



# Carrying The Flame



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**1 Timothy**

INTEGRATED BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

## i

**How to get best value out of these studies...**

Welcome to a new series of New Testament studies in the book of **1 Timothy**.

**If you're using these Guides in a Small Group**, it is vital that you have done preparatory work *before* you get to your meeting. This will be of great benefit not only to you, but to the other members of your group.

**If you're doing these studies individually**, make sure you let someone know you are doing so, and arrange a time to meet with them when you've finished (or even before) to let them know how your life is being changed by God's Word.

If you're after good commentaries or resources to complement your looking into the bible, speak to your Small Group Leader or one of the staff, and we'll try to be as helpful as possible. Most people aren't going to spend lots of dollars on theological works, so we're constantly on the look out for good quality titles that will result in money well spent.

We trust you'll find the guides helpful, and we welcome any feedback you can give us as you use them.

Always surround your time looking into God's Word with **prayer**, asking God to change your heart and life so that you – with God's people – might become more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ.

8 Read 6:17-21 What attitude should rich people have to:  
Their riches:

The future:

Themselves:

9 Read v20-21. Why do you think Paul ends his letter this way?

*Conclusion:*

10 In what areas and under what conditions do you struggle with desiring wealth?

11 In Paul's final prayer "Grace be with you", the 'you' is plural, indicating that this letter would be read by the congregation even though it was addressed to Timothy. The task of establishing a church and entrusting the gospel to others is team work. Pray for the grace individually and corporately to do this task.



## The Route to All Evil

### 1 Timothy 6:3 – 21

#### *Starters:*

*Money can foster sin or further God's kingdom. It certainly can divide Christians, some believing poverty to be good and wealth- evil, while others are of the opinion that being rich is good and being poor is evil!*

- 1 Which do you think is better in this world?
- 2 What evidences of a love of money do you see among Christians today?
- 3 What are the links between false teaching and money? (6:3-5)
- 4 In contrast to using godliness as a means to financial gains, (v5) how might a person combine godliness with contentment to bring about great gain? (v6)
- 5 In what areas do you feel discontent?
- 6 What is the price people pay for their love of money? Read v 6-10 and compare Deut 8:10-14, Eccles: 5: 8-12.
- 7 Summarise Paul's antidote for Timothy to be tempted to use leadership to feather his own nest. (v11-16)

### *Overview*

I first studied 1 Timothy seriously in a bible study series entitled, “Letters to Reluctant Leaders”. At the time, I was both a relatively young man and a young Christian. I found no problem identifying with Timothy, listening through his ears to the elderly apostle’s instructions. I eagerly drank in the encouragements, prods and instructions to pursue godly leadership. But now I am mid-way through life and the situation has changed. I am no longer Timothy, but find myself increasingly in the position of the elder, not that I have grandiose notions of apostolic authority! In this current culture of eternal youthfulness, for many of us, it is hard to admit we are growing up and in fact growing old and this is equally true for the Christian life. As such our automatic response to reading 1 Timothy might be to ask the question, “Who is my Paul?” Maybe the challenge of this book for you is rather to ask the question “Who is my Timothy?” Maybe it is critical to ask both. I find that I am making that transition from Timothy to Paul as I feel something of the burden of the gospel reaching future generations. Who will be responsible to guard the gospel and pass it on? This is a great personal challenge to confront, as you study this book.

### *Major Themes Throughout The Series*

#### *The Gospel as Truth*

Paul has an overarching pre-occupation with the truth: faithfully guarded and handed on. Paul has an unabashed commitment to it, he is a teacher of it (2:7), the church is the pillar of it (3:15), false teachers have wandered from it and even oppose it (6:21). Truth is defined in 1 Timothy in a variety of ways, but ultimately it is God’s gracious acceptance and forgiveness. It is referred to as ‘the faith’ 1:19, ‘the truth’ 2:4, the deposit to be guarded 6:20, “sound or healthy teaching’ 6:3 and ‘our religion’ 4:7-8. Scattered throughout the letter are three trustworthy statements which encapsulate the truth. It is worth meditating on these – 1:15, 3:1, 4:9. Paul points out that the natural tendency is for such truth to be distorted and corrupted in the absence of repeated definition. This idea of ‘objective God-given truth’ is crucial for any culture overtaken by relative and subjective notions of truth. We live in a culture that conditions us to think that it is arrogant to claim there is some sort of

universal truth. If we are convinced that the gospel is truth for all people, at points we will clash with our culture and even with those within the church. Application: What is my attitude to truth?

### *Transmission of the Truth*

There are four players we are introduced to in the letter. Four characters, if you like, that we become familiar with: Paul and the apostles, Timothy-his representative, the elders he will appoint, and the false teachers within the Ephesian church. The way these players interplay can be best summarized in the following diagram based on 2 Timothy 2: 2.

PAUL (apostolic instruction) → TIMOTHY (teach) → ELDERS (teach others).

This idea of faithful transmission and entrusting to reliable people of the gospel is the priority of Paul in this letter. In contrast to many of Paul's letters addressed to churches, 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus are addressed to individuals and yet they are still designed for the church, in that the Christian community at Ephesus 'overhear' what Paul wants Timothy to do at Ephesus. Paul's usual strategy for dealing with difficulties in the early church was firstly to visit, secondly to send a trusted delegate and thirdly to send a letter. In 1 Timothy, we see an overlapping mixture of the second and third strategies. Paul sends this letter to his trusted delegate who is in damage control in the Ephesus church and Paul wants the church to know Timothy is there in his place. He also wants Timothy to successfully carry the flame of the gospel in that place and in turn, search out suitable people who would successfully transmit the gospel to others through their teaching. This goal can be summarized in Paul's instruction to Timothy to 'guard what has been entrusted to his care'. 6:20 Application: Am I concerned with the transmission of the gospel?

### *Leadership & Truth*

Both 1 and 2 Timothy have been used extensively in the compilation of the Anglican prayer book services for the ordination of its leaders. It is a book that tells us a great deal about leaders... about Paul, about Timothy and about the sort of people Timothy should appoint as leaders. If truth is to be successfully transmitted intact, then a critical factor is the selection of godly leaders.

Timothy was a much younger colleague of Paul's who had become a traveling companion on his missionary journeys. Paul first met him in Lystra, (Acts 13: 49 ff) and Paul takes Timothy on recommendation of local believers ( Acts 16:2). Timothy's previous assignments include Thessalonika, Corinth and Phillipi. His final assignment was to be left in charge of the church of Ephesus to stop false teaching that was unraveling all the good work done amongst

- 6 Honour and respect flow on to material provision for both widows (v3) and overseers (v17). How might this principle translate to the church today?
- 7 In v 18 Paul quotes an obscure OT law and combines it with Jesus' instruction before sending the seventy on mission. (Cp Deut 25:4 & Luke 10:7) What is the logic behind this quote?
- 8 As you read the charge to Timothy in v21-25, which part challenges you the most and why?
- 9 How should slaves view their masters in 6:1-2? Why?

### *Conclusion:*

- 10 If leaders get their reward in heaven, why does Paul still encourage the church to honour them now?
- 11 When do you find it difficult to honour leaders?
- 12 Do you need to change the way you treat anyone in your church? Ie: the needy, a leader, your boss?

## 6

**Giving Due Honour****1 Timothy 5:3 – 6:2***Starters:*

*Some would say that the church should preach the gospel and not get distracted by social programs. Others say it is our biblical responsibility to care for the needy. Paul had to deal with social welfare issues in the early church and takes up three particular groupings: widows, elders and slaves, and discusses the responsibilities to each.*

- 1 Do some background reading. What was it like to be a widow in Biblical times?
 

Acts 6:1-4	Luke 18:1-8
James 1:27	Psalm 68:5
Deuteronomy 10:18	Ruth
  
- 2 According to v 5-10, what defines a true widow?
  
- 3 How is this church doing at taking care of its needy members? What specific things might you (personally) and you (as a home group) do to help?
  
- 4 Verse 8 tells us that it is a fundamental Christian duty to provide for our relatives. Discuss various strategies for providing for one's relatives. Eg: a life insurance policy.
  
- 5 Why don't younger widows qualify for the needy register, v11-15? What sort of principle is Paul setting up here for those who make the decisions about where church resources are directed?

God's people there. The incredible friendship enjoyed between Paul and Timothy, forged in gospel work, is best summarized in Paul's words to the church in Phillip: "I have no-one like him". And yet, we also find out in this letter that Timothy was young and faced some difficulty in holding respect, he was prone to sickness and seemed to lack assertiveness. The sobering question to ask is this: "Knowing all these weaknesses: would we have used Timothy in leadership?" This letter reminds us that despite the rigorous criteria given by Paul to select leaders for Ephesus, leaders still have problems from within- including personality, ability and sickness and from without- in dealing with other influential people in a church. Leaders do not come 'problem free' and this is a good check and balance for the sort of people we consider for leadership in God's church.

Application: Am I investing in the right people for the gospel?

*Truth Lived Out In Life*

The greatest homage we can pay to truth is to use it. Paul is greatly concerned that truth is lived out in the lives of God's people and in particular amongst its leaders. Hence some of the issues raised relate to prayer, to gathering together as a church and the roles of men & women, to the way leaders conduct their home-life, how to deal with various sub-groups within God's community and our attitude to material possessions. One of the great dangers of the false teachers emerging within the church, indeed as Paul himself predicted ( Acts 20:30) is that teaching distorted truth will lead to distorted lives. As Paul outlines to Timothy the sort of people he is to select for leadership he is also providing a yardstick for the church to measure against the life of Timothy. If leaders don't walk the talk, in the end, the talk is powerless.

Application: Has the truth found its way into my behaviour?

## 1

**The Entire Letter****1 Timothy***Starters:*

- 1 Try and read through the letter in one sitting.
- 2 What is the mood or tone of the letter?
- 3 There are four identifiable groups which interplay throughout the fabric of the letter. They are:
  1. Paul (representing the apostles' authority)
  2. Timothy (the delegate left in Ephesus)
  3. Leaders in Ephesus (whom Timothy is charged to appoint)
  4. False teachers (who have arisen from within the ranks of the church there)

Try to summarise in a paragraph what each group does.
- 4 Over the years there has been some controversy as to whether this title 'pastoral epistle' is a good summary of the content of the letter. The argument for this, is that they are focused almost exclusively on church organisation and contain little doctrine. However it is possible to build up a picture of the gospel through this letter. Skim through 1 Timothy & try and do that.

*About Timothy:*

- 5 Timothy is left in charge of the church in Ephesus as Paul's delegate. Draw together a character resume of Timothy using the following NT references.  
1 Timothy 1:2, 4:12-14, 1 Corinthians 4:17, 16: 10-11,  
1 Thessalonians 3:1-3, Philippians 2: 19-24, Acts 16: 1-3, 2 Timothy 1:6

- 8 If we can train ourselves in godliness, in a parallel way to physical fitness, where might God's Word fit? Share with each other how you keep spiritually fit?
- 9 What are the things which could undermine Timothy's leadership in Ephesus according to 4:11-5:2. How does Paul's advice counter this?
- 10 If you are younger, according to v 12, how can you grow in your leadership and other people's estimation? How is the different to perfection?

*Conclusion:*

- 11 Over what points is your own leadership vulnerable?
- 12 What spiritual progress has occurred in your life over the past few months and possibly been observed by others?
- 13 Often we import onto a leader's role a whole range of expectations. How has this chapter helped you to define what is critical to leadership?

## 5

**How To Pick A Lemon****1 Timothy 4***Starters:*

- 1 Look closely at 4:1. The word 'abandon' means to apostatize and is used to describe Israel's unfaithfulness to God in the OT.
  
- 2 Discuss why people abandon their faith.
  
- 3 What criteria does Paul give for determining false teachers in v 1-5?
  
- 4 Why do you think gratitude to God is so important in fighting the sort of false teaching described in v 1-3?
  
- 5 Consider v6-10. What is the best defence to guard against false teaching?
  
- 6 What do you think is the content of 'godliness'?
  
- 7 What is trustworthy or reliable about the statement of v 9?

*About Ephesus:*

- 6 The city of Ephesus was a great commercial city of Asia Minor, a busy sea port that now is seven miles inland. It was a free Greek city with its own magistrates, judges and town clerks. The Olympics were held there as well as regular games. It had a huge theatre, mineral baths... it was a must-go destination for travellers. But its crowning glory was its worship temple to Artemis . One of the seven wonders of the world, it stood some distance from the town, with over 100 columns. Artemis was the fertility god and the Roman equivalent of this was called Dianna. From its many porches tradesman would sell small statuettes of Dianna and people visiting would buy a curio to take home to say they had visited Artemis headquarters. Now with more and more people becoming Christians, Artemis' popularity was taking a beating in the popularity stakes. Build up a profile of the church in Ephesus from a brief NT survey of the following passages:  
1 Timothy 1:6, Acts 19:10, 23-41, Acts 20:17-38, Revelation 2: 1-7

*Conclusion:*

- 7 From your first impressions of reading 1 Timothy what seems to be the chief aim of this letter?

## 2

**Those Entrusted Truths****1 Timothy 1**

*Truth is not a valued commodity today. For example, lying to prevent personal embarrassment or to avoid hurting someone's feelings comes naturally to most of us. Advertising regularly uses deception to sell products. The apostle Paul's overriding preoccupation throughout this letter was with the truth, that it was faithfully guarded and entrusted to those beyond his lifetime. We live in an age where truth has been relativised and deranged of its objectivity. This chapter makes a refreshing read as we see Paul's unambiguous commitment to truth.*

- 1 When is it difficult for you to practise or hold to God's truth?
- 2 What does Paul teach Timothy in this introduction v1-2?
- 3 Contrast the goals of false teaching & of true teaching, v3-7.
- 4 How does Paul relate the law to the gospel in these verses v8-10?
- 5 Why do you think it is so important to maintain sound doctrine and refute false teaching?
- 6 In what ways have false teachers in our own day wandered from the truth? Can you think of current examples of fruitless controversies?
- 7 Read 1 Timothy 1:12-17. Describe Paul before and after he became a believer.

- 6 If you can get a hold of an Australian Anglican Prayer Book, look up the ordination service and compare this with Paul's qualifications for leadership. Do they overlap at all?
- 7 In v14-16, Paul turns his attention from leaders to the church where they serve. How is the church described?
- 8 Summarise the purpose in Paul writing to Timothy. Verse 14-15.

***Conclusion:***

- 9 How might 1 Timothy 3 affect the selection of leaders for other Christian ministries. eg: Beach Missions, Sunday School, Youth Ministry.

**Finish this Bible study by praying for those charged to lead and appoint other leaders.**

## 4

**Picking the Right People****1 Timothy 3**

*It has been a difficult time to wear the label 'Anglican' in Adelaide in recent days. Unbelievers take notice and judge Christianity by the conduct of its leaders. In many ways a church's health and reputation largely depend on the integrity, faithfulness and teachings of its leaders. In this chapter, Paul turns his attention to that task.*

- 1 Read through the whole chapter and devise 4-5 questions which could be used as questionnaire to interview a potential church leader.
- 2 List in three columns the qualifications of elder, deacon (male) and deacon (female). Try and categorise these into character and abilities. You will notice that the focus rests on character, rather than specific duties. What advantage is this sort of slant, particularly when it comes to other areas of leadership?
- 3 Given the broader goals & themes of 1 Timothy, why is being 'able to teach' so critical for the elder?
- 4 What are the parallels between a person's family and God's church? In your opinion, how important is someone's marital status in church leadership?
- 5 If you are in leadership or considering it, which qualities do you need to cultivate or deepen and how?

- 8 Verse 15 is the first of five trustworthy sayings of the pastoral epistles. This is a concise summary of the gospel. What does it tell us about the gospel?
- 9 How was Paul an example of Christ's unlimited patience?
- 10 Read 1 Timothy 1:18-20. What is the good fight Paul urged Timothy to fight? (See also 6:12)

*Conclusion:*

- 11 How can a person increase their discernment between false and true teachings so they can follow the truth?

*Belief and behaviour, conviction and conscience are closely linked. This is because God's truth contains ethical demands. When people are determined to pursue a sinful course of action, often this will be preceded by a suppression or questioning of truth. As such, the voice of conscience will be also squashed, allowing sin to remain unconfessed and unforsaken, such a faith will not survive for long.*

- 12 Think through other aspects of the dynamic relationship between behaviour and truth.
- 13 In the light of what happened to Hymenaeus and Alexander, what specific steps can you take to keep from shipwrecking your faith in Christ?
- 14 As a general principle, whatever you spend most of your time thinking and talking about is your gospel. If this test were applied to your Christian life, what would people conclude is your gospel? Spend a few moments in prayer reflecting on how God has shown you mercy and the difference it has made to your life. Thank him for that.

## 3

## Praying Together

## 1 Timothy 2

*Starters:*

- 1 Read through v 1-7. What is so remarkable about Paul's instruction to pray for world rulers? Why is this so important?
- 2 Verse 2 tells us to pray 'for kings and all those in authority'. What would be the equivalent of these people in your country today?
- 3 Read v3/4. How do you reconcile God's desire that all people be saved with his election of some to salvation? How can we avoid both the extremes of elitism (only some will be saved) and universalism (everybody will be saved)?
- 4 How is the key idea of v5 connected to v4?
- 5 What steps can you take to broaden the scope of your prayers?
- 6 Read through v 8-15. How do you react to Paul's teaching on the role of women here?
- 7 What does it mean in v8 to pray with 'holy hands'? How is this explained in the rest of the verse?

- 8 What does it mean for a woman to dress with good deeds?
- 9 These verses been interpreted in a variety of ways and have caused numerous arguments about the roles of men and women in the church. One rule of interpretation is to determine universal principles and cultural expressions of them. Looking at v 8-15 from this perspective, try and complete the following chart.

Universal instruction	Then	Now
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v8

v9-10

v11-15

- 10 What attempts have been made to soften Paul's teaching in v11-12? How convincing do you find these approaches?
- 11 What positive thing are women commanded to do in v11?
- 12 How is submission expressed according to Paul in this passage? What reasons does he give for it?
- 13 If Paul was writing this letter to your gathering what might he say about the roles of men and women?