

## **Introduction:**

1 Timothy 1:12-20 contains one of the most gospel rich sentences in the whole Bible as Paul breaks into praise as he remembers his conversion and God's glorious purposes for his life. This passage also contains a warning for Christians to not shipwreck their faith, but to wage the good warfare. Take time to read the text with your group and pick and choose from the questions below.

## **Questions:**

**1. In 1 Timothy vv12-15, Paul speaks about his life before Christ when he was an opponent of the gospel who received God's undeserved grace. Discuss with your group the hope this should produce for those who have loved ones far from the Lord.**

*Leader tip: You may want to pause here or at the end of the discussion to take time to pray for unbelieving friends and family of people in your group. Encourage the group to pray with faith knowing that God saves even the "worst" or "foremost" of sinners.*

**2. In v16, Paul speaks about God's purpose in saving him—that through his life God would display his grace to others who would someday trust in Christ. In other words, God saves us for more than just our own sake. Christians are not to be cul-de-sacs of grace, but conduits of it to the world around them. In light of this, take time with your group to discuss what this looks like in the life of ordinary Christians.**

—What are things every Christian can do in everyday life to be a witness for the gospel?

—Peter says we should always be ready to explain the hope we have in Christ (1 Peter 3:15). What does this look like for a believer?

—We tend to wrongly think of evangelism or witnessing as an individual duty when in reality it is something we should engage together as the community of the local church. What does evangelism look like as a whole-church effort?

*Leader tip: Try to help your group see the importance of the local church seeing mission and evangelism as being corporate responsibility—not just the job of clergy or people particularly gifted in sharing their faith. One thing that every Christian can do is invite unbelieving friends to their community group or church. And then, every Christian can contribute to crafting an atmosphere of love where the unbeliever is drawn by the corporate life and witness of a local church.*

**3. In vv18-20, Paul exhorts Timothy to fight the good fight, unlike Hymanaeus and Alexander. He uses the apparent apostasy of these two men as a warning to others not to “shipwreck” their faith.**

–Discuss the imagery of “shipwrecking” one’s faith. Why do you think Paul uses this analogy?

–Paul says he has handed these men over to Satan, to teach them not to blaspheme. It’s as if Satan is a mere tool in God’s arsenal to teach these men a lesson. What does this say about God’s power over evil

–What do you think Paul means by “handing” them over to Satan?

*Leader tip: For Paul, there were only two types of people, those in the Kingdom of God through faith in Christ, and those outside of the Kingdom of God who were still ruled by the prince of the power of the air, Satan. So, for Paul, to “hand” someone over to Satan is a figurative way of putting them out of the church because of their sin (much like the man in 1 Corinthians 5). But notice that even when he calls for this, his hope is that it would eventually cause the person to turn from sin and return to the Lord.*