

# PASTORAL EPISTLES

## OUTLINE

## THE ORDER OF 1 TIMOTHY

In order to situate ourselves in Paul's first letter to his young protégé, let us look at the natural flow of this epistle.

Throughout this series, we will come back to 1 Timothy several times. You may want to consult this outline multiple times or memorize it. A challenging exercise would be to read the entire book of 1 Timothy and see if you can outline the book in your own words.

The following is an adaptation from an outline in N.T. Wright's *"The New Testament In Its World"*.

**1:1-2** Greeting

**1:3-20** Warnings of False Teachers

**2:1-15** Persistent Prayer and Worship

**3:1-16** Qualifications for Leadership

**4:1-16** Refutation of Heresy, Timothy's Charge

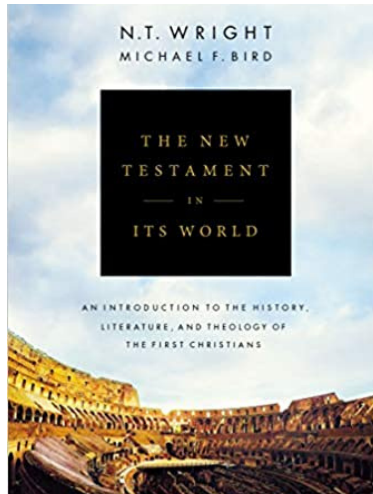
**5:1-6:2** Managing the Household of God

**6:2-21** Flee Falsehood, Fight the Good Fight, Closing

## BACKGROUND

## WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Timothy is encouraged by Paul to establish the organization (structure) and orthodoxy (right belief) of the Christian Church in the city of Ephesus. For these two men, it was a letter from an older, more experienced minister of the Gospel pouring into and encouraging a younger minister. Though it was written to a pastor, all Christians can learn from this letter to encourage one another to participate in spiritual growth.



## OPENING

## EASING INTO THE TRUTH

Each Life Group is different. Your group may start with praying for the countries that Legacy Missions has brought to our attention, or with small talk before jumping into the lesson. Maybe still, your group may share highs and lows from the last week. However you begin, make sure that you are engaging the Life Group culture/dynamic that provides an encouraging and supportive environment. Before you get into the study of the Scriptures, make sure to ask and engage at least one of the following questions.

- Consider something that another person has taught you (riding a bike, juggling, fixing a flat). Tell the group about what it was and who taught you. Was it a good experience or a bad experience? Why?
- What is one thing that you have practiced or immersed yourself in over the years (like a sport or hobby)? How have you progressed?
- Do you find yourself persevering during hardship or giving up? Why is that?

# PASTORAL EPISTLES

## SCRIPTURE

# 1 TIMOTHY 4:6-16

OVER THE COURSE OF THE SERIES, WE WILL READ MULTIPLE VERSES OF SCRIPTURE. THIS IS THE MAIN TEXT FROM SUNDAY'S SERMON.

**6** IF YOU PUT THESE THINGS BEFORE THE BROTHERS, YOU WILL BE A GOOD SERVANT OF CHRIST JESUS, BEING TRAINED IN THE WORDS OF THE FAITH AND OF THE GOOD DOCTRINE THAT YOU HAVE FOLLOWED. **7** HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH IRREVERENT, SILLY MYTHS. RATHER TRAIN YOURSELF FOR GODLINESS; **8** FOR WHILE BODILY TRAINING IS OF SOME VALUE, GODLINESS IS OF VALUE IN EVERY WAY, AS IT HOLDS PROMISE FOR THE PRESENT LIFE AND ALSO FOR THE LIFE TO COME. **9** THE SAYING IS TRUSTWORTHY AND DESERVING OF FULL ACCEPTANCE. **10** FOR TO THIS END WE TOIL AND STRIVE, BECAUSE WE HAVE OUR HOPE SET ON THE LIVING GOD, WHO IS THE SAVIOR OF ALL PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE. **11** COMMAND AND TEACH THESE THINGS. **12** LET NO ONE DESPISE YOU FOR YOUR YOUTH, BUT SET THE BELIEVERS AN EXAMPLE IN SPEECH, IN CONDUCT, IN LOVE, IN FAITH, IN PURITY. **13** UNTIL I COME, DEVOTE YOURSELF TO THE PUBLIC READING OF SCRIPTURE, TO EXHORTATION, TO TEACHING. **14** DO NOT NEGLECT THE GIFT YOU HAVE, WHICH WAS GIVEN YOU BY PROPHECY WHEN THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS LAID THEIR HANDS ON YOU. **15** PRACTICE THESE THINGS, IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THEM, SO THAT ALL MAY SEE YOUR PROGRESS. **16** KEEP A CLOSE WATCH ON YOURSELF AND ON THE TEACHING. PERSIST IN THIS, FOR BY SO DOING YOU WILL SAVE BOTH YOURSELF AND YOUR HEARERS.

**C**ommentator Dr. Thomas Constable writes - "*Paul wrote these positive directions [1 Timothy 4:6-16] to enable Timothy to overcome the influences of the ascetic apostates that threatened the church at Ephesus. He also wrote to remind him of the importance of his personal life and public ministry, so he would not fall into the same errors.*"

In the first part of 1 Timothy 4, Paul outlines some of the heretical errors of the false teachers in Ephesus.

As Paul continues, he calls Timothy to face the errors with practical wisdom and calls him to develop godliness for himself and the Church. Then the apostle concludes the chapter by outlining specific actions for Timothy to model for his church. On paper it seems like a very simple plan but in reality it is a little more difficult to enact. Paul knew this, Timothy knew this, and you and I know this as well. When was the last time our plans, even our spiritual plans, went smoothly?

But Paul is not calling Timothy (or us) to ease, he is calling us to develop godly behavior through transformation. As a group, let us walk through this pericope so that we can learn new things, develop new habits, and do this as a community that seeks to be transformed.

- If you haven't already, read through 1 Timothy 4:6-16. You may want to read all of chapter 4, though our emphasis will be on the section listed above.

- In verses 6-10, what actions does Paul tell Timothy to engage in? How would those activities help combat the false teaching of the day?

- It seems likely that Paul was encouraging Timothy to warn the Ephesian church against an enforced celibacy and asceticism (see 1 Timothy 4:3-4). How are those actions not a requirement to be a Christian? Why is it helpful to know this?

# PASTORAL EPISTLES

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- Paul helps Timothy develop a strategy for living in a world inundated with false teaching. Namely, it is to expose the errors of false teaching and to develop a personal holiness to assure living a godly life in light of a fallen and broken world. Where have you had to expose false teaching in the last week? What was the false teaching? How do you know it was false teaching? What did you say to combat it that was inline with Scripture?

- What does it mean to train for godliness (vs 8)? How have you been training for godliness in your life? How does your training impact this group? Our church? Your job?

- Timothy was a young man (likely under 40) and lived in a culture that would often look down on younger people, especially in leadership roles. Paul exhorts Timothy to set and live as an example for those in his church. Timothy should have outward and inward traits. The outward (public) traits should be his speech and conduct. The inward (character) traits should be his love, faith, and purity. How was Timothy supposed to demonstrate these things to his church? How are you at demonstrating the outward traits in your life? Where do you need to grow? How are you demonstrating the inward traits? Where do you need to grow?

- In verse 13, Paul tells Timothy to devote himself to the public reading of Scripture, exhortation (preaching), and to teaching. This is a simple and effective formula to combat false teaching. In what ways does reading Scripture combat false teaching? In what ways does preaching (moral instruction that appeals to the will) combat false teaching? In what ways does teaching (informing listeners of Christian truth) combat false teaching? Think back to this past Sunday; where did you see these three elements (reading, preaching, and teaching) during the service? Consider more than just the sermon.

- Paul tells Timothy to practice and immerse himself in the good things of chapter 4. It implies not just a meditation on or a zealous act, but rather it is about doing both. Timothy was to think deeply and develop practices for living out truth. In what ways does both meditation upon truth and developing habits in truth contribute to godly wisdom? How does one meditate upon truth? Where can we go to develop the habit of living in accordance to truth?

Describe to the group a time when you did both of these things and God provided growth? Where do you currently need help in growing in these areas?

- The chapter concludes with Timothy being encouraged to scrutinize his behavior and his theology. By doing this, his orthodoxy (right belief) and his orthopraxy (right behavior) would be incontrovertible proof of salvation and truth. How are your beliefs evidence of your salvation? Now what about your actions? Is there anything you currently believe or do that might give evidence to the contrary? How as a group can we help one another grow in belief and practice?

- Is there anything else from today's passage that you would like to highlight, discuss, or still have questions on?

## CLOSING

**A**s we close today, I want us to remember to be on the lookout for false teaching and false teachers.

Pray for the wisdom and boldness to speak against such dangerous things for the glory of God and the sake of the Church.

Furthermore, I want us to pray for, and seek to apply, today's passage so that we can both outwardly and inwardly be men and women of God. That our lives would be evidence and reason enough for people to look toward Jesus for salvation and hope.

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