

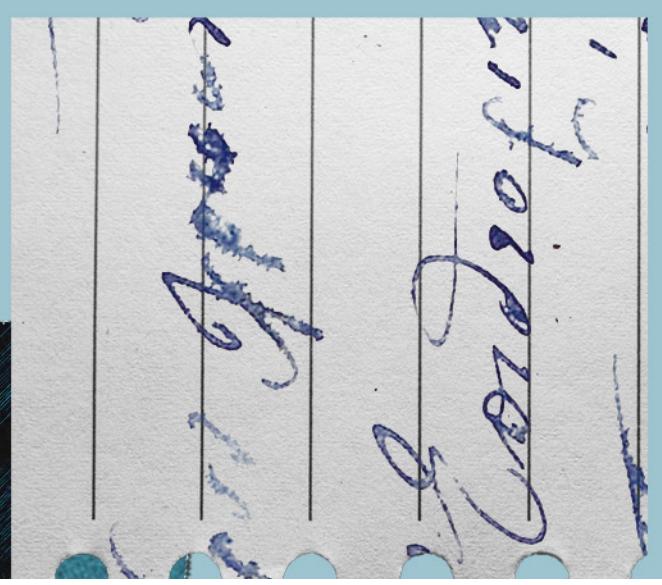
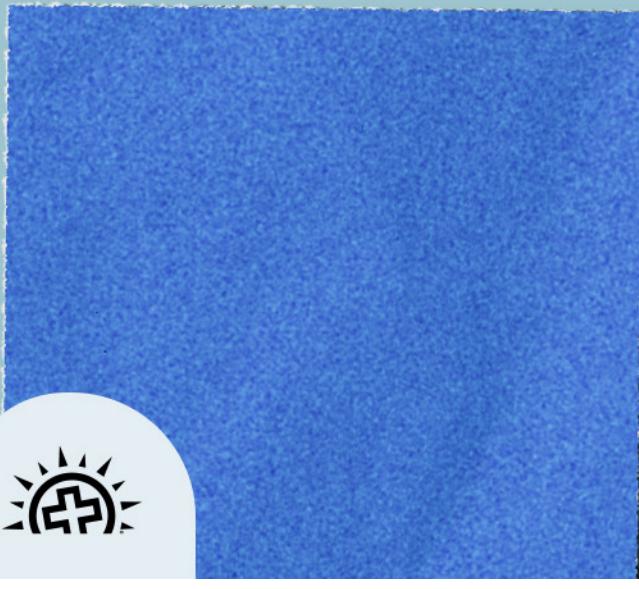


1&2

TIMOTHY

Building God's house

GROUP LEADER RESOURCES



OVERVIEW OF THE LETTERS TO TIMOTHY

*Guard the Gospel.
Live the Gospel.
Pass the Gospel On.*

The letters of 1 and 2 Timothy give us a rare and intimate look into the heart of discipleship, leadership, and spiritual endurance. These are not abstract theological essays written by a far-off scholar. They're deeply personal, pastoral letters written by the apostle Paul to a young pastor he loved, mentored, and trusted—to a friend and, as he calls him, “my true son in the faith” (1 Timothy 1:2 NIV).

As we walk through these letters verse by verse and chapter by chapter, it’s important to understand their context. Why did Paul write these letters? Who was Timothy, and why did Paul trust him with such a weighty responsibility? And how do these ancient words still speak so clearly into our lives and into the church today?

These are the questions we’ll explore together as we seek to gain a fuller picture of what God was doing then, and what He’s still doing now. So, let’s dive in.

A Brief Overview

The letters we now call 1 and 2 Timothy were written by the apostle Paul during the final years of his life. 1 Timothy was likely written between A.D. 63–65, after Paul’s release from his first Roman imprisonment, while he was traveling in the region of Macedonia. 2 Timothy was written a few years later, around A.D. 66–67, during Paul’s second imprisonment in Rome, shortly before his execution.

Together, these two letters form Paul’s final pastoral investment into the next generation of church leadership. While they’re often grouped with Titus as the “Pastoral Epistles,” the letters to Timothy stand out because of their deeply personal tone and emotional weight. These aren’t just ministry manuals; they’re letters written from a spiritual father to a beloved son in the faith.

Who Was Timothy?

Timothy was a young believer who came from a mixed background. His mother was a Jewish Christian and his father was Greek. He was introduced to the faith at an early age through the faithful instruction of his mother and grandmother. Timothy later joined Paul during his missionary journeys and quickly became one of Paul’s most trusted companions.

Paul referred to Timothy not simply as a coworker, but as “my true son in the faith.” Timothy traveled with Paul, suffered with Paul, and learned ministry under Paul’s guidance. Eventually, Paul entrusted him with leadership responsibility over the church in Ephesus . . . one of the most influential and spiritually dangerous cities in the Roman world.

Timothy was faithful, but he was also young, naturally timid, physically weak, and under constant pressure. These letters reveal Paul’s desire to strengthen Timothy’s courage, sharpen his convictions, and steady his calling.

Who Were the Ephesians?

Ephesus was one of the most powerful cities in the Roman Empire. It was a center of commerce, philosophy, politics, and pagan worship. The city was best known for the Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. This made Ephesus both religiously influential and morally corrupt.

The culture of Ephesus was saturated with idolatry, sexual immorality, superstition, and spiritual confusion. While the gospel had taken root there, false teachers soon began infiltrating the church. These teachers promoted myths, genealogies, legalism, speculative theology, and distorted interpretations of the law. Their influence produced pride, division, and moral compromise within the congregation.

It was into this environment that Timothy was sent to shepherd the church.

Why Did Paul Write the Letters to Timothy?

Paul wrote these letters because the gospel was under threat not just from external persecution, but also from internal corruption. False teachers were distorting the truth, believers were becoming confused, and leaders were being compromised. And because of this, Timothy was facing opposition, pressure, and discouragement. So, like a good (spiritual) father, Paul provided Timothy with loving exhortation to continue to fight the good fight.

In 1 Timothy, Paul writes to instruct Timothy on how the church should function, how leaders should live, how believers should behave, and how truth should be protected.

In 2 Timothy, Paul writes to prepare Timothy for a future in which faithfulness will be costly. He urges Timothy to stand firm, suffer well, guard the gospel, and pass it on to faithful people who will teach others.

Together, these letters show that ministry isn't about popularity or comfort, but about faithfulness.

Key Terms Found in the Letters to Timothy

As you read through these letters, here are several terms and ideas that appear frequently. Repetition in Scripture is never accidental; instead, it highlights what God wants us to notice.

- Sound doctrine
- Faith
- Conscience
- Truth
- Teaching
- Godliness
- Endurance
- Good works
- Suffering
- Perseverance
- Calling
- Grace
- Faithful

These repeated ideas reveal Paul's primary concern: that Timothy would remain anchored in truth and faithful in life.

Key Verses Found in the Letters to Timothy

1 TIMOTHY 1:5

The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

1 TIMOTHY 4:12

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

1 TIMOTHY 6:12

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

2 TIMOTHY 1:7

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

2 TIMOTHY 2:2

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

2 TIMOTHY 3:16–17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 TIMOTHY 4:7–8

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Key Themes Found in the Letters to Timothy

SOUND DOCTRINE

Paul repeatedly emphasizes that truth must be guarded. Doctrine is the foundation of healthy faith. When truth is compromised, everything else eventually collapses.

GODLY LIVING

Faith is never meant to be theoretical. Paul calls Timothy to live as an example in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. The credibility of the gospel is tied to the visible lives of believers.

LEADERSHIP AND CHARACTER

Paul provides clear qualifications for church leaders, emphasizing integrity, humility, and faithfulness. Leadership in God's church is about character before calling.

COURAGE AND PERSEVERANCE

Timothy is reminded that fear doesn't come from God. Ministry will involve suffering, opposition, and sacrifice. Faithfulness requires courage.

GENERATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

The gospel must be passed on. Paul calls Timothy to entrust the truth to faithful people who will also teach others. Christianity is always one generation away from extinction if it isn't intentionally transferred.

FINISHING WELL

2 Timothy centers on endurance. Paul shows Timothy what it looks like to finish the race with faith intact.

Note: All translation references are NIV.

Things to Look For

As you journey through these letters, notice how closely Timothy's challenges resemble the challenges of the modern church. False teaching, cultural pressure, leadership compromise, spiritual fear, and moral confusion are not new problems.

The wisdom found in these ancient letters is just as relevant today as it was in the first century. They remind us that faithfulness has always been costly—and always worth it.

WEEK 1

1 Timothy 1:1-5

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE:

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."

1 TIMOTHY 1:1-5 (NIV)

Do you remember some of the people you looked up to growing up? Maybe it was a coach, a teacher, your parents, an astronaut, an athlete . . . you fill in the blank. We've all allowed certain people to influence us with their lives and words. The voices we listen to matter! Timothy looked up to Paul because they had a mentorship relationship. At this time, in Ephesus, a group of leaders was influencing the church with bad theology. Paul's purpose in writing to Timothy was to remind him of how to identify and respond to this harmful teaching.

Paul encourages Timothy to be on guard against false teachings and to refute them for the sake of unity and obedience to the true gospel. The voices we listen to from those around us should be rooted in Scripture and the Holy Spirit, and in the same way, we should use our voices to share the truth in love! Paul said it himself in verse 5: the goal of diffusing controversies and false teachings is **love**. We should adopt the same attitude in our lives,

cultivating a pure heart and sincere faith that can guide us when we have conversations with people who might misunderstand or misapply Scripture.

Scripture

Read this week's Scripture in addition to these supporting Scriptures:

Titus 1:10-16; 3:3-11; Galatians 1:6-10; 1 Corinthians 13

Application Challenge

Take inventory of the voices that influence you, both in person and digitally. Evaluate their messages with Scripture and wise counsel. Decide what needs to change to have your mind influenced by better voices, and make it happen.

Group Discussion Guide

Pick your favorites to discuss with your group, family, or friends.

- Who was someone you looked up to growing up? What kind of influence did they have on your life?
- What marked the false teachers—what they focused on, what they taught, and what their teaching produced?
- How do you discern whether someone's voice or teaching is worth listening to?
- Paul mentions "myths and endless genealogies." What kinds of modern distractions or speculations do Christians tend to get caught up in today?
- "The goal of this command is love." What does it look like for correction or confrontation to actually be rooted in love rather than frustration, anger, or pride?
- What does this passage reveal about God's character—His truth, His love, or His desire for unity?
- How does this passage challenge you personally in your relationships, influence, or leadership?

WEEK 2

1 Timothy 1:6-18

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE:

"Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm. We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurors—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me. I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen. Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well."

1 TIMOTHY 1:6-18 (NIV)

Have you ever listened to someone speak with absolute confidence, only to realize they had no idea what they were talking about? The truth is, we see it all the time. We see it on TikTok, Instagram, and X, where people make claims that are often complete nonsense. We see it in the political realm during debates where candidates make outrageous claims that are quickly debunked by fact-checkers—sadly, we sometimes see it with fact-checkers being fact-checked themselves. And what's even more sad, we sometimes see it in the church.

In this passage, the apostle Paul tells Timothy that this was already happening in Ephesus. Some had drifted from the heart of the gospel and replaced it with speculation, arguments, and spiritual-sounding noise. They wanted influence without understanding, authority without obedience, and teaching without truth.

Paul reminds Timothy that God's law was never meant to make us feel superior or more spiritual than others. It was meant to expose sin and point us to grace. That's why Paul doesn't speak from a pedestal; he speaks from personal experience. He calls himself the worst of sinners and points to Jesus as the One who met him with mercy anyway. Grace didn't excuse Paul's past, but it transformed his future. And now Paul charges Timothy to hold tightly to both faith and a good conscience. When belief and obedience stay together, faith grows strong. But when conscience is ignored, and truth is bent, faith doesn't just weaken—it crashes. Paul's encouragement is clear: Guard the gospel, walk in humility, and fight the good fight with love.

Scripture

Read this week's Scripture in addition to these supporting Scriptures:
Romans 3:19–26; Galatians 1:6–10; 2 Timothy 2:14–18, 22–26; Jude 3–4

Application Challenge

Take time this week to honestly examine your conscience before God. Ask Him to reveal any areas where truth has been compromised, obedience has been delayed, or repentance is needed. Then take one clear step of obedience in response.

Group Discussion Guide

Pick your favorites to discuss with your group, family, or friends.

- What are some modern examples of “meaningless talk” or spiritual noise in Christian culture today?
- Why do you think Paul connects false teaching with a damaged conscience?
- How does Paul’s testimony shape the way we view grace, repentance, and transformation?
- What does it mean to hold both faith and a good conscience together?
- When correction is necessary, how can it be rooted in love rather than pride or frustration?
- What does this passage reveal about God’s patience, holiness, and desire for spiritual maturity?
- Where do you feel challenged to “fight the good fight” in your own life right now?

WEEK 3

1 Timothy 1:18–20

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE:

"Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well, holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme."

1 TIMOTHY 1:18–20 (NIV)

Have you ever needed someone to remind you of who you are when life gets hard? Maybe it was a coach who told you not to quit, a mentor who called out your potential, or a friend who spoke truth when you felt discouraged. Scripture shows us the words spoken over us—and the identity God gives us—matter deeply.

Paul does this for Timothy. He reminds him of the prophecies spoken over his life—the calling, gifting, and purpose God had already affirmed. Why? Because Timothy was in a battle. False teachers were spreading harmful doctrine, and the church needed a shepherd who wouldn't back down. Paul tells Timothy to fight well by holding tightly to two things: **faith** and a **good conscience**.

Not everyone did. Some abandoned them and “shipwrecked” their faith. This wasn’t about losing an argument—it was about losing direction, losing grounding, losing the truth. Paul calls Timothy to stand firm, stay anchored, and remember who God says he is. We’re called to the same. In a world filled with competing voices, doubts, and cultural pressure, God invites us to cling tightly to our faith, guard our conscience, and live from the identity He’s already spoken over us.

Scripture

Read this week's Scripture in addition to these supporting Scriptures:

2 Timothy 1:6–14; Jude 3–4, 20–23; Ephesians 6:10–18; Hebrews 10:32–39

Application Challenge

Identify one area where you've grown spiritually “drift-prone”—a habit, a relationship, or a pattern of thinking. Ask the Holy Spirit to realign your heart, rebuild conviction, and strengthen your conscience. Make one practical change this week to anchor yourself in faith.

Group Discussion Guide

Pick your favorites to discuss with your group, family, or friends.

- Who has spoken “identity” or encouragement over your life in a meaningful way? How did it shape you?
- What does Paul mean by “fighting the battle well”? What does that look like practically?
- Why do you think Paul emphasizes both “faith” and a “good conscience”?
- What does “shipwrecking the faith” look like in real life today? What warning can we take from this?
- How does recalling God’s calling or past faithfulness help strengthen us in difficult seasons?
- What does this passage reveal about God’s love, discipline, and commitment to His people?
- How’s God challenging you personally to guard your faith, your conscience, or your influences?

WEEK 4

1 Timothy 2

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE:

"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles. Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing. I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety."

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-15 (NIV)

As Paul continues writing to Timothy, he addresses many specific issues amongst the believers at Ephesus. To gain more context on the situation in Ephesus, read Acts 19 and observe the intensity of the division within and outside the church. In view of

this tension and the influence of false teachers, Paul begins his list of specific instructions surrounding worship, character, and behavior. Here's a synopsis of it:

- Pray for all people, including kings and those in authority, so they can live peacefully, for God desires all to be saved and to know the truth (1 Timothy 2:1-7).
- The men should pray with integrity, free from anger or controversy (1 Timothy 2:8).
- The women should avoid drawing attention to themselves with distracting or upscale clothing, which also takes the focus away from genuine prayer and worship (2 Timothy 2:9-10).
- Women should learn undisturbed and respectfully, which wasn't allowed at this time and in this culture and would've been a revolutionary idea (2 Timothy 2:11).

The final verses of this chapter are some of the most complex to translate and interpret in Greek. Here are two important factors to remember when reading these verses:

1. The Greek word used for "assume authority" is *authenteō*, and it's only used once in the entire Bible. Other translations of authority typically translate the word *exousia*, which occurs 102 times in the Bible. After researching how the word *authenteō* is used in other Greek texts around the same time, scholars agree that it more closely means "to domineer" or to exercise one's authority in an aggressive, abusive, and disrespectful way.
2. Ephesus was home to the Greek goddess Artemis, known as the protector of the city, the deliverer of women in childbirth, and the perfect image from heaven. Her temple was one of the seven wonders in the ancient world and was run entirely by female officials. Artemis

symbolized female superiority, yet the biblical creation account exposes this false narrative by depicting the fall as a result of Eve's deception and Adam's ignorance.

3. 1 Timothy 2:15 uses a singular Greek verb for the word "saved" and a plural Greek verb for the word "continue." This means the verse most likely reads as the ESV (emphasis added) translates it: "Yet **she will be saved** through childbearing—if **they continue** in faith and love and holiness, with self-control." (The NIV includes this in a subscript note.) Because punctuation wasn't used in the original Greek, this verse has been confusing to translate for years. Considering Paul's reference to the story of the fall, this verse seems to echo Genesis 3:15, which says that the woman's offspring will crush the serpent's head. This was the first glimpse of God's gospel plan, foreshadowing Jesus as the seed who will come from a woman to defeat Satan. In light of this, Paul's statement here that "**she will be saved**" through childbearing seems to refer to the promise given to Eve at the beginning, which then extends to all of "**they** [who] **continue** in faith and love and holiness, with self-control." This would've been an enormous source of hope for women at the time who were turning from Artemis to follow Jesus and could've been fearing or mourning the "benefits" of following her.

In summary, Paul's saying that following Jesus is better, for Jesus stands for everyone, both men and women, giving them both complete access to a relationship with Him and acting as their mighty deliverer! Paul wants Timothy to instruct the believers in Ephesus on proper, respectful, and God-honoring worship and behavior. The way they carry themselves and treat each other matters because it will either be obedient to God's Word and reflect Jesus well, or it will be the opposite. The church should be primarily focused on pointing others to King Jesus, walking with integrity, serving each

other, and treating others with the same love and honor that Jesus did!

SOURCES TO EXPLORE:

[StepBible: 1 Timothy 2](#)

[BibleStudyTools: Authenteo](#)

[Great is Artemis of the Ephesians: NT Wright Online](#)

[Got Questions: Who is Artemis?](#)

[Bible Project: 1 Timothy](#)

Scripture

Read this week's Scripture in addition to these supporting Scriptures:

1 Timothy 1; Acts 19; Genesis 3; Titus 2-3:7

Application Challenge

Take note of the type of character Paul's describing in all these instructions and counsel to Timothy. Take that list and write down some ideas about how you can cultivate that character in yourself.

Group Discussion Guide

Pick your favorites to discuss with your group, family, or friends.

- What stands out to you most about Paul's instructions in 1 Timothy 2. Why do you think they were essential for the church in Ephesus?
- How does knowing the background of Acts 19 and the worship of Artemis change the way you understand Paul's call for prayer, peace, and order?
- Why do you think Paul emphasizes prayer for all people, including leaders, even when they may be unjust or ungodly? How is that challenging today?
- When Paul refers back to Adam and Eve, what do you think he's trying to teach about responsibility, deception, and God's design for men and women?
- How does the hope found in Jesus—especially the promise of salvation in 1 Timothy 2:15—shape the way we live, worship, and treat one another today?

WEEK 5

1 Timothy 3

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE:

"Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus. Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. Beyond all question,

the mystery from which true godliness springs is great:

*He appeared in the flesh,
was vindicated by the Spirit,
was seen by angels,
was preached among the nations,
was believed on in the world,
was taken up in glory."*

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-16 (NIV)

Have you ever met someone whose inner life doesn't match up with their outer life? By appearances, they seem respectable and growing in godliness, but inside, they're a wreck. This chapter is all about Christian character, and specifically the inner life of Christian leaders. Paul focuses on who these leaders truly are and how their character matches their level of leadership in the church. I love how Paul ends this chapter: True godliness springs from Christ. If you read through the traits of these leaders in the church, they sound a lot like Christ. Paul's hope in this passage is to cast a vision for Christian leaders who live out the gospel in every area of their lives—in both their inner and outer lives.

The Bible identifies two primary leadership roles in the church: elders, who are servant leaders, and deacons, who are leading servants. Elders care for the spiritual needs of the church. Deacons care for the material needs of the church. These leaders in the church are to be the models of the church. This is why Hebrews 13:7 (NIV) calls us to "imitate their faith." I'm sure you've heard the saying, "You can't lead someone somewhere you've never been." Though these leaders aren't perfect, they're called to lead people to true discipleship because they themselves have been discipled and are being discipled.

There's a danger in prescriptive lists like these: for non elders and deacons to believe they're excused from these requirements. However, the Scriptures tell us that almost everything in 1 Timothy 3:2–7 is expected of every follower of Christ. In addition to teaching, these qualifications are intended by Christ for every member of the church. All of us are called to believe that Christ is King, to live a life above reproach, to be worthy of respect, to be temperate, to lead our households with kindness and grace, to not be controlled by substances, and to hold to our faith with a clear conscience—and much more. For Christians, all of life's behaviors flow from who we are on the inside.

Scripture

Read this week's Scripture in addition to these

supporting Scriptures:

Acts 20:27–31; Hebrews 13:7; Philippians 1:3–7

Application Challenge

Write down a list of ways you'd like to grow spiritually in 2026 and share them with a trusted friend. Invite them to keep you accountable and journey with you as you seek to build a life formed by Jesus.

Group Discussion Questions

Pick your favorites to discuss with your group, family, or friends.

- What words, phrases, or ideas stick out to you in this passage?
- Where do you feel the most significant gap between your inner life and your outer life right now?
- Which of the character traits described here feels most challenging for you in this season of life—and why?
- Paul assumes that leadership flows from who we are, not just what we do. How does that challenge the way you usually think about influence, parenting, marriage, work, or ministry?
- If almost all these traits are meant for every follower of Jesus—not just church leaders—what part of discipleship have you quietly outsourced to “professionals”?

WEEK 6

1 Timothy 4

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE:

"The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. That is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe. Command and teach these things. Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them,

because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."

1 TIMOTHY 4:1-16 (NIV)

Most of us don't wake up one day and decide to walk away from our faith. It usually happens slowly, quietly, almost unnoticeably. A little less time in the Word, a little less prayer, a little more compromise, a bit of comfort. Over time, what once felt vibrant begins to feel heavy, and what once mattered starts to drift to the margins.

That's the concern Paul raises with Timothy. The danger facing the church in Ephesus wasn't just obvious false teaching; it was subtle spiritual decay. Ideas that sounded disciplined and spiritual were actually hollow, distracting people from the life-giving truth of the gospel. Paul reminds Timothy that rigid rules or outward appearances don't measure real spiritual health, but by a life shaped by godliness. It's something that's actively trained, practiced, and lived out.

Paul's instruction here in chapter 4 is deeply practical. Just as physical strength requires intentional effort, spiritual strength requires consistent training. Timothy wasn't called to impress people with his age, authority, or personality. He was called to model a life that took faith seriously—to live it out in his words, conduct, love, and devotion to Scripture. Growth doesn't happen automatically. It happens through persistence, humility, and obedience.

This passage invites us to take an honest look at our own lives. Are we drifting or training? Coasting or growing? Paul's encouragement reminds us that following Jesus isn't passive; it's an active pursuit of godliness that impacts not only our own faith, but the faith of those watching us.

Scripture

Read this week's Scripture in addition to these supporting Scriptures:

Acts 20:28–31; Colossians 2:16–23; Hebrews 5:11–14;
James 1:22–25

Application Challenge:

Choose one intentional habit this week that will help you train in godliness. Set aside a specific time to be in Scripture, commit to prayer even when it feels inconvenient, or remove one distraction that's been hindering your spiritual growth. Then follow through consistently throughout the week, remembering that growth happens through practice, not just intention.

Group Discussion Guide

Pick your favorites to discuss with your group, family, or friends.

- Paul warns that some teachings appear spiritual but actually lead people away from Christ. What are some examples today of ideas or practices that sound godly but distract us from the gospel?
- Why do you think Paul emphasizes training in godliness rather than simply having good intentions or correct beliefs?
- Paul urges Timothy to lead by example in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. Which of those areas do you think most strongly influences others—and why?
- What's the difference between spiritual growth that comes from discipline and growth we expect to happen automatically?
- Paul tells Timothy not to neglect his gifting and calling. What might it look like for believers today to neglect, or faithfully steward, what God has entrusted to them?
- How does this passage challenge the idea that faith is private or only internal, rather than something lived out visibly?
- Where do you sense God calling you to greater perseverance or intentional growth in your walk with Him right now?

WEEK 7

1 Timothy 5:1–16

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE:

"Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.

The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. Give the people these instructions, so that no one may be open to blame. Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the Lord's people, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds. As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to. So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy

no opportunity for slander. Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan. If any woman who is a believer has widows in her care, she should continue to help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need."

1 TIMOTHY 5:1–16 (NIV)

Have you ever been in a community that felt like family—where people of every age were valued, honored, and cared for? Paul's instructions to Timothy paint a picture of what God designed the church to look like: a spiritual household marked by dignity, purity, compassion, and responsibility. Timothy was a young leader navigating complex relationships in his congregation. So Paul reminds him that leadership starts with treating people the way God sees them: older men like fathers, younger men like brothers, older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, with absolute purity. This kind of family-shaped love rewires our interactions, protects relationships, and builds trust.

Paul then focuses on vulnerable widows—those who had no family and placed all their hope in God. The church was called to step in with compassion, discernment, and practical support. At the same time, believers with family members in need were expected to care for them personally. In God's household, love's expressed through honor, financial responsibility, purity, and sacrifice. This passage reminds us that following Jesus means treating people with the dignity they carry as image bearers and letting our care for others reflect God's care for us.

Scripture

Read this week's Scripture in addition to these supporting Scriptures:

James 1:26–27; Acts 6:1–7; Ruth 1–2; Ephesians 4:1–3; Philippians 2:1–8

Application Challenge

Identify one person you can honor in a practical way this week—an elder, a single parent, a widow, a sibling in Christ, or someone who tends to be overlooked. Take a specific step to care for them—a visit, a meal, financial help, a note of encouragement, or an act of service.

Group Discussion Guide

Pick your favorites to discuss with your group, family, or friends.

- What healthy or unhealthy examples of “church as family” have you experienced?
- How does Paul’s instruction reshape the way we relate to older and younger believers?
- What stands out to you about the role of purity in relationships?
- How does this passage challenge cultural views of independence, self-focus, or relational distance?
- What does caring for widows or vulnerable people look like in modern church life?
- Why do you think Paul connects providing for family with demonstrating genuine faith?
- Where’s God inviting you to grow in honor, compassion, or responsibility within His family?

WEEK 8

1 Timothy 5:17–6:2

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE:

"The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For Scripture says, 'Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,' and 'The worker deserves his wages.' Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. But those elders who are sinning you are to reprove before everyone, so that the others may take warning. I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism. Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure. Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses. The sins of some are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them. In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not obvious cannot remain hidden forever. All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered. Those who have believing masters should not show them disrespect just because they are fellow believers. Instead, they should serve them even better because their masters are dear to them as fellow believers and are devoted to the welfare of their slaves."

1 TIMOTHY 5:17–6:2 (NIV)

In 1 Timothy 5, Paul speaks about caring for fellow Christians, whether young or old, men or women. He also gives instructions to the church about caring for and loving the widows in their community. For Paul, the gospel must be on full display in all of church life—not just in the sermons and worship songs, but in how the church community relates to one another and to the leaders, the elders of the church.

One of the themes of this section is about honoring leaders inside and outside the church. As Christians, we're to know how to lead and how to follow. Our perspective towards those in authority over us, whether in church or in our workplaces, should be shaped by the gospel of Jesus. For followers of Jesus, all of life is supposed to be shaped by the gospel of Jesus, including His life, ministry, death, and resurrection. We live in a fallen world filled with both kinds of leaders: those who are worthy of respect and those who are harsh and selfish. Regardless, as Christians, we're called to put the gospel on full display, showing grace, love, and kindness to all those in leadership above us.

A quick note on 1 Timothy 6:1–2. It's important to see that Paul isn't endorsing the institution of slavery as God's design for humanity. In this Greco-Roman context, slavery was a deeply-embedded economic reality. However, Paul does challenge the common practice of slavery in the Book of Philemon and hopes that one day Christians will work to see it abolished. In this text, Paul focuses on how they were to live out the gospel in their context and be a gospel witness in an unjust and broken world.

Scripture

Read this week's Scripture in addition to these supporting Scriptures:
1 Thessalonians 5:12; Philemon 1:1-25; Romans 12:3-7

Application Challenge

Christians are called to model servanthood in all areas of life, including the home and workplace. For the leaders you see weekly, consider picking up an extra coffee or encouraging them in your speech or a written note.

Group Discussion Questions

Pick your favorites to discuss with your group, family, or friends.

- What words, themes, or ideas in this section stick out to you?
- Where is it hardest for you to “put the gospel on display” in everyday relationships—at home, at work, or at church?
- How do you typically respond to authority when it feels unfair, disappointing, or undeserved? Do you tend to withdraw, resist, and comply outwardly but resent inwardly, or do you trust God’s purposes beyond the leader?
- Paul connects honoring others with the credibility of the gospel. How might the way you talk about leaders—pastors, bosses, parents, teachers—shape what others believe about Jesus?
- Paul calls believers to live faithfully within broken systems without pretending those systems are good. Where in your own life are you navigating tension between what is and what ought to be? How does the gospel connect to that tension?

WEEK 9

1 Timothy 6:3–21

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE:

"If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain."

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal

and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith. Grace be with you all."

1 TIMOTHY 6:3–21 (NIV)

It's easy to assume that spiritual danger always looks dark, aggressive, or obviously sinful. But often, it seems successful, confident, and impressive. It can even sound biblical. It uses the right words and promises fulfillment, blessing, or freedom with a subtle shift in focus. Instead of Jesus at the center, something else quietly takes His place.

That's the tension Paul addresses as he closes his letter to Timothy. You see, the threat facing the church wasn't only false doctrine, but distorted priorities. Some used faith for personal gain, treating godliness as a pathway to comfort, influence, or financial security. Paul exposes the lie at the heart of it all: When Christ is no longer enough, contentment disappears and faith begins to erode.

Paul doesn't condemn wealth itself, but he warns about misplaced trust. When money becomes the source of security, identity, or hope, it begins to master us. In contrast, Paul calls Timothy to a different pursuit, not accumulation, but character; not comfort, but faithfulness. Timothy is urged to flee what corrodes the soul and to actively pursue a life shaped by righteousness, endurance, and gentleness.

This passage invites us to examine what we're chasing and what we're trusting. Paul reminds Timothy, and us, that the Christian life isn't about gaining the world, but guarding the faith. What God has entrusted to us is precious, and it's worth protecting with humility, wisdom, and an eternal perspective.

Scripture

Read this week's Scripture in addition to these supporting Scriptures:

Matthew 6:19–24; Hebrews 13:5–6; Luke 12:15; James 5:1–5

Application Challenge

This week, take an honest look at where your sense of security comes from. Identify one area where you need to loosen your grip (e.g., money, control, comfort), and intentionally surrender that trust back to God through prayer and obedience.

Group Discussion Guide

Pick your favorites to discuss with your group, family, or friends.

- Where do you see the temptation to treat faith as a means to personal gain or comfort in today's culture?
- Why do you think contentment is so closely connected to spiritual health?
- How can money or success subtly shift from a tool to a source of trust?
- Paul calls believers to flee some things and pursue others. What does that look like practically in everyday life?
- What does it mean to "guard what has been entrusted" to us as followers of Jesus?
- How does this passage challenge the idea that more will always lead to better?
- Where might God be calling you to reorient your priorities toward what truly lasts?