him. Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of

patience.” Stress should be placed upon the fact that Clement said that Paul came unto “the extreme limit of the west,” and after his having done so, he suffered martyrdom. Under no circumstances could Rome be counted the extreme west. The clear and unmistakable implication is that Paul was released from his Roman imprisonment, and in turn, that he completed his long avowed purpose to preach the gospel in Spain.

A second source of external evidence is the Muratorian Fragment. This fragment or canon was discovered by L.A. Muratori (A.D. 1672-1750) in the Ambrosian Library and published by him in A.D. 1740. It was written in Latin and consists of eighty-five lines. Scholars agree that the original form, of which the Muratorian fragment is a copy, was written about A.D. 180-190. That fragment reads: “Luke compiled for ‘most excellent Theophilus’ what things were done in detail in his presence, as he plainly shows by omitting both the death of Peter and also the departure of Paul from the city, when he departed from Spain.” Note should be taken of the fact that his Muratorian fragment explicitly states that Paul left for Spain.

A third source of external evidence is from the historian Eusebius. His life dates about A.D. 260-340. He wrote as follows: “Festus was sent by Nero to be Felix’s successor. Under him, Paul, having made his defense, was sent bound to Rome. Aristarchus was with him, whom he also somewhere in his epistles quite naturally calls his fellow prisoner. And Luke, who wrote the Acts of the Apostles, brought his history to a close at this point, after stating that Paul spent two years at Rome as a prisoner at large and preached the word of God without restraint. Then after he made his defense it is said that the apostle was sent again upon the ministry of preaching and that upon coming to the same city a second time he suffered martyrdom. In this imprisonment he wrote his second epistle to Timothy, in which he mentions his first defense and his impending death.” As should be observed, this external evidence is independent. There is no attempt by the author to have it agree with other external evidence, but on the other hand it is in complete agreement with the prior external evidence already submitted.

A fourth source of external evidence is from the historian Jerome. He wrote from Bethlehem in A.D. 492. In his preface he states that he had no predecessor in his work, but he very properly acknowledged his indebtedness to the church history written by Eusebius. Concerning the apostle Paul, he wrote: “And because a full account of his (Paul’s) life is given in the Acts of the Apostles, I only say this, that the twenty-fifth year after our Lord’s passion, that is the second of Nero, at the time when Festus Procurator of Judea succeeded Felix, he was sent bound to Rome, and remaining for two years in free custody, disputed daily with the Jews concerning the advent of Christ. It ought to be said that at the first defense, the power of Nero having not been confirmed, nor his wickedness broken forth to such a degree as the historians relate concerning him, Paul was dismissed by Nero, that the gospel of Christ might be preached also in the west. As he himself writes in the second epistle to Timothy at the time he was about to be put to death dictating his epistle as he did while in chains; ‘at my first defense no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account.’” This external evidence is in harmony with the other three sources as quoted. The case is that Paul’s writings

together with external history make certain the fact that he was released from his imprisonment at Rome, and that “he preached also in the west,” or Spain. Thus by both internal and external evidence—Paul’s release, his visit to Philippi and Ephesus, his visit to the Island of Crete, and his visit to Spain—all of these are confirmed. Paul’s second imprisonment and his ultimate death at the hands of Nero are also confirmed.

The external evidence as set forth, especially by Eusebius and Jerome, indicates that Paul was put to death just prior to Nero’s death. Nero’s death occurred on June 8, A.D. 68. Luke closed his Acts of Apostles at the end of Paul’s two whole years of Roman imprisonment, or A.D. 62, and certainly not later than A.D. 63. Now, from A.D. 62 to A.D. 67 or 68 would leave a minimum of five to six years for Paul to make his promised visits and to preach the gospel in Crete and in Spain as well.

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*The Epistles of I and II Timothy, Titus*  
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## Women - Pastors and Preachers

In our world today, women are increasingly taking the roles of preachers and pastors, but is this the work of God? The question cannot be answered by human traditions, emotions, or opinions. The Bible is the inspired Word of God which answers every religious question so that we may be “thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

### The Preacher's Work

First, the Bible defines each work. A preacher publicly proclaims the gospel of Jesus Christ. A preacher is an evangelists or minister of the gospel and here is his work:

- Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.
- But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry (see 2 Timothy 4:1-5).

Paul was an Apostle and “a preacher” especially dedicated to teaching the Gentiles (1 Timothy 2:7). An evangelist may travel from place to place at times; he also may remain with the same church for several years, teaching “publicly” and “house to house” (Acts 20:20, 31).

### The Pastor's Work

The pastor's work is entirely different. A pastor is a shepherd of God's people viewed as sheep. He is also called an elder because of his spiritual maturity and a bishop because he oversees the local church. Pastor (or shepherd), elder (or presbyter), and bishop (or overseer) refer to the same person doing the same work (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7).

This work involves overseeing and managing all the affairs of a local church:

- Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28).
- Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind (1 Peter 5:2).

The unique work of a pastor is not publicly proclaiming the gospel as a preacher. False religions confuse the roles of pastor and preacher. Each local church must have a plurality of pastors, never a one-man pastor (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).

### Women Too?

God's Word teaches men, not women, are to serve as pastors in a local church and as public preachers of the gospel. The New Testament law of Christ clearly forbids women from taking the roles of public leaders in the church. The apostle Paul stated, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Timothy 2:11-12).

Women are not to preach in assemblies with men present or in any other way to exercise places of authority over men. A pastor must be a male: “the husband of one

wife . . . one that ruleth well his own house" (1 Timothy 3:1-7). No woman can obey God's Word as a public preacher or as one of the pastors in a local church.

Those who believe the Bible is inspired of God recognize the teaching of the Bible is God's word for all of us. What the Scriptures say about women's role must be taken just as seriously as what the Scriptures teach about redemption. This subject is NOT about the value or equality of women, but it is about different roles. Many women are more intelligent than some men. Many are more devoted to the Lord than some men. The Bible does not teach that women are inferior to men.

The question is not necessarily "can women teach" but rather "in what capacity or setting can women teach?" The teaching prohibited by women in 1 Timothy 2:12 is teaching which would "usurp" authority from the man. Women are permitted to teach women as well as children. However, women are not permitted to teach in such a way which dominates over or takes authority from a man. It is for that reason, as shown forth in the Bible, that women cannot occupy the role of a preacher or pastor. Such is contrary to God's plan and the roles which he has given for women and men.

## Three Different Greek Words Used For The Same Office

1. The Greek word translated “bishop” (episkopos) is one of three different Greek words which are used to refer to the same office. The word episkopos is translated “bishop” in this passage and “overseer” in verses like Acts 20:28. Thus, the terms “bishop” and “overseer” are used interchangeably. According to J. H. Thayer, this word means, “an overseer, a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any guardian or superintendent.” Thus, according to the meaning of this word, we see that the bishops in a local congregation have AUTHORITY from God to superintend, oversee and ensure that God’s work in that congregation is done properly (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7, 17). Obviously, they have no authority from God to create laws. That is true because God’s word is our law and we must not add to or take away from it (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19). However, bishops have the God-given authority and responsibility to ensure that God’s word is taught and implemented properly in the local congregation where they serve (cf. Titus 1:9-14).
2. The second Greek word used to refer to this office is presbuteros. This word is translated “elder” in passages like Titus 1:5 and “presbytery” in 1 Timothy 4:14. This word refers to the age and spiritual maturity of spiritual experience of the men who serve as elders. It is critically important that we understand that the terms bishop, overseer, elder and presbyter refer to THE SAME OFFICE! To see a clear example of that, please turn with me to Titus 1:5-7. Thus, the term bishop (overseer) is used to refer to the elders.
3. The third Greek word used to refer to this office is poimen. As we saw in our study of the background material for this course, this word is translated pastor and shepherd. We also learned that the terms “pastor” and “shepherd” refer to the elders of each local congregation of the Lord’s church. We noted that these terms show that the elders are God’s shepherds who tend (i.e., take care of, guard, feed, etc.) the spiritual flock of God which is His church. But we just learned from our study of Titus 1:5-7 that the term “bishop” (overseer) ALSO refers to the elders of the local congregation. Thus, the terms pastor, shepherd, bishop and overseer ALL refer to the ELDERS (presbyters). Therefore, it is clear that an elder is a presbyter, a bishop, an overseer, a pastor and a shepherd. These are just different descriptive terms which God used to refer to the same office. One of the clearest ways to see that this is the proper understanding is to study 1 Peter 5:1-2.

- Charlie DiPalma

## Arguments Used For Social Drinking

The use of alcoholic beverages has been popular for so long, few people stop to consider whether the Bible actually supports its use or not. Let us look at each example given above to see if it really supports moderate or social drinking.

### **Jesus turned water into wine.**

*"On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it." Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast." And they took it. When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!" This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him." (John 2:1-11)*

The Greek word being used for the word "wine" is *oinos*, a generic word that applies to any beverage derived from grapes whether alcoholic or not. To understand whether alcohol was involved or not, we must examine the context.

A wedding feast was in progress and part way through the celebration, the wine that was purchased had run out. Weddings were big things in ancient days. A wedding feast lasted about a week and to run out of provisions before the end would have been an embarrassment to the new couple and their families. Mary asked Jesus to handle the problem. Jesus had six waterpots filled. These held twenty to thirty gallons a piece, which means when the water was changed to wine, Jesus had made between 120 and 180 gallons of wine. If this wine was alcoholic, then there was more than sufficient quantities available to get the guests well drunk -- especially when you consider that everyone had drunk the original supplies. Yet we know that the Bible condemns drunkenness, such as in Romans 13:13 or I Corinthians

6:9-10. Since Jesus did not sin, we know He would not have been the cause of other men's sins (Romans 1:32).

Some point out that the governor of the feast tasted Jesus' wine and declared it to be good -- better than the wine served earlier. The problem with the argument is that one must assume that the higher the alcoholic content of the wine, the better it tastes. Such is definitely not the case. In fact, in a society that lacked refrigerators in every home, fresh juice was prized over juice that had become vinegary or alcoholic from storage. The governor's declaration does not prove the wine contained alcohol.

Another argument is that the governor mentioned that everyone was already drunk. The Greek word *methuo* is used much like the English word "drunk." It literally means "filled to the full." It can be used to refer to a person who has had enough to drink to satisfy them; or if it is referring to an alcoholic beverage, it can refer to a person who has had too much to drink. If the guests at this wedding party were drunk with alcohol, then the governor of the feast had failed in his duties. You see the Jews considered drunkenness such a sin, they had people assigned the task of making sure it didn't happen. This is one of the reasons he was offered the first taste of the new wine brought in. If he thought it might cause drunkenness, he would have ordered it to be watered down. The governor's presence at this feast and his praise of Jesus's wine without an order to water it down is strong indication that the wine was not alcoholic.

Finally, this feast is taking place in Israel where the Old Testament laws were enforced. The Old Testament forbade the use of alcoholic beverages (see Old Testament Beverages for more details). Hence, we must conclude that Jesus did not serve alcoholic beverages.

The result is that the wedding feast does not prove that alcoholic beverages were in use. Instead, there are strong hints that non-alcoholic beverages were available and used.

**The disciples were accused of being drunk, so alcohol must have been in use.**

*"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all*

*amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs -- we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?" Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine." But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day." (Acts 2:1-15)*

The charge is that the apostles were full of new wine. The Greek word is *gluekos*, which literally means "sweet wine." It is a word that refers to unfermented juice. If you recall that the charge came from those mocking the disciples, it makes perfectly good sense. Luke records that there were people present from fifteen different regions of the world and as the apostles spoke, they were all hearing them speak in their native language. But even if I knew one of the languages, there were fourteen others being spoken that I could not comprehend. It would have sounded to those running to the scene as chaos. People couldn't understand what was going on. Others taunted and said, "Oh, they're just drunk on grape juice!" In other words, they are so unable to handle their liquor that grape juice makes them drunk. Peter adroitly uses this as an opening to his sermon. He notes that since it is only nine o'clock in the morning, it is too early for people to be drinking. Yes, even in those days, people who were looking to get drunk generally did it at night (I Thessalonians 5:7).

Once again, this verse does not prove alcoholic beverages were in use. In fact, the crowd was charging the apostles with getting drunk on grape juice. The charge was deliberately facetious because those making the charge were mocking the disciples.

**Older women were only told not to be given to much wine.**

*"But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things-- that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed." (Titus 2:1-5)*

The Greek phrase under consideration is *me oino pollo dedoulomenas*, which literally means not enslaved to much wine. In contrast they were to train the young women to be, among other things, discreet. The word translated "admonish" in the New King James Version, is from the Greek word *sophronizosin* that means "to train in self-control." The word "discreet" comes from the related Greek work *sophronas*, which means "self-controlled." The root word *sophron* literally means "safe mind." It refers to someone who is intellectually sound of mind or rational. The Jewish philosopher Philo defined the opposite of *sophrosune*, namely *aphrosune*, as a person who "inflamed by wine drowns the whole life in ceaseless and unending drunkenness." Paul is making the same point: older women are not to be drunkards enslaved by the overuse of wine but to teach younger women to live as they live -- sober.

In two passages, I Timothy 3:2 and Titus 2:2, the word "sober" (*sophron*) is joined in a list with the word "temperate" (*nephaleous*). As the commentator Adam Clarke explains, "He must be vigilant, *nephaleos*, from *ne*, not, and *pino*, to drink. Watchful; for as one who drinks is apt to sleep, so he who abstains from it is more likely to keep awake, and attend to his work and charge." Though temperate today refers to moderation, it wasn't all that long ago that temperate meant abstinence, as in the women's temperance movement which sought the banning of alcohol. Albert Barnes, another commentator says, "This word (*nephalios*) occurs only here [I Timothy 3:2] and in verse 11; Titus 2:2. It means, properly, sober, temperate, abstinent, especially in respect to wine; then, sober-minded, watchful, circumspect." Hence, elders and older men were charge with both being sober and not to drink. Now are you prepared to say that older men are not to drink, but older woman may drink so long as it is not in excess?

A very similar phrase is found in I Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7 where men seeking to be elders are told to be "not addicted to wine." Actually, the literal translation of the phrase *me paroinos* is "not near to wine." Of this phrase, the commentators Lee and Burn say, "The ancient *paroinos* was a man accustomed to attend drinking parties, and, as a consequence, to become intimately associated with strong drink." Albert Barnes said, "The Greek word (*paroinos*) occurs in the New Testament only here [I Timothy 3:3] and in Titus 1:7. It means, properly, by wine; that is, spoken of what takes place by or over wine, as revelry, drinking-songs, etc. Then it denotes, as it does here, one who sits by win; that is, who is in the habit of drinking it ... It means that one who is in the habit of drinking wine, or who is accustomed to sit with those who indulge in it, should not be admitted to the ministry. The way in which the apostle mentions the subject here would lead us fairly to suppose that he did not mean to commend its use in any sense; that he regarded it as

dangerous and that he would wish the ministers of religion to avoid it altogether."

To tell a group of elderly ladies not to be enslaved by the overuse of wine is not necessarily an implication that moderate use in social settings is allowed. Other words within the same context show that Paul has in mind that people should not be using alcohol casually. Could wine (*oinos*) be used? Most certainly! In its non-alcoholic form, it makes a pleasant drink. In its vinegar form, it is used in cooking. In its alcoholic form it can be used as medicine. None of these proper uses constitute an overuse of *oinos*. That is why you don't find a direct forbiddance of *oinos*. Its use had to be limited.

**Paul told Timothy to drink a little wine for his stomach's sake.**

*"No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities."* (1 Timothy 5:23)

Paul is not instructing Timothy to use *oinos* (wine) casually at dinner. Timothy had a stomach ailment and other problems for which Paul recommended that he use a little wine to treat the symptoms. Especially notice what is implied here. Timothy normally drank water exclusively. He was not in the habit of using any grape beverage at all. Paul had to encourage him to ease up on his total abstinence so as to use a little wine for its medicinal properties.

Wine was used in the New Testament days for medical purposes. For example, in the parable of the good Samaritan, *"So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him"* (Luke 10:34). However, medical uses do not imply acceptance of casual use. Valium can be used to relax injured muscles, but valium can be abused when casually taken. I knew a man dying of cancer who needed a mild pain killer. He was instructed by his doctor to drink a glass of sherry before bed time so he might sleep in more comfort. This is a proper use of alcoholic beverages.

Hence, once again we fail to find support for social drinking or moderate drinking. Instead we find that at least one Christian strongly avoided all use of wine and had to be encouraged to take some when he needed it for his medical condition.

# Did Paul Endorse Slavery?

by Eric Lyons, M.Min.

Thousands of years prior to the establishment of the Lord's Church, and long before Paul addressed the conduct of Christian slaves in the first century, various forms of slavery were commonplace. In fact, virtually every ancient civilization used slaves.<sup>1</sup> Slavery was prevalent enough in Babylon in the 18<sup>th</sup> century B.C. to be mentioned numerous times in the Code of Hammurabi.<sup>2</sup> The Egyptians enslaved hundreds of thousands of Israelites in the 16<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (Exodus 1; cf. Numbers 1:46). Historians estimate that, by the time Paul wrote his New Testament epistles in the first century A.D., five to eight million slaves resided within the Roman Empire,<sup>3</sup> including 15-25% of the total population of Italy.<sup>4</sup>

## “SLAVERY”—A BROAD TERM IN THE FIRST CENTURY

The English term “slave” is translated from the Greek word *doulos*. Some translations use the term “servant” (or “bondservant”), but *doulos* is best translated “slave” (especially since “in normal usage at the present time the two words [“slave” and “servant”—EL] are carefully distinguished”).<sup>5</sup>

So what is meant by “slave” or “slavery”? Americans often envision ancient slavery as the kind of oppressive bondage that was popular among many slave owners in North America in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, when millions of Africans were stolen from their homelands and shipped across the Atlantic. Certainly, some first-century slavery was similar, but often it was quite different. For example, slavery in New Testament times was not based on race. Many foreign soldiers and their families became slaves after being captured during times of war.<sup>6</sup> What's more, “[s]ome became slaves because they could not pay back the money they had borrowed. The government would also take people into slavery if they could not pay their taxes. There were also many cases of poor people selling their children as slaves to richer neighbours.”<sup>7</sup>

Consider the fact that the ancients would likely interpret certain modern American practices as forms of “slavery.” For example, hundreds of thousands of Americans who work, labor nearly one-third of every year **for the government**. That is, Americans are **forced** by the government **with the threat of fines and imprisonment** to pay over 100 days wages to local, state, and federal governments every year in the form of taxes. Many Americans hand over more money to the government each year than they spend on food, clothing, and shelter combined.<sup>8</sup> According to irs.gov, U.S. citizens who fail to pay government-mandated taxes can be prosecuted and imprisoned for up to five years. And what about the military draft—“the practice of **ordering people by law to serve** in the armed

forces”?<sup>9</sup> To this day, all 18-25-year-old males in the U.S. are required to register with the Selective Service System in case of “a crisis requiring a draft”<sup>10</sup>—a draft in which thousands or millions of men would be forced to go to war, and possibly die for their country, whether they wanted to or not.

Please understand, I am not suggesting that we should defraud the government, or that we should refuse to submit to its authority if the draft is reinstated. I am simply suggesting that “slavery” was broadly defined in the first century. When people ask questions such as “Did Paul endorse slavery?” we must understand that there were various kinds of slavery in the first century, including some forms that resemble certain practices today which may be generally accepted and morally justified.

### DEFINE “ENDORSE”

Did Paul “endorse” slavery? The word “endorse” means “to publicly or officially say that you support or approve of (someone or something).”<sup>11</sup> To endorse is to advocate or champion an idea, a thing, or a person. Did Paul “endorse” slavery? Did he champion it or publicly promote it as one advocates a particular product or political candidate? No, at least not the kind of slavery most people think of when they hear the term.

In truth, Paul specifically condemned “kidnappers” (*andrapodistais*) or “menstealers” (KJV) as lawless and insubordinate individuals who practice that which is “contrary to sound doctrine” (1 Timothy 1:10). Danker, et al. defines this kidnapper as a “slave-dealer.”<sup>12</sup> Far from endorsing such activity, Paul groups these men-stealing, slave traders with murderers, liars, and other ungodly sinners (1 Timothy 1:9-10).

Yet, five chapters later Paul wrote: “Let as many bondservants [*doulos*, slaves] as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed. And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things” (1 Timothy 6:1-2). What did Paul instruct Timothy to teach the various Christian slaves in the first century? To respect, honor, and even serve their masters (i.e., to set a good example of Christianity before them).

### PAUL ENDORSED GODLY SUBMISSION, NOT SINFUL FORMS OF SLAVERY

Paul’s instruction for slaves to honor their masters is perfectly consistent with the rest of God’s Word regarding all Christians submitting to those in positions of authority. To the Christians living in the heart of the Roman Empire, Paul taught: “Let **every soul** be subject to the governing authorities.... Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor” (Romans 13:1,7; cf. Matthew 22:21).<sup>13</sup> Similarly, Peter wrote:

“Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors.... For this is the will of God.... Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king” (1 Peter 2:13-17). Was the Roman Empire corrupt in many ways? Certainly. Was a Christian’s submission to Rome a blanket endorsement of the Empire? Not at all. But Christians were (and are) to be humbly compliant.

God expects all Christians to have a spirit of submission. Children are to submit to their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3). Young people are to be submissive to older people (1 Peter 5:5). Wives are to submit to their husbands (1 Peter 3:1-2). Members of local churches are to submit to their overseeing elders who rule over them (Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28). Local shepherds are to submit fully to the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:1-4). In short, all Christians, including those in leadership positions, are to “be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble’” (1 Peter 5:5). And, yes, God expects His people to humbly “submit...to every authority instituted among men,” whether to kings or to slave masters (1 Peter 2:13,18, NIV).

## SUBMISSION FOR A HIGHER PURPOSE

God did not create the practice of slavery. Furthermore, Paul’s inspired instructions regarding a slave’s submission to his master were not given because God favors a master over his slave (Galatians 3:28), or because He simply wants some people to have harder lives than others. The specific purpose that Paul gave for Christian slaves submitting to their pagan masters was “so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed” (1 Timothy 6:1).

Imagine if Christian slave after slave in the first century became less submissive to their masters as they learned more about the equality of all mankind (Genesis 1:26-27). Consider how the reputation of Christianity would have been greatly tarnished in the eyes of the unbelieving world if Paul explicitly taught that all slaves should be set free. As William Barclay noted: “For the Church to have encouraged slaves to revolt and rebel and rise against their masters would have been fatal. It would simply have caused civil war, mass murder, and the complete discredit of the Church.”<sup>14</sup>

God, in His infinite wisdom, commands all men to do their best to make the most for the cause of Christ **in whatever situation** they find themselves. “Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it. For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord’s freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ’s slave” (1 Corinthians 7:21-23). Whether a person becomes a Christian while in slavery or in a terrible marriage, God wants His people to change from the inside out and have a positive spiritual impact on others. **Be obedient** to parents, husbands, governing officials, and yes, even slave owners. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works **and glorify your Father in**

**heaven**" (Matthew 5:16). Rather than giving people reasons to curse Christ and His doctrine, be obedient to all those in positions of authority "for the Lord's sake" (1 Peter 2:13). Be honorable at all times so that you may "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" and "by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Peter 2:15,12; cf. 3:1-2). In short, "humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter 2:6).

## TAKING PAUL'S TEACHING TO ITS LOGICAL CONCLUSION

Over time, with the spread of Christianity (cf. Acts 19:10,26; 21:20) and with increasing numbers of slave masters becoming Christians, the physical lives of many slaves would have improved dramatically. As slave owners with honest and good hearts learned (1) to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and (2) to love their neighbors (including their slaves) as themselves (Matthew 22:36-40), they would give up "threatening" (Ephesians 6:9). As Christian slave owners contemplated treating others how they want to be treated (Matthew 7:12), they would give their slaves "what is just and fair," knowing that they, too, had a Master in heaven (Colossians 4:1). As slave owners submitted to Christ, they would be transformed by the Gospel, learning to be "kindly affectionate" to everyone (Romans 12:2,10), including all those who served them. In short, far from endorsing sinful slavery, Paul's teachings, **taken to their logical conclusion**, would eventually lead truth-seeking masters and government officials to help bring an end to any kind of cruel, sinful captivity.<sup>15</sup>

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> "History of Slavery" (no date), *History World*, [www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ac41](http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ac41).

<sup>2</sup> "Code of Hammurabi, King of Babylon" (no date), [https://archive.org/stream/cu31924060109703/cu31924060109703\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/cu31924060109703/cu31924060109703_djvu.txt).

<sup>3</sup> Walter Scheidel (2007), "The Roman Slave Supply," p. 6, <https://www.princeton.edu/~pswpc/pdfs/scheidel/050704.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Scheidel, pp. 3-6.

<sup>5</sup> Frederick William Danker, William Arndt, and F.W. Gingrich (2000), *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago), p. 260.

<sup>6</sup> John Simkin (2014), "Slavery in the Roman Empire," *Spartacus Educational*, <http://spartacus-educational.com/ROMslaves.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> Simkin.

<sup>8</sup> Scott Greenberg (no date), *Tax Foundation*, <https://taxfoundation.org/tax-freedom-day-2016-april-24/>.

<sup>9</sup> “Conscription,” *Merriam-Webster.com*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conscription>, emp. added.

<sup>10</sup> “Who Must Register” (2008), Selective Service System, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090507213840/http://www.sss.gov/FSwho.htm>.

<sup>11</sup> “Endorse,” *Merriam-Webster.com*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/endorse>.

<sup>12</sup> Danker, et al., p. 76.

<sup>13</sup> All bold text in Scripture quotations has been added for emphasis.

<sup>14</sup> William Barclay (1956), *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (Philadelphia: Westminster), p. 141.

<sup>15</sup> For a more extensive response to questions regarding slavery, and especially slavery in the Old Testament, see Kyle Butt (2005), “Defending the Bible’s Position on Slavery,” *Reason & Revelation*, 25[6]:41-47, June, [https://www.apologeticspress.org/pub\\_rar/25\\_6/0506.pdf](https://www.apologeticspress.org/pub_rar/25_6/0506.pdf).

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