

Sermons on 1 Timothy - Lowell Johnson

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I Timothy 1:1-2 AN INTRODUCTION TO I TIMOTHY

The first letters that Paul wrote were 1 and 2 Thessalonians; the last letters that Paul wrote were the three Pastoral Epistles – 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus.

The content of Paul's last three letters (The Pastoral Epistles) are far different than the content of all of Paul's other letters. All of Paul's other letters were addressed to churches, usually written in the heat and in the fire of tremendous ecclesiastical emergencies and controversies.

The Pastoral Epistles are addressed to two young ministers – Timothy and Titus. Their purpose is to instruct them:

- How the Church ought to be Organized
- How the Church ought to be Conducted
- How its Services ought to be Performed
- What Methods it should Follow
- The Things it should Do
- The Doctrines to which it is to be True

Paul knew that he was coming to the end of his way. He knew that he was about to pass from this life and his steadying influence would soon be gone. He wanted to leave something behind that would profit the Church until Christ called His Bride home.

From the Pastoral letters it seemed that God put it on Paul's heart to pass Christianity down to younger servants who would carry it on to the next generation. Christianity is always one generation away from extinction. For Christianity to survive each generation must pass it on and pass it down, and be sure what it passes is true.

Paul needed a protege; someone he could mentor. Paul had so much knowledge and wisdom from the Lord. He had received so much revelation from the Lord. His experiences had taught him so much. He had so much to share. What a shame to let all that die when he died! What a help and encouragement that he had learned from the Lord could be to a younger man who was dedicated to the Lord. Paul wanted to pass what God had given him down to those who had surrendered under him to teach and preach the Word.

May I say humbly that God has put in my heart to mentor young pastors. I know that the spiritual knowledge the Lord has given me is not a drop in the bucket compared to Paul, but I also know that God has given me the spiritual gift of teaching and to make plainer the truths of God's Word. That's why I do what I can to put what God has given me online, so others can use what God has blessed me with to bless others. I have a dozen or so "Timothys" that God has given and I feel a responsibility to them as well as other ministers of the Gospel.

Think of the older men in the Bible who mentored younger men: Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, Peter and John, and now, Paul and Timothy – an older man and a younger man with a common love for the Lord and a common dedication to the Lord, and a common determination to preach and exalt the glorious Gospel of the Lord Jesus

A. A Review

Let's take a moment and take a review of the life of Paul.

Paul was born about the year one. He was converted in about A.D. 35 He began his first missionary journey when he was about forty-nine or fifty; his third about sixty.

He was arrested in Jerusalem in about A.D. 58 and was there in Caesarea three years, then taken to Rome. His first Roman imprisonment came from about 61 to 63 when he was freed by Nero before the great Roman fire of A.D. July 64.

In about 67 he was arrested in Nicopolis and taken to Rome for the last time and placed in the [Mamertine Prison](#) (picture of one of the dungeons - talk about claustrophobia!), from which he wrote 2 Timothy, and was beheaded on the Ostian Way by Nero just before 68, in June, when Nero died.

So these Pastoral Epistles were written between the time just after his first Roman imprisonment and the second imprisonment.

B. The Recipient I Timothy 1:2

The New Testament has much to say concerning Timothy:

The name Timothy means "one who honors God" or "honored by God." His name appears some 24 times in the New Testament.

Timothy's father was a Greek (pagan) but his mother and grandmother were Jews. From a child (from infancy) Timothy was taught the Holy Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:15) by his Grandmother Lois and his Mother Eunice.

When Timothy was about 12 years old, Paul came through Lystra, Timothy's hometown, on his first missionary journey and all three of them, Timothy, Lois, and Eunice, were converted.

Then at about age 15 Timothy witnessed the stoning of Paul at Lystra, when they dragged him out for dead. After those who had stoned him left him outside the city, some disciples gathered around him and he rose up and went into the city (Acts 14:19-20).

On Paul's second missionary journey about seven years later, Paul again visited Lystra. Paul saw Timothy again and he had grown up to be a highly esteemed and much loved young man. John Mark had left the mission team, so Paul chose Timothy to be his companion on the team.

Acts 16:1-3. Because Timothy's father was a Greek and his mother was a Jew, Timothy had access to both cultures and was an indispensable asset for missionary service. But Timothy had to be circumcised to aid his acceptance by the Jews and provide full access to the synagogues. If Timothy had not been circumcised, the Jews could have assumed he had renounced his Jewish heritage and had chosen to live as a Gentile.

This gave Timothy the freedom to preach in the various Jewish synagogues (probably in his late teens or early twenties). After Timothy's circumcision, he was formally ordained by Paul (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6).

Timothy performs a ministry in at least five New Testament churches:

1. Thessalonica I Thessalonians 3:2,6
2. Corinth I Corinthians 4:17; 16:10; 2 Corinthians 1:19
3. Philippi Philippians 2:19-23
4. Berea Acts 17:10
5. Ephesus I Timothy 1:3

Timothy was still comparatively young when Paul addressed this letter to him:

Paul told him not to let anyone look down on him on account of his youth – 1 Timothy 4:12

Some two years later Paul urged him to “flee the evil desires of youth.”

Timothy was temperamentally shy, needing affirmation, encouragement and reassurance. He is often called “Timid Timothy” (see 2 Timothy 1:7 – “fear” means “Timidity”).

Paul urged the Corinthians to put him at ease when he came to them – 1 Corinthians 16:10-11: “And if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear (he is easily intimidated by folks); for he does the work of the Lord, as I do. Therefore let no one despise him (because he is weak physically and emotionally). But send him on his journey in peace.”

Timothy suffered from recurrent gastric problems and often had stomach problems – 1 Timothy 5:23: “No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.”

Notice in 1 Timothy 1:2 that Paul calls Timothy his “true child in the faith.” Five characteristics are implied in the book for a “true child in the faith”:

1. Saving Faith – It is impossible to be a true child of faith without experiencing divine salvation in Jesus Christ.
2. Continuing Obedience
3. Humble Service
4. Sound Doctrine
5. Courage Conviction

C. The Regiment

Paul literally fills this epistle with admonitions to Timothy. Paul not only spells out WHAT he is to do, but also WHY:

1. Remain in Ephesus 1 Timothy 1:3
2. Keep doctrinal standards pure 1 Timothy 1:3
3. Refused to become bogged down with religious and worldly speculation 1 Timothy 1:4; 4:7; 6:20
4. Fight the good fight of faith 1 Timothy 6:12
5. Maintain a good conscience 1 Timothy 1:19
6. Pray for all men 1 Timothy 2:1-3
7. Be an example 1 Timothy 4:12

8. Give attention to the Word of God I Timothy 4:13
9. Honor widows I Timothy 5:3
10. Be slow to judge elders I Timothy 5:1, 19
11. Rebuke public sin publicly I Timothy 5:20
12. Show no bias or partiality I Timothy 5:21
13. Avoid the love of money I Timothy 6:10-11

D. The Reflection

The theme of I Timothy: I Timothy 3:15-16; 6:11-12 (A Leadership Manual)

1. Become an example to others
2. Exercise your spiritual gifts
3. Fight the good fight of faith

Outline of I Timothy

- A. The Church and its Message Chapter 1
- B. The Church and its Members Chapter 2-3
- C. The Church and its Minister Chapter 4
- D. The Church and its Ministry to Itself Chapter 5
- E. The Church and its Ministry to the World Chapter 6\

I Timothy 1:3-11 HOW TO TREAT FALSE TEACHERS

Acts 20 tells us that Paul founded the Church at Ephesus on his second missionary journey. Aquila and Priscilla were involved very early in its shaping. Paul dropped them off there for a brief stopover while he hurried away to Antioch.

When Paul returned to Ephesus, he engaged in a three year ministry there. His ministry there was filled with extraordinary power. Before Paul moved on, he reminded them of his ministry there. He called the elders of the church together before he left them and said (Acts 20:18-22):

“You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there.”

Now as he gets ready to board the ship, Paul gives them a warning (Acts 20:29-31). “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.”

Acts 20:36-38: “And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.”

Now, as he writes this first letter to Timothy, in A.D. 64, some five years have passed since his ministry in Ephesus. Trouble has come to the church from within – savage wolves are in the very sheepfold. And Paul has already dispatched Timothy to Ephesus to deal with the problems. It was imperative that Timothy succeed.

Timothy was not sent to Ephesus as a bishop or as an elder or as a pastor; rather, Timothy was sent as an apostolic representative, that is, as Paul's substitute.

With that introduction, I want to share three things about false teachers:

I. The Error of False Teachers I Timothy 1:3-7

It is highly significant that the first task Paul sent Timothy to do in Ephesus was to guard the teaching of the Church. "Charge Certain Persons that They must not teach differing doctrines." In other words, true teaching of the Word is the MOST important aspect of the ministry of a church. It must be kept Pure. "The main thing is to see that the main thing remains the main thing."

Those "certain persons" who were teaching a different doctrine or teaching false or other doctrines are unnamed, but the people knew who they were. They were even some of the elders "from among your own selves," some of their own leaders.

Notice that Paul had to "urge" (verse 3) or use strong persuasion, for Timothy did not feel he was the man for the job. These were elders and Timothy was young and timid; but Paul knew that when God Appoints, God Anoints.

Over and over in the Bible we are warned about the dangers of false teachers. Whenever God sows truth, His archenemy, Satan, endeavors to sow falsehood and error. Satan is subtle and deceitful, cleverly twisting the Scriptures and disguising his teachers as true men of God.

- Matthew 7:15: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves."
- Matthew 24:11, 24: "And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many . . . For false christ and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect."

False teachers first confuse, then captivate, and finally damn the souls they have lead away to hell.

Paul says to keep the teaching in church Pure, True, Accurate. Seven times in I Timothy he says to keep the teaching sound and true: I Timothy 1:10; 4:6, 13, 16: 5:17; 6:1, 3, 4.

If you were the devil where would you put your best people: in the bars or in the churches? In the pews or in the pulpits. Sheep in the pew are easy prey for false teachers who come with eloquence, worldly wisdom and flattery because many know so little of the Word of God.

II. The End (Goal) of False Teachers I Timothy 1:6

To be honest some do not teach truth because of ignorance. They do not realize they are teaching things that are not true. Many have not gotten into the Word of God for themselves and all of the Word of God they know is what others, sometime ignorant, teachers and preachers say. It may sound good or even conservative, and they simply repeat what someone else has said. And then they look down on question others who don't believe or teach just like them.

For example, I hear some preachers say that one translation of the Bible is closer to the Greek or the Hebrew than other translations and my question is, how do they know? They have no knowledge of Greek or Hebrew and they have not studied any of the translations themselves. They just go by what they have heard others say, and most likely the one that they heard say it doesn't know Greek or Hebrew either.

There is a group that I call "The King James Only Boys." They boast that they use only the King James version and proclaim that it's a sin to use something other than the King James version. Now, the King James is one of the finest translation we have, but is it a sin to read or study another translation? And, then, isn't Pride a sin? What about their sin of pride for using only the King James version.

What folks are not up on, they are usually down on. There is a lot of speculation by some but little revelation.

But some false teachers know they are false teachers. They want to deceive, mislead, and confuse. Some do their deeds to be noticed of man. They love the place of honor or the respectful greeting or to be called by the title of Doctor or Reverend, or Pastor. For some it is a boost to their Ego and to others it fills their pockets.

III. The Emphasis of These False Teachers I Timothy 1:3-6, 8-11

Paul says there is both a right and a wrong way to use the Law; both a legitimate and an illegitimate use of the Law:

A. The Wrong use of the Law I Timothy 1:4-6

False teachers devote themselves to legends or fables or myths or genealogies, which trace the descent or pedigree of the patriarchs, or stories about genealogies.

As we learn the Word and share with others, there is a danger of trying to find something in Scripture no one else has ever seen before. That's what some in Ephesus were doing as they looked into Old Testament genealogies, discussed the stories endlessly,

and veered off into all sorts of vain speculations. To those who desire to be Bible teachers, I give this piece of advice: Give up trying to be creative and innovative. Instead, stick with the simple, powerful truth of the Gospel – and you'll never go wrong.

Don't go off on tangents and don't go to seed on some topic.

Three ancient Jewish documents may throw light on what Paul is referring to:

1. The Book of Jubilees (135-105 B.C.) which retells from a Pharisaic perspective the Old Testament story from the creation of the world to the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. It divides this history into jubilees or periods of 49 years and asserts the uniqueness of Israel among the nations.

This book supplies us with the names of all the children of Adam and Eve, of Enoch's family, of Noah's predecessors and descendants, and of the seventy people who went down into Egypt.

2. The biblical Antiquities of Philo: (Dated soon after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70). It retells even more Old Testament stories from creation to the death of Saul.

3. The Apocrypha: Recounts the inter-testimonial period to the early life of Christ.

Speculation questions are still around today, like: "Where did Cain get his wife?" or "How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?"

Where do such speculation questions lead?

- 1 Timothy 6:4: Obsession with disputes (arguments over the Bible), envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions.
- 2 Timothy 2:14: The ruin of hearers.
- 2 Timothy 2:16: Empty chatter and further ungodliness.
- 2 Timothy 2:23: Quarrels and controversy.

False teaching promotes controversy and useless speculation like: Where did Cain get his wife? And How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?

Since false teachers threaten people with eternal ruin, false teachers are not to be taken lightly. See Galatians 1:8-9.

Paul gives a contrast between speculation and faith in God's revelation. First, the test of faith: does it come from God and is it in agreement with apostolic doctrine or is it the product of fertile human imagination? Second, the test of love: does it promote unity in the body of Christ, or if no, is it irresponsible divisive? "Faith" means we receive it from God; "love" means that it builds up the Church. God judges doctrine by its fruit.

B. The Right use of the Law I Timothy 1:8-11

All Law is designed for those whose natural tendency is not to keep it but to break it. The Law is targeted for the sinner; not the saint.

The Law is our schoolmaster. The Law was given to restrain evil, to lead to Christ, and to determine the conduct of believers. Or, the Law condemns sinners and drives them to Christ, it restrains evildoers, and it teaches and exhorts believers.

The purpose for the Law is love (1 Timothy 1:5); love from a pure heart and from a good conscience, and from sincere faith.

I Timothy 1:12-17

PAUL'S "BEFORE AND AFTER" SALVATION TESTIMONY

We've all seen those "before and after" advertisements. A lady in her mid-forties, bright, smiling, healthy figure, standing beside a swimming pool wearing a two-piece, holding a pair of gigantic blue jeans. She says, "These are the jeans I used to wear before I lost 200 pounds on the Suddenly Slim miracle device. Now I use these old jeans to cover my swimming pool in the winter. Thanks, Suddenly Slim. I couldn't have done it without you!"

Paul's life is a "before and after" story. Before his conversion, Saul of Tarsus was a meticulous observer of the Law – at least outwardly. A Pharisee among Pharisees, he was the cream of the crop. He saw himself as a paragon of piety and looked down on

those who settled for less than perfection. Saul's misguided zeal for the Law led him to hate Christians. He ruthlessly hunted down other followers of "the way," tore them from their homes, threw them in prison, even approved of their torture and death.

Then, on his way to Damascus, Saul ran into the blinding grace of God and the Lord Jesus transformed him into a champion of the Gospel, and he began to openly condemn the legalistic system he once followed.

Paul never got over His salvation experience. He never lost the wonder that God could and did redeem someone like him. He viewed himself as the supreme example of God's saving grace. Paul gives his testimony in Acts 9:1-22; 22:1-21; 26:9-18; Galatians 2; Philippians 3; and I Timothy 1.

There are two reasons we should give our personal testimony:

1. To let those we go to school with, or go to work with, or those who live near us know that salvation worked for us personally. "When I was 9 or 15 or 21, I gave my heart to Jesus, and . . ." Advertisers tell us that the most powerful selling tool is a satisfied customer.
2. Giving your testimony gives you added assurance and makes what Jesus did for you more meaningful.

Paul knew Timothy was timid and easily discouraged, so Paul writes him to encourage him to continue to serve the Lord faithfully. He writes him to challenge him to continue to grow in the Lord and to stand for the truth in spite of all the opposition he was facing.

In an effort to accomplish his goal of encouraging Timothy, Paul uses his life as an example of what Jesus can do through His grace and through His power. He says to Timothy, "Look at me, Timothy! Look what Jesus has done for me! If God can work IN me and THROUGH me, He can do His wonderful work in you, as well.

Listen to Paul's testimony:

I. The Testimony of a Sinner I Timothy 1:13, 15

By his own admission, Paul was guilty of breaking all of the Lord's commandments.

1. Paul admits he was a Blasphemer.

Paul had spoken evil of and slandered the name of God. He had denied the deity of Jesus Christ and had forced others to deny it as well. He had used insults against Christ; ridiculed, scoffed at, and lied about Christ.

2. Paul admits he was a Persecutor.

Paul was brutal as he hunted Christians down, causing others to suffer because of their beliefs. He would enter the Christian's homes and drag off men and women and put them in prison. He was a violent aggressor and a bully. He was a man of blood.

The word "insolent" means a "violent aggressor."

3. In I Timothy 1:15 Paul describes himself as the chief of sinners. He did not write "I WAS chief," but in humiliation he wrote, "of whom I AM chief."

Again in humility he considered himself to be the "least of the apostles" (I Corinthians 15:9)

and the "least of the saints" (Ephesians 3:8).

But notice that Paul did what he did in "ignorance" and "unbelief." He was blinded by Satan. Paul is not making excuses; he is simply stating the fact. Paul didn't understand the ramifications of his actions. He thought he was earnestly and faithfully serving the Lord. He had rejected Jesus and the Gospel message because he was sincerely trying to earn his salvation.

II. The Testimony of a Saint I Timothy 1:13-14

Notice the words "mercy" (I Timothy 1:13) and "grace" (I Timothy 1:14). Paul was a great sinner so he needed great mercy and grace.

- In mercy, God did not give Paul what he deserved.
- In grace, God gave him what he did not deserve.

God gave him the perfect salvation that he did not deserve – that's grace. In mercy, God did not give Paul the condemnation in Hell that he deserved.

It was mercy that held off the wrath of God when Paul persecuted the Church and blasphemed the Name of

Jesus. But it was grace that came to him on the Damascus Road, confronted him concerning his sins, and saved his soul.

Paul tells us that the grace that sought him and bought him was “Exceeding Abundant.” This means that God had more grace than Paul needed! Where his sin had abounded, God's grace did much more abound (Romans 5:20).

By the way, when Paul says that he “Obtained Mercy,” that phrase is in the passive voice, which implies that Paul did not seek mercy, but mercy found him. He did not deserve mercy, but mercy came to him anyway.

When grace came, it brought with it “faith and love” (1 Timothy 1:14). When grace came, it allowed Paul to believe what he had formerly denied and to love the Lord and a people he had formerly hated. That's what God's grace will do for you, because you are a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Paul directs his thanks to Christ Jesus because He is the Source of all grace (1 Timothy 1:14; John 1:17; 1 Corinthians 15:9-10).

Paul expressed thankfulness for four aspects of grace in his life:

1. For Electing Grace

God chose him, both for salvation and apostleship.

2. For Enabling Grace (Strengthened)

Through God's grace he had the strength to live out his salvation – Philippians 4:13

3. For Entrusting Grace

God considered him faithful or trustworthy, and it was grace that made Paul so.

4. For Employing Grace ...that put him into service.

III. The Testimony of a Showpiece I Timothy 1:16

God is using Paul as a pattern (a showpiece), as proof positive of His long-suffering. God wanted everyone who saw Paul to understand that if He could save this man, He will save anyone who comes to Him. God has put Paul on display for His glory to point others to Himself.

God saves us to be trophies of His grace and living testimonies to His life-changing power – Ephesians 2:10.

IV. The Testimony of a Song-leader I Timothy 1:17

As Paul thought about what God had done in his life, he broke forth in spontaneous worship and praise. Notice that the attributes of God which Paul praises here are those that separate Him from us. He addresses God in this doxology as:

1. The King:

The sovereign ruler of all things, who not only reigns over the natural order and the historical process, but has also established His special kingdom through Christ and by His spirit over His redeemed people.

The divine King is now characterized by four epithets:

- a. He is Eternal, literally “King of the ages,” Who is beyond the fluctuations of time. This refers to the two ages in Jewish thought: the present age and the age to come. God had no beginning and will have no end. He exists outside of time, though He acts in it.
- b. He is Immortal. He will never know death, decay, or loss of strength.
- c. He is Invisible. He can be known only by His self-revelation.
- d. He is the only God. He has no rivals.

2. He alone is Worthy of all honor and glory forever and ever.

3. The doxology closes with the emphatic, “AMEN,” meaning “let it be said.”

I Timothy 1:18-20

FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

The Lord Jesus has called His followers to an abundant life of love, peace, joy and communion with Him. But, there is another side to the Christian life. The Christian life is also a warfare, as believers enter a lifelong fight against the evil world system, Satan, and their own sinful human flesh.

As Paul summarizes the introduction to this letter in I Timothy 1:18-20, he calls Timothy to fight the good fight against Satan. Like all those in the ministry, Timothy was called to an unceasing spiritual warfare. That fight demands equipped, trained, and devoted soldiers. Paul wrote this letter to help Timothy gear up for the current battles.

Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus to oppose the enemies encroaching on the Ephesian Church. False leaders in positions of power and authority were teaching heresy about the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus. These false teachers were also living impure lives.

These three verses deal with three things:

I. **Commissioning** I Timothy 1:18

Paul used military language to enforce his statement, for the word “charge” means “an urgent command handed down from a superior officer” (Paul uses the same term back in I Timothy 1:3). Timothy was a man under orders, and he had to obey. He is in God's army and God is his Commander-in-Chief.

The soldier's task is to “please him who has chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Timothy 2:4), and not to please himself.

Also, Timothy was there by divine appointment: God had chosen him and sent him. It was this fact that could give him assurance in difficult days.

Notice the phrase: “in keeping with the prophecies once made about you.” It seems that these prophecies were given on the special occasion of his commissioning or his ordination.

It was at Timothy's ordination that he was given a prophetic message and the body of elders laid their hands' on him (see I Timothy 4:14). A series of prophecies had been given about Timothy at his ordination in connection with his receiving his spiritual gift. These prophecies specifically and supernaturally called Timothy into God's service. Their laying on of hands solemnly set him apart for his ministry, gifting and authorizing him to exercise his gift.

Sometimes in the ordination service for a young preacher, the ordained men there may share something positive about the man being ordained. They may mention his spiritual gifts or his ability to work with other people or his insight into the Word of God. Then at the laying on of hands, he is encouraged to reach his fullest potential in developing and using his gift. The expectations voiced for Timothy were high and from the Lord.

What is this “good fight” or warfare? Well, I Timothy 6:12 implies it is to fight the good fight of the spiritual conflict against Satan and the kingdom of darkness. Stand against false teachers and spiritual error.

Conscience I Timothy 1:19

Timothy possessed two valuable things which he must carefully guard: an objective measure called “the faith,” meaning the apostolic faith, and a subjective treasure called “a good conscience.”

Paul says a great deal about the healthy conscience:

1. I Timothy 1:5 – Elders are to stop teaching false doctrine and come back to “love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience.”
2. I Timothy 3:9 – Church leaders must hold the mystery of faith with clear conscience.
3. 2 Timothy 1:3 – Paul said he served God “with a clear conscience.”
4. Acts 23:1 – Paul said he lived his life “before God in all good conscience.”
5. In Acts 24:16 Paul stands before Felix and declares, “So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.”

6. Romans 9:1 – Paul said, “I speak the truth in Christ – I lie not; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit.”

What is your conscience? The Indians use to say the conscience is shaped like a triangle with three sharp points next to your heart that turns around and around. When you do wrong, a sharp point hurts your heart. But if you continue to do wrong, the sharp point will wear down until you can hardly feel it.

I Timothy 4:2: “seared” means cauterized or desensitized, as if all nerves that make them feel has been destroyed and turned into scar tissue. So you can ignore your conscience or transgress against your conscience, and your conscience will no longer be reliable or dependable. So you cannot let your conscience be your guide.

God created man with a conscience as his self-judging faculty. Because God has written His law on man's heart (Romans 2:14-16), man knows the basic standard of right and wrong. When he violates that standard, his conscience produces guilt, which acts as the mind's security system that produces fear, guilt, shame, and doubt as warnings of threats to the soul's well-being.

On the other hand, when a believer does God's will, he enjoys the affirmation, assurance, peace, and joy of a good conscience. A good conscience serves as the rudder that steers the believer through the rocks and reefs of sin and error.

Calamity I Timothy 1:19b-20

Both Hymenaeus and Alexander suffered spiritual shipwreck in the faith because they “pushed their conscience away” in a violent and deliberate rejection of the truth. We are not sure who Alexander is, but 2 Timothy 2:17-19 tells us that Hymenaeus strayed from the truth saying that the resurrection had already taken place and overthrew the faith of some with the false teaching. Paul said the false teaching would spread like cancer.

Paul said that he delivered these men to Satan. What does that mean? He expelled or excommunicated them from the Church, which ended their influence in the Church and removed them from the protection and insulation of God's people. They were no longer in the environment of God's blessing but under Satan's control.

This is a form of church discipline. Several times someone had to be dealt with because they suffered spiritual shipwreck. Note that the desired result in doing so is restoration.

1. 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15
2. I Corinthians 5:1-5
3. I John 5:16-17
4. 3 John 9-10
5. Romans 16:17-18
6. I Corinthians 5:9-13
7. Acts 5:1-11

In some instances God has turned believers over to Satan for positive purposes: such as revealing of their genuineness of saving faith (Job – See Job 1:1-22), keeping them humble and dependent on Him (Paul – see 2 Corinthians 12:1-12).

Then God hands some people over to Satan for judgment (as in King Saul – I Samuel 16:12-16; 28:4-20; and Judas – John 13:27).

“Wage the good warfare. Do not sin against your conscience. A good conscience is key to maintaining a sound faith.

I Timothy 2:1-8

THE SPIRITUAL WORK OF THE CHURCH

If the local church is a real New Testament church, the church is usually a busy place. There is much work to be done. Some of the work is very visible; you can see it. Some of it is public; some is private. Some is of a physical nature; some is of a spiritual nature. Sometimes we are good at the physical nature and work, but we become slack at the spiritual nature.

Just before Jesus was ascended to His Father, He told His disciples to “wait” in Jerusalem until the coming of the promised Holy Spirit came. Now think about this: Ten days after the Lord ascended, His Church was going to be birthed. So what did Jesus tell them to do? Wait!

Here were 120 in the upper room waiting for the birth of the Church. What were they doing? Waiting AND Praying. Here is the real inner workings of God. They waited and prayed ten days, preached 30 minutes, and 3,000 were saved.

Today we pray ten minutes, preach ten days and wonder why nothing happens. What is the real inner workings of the Church? Where does the real power from God come from? Which is more important: the types of hands on a clock, or the fine inner workings and mechanisms of a clock?

The secret of power in a church is not found in the leaders of the church, but in what God is doing in the hearts and lives of those leaders. Jesus said, “Without Me, you can do nothing.” (Do you know what nothing is? Nothing is a zero with the edges shaved off! That’s what you and I can do without the Lord.)

What is the secret of a powerful church? God! And that power comes forth when God does His inner-working in the lives of His people. Well, how does God accomplish those inner-workings?

I. A Spiritual Requirement I Timothy 2:1-2a

The word “exhort” conveys the idea of encouragement, but it is much more than a suggestion; it is a command from God to His people to be engaged in the work of prayer. God’s people are to be praying people!

The heart ... the soul ... the power of any ministry is Prayer! More prayer, more power! No prayer, no power! Prayer is one of our mightiest weapons for God. God accomplishes more through our prayers than He does through anything else. But prayer is the one thing God’s people find so difficult to do, whether in private or in public.

Notice the words “first of all.” First in priority. Prayer inspires the Church to depend on God and prayer inspires the Church to obey God’s Word.

- Acts 6:1-4: “We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.”
- Ephesians 6:13-14: “Pray at all times for all the saints.”

Prayer is an indispensable weapon in our battle against Satan and his forces. Prayer should flow through every situation, reminding us that everything we do depends on our Heavenly Father.

Paul uses four of the seven Greek words for Prayer:

A. Supplications

The root meaning of this word means “to be deprived of something or to be without something.” This kind of prayer arises from the sense of need. Knowing what is missing or lacking, we plead with God to supply it. We offer a request for a felt need.

B. Prayers

This word emphasizes the sacredness of prayer. We are praying to God. Prayer is an act of worship, adoration, and reverence of our heart, not just an expression of our wants and needs.

Do you ever imagine as you pray, the throne room of God. How it might look? How it would be with our God sitting upon His throne and His angels attending Him? In prayer I always try to express my love for the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Each person of the God-head had a part in my salvation and I offer praise for what each has done. God the Father planned my salvation. God the Son purchased my salvation with his rich, royal blood on the cross as he died in my place. The Holy Spirit provided my salvation as He convicted and convinced me of my sin. Then He converted me and placed me into the family of God.

In prayer we come into the Lord’s presence to worship Him and to spend time at His feet. Every believer must have that time when we go before the Lord, without distraction, without hurry, and just spend time loving Him and talking to Him.

C. Intercessions

The word means “to get involved with someone” and “to make request on behalf of others.” It means “to boldly pray on behalf of others.” Jesus is our intercessor (I Timothy 2:5). He stands

in the gap between us and the Father and boldly prays for us (Hebrews 7:25).

D. Giving of Thanks

No prayer is complete until we spend some of that time thanking God. We are to thank Him for that which He has already done, for the fact that He is hearing us now, and thank Him for those things He is yet to do. We are to pray in faith, believing that the things we are asking God to do are already done, even though we can't see them at the present time. A spirit of gratitude to God!

Notice the objects or scope of our praying: "for all men." No person on earth is outside the influence of believing prayer.

"All who are in authority." Our leaders need the wisdom of God to be able to carry out their offices. (Note: When Paul wrote these words, Nero was the Emperor of Rome. He was a wicked man who had his own mother and brothers executed to secure his throne. He took Christians, dipped their bodies in wax and set them on fire, using the light to light his dinner parties. He was a wicked man!)

I firmly believe that God intervenes in the affairs of men. He can overrule a wicked leader. He can impress a wicked leader to make godly decisions. We need to pray for those in power, especially now.

II. A Spiritual Reason I Timothy 2:2b-4

It Leads to a Peaceful Life

One of the reasons we are to pray for those in authority is that we might live lives free from persecution and governmental intervention.

By the way, even when we cannot respect men or women in authority, we must respect the offices.

Why was this command given? Because the number one group of people we fail to pray for are those who have authority over us. We are to pray for them that we might have a peaceful and a moral environment.

We need to seek to guard our liberties and protect our freedoms at all cost.

Notice in I Timothy 2:3-4 prayer pleases the Lord. It pleases the Lord when His children pray as He commanded them.

III. A Spiritual Reflection I Timothy 2:5-8

"There is One God (Jehovah) and One Mediator between God and man (and it's not Mary), the MAN Christ Jesus."

Many believers do not realize that prayer is based on the work of Jesus Christ as Savior and Mediator. As the God-Man, Jesus, is the perfect and only Mediator between holy God and His failing children. Jesus Christ is both God and man. In His perfect life and substitutionary death, He met the just demands of God's holy Law. He was a "ransom for all" and His death was on behalf of all.

1. The Title "Mediator"

A mediator is a reconciler who stands between two parties that differ – that are separated – and the mediator seeks to effect a reconciliation between the two opposing parties. In this instance, these two opposing parties are the holy Lord God whose wrath is kindled against sin every day (Psalm 7:11), who has a controversy with vile and wicked mankind, who shall judge mankind according to His holiness and His righteousness, the man finds himself lost and condemned and damned.

The great, high God on one side; on the other side is the sinful and depraved and dying man – these two. And the Scriptures say that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19).

The other meaning of the title "mediator" refers to a medium or a channel of communication, between God above and insignificant, depraved man below.

2. The Qualifications of Jesus for the high office and title of Mediator.

No one can take this honor unto himself nor can some man bestow the honor on someone else. He must be chosen and ordained of God (notice Hebrews 5:4).

Then second, He must be able to sympathize with both parties. There must be an understanding in him of both sides. With one hand, He must touch and hold God; and with the other hand, He must touch humanity in understanding and in sympathy with humanity.

So whoever is the Mediator between God and man must be both God and man. Notice Hebrews 2:9-10, 16-18; see also Hebrews 4:14-16.

3. The Work of this Mediator

His work is to keep us saved forever – to keep us from falling, to present us without blame and without blemish someday in the presence of God Almighty (see Jude 24; Colossians 1:22).

That's how Paul could say what he says in Romans 8:33-34; and John in I John 2:1-2.

All of this is possible because Jesus gave Himself a “ransom” for us. This ransom is the result of Christ's substitutionary death for believers, which He did voluntarily.

The word “ransom” means “a price paid to free a slave.” His death was on our behalf. Though the death of Christ is efficient only for those who trust Him, it is sufficient for the sins of the whole world.

g a sound faith.

I Timothy 2:8-15

THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN

These are probably the most controversial verses (especially verses 11-15) in the Pastoral Letters. I have never personally heard anyone preach on these verses. Not only that, you will be hard pressed to find a message in our generation or any generation or in any period who has ever preached on this passage. Most commentaries on First Timothy either skip the passage altogether or find some way to skirt around the issues.

Why? The issue of the place of women in public worship stirs and arouses the emotions and the reactions of both men and women. Women's rights have become a heated issue. Today many denominations are in hot debate about the ordination and ministry of women. And, if a woman does minister in public worship, how far should her ministry go?

Some have even accused Paul of being a “crusty old bachelor” who was anti-women. Those of us who hold to the inspiration and authority of the Word of God know that Paul's teaching came from God and not from himself. If we have a problem with what the Bible says about women in the Church, the issue is not with Paul or Peter (see I Peter 3:1-7), but with the Lord who gave the Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

So, in this message tonight, this will be an exegesis of this passage as best as I know how. Just so you know, I am not anti-women. I like women. My mother was a woman and my wife is a woman – so I'll just do the best I can!

To begin with, there is a connection in verse 8 and 9. There is a word to both men and women.

Men are to “pray everywhere” when they gather together for their public services of worship. The Jewish custom was that men lifted up their hands unto the Lord when praying in public services. And they were to lift up “holy hands” and he adds, “without wrath and doubting.” The word “doubting” actually means “disputing or debate.” It's hard for us to realize that in those early churches, folks would come to worship and their hearts would be filled with anger, contentions, and open disagreements with one another. If we are going to truly worship God, we must be on good terms with one another. Effective praying demands that I be in a right relationship with God (holy hands) and with my fellow believers (“without murmurings and disputings”).

Then, the women are to come and pray “in like manner” as the men – with a holy heart before God and no anger and contention toward another.

Then Paul deals with three issues when the women come to public worship. How is the woman to appear in the public services of the house of God?

A. The Style of Women in Public Worship I Timothy 2:9-10

The word “adorn” means the arrangement of clothing upon the body. The word also refers to behavior and demeanor, that is, the way a woman carries herself as she walks, moves, and behaves in public.

Why did Paul bring the matter of dress and adornment up? Because in Ephesus some of the women competed against each other for attention and popularity. In that day expensive hairdos arrayed with costly jewelry were an accepted way to get to the top socially. Women wove gold, pearls or other jewelry through their hairdos to call attention to themselves and their wealth or beauty. When a woman dresses for the worship service to attract attention to herself, she has violated the purpose of worship. Women are not to draw attention to themselves by wearing things intended to do so.

There is a little humor here. I have seen some ladies who seem to be determined to call attention to themselves. I've seen some

ladies who walk into services with outlandish ornaments dangling from every joint and every suspension and I've thought, "Well, there goes Mrs. Christmas-tree herself!" She ruins the service. People quit listening to the preaching and start looking at the hats and all those dangling things she's wearing!

Notice Paul said the lady is to wear "modest apparel." What does that mean? It means that whatever a lady wears should cover the subject – completely! Back in the 1970's when the miniskirts were the big thing, I was in revival and five or six girls in their late teens or early twenties were sitting on the front pew and everything was shinning! Thank goodness, the pastor found some towels and covered them up before I preached.

A godly woman wants to bring honor to the Lord she loves and has committed herself to. A godly woman would be ashamed and feel guilty if she distracted someone from worshipping God or contributed to someone's lustful thought. A godly woman will dress so as not to be a source of temptation and will reject anything dishonorable to God.

Paul admonished the Christian woman to major on the "inner person," the true beauty that only Christ can give.

B. The Silence of Women in Public Worship I Timothy 2:11-14

This is NOT a "gag order" for women. Some become very legalistic at this point and say that women must keep their mouth shut in public worship. Not so!

The word "silence" is an unfortunate translation because it gives the impression that believing women were never to open their mouths in the assembly. A better translation would be, "let the women learn in quietness, in tranquility, to cease from quarreling and altercation and contention."

Again go back to the early Church and you will find a lot of contention. Let me give an example: I Corinthians 14:26-35.

Note what Paul is saying: "I suffer a woman not to teach" is better translated "to be THE teacher" and refers to the office of pastor-teacher. She is to receive instruction rather than give it publicly as THE teacher.

In fact, Paul instructs women to teach – Titus 2:3-5.

If it were not for women, much of God's work would not get done and when a man will not respond to God's call, He often raises up a woman – Judges 4:8-9.

But it is dangerous for a woman to try to take man's place – Numbers 12:1-13 (commentary)

Paul gives two reasons why He chose man to take the spiritual lead:

- Because of original creation: 1 Timothy 2:13

God could have created man and woman at the same time, but God had His reason for the order.

Woman is not to be a competitor, but a counterpart. Woman is to compliment man and they are to work along side each other.

- Because of original corruption: I Timothy 2:14

Adam knew exactly what he was doing. Satan deceived the woman into sinning; the man sinned with his eyes wide open. When Adam took of that forbidden fruit from the hand of his wife, he chose to die with her. He knew what he was doing. Eve was deceived. Satan attacked one of them. He attacked the woman. When Adam saw that his wife was to die, rather than live without her, he took of the forbidden fruit that they might die together.

C. The Safety of Women I Timothy 2:15

Paul is not advocating that women are eternally saved from sin through childbearing or that they maintain their salvation by having babies. Both of those things would be a clear contradiction to the New Testament teaching of salvation by grace alone through faith alone.

In the Greek the article "tes" is very, very prominent. She shall be saved in "THE" childbearing. What is he talking about: "THE childbearing"? He is going back to the third chapter of Genesis out of which he has made two illustrations already. He is going back to the time when God said to the woman, "and thy seed shall crush this serpent's head" (Genesis 3:15). She shall be saved in the childbearing – the seed not of the man, the seed of the woman.

The "she" in the verse refers to Eve, not to all the women; which pictures the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15 in the birth of Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

I Timothy 3:1-13

GODLY CHARACTERISTICS FOR CHURCH LEADERS

Everything rises or falls with leadership, whether it be family or a local church. What we are as leaders, the congregation will become as the years go by. Of course, there will be individual exceptions, but it is generally true that the church will take on the personality of the pastor.

- If the leadership is Word-centered, the church will be Word-centered.
- If the leadership is mission-minded, the church will be mission-minded.
- If the leadership is sincere, the people will be sincere.
- If the leadership is kind, the church will be kind.

The other side of the coin is also true: Unloving, narrow, stingy leaders beget an unloving, narrow, stingy church.

The principle of Hosea 4:9 is still true: "And it will be, like people, like priest." People do not normally rise above the level of their leader. There is an inseparable link between the character of a church and the quality of its leadership. Leaders must set a godly example for the church to follow.

- Our Lord said in Luke 6:40: "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher."
- Paul said in I Corinthians 4:16: "I urge you, imitate me..." "...be imitators of me as I imitate Christ."
- Philippians 4:9: "The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things."

Christian ministry and leadership is without question a matter of character. Christian character is everything in church leadership. Paul tells us in I Timothy 3:15 why he wrote First Timothy: "So that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living, the pillar and ground of the truth."

Paul deals with two things in these verses: (1) A Noble Aspiration (verse 1) and (2) Noble Qualifications (verses 2-13).

I. A Noble Aspiration I Timothy 3:1

A. Pastor I Timothy 3:1-7

God intends His Church to have pastors. On their first missionary journey Paul and Barnabas "appointed elders ... in each church (Acts 14:23). Titus was left in Crete to "appoint elders in every town (Titus 1:5). The Holy Spirit not only gave gifts to believers for ministry in the local church, but He gave the gifts of "pastors and teachers" to the Church (Ephesians 4:11-16).

According to the New Testament, the terms "bishop," "pastor," and "elder" are synonymous.

- "Bishop" means "overseer" and refers to one who has the responsibility of overseeing the work of the church.
- "Elder" refers to a mature person with spiritual wisdom and experience. That doesn't necessarily mean he must be old in years.
- "Pastor" means "shepherd," one who leads, feeds, and cares for the flock of God.

Paul does not give us the duties or the responsibilities of the pastor in this passage, but only the qualifications. We are given the responsibilities for pastors in other passages of Scripture. Here are but a few:

1. They are to rule.

I Timothy 5:17: "Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the Word and doctrine."

I Thessalonians 5:12-13: "And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you (and to know them well enough to have an intimate appreciation for them and to respect them because of their value), and are over you in the Lord and admonish (instruct or warn) you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."

Hebrews 13:7, 17: "Remember those who rule (lead) over you, who have spoken the Word of God to you,

whose faith follow ... obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls."

2. They are to preach and teach. I Timothy 5:17

3. They are to pray for the sick.

James 5:14: "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him."

4. They are to care for the church. I Peter 5:1-2

5. They are to be examples for others to follow.

I Peter 5:1-2: "The elders who are among you I exhort, ... shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers."

6. They are to set church policy. Acts 15:22-23 In conjunction with the church.

7. They were to ordain other leaders. I Timothy 4:14

B. Deacons I Timothy 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-7

Deacons were first chosen to assist the disciples so they could give themselves to the study of the Word and to prayer. The word "deacon" means servant. When God raises up people to serve His Church, He looks for those committed to the Lord Jesus who have a servant heart.

Deacons were not chosen to run the church, but to serve. The Bible knows nothing of a "Board" of deacons, but a "Body" of deacons.

Deacons are to Be: They are to be men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, who assist in ministry.

Deacons are to See: They are to see needs that need to be met.

Deacons are to Free: They are to free the pastor up so he can devote himself to the Word and prayer.

II. Noble Qualifications I Timothy 3:2-13

Paul lists some 20 qualifications for both Pastor and Deacon. Many of these overlap; where they do not overlap, we will deal with them separately. It is so important that those who lead the church be highly qualified spiritually that the detailed list of their specific qualifications is given twice in Paul's letters, here and in Titus 1.

1. Desire I Timothy 3:1

Before discussing the individual qualifications against which all pastors are to be measured, Paul gives some helpful insights related to the call to the ministry. This opening verse suggests six facets related to the call to ministry:

a. It's an Important Call – I Timothy 3:1a (This is a faithful {true} saying)

This phrase is unique to the Pastoral Epistles and is used five times (I Timothy 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Timothy 2:11; Titus 3:8). These words announce a statement summarizing key doctrines. The phrase "worthy of all acceptance" gives the statement added emphasis. These sayings were apparently well-known in the churches and expressed cardinal gospel truth.

We could easily overlook this verse in our haste to get to the list of qualifications for spiritual leaders, but that would be a great mistake. Here's why: Godly leaders must Desire the ministry. Spiritual leaders are made, not born. No one comes into the world as a man of honor for God. To become such a man takes time, submission, development, humility, effort, diligence, and yes, desire.

Now, just because a man desires the office of bishop does not mean that God will call him to the ministry. The call to pastor is a matter of divine call rather than human aspiration.

Paul clearly affirms the call and appointment of God on a man's life. Acts 20:28 says, "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood."

The call to be a pastor entails three essentials: (1) the call of God, (2) the inner aspiration and conviction of the individuals concerned and (3) their conscientious screening by the church as to whether they meet the requirements which Paul now goes on to list. Sometimes young men who are wrestling with the call to preach

will ask how a man KNOWS he is called to preach. I often tell them, "If you can do anything else other than preach, don't preach." Church leadership can attract people with mixed and sometimes outright sinful motives. The seeming prestige of spiritual leadership attracts some. The lure of power draws others. The control over the lives of others sway some. Then there is the money that some see.

Some who are in the ministry said they were called to the ministry know they were not called, but because they are already in the ministry, they have too much pride to admit they made the mistake of THINKING they were called when they were not. Much damage can be done by a man who is in the ministry, but was not called of God to be there. Someone said, "You have never been 'had' until you have been 'had' by a fellow born-again Christian who calls you 'brother.'"

Only the Holy Spirit can produce a true spiritual leader. Godly leaders are not produced by Bible colleges or seminaries; these merely give them the tools to work with.

b. It's a Limited Calling – I Timothy 3:1b

"If only man." An essential requirement for a church leader is that he be a man.

c. It's a Compelling Calling – I Timothy 3:1 (desires ... desires)

There are two different Greek words translated "desires." The first word translated "desire" describes someone who has taken steps to become an overseer or pastor; the other word translated "desire" refers to "a passionate compulsion" and refers to an inward feeling of desire.

Taken together, the two terms describe the man who outwardly pursues the ministry because of the driving compulsion on the inside. The man truly called to the ministry is marked by both an inward consuming passion and a disciplined outward pursuit. For him the ministry is not the best option, it is the only option. There is nothing else he could do with his life that would fulfill him. So, he works diligently to prepare himself to be qualified for service.

d. It's a Responsible Calling – I Timothy 3:1 (the office of bishop)

Having oversight of the church is a great responsibility. Hebrews 13:17 warns that leaders must give an account to God for how faithfully they have led, while James 3:1 adds that because they teach others they face a stricter judgment.

e. It's a Worthy Calling – I Timothy 3:1 (a good work)

"Good" means noble, honorable, excellent, high-quality work. The work of preaching and leading the church, which our Lord purchased with His blood, is the highest, greatest, and

most glorious calling to which anyone can ever be called.

f. It's a Demanding Calling – I Timothy 3:1 (work)

Those looking for an easy time will not find it in the ministry. It's a demanding, lifelong task. The ministry is no nine-to-five occupation that one can walk away from and forget each evening. It's work is never-ending as he relies on the power of Christ at work in his life.

2. Blameless, Above Reproach – I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6-7

This cannot mean "faultless," or no child of Adam would ever qualify to pastor. It means rather "of blameless reputation" and has to do with "irreproachable observable conduct."

This word in the Greek describes a garment without folds. When applied to personal character, it means that the leader must be free from any secret or hidden pockets of sin.

The Living Bible says, "a good man whose life cannot be spoken against." This means no questionable conduct, no secret sin, no deliberately unresolved conflicts. It means a man who has nothing hidden and nothing to hide.

Speaking to preachers, Richard Baker, a 17th century Puritan pastor in England, said: "Take heed to yourselves, lest your example contradict your doctrine ... lest you unsay with your lives what you say with your tongues ... One proud, lordly word, one needless contention, one covetous action, may cut the throat of many a sermon, and blast the fruit of all you have been doing.

"Take heed to yourselves, lest you live those sins which you preach against in others. Will you make it your work to magnify God, and, when you have done so, dishonor Him as much as others? Will you proclaim

Christ's governing power and rebel yourselves? Will you preach His laws and willfully break them? O brethren! It is easier to rebuke sin than to overcome it."

Pastors must take great care to remain above reproach for several reasons:

- Pastors are the special targets of Satan, and he will assault them with more severe temptation than others. Those on the front lines of the spiritual battle will bear the brunt of satanic opposition.
- A pastor's fall has a greater potential for harm. Satan knows that when a shepherd falls, the effect on the sheep is devastating.
- Leader's greater knowledge of the truth, and accountability to live it, brings greater chastening when they sin.
- Pastor's sins are more hypocritical than others' because they preach against the very sins they commit.

Leaders need an abundance of God's grace and power because of their greater responsibility and visibility. To protect themselves leaders must spend in-depth time in the study of God's Word, in prayer, and be accountable to others in spiritual fellowship.

3. A One-woman Man | Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6

The requirement that the pastor be "the husband of but one wife" or "married only once" (NRSV) has been the subject of long and anxious debate.

The pastor is to be above reproach in relation to women. In reading this verse in the Greek, it does not say, "the husband of one wife;" rather, it says, "a one-woman man." Paul begins his list of moral character with this characteristic because it is in this area, above all others, where leaders seem most prone to fall. The failure to be a "one-woman man" has put more men out of the ministry than any other sin.

At Blue Mountain College Dr. James Travis used to tell us "preacher boys" that the "three D's" will ruin a man's ministry – Dirt, Dames, and Debt!

By saying that the pastor should be a one-woman man does not exclude single men from the ministry. If that was his point here, he would have disqualified himself, since he was single, at least at this time (I Corinthians 7:8).

What does "one-woman man" mean? Several possibilities have been given:

- Only one wife at a time.
- Never divorced or remarried.
- Never remarried even after the death of the wife.
- Marital faithfulness.

I believe Paul had this fourth option in mind. He is not referring to a leader's marital status; but, rather, to the issue of his moral, sexual behavior. Many men married only once are not one-women men. Many with one wife are unfaithful to that wife, at least in their minds and fantasies.

To be a one-woman man means to put your wife first in your affections, to center your thoughts around her. She must be first and there can be no number two. This is a positive statement about loyalty and faithfulness. So this is a moral qualification, not simply a marital one.

A one-woman man is a man devoted in his heart and mind to the woman who is his wife. He loves, desires, and thinks only of her. He maintains sexual purity in both his thought life and conduct.

A spiritual leader is not a flirtatious man, but one who is content with his wife. Why is that important? Because if a man is not faithful to his wife, how can he be trusted to be faithful to his obligations elsewhere? If a man cheats on his wife, where else will he cheat?

Here are some questions we ought to ask about potential leaders:

1. Is he a flirt? Does he have a roving eye?
2. Are his affections centered on his wife?
3. Does he demonstrate affection for and loyalty to his wife in ways others can see?
4. Is his marriage a model for others to follow?

5. Is he above reproach in his dealings with the opposite sex?
6. Is his life free from pornography in every form?

4. Temperate | Timothy 3:2 (Vigilant (KJV))

The Greek word for “temperate” originally meant “wine-less.” When Paul uses the word here, he means something like “even-tempered,” “clear-headed,” or “balanced.” It refers to a man in whom nothing muddies or muddles his senses. In that sense it certainly touches the use of alcohol, but it goes far beyond it. While it is true that wine “makes man’s heart glad” (Psalm 104:15), it also has the potential for great harm. That is why it was commonly diluted with water in biblical times.

A temperate person is cool, calm, and collected, especially in a moment of crises. He is not easily rattled under pressure; he doesn’t fall apart when his world falls apart; he doesn’t lose his emotional equilibrium when the rug is suddenly pulled out from under him; he demonstrates courage in the face of difficult circumstances.

Four qualities are evident in people of courage:

1. Bravery in the face of danger – “I won’t be held back by fear.”
2. Steadfast in the face of opposition – “I won’t give up.”
3. Action in the face of resistance – “I won’t be intimidated.”
4. Optimism in the face of despair – “I won’t lose heart.”

5. Sober-minded | Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8

This word describes a person who is self-controlled. He is well-disciplined and knows how to correctly order his priorities. He is serious about spiritual things and views the world through God’s eyes. He is not rash in judgment, but thoughtful, earnest, and cautious. He is not given to extremes and keeps his balance when life throws him a curve-ball. He is a great man to have around when a tough decision needs to be made because he doesn’t jump to conclusions or act solely on the basis of his emotions.

6. Of Good Behavior | Timothy 3:2

This word carries the idea of living an orderly lifestyle. His life is not to be in a state of continual confusion.

7. Hospitable | Timothy 3:2

This word means “to love strangers.” It does not refer to entertaining friends, but showing hospitality to strangers. The minister must be friendly, outgoing, welcoming to strangers and new people. He should have an open heart and an open home. In the New Testament days there were no hotels comparable to those we are familiar with, and the roadside inns were scarce, dirty, and unsafe. So Christian travelers, especially itinerant Christian preachers, needed to be accommodated by the pastor and his wife. The word also carries the idea of being approachable and available. (Matthew 25:37-40).

8. Able to Teach | Timothy 3:2

This is the only qualification that relates specifically to the pastor’s giftedness and function. “Able to teach” appears only here and 2 Timothy 2:24 in the New Testament. A pastor must be a skilled teacher who works hard in his studies and proclamation. The primary duty of a pastor is to preach and teach the Word of God. It was for that purpose that they were given to the Church (Ephesians 4:11, 14).

Some may wonder why Paul includes this qualification in the list of moral qualities. He does so because effective teaching is woven into the moral character of the teacher. What a man IS cannot be divorced from what he SAYS. He must practice what he preaches and teaches.

“Able to teach” carries two meanings: having a teachable spirit and able to teach others.

- A teachable spirit – eagerness to learn.
- A good working knowledge of the Bible.
- A willingness to share spiritual truth with others.
- A willingness to confront false teaching when necessary.

What word would you use to describe Jesus Christ? Savior? Lord? Redeemer? The gospel writers use one word more than any other to describe Christ. More than 60 times the gospels call Jesus – Teacher. He taught

by the seashore, on the mount, on the plains, in a boat, in the synagogue, and in the Temple. He taught large crowds, small crowds, and individuals who came with questions.

What criteria identifies a man as a skilled teacher?

a. He must have the spiritual gift of teaching.

It is not natural ability that makes one a good teacher. The gift of teaching is spirit-given and enables one to teach effectively the truths of the Word of God. That's why someone may be a great school teacher, but a poor Bible teacher.

Although all pastors are to have the gift of teaching, spiritual leaders are not all equally gifted in teaching. Some will do well in front of a large class, others will do better in a small group or in one-on-one discipleship. Not all will teach the same way, but all must be able to do it in some way.

b. He must have a deep understanding of doctrine.

1 Timothy 4:16: "If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourishing in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed."

c. He must have an attitude of humility.

2 Timothy 2:24-25: "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth."

To teach with an arrogant attitude would only serve to undermine the very truths being taught.

d. He is to live a life of holiness 1 Timothy 4:12; 6:11

"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 ... But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness."

e. He must be a diligent student of Scripture 2 Timothy 2:15

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth."

If the man of God is lazy in the study, he will be lazy in the pulpit.

f. He must avoid error

1 Timothy 4:7: "But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness."

1 Timothy 6:20: "O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge."

2 Timothy 2:16: "But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness."

g. He must have strong courage and consistent convictions.

1 Timothy 1:18-19: "This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare."

1 Timothy 4:11, 13: "These things command and teach. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."

2 Timothy 4:7: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

As a teacher it is often hard to measure your effectiveness by what you are doing today. Sometime you are just sowing seed, sometimes you are watering, and it may seem like harvest will never come. Teaching is like that. You plant a lot of seed, you water, you pray a lot, and you sit back and wait. Not all seed will come up, but some will.

9. "Not Addicted to Wine" 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7

The phrase Paul uses literally means "not lingering over wine." It is variously translated as "not a lover of wine," "not addicted to strong drink," "not a drunkard," "not excessive in his use of wine."

Godly leaders must be above reproach in the use of alcohol. A generation ago it was a given that if you belonged to an evangelical

church, you didn't drink. Period. End of discussion. Drinking was something other people did. We didn't want to be a part of it. But that consensus against social drinking has largely evaporated in the last few years.

While the Bible has a great deal to say about intoxicating beverages and the dangers of abuse, it does not lay down a binding rule about drinking intoxicating beverages per se – saying, “Thou shall not drink alcohol.” Therefore, a personal choice is necessary.

I want to make it clear that where the Bible makes no binding rule about alcohol, we must be honest about it and we must not either. Therefore my appeal is to your heart and to your head.

In ancient times most people consumed wine, since it was the staple liquid to drink. The water was impure, and mixing the wine with water not only significantly diluted the alcohol content, but purified the water.

William Barclay points out that in the ancient world the water supply was often inadequate and dangerous and although wine was the most common of all drinks, when wine was used, it was drunk in the proportion of two parts wine to three parts of water to avoid any evil effect.

Timothy was even reluctant to take the mixed wine, so as not to set an example that could cause someone to stumble. Thus, he was committed to abstinence, and Paul had to tell him, “No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments” (I Timothy 5:23). Drinking only water was contributing to his poor health.

Although the Bible does not tell us we cannot not drink, we ought to think twice before we do so because of other Bible principles:

- a. Proverbs 20:1: “Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler.”
- b. Galatians 5:19-21: “The acts of the sinful nature are obvious ... drunkenness.”
- c. I Thessalonians 5:22: “Abstain from all appearance of evil.”
- d. Romans 14:13, 21: “Make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way ... It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.”

10. Not Violent I Timothy 3:3 (No striker) – KJV)

A minister must not be combative, contentious, or quarrelsome. A minister must not be a person who strikes other people or who becomes easily upset, irritated, or aggravated with others.

He uses neither hand nor tongue against anyone. He is not to be a bully. He may never lay a finger on anyone, but if his manner is threatening, or if he picks on sections of the congregation from the safety of the pulpit in a quarrelsome way, he is guilty of homiletical bullying. The pulpit is no place for a bully.

A “striker” is a person who is easily angered. Such a person tends to be assertive, manipulative, demanding, and highly critical of others.

This term warns against persons who use physical, verbal, mental, or emotional abuse to get their way. They are masters of intimidation, quick to raise their voice, quicker still to raise their fist, always ready to do whatever it takes to have their own way. Such folks have a Rambo mentality.

Instead, ministers must react to situations calmly, coolly, and gently (2 Timothy 2:24-25). A leader, when wronged, must have no thought of retaliation. He is to be a peacemaker (Romans 12:18).

11. Free From the Love of Money I Timothy 3:3 (Not covetous)

A minister must not be a lover of worldly gain or possessions. He must not be a person who has entered the ministry as a profession or as a livelihood (yes, throughout history bad men have tried to make money out of ministry). He must be supported and given a livelihood by the church, but he is not to be in the ministry in order to get a livelihood.

He must not be a person who is out to get, but a person who is committed to giving. Notice the warning Paul gave in I Timothy 6:10, 17-19.

Maxey Jarman was a Christian businessman who supported many worthy causes, including Billy Graham Crusades. He freely gave his money to benefit God's work around the world. But the day came when his company collapsed and with it his personal fortune. Someone asked him, “Mr. Jarman, don't you regret giving all that money away? Think what a difference it would make if you had it all back.” To which he replied, “Oh no, I don't regret any of the money I have given away. After all, I only lost what I kept for myself.”

What a wonderful perspective on life. “I only lost what I kept for myself.”

12. Gentleness | Timothy 3:3 (Patient – KJV)

This word describes a person who considers the whole picture before acting. In making a decision, he judges both the letter and the spirit of the Law. He is willing to lose even when he is right. He is willing to yield, willing to forgive, willing to overlook.

Gentleness includes maintaining a steady emotional balance during times when you might prefer to fly off the handle. You can't be gentle while you are screaming, stomping your feet, and calling people names. Gentleness is power under control. It is not giving up or giving in; it's staying calm, keeping your cool, looking for alternatives, and keeping your eye on the goal.

Gentleness is an important part of God's character. Listen to Psalm 103:8, 10:

"The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in mercy ... He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities."

Gentleness is important for the pastor to have because spiritual sheep can be exasperating at times. There was a seminar several years ago for pastors entitled, *How to Handle Criticism, Conflict, and Difficult People in the Church*. One session focused on the most common troublemakers in the church. The seminar leader gave names to each one, then explained how they act and why, and how to deal with them. The list was both instructive and suggestive:

- The Charging Bull – The Sneaky Snake
- The Roaring Lion – The Wimpy Weasel
- The Heckling Hen – Chicken Little
- The Creeping Crab – The King of the Hill

Then the instructor said, "Remember, we're all different people some of the time."

13. Not Quarrelsome | Timothy 3:3

Paul has already said that a minister is not to be violent. Why would he mention this requirement again? Because, if a pastor can't get along with folks, he is not going to have much of a ministry.

Other translations say, "not pugnacious," "not combative," "not thin-skinned." Some people just love to pick fights. They love to argue, to mix it up, to trade insults and put other people down. Such a man is the master of the cutting remark, the king of the snappy comeback.

Proverbs 20:3: "It is to a man's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel."

Do you know how to spot this person? In any group this man dominates the discussion by arguing every point in the ground. When challenged, he sends out the clear message, "My way or the highway." By contrast, the godly leader is uncontentious, willing to listen, not argumentative, not given to a fighting spirit. He is a peacemaker.

14. One Who Rules His Own Household Well | Timothy 3:4-5

The pastor's home, like his personal life must be exemplary. The most important quality a leader can demonstrate is not intelligence, a forceful, winning personality, administrative skills, courage, humor, tact, or any other similar natural attribute. Those all play a part, but the most desirable quality for any leader is integrity, and the most important place for a man to live out integrity is at home and with his family. Pastors must not only preach the truth, but also live out truth.

Throughout history there have been those who advocated celibacy for spiritual leaders. However, the Word of God assumes that a leader will be married and have a family and that they are to be successful leaders in the family.

The word "manage" means "to stand before and lead." Why does Paul bring up the family? Because the family is the best training ground for leadership. Spiritual leadership begins at home. The family is like a church in miniature, and the father is the pastor of his own family.

Notice the penetrating question Paul asks: "If one does not know how to rule (manage) his own household well, how will he take care of the church of God (which is the household of God). To rule or manage his household well involves many things, including setting priorities, planning for the future, providing what is needed, and handling crisis situations.

"Having his children in submission with all reverence" means that his children are under control and respectful, bringing honor to their parents. The home is a miniature of the church: the home is the proving ground for leadership in the church.

Some fathers DEMAND respect and wonder why they don't get it; others COMMAND respect by the combination of love and

godliness that they model.

Listen – really listen – to your children. Set limits. Say “No” when needed and back up your words. Model the right kind of life: our children copy us.

16. “Having a Good Reputation” I Timothy 3:7

The minister must meet one very important community qualification. He must have a “good report of them that are without;” that is, he must have a good testimony before the world. A man chosen to lead the church must maintain a good reputation and testimony in the community for righteousness, moral character, love, kindness, generosity, and goodness.

As a Christian, I bear the name of my Heavenly Father. I have a sacred obligation to honor

His name and to increase His reputation in the world. Matthew 5:16 says, “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

I Timothy 3:8-13 THE PURPOSE OF DEACONS

I remind you that the first seven verses of I Timothy 3 deals with the qualifications for the office of elder or pastor. Then, in I Timothy 3:8-13, Paul deals with the qualifications for the office of deacon.

The first word in verse 8 is “likewise.” That is, deacons are to be “elder-like.”

Let me remind you why there was a need for deacons in the Church. In Acts 6 we are told that deacons were needed to assist the Apostles because the Apostles were spending so much time in serving the thousands of new converts that they had little time for praying, studying the Word, preparing to preach, and then preaching the Word. Peter had to say that the main task of praying and studying the Word was so important that they had to set these two things as the priority of their lives.

Let me point out that all the way through the New Testament, there is a close relationship between pastor (elder) and deacon. There must be a close working relationship between pastor and deacon if the work and ministry of the Church is to be successful.

The attitude and spirit of BOTH pastor and deacon is that of servant-hood. Both pastor and deacon must be mature men and the servants of the Church.

Jesus is our Example! He is Savior and Lord; yet, His spirit was that of a servant! Listen to our Lord's great attitude of humility. Our Lord's disciples were arguing over who would be the greatest in the Lord's kingdom and who would sit on His right side and on His left side. Now listen to Mark 10:42-43:

“But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, you know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

There is one action in the Passion Week of Christ that exemplified the absolute complete humility of Christ. It was the act of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. Jesus says to them, “I am washing your feet and I want you to do as I do.” It is not a command for that to become an ordinance of the Church. The idea is what can better exemplify humble service than the King, the Creator of all, the Sustainer of all, getting on His knees with His towel and washing off the dirty feet of these disciples who had just hours earlier had been jockeying for position asking, “Lord, can I sit on your right hand?” What can be more gracious than that act?

In Acts 6 the seven men were chosen to minister to the day-to-day needs of believers and in particular to the needs of the poor, the widows and widowers, and the sick of the Church.

Look at any church today and if the deacons are ministering as they should in the church and to the congregation, you will find them weekly welcoming you at the door. They are at the church early, checking on the heating and cooling and making sure everything is in order. They will be lifting their

voices in prayer for those in need and supporting the church's activities. They support the pastor with words of encouragement. Deacons are the backbone of every true church.

Let me outline these verses for you:

1. The Personal Qualifications for Deacons I Timothy 3:8
2. The Spiritual Qualifications for Deacons I Timothy 3:9-10
3. The Family Qualifications for Deacons I Timothy 3:11-12
4. The Results or Rewards for Deacons I Timothy 3:13

The Personal and Spiritual Qualifications for deacons are the same as the qualifications for elders and we have already looked at those. Paul does add some Family Qualifications for deacons, which we will look at now.

1. Deacons are to be “reverent” (verse 8) – a man of dignity and worthy of respect; a godly man.
2. Deacons are not to be “doubled-tongued” (verse 8). He can be trusted in what he says. He must not say one thing to some people and something else to others. He is not to talk out of both sides of his mouth. He is to be credible and honest in his speech. He is a man who speaks truth. He is not a hypocrite in the manner by which he discusses things.
3. Deacons are not to be addicted to wine or greedy for money.
4. Deacons are to “hold the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience.” The “mystery of the faith” is given in verse 16. He is to understand, believe, and practice the fundamentals of the faith.
5. Deacons are to be tested or proven in their character and service by the Church and found to be blameless.

Now when we come to verse 11, there is some debate, because the word translated “wives” can also be translated “women.” Some say that Paul is not referring to the wives of the deacons, but to an office for women who serve as deacons or deaconesses. For me the question is settled when Paul says the deacon is to be “the husband of one wife.” How can a deaconess be the husband of one wife?

I think Paul is saying that the deacon's wife is to be just as godly as her husband. She is to be just as faithful to the things of God as her husband is.

The deacon's wife must be able to control her tongue. She must not “slander” others or spread malicious gossip or cut people down. Nor should she demand that her deacon husband tell her everything that went on in the deacon's meeting. There may be some things that go on in the deacon's meeting that may need to be kept private – at least for a while.

The deacon's wife, then, must not be a gossip or a person who goes about talking about others, stirring up mischief and disturbance.

The wife of a deacon must be faithful in all things: completely trustworthy as a wife and mother and as a believer. She must be faithful to the Lord ...

- in her personal devotion and loyalty to the Lord.
- in her call as a wife and mother.
- in her commitment to the church and its services and ministry.
- In her ministry in serving with her husband.

There are two things one can expect if the deacon has really met his responsibilities as found in verse 13:

1. They will gain a good standing and testimony before God and man.
2. He gains great boldness or confidence and security in the faith. He experiences more and more assurance and freedom in the Spirit of God.

I Timothy 3:14-16

THE APPEARANCE OF GOD

Paul now turns from the qualifications for the pastorate to the church in which the pastors serve.

In verses 14-15 Paul tells Timothy why he is writing this letter to him. He writes so that “he might know how he ought to behave himself in the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

Paul begins by telling Timothy WHY God established His Church in the world. Paul gives three descriptive expressions of the Church, each of which illustrates a different aspect of the Church.

1. “The household of God” I Timothy 3:15

The word “house” (KJV) or “household” does not refer to the building of the Church, but to the household of the Church, to the people of the Church. The Church is a body of people who have committed themselves to form a family of people, a family centered around God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

By new birth of the Spirit we become members of the family of God, related to Him. God is the Father; Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father; but we, the followers of God, are the adopted children of God. Each person who truly follows God is a true member of the Church, that is, of the family of God.

2. The Church is “of the Living God.”

The word “Church” (ekklesia) means “a company of people who have been called out by God. God is called “the living God” in deliberate contrast to the lifeless idols of the heathen. He is the Living God who actually speaks to the human heart and calls people to follow Him and to live for Him.

But where does the Living God live?

– Joshua 3:10: “The Living God is among you.”

– Exodus 25:8; 29:45-46: “I will dwell among you and be your God, and you shall be my people.”

– 2 Corinthians 6:16: “For you are the temple of the Living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them, I will be their God, and they shall be My people.’” (What should be our response? 2 Cor 7:1+).

– Ephesians 2:22: You are “a dwelling place in which God lives by His Spirit.”

3. The Church is the “pillar and ground of the truth.”

The purpose of the pillar is not only to hold the roof firm, but to thrust it high so that it can be clearly seen even from a distance. The truth is to be held high so that it is not hidden from the world.

The Church rests on the truth, depends on the truth, cannot exist without the truth. The Church depends on the truth for its existence; the truth depends on the Church for its defense and proclamation.

Notice the word “mystery” in verse 16.

To the world's mind a mystery is an unsalvageable problem. To the believer in Christ a mystery is something that human reason could not figure out – not by human reason or learning or scholarship or research. It has to be revealed by God because it is known by God and will remain forever secret until God reveals it to His people.

I have picked out seven of the greatest mysteries of the New Testament and of the Christian faith.

1. The Mystery of the Incarnation – I Timothy 3:16; Matthew 1:22-25

2. The Mystery of the Indwelling Christ – Colossians 1:26-27

3. The Mystery of the New Birth

When Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again, what did Nicodemus say? “How can these things be?” (John 3:9). “I don't understand!” I don't understand either. All I know is that when men are born again, he is a new man, old things have passed away, all things have become new and we have experienced a touch of God's power (2 Corinthians 5:17).

4. The Mystery that Gentiles, as well as Jews, can be Saved – Ephesians 3:5-6, 9-10

5. The Mystery of Iniquity that now Works – 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12

6. The Mystery of the Resurrection from the Dead – I Corinthians 16:51-53

7. The Mystery of Godliness – I Timothy 3:16 (which we will look at now)

“Without controversy” means it is indisputable, undeniable, beyond any question. It is a mystery to the non-Christian, but not to the

disciples of Jesus Christ. God has hidden such things from the wise and prudent, but the whole supernatural story of redemption through the incarnation of the Son of God has been revealed to us babes! That's the only reason we can know it. Sovereign Mercy has enlightened us.

The Mystery of Godliness is that God has done six wonderful things for man and has now revealed them to saved men (I Timothy 3:16).

A. "God was manifest (revealed) in the flesh."

God actually became a man of flesh and blood in the Person of Jesus Christ. God appeared in a body.

At His incarnation He was being introduced to us. His birth in Bethlehem did not mark His beginning as birth marks the beginning of every other creature. The world had been in ignorance that God was eternally triune, that the Father was God, the Son was God, and the Holy Spirit was God, and yet that these three were one God.

The world did not know that Christ already existed. Before He appeared in a body, before He was born of the virgin Mary, He existed in the form of God. His birth was God's way of making Him known to men.

The pre-existence of Christ is exactly what we have in the prologue of John's Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God" (John 1:1-2).

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are distinct persons. But notice that Jesus became flesh forever. That union of deity with true humanity is indissoluble. He is still God today and man. There are permanently two natures in the one Person of the Son of God. The dust of the earth is on the throne of the universe.

By becoming man, He experienced all the trials and sufferings of men; therefore, He is able to secure and deliver men through all the trials of life.

Jesus Christ also became man in order to take away the sins of man – I Peter 2:24; I John 3:5, 8.

B. Christ was justified or vindicated in the Spirit

Why did Christ need to be vindicated? Because as a man, Christ took on our low condition. He looked indistinguishable from us sinners. Judas needed to go right up to Him in Gethsemane and point Him out to the chief priest by kissing Him. Jesus did not have a continual glow about Him, nor did He wear a distinctive white robe, nor was He taller than all the rest. He was found in fashion as a man and was in appearance as other men – except for the episode of the transformation.

So how was He credible?

– The Spirit of God enabled Christ to live a sinless and perfect life. Christ proved that He was the Son of God by living such a life.

– John 8:46: "Which of you convicts me of sin?"

– 2 Corinthians 5:21: "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin."

– 1 John 3:5: "And in Him is no sin."

The Spirit of God vindicated Christ by giving Him His words and His works.

John 7:46: "Never a man spoke like this man." "He spoke as one having authority."

John 2:11: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him."

John 3:2: Nicodemus said, "No man can do these miracles that Thou does, except God be with Him."

The Spirit of God vindicated Christ by raising Him from the dead – Romans 1:4.

C. Christ was seen by angels

What does it mean, "seen of angels?" The angels had never seen God like that before. They had seen God in holiness, in majestic and sovereign power, in wisdom and in justice, but they never thought of God in the form of a man, crying over the bereaved, suffering with the sick, dying for the lost.

And when the angels looked upon Him, it was in adoration and glory. They now saw Him in love, sympathy, and such understanding.

The angels were involved:

- in the preparation for His birth – Luke 1:26
- in His birth – Luke 2:8, 13
- in His temptations – Mark 1:13
- in His trials – Luke 22:43
- in His resurrection – Matthew 28:2ff
- in His ascension – Acts 1:10-11

D. Christ was preached to the Gentiles, to all the nations of the world

Christ is not the exclusive Savior of the Jews or any other nation. He is the Savior of all people and all nations, both Jew and Gentile alike.

E. Christ was believed on in the world-wide

Spurgeon calls this the most glorious of the six points. Christ may have become man and died and was risen, but if sinners didn't believe, then it would have all been to no avail.

Peter goes out on the day of Pentecost, preaches the Word, and 3,000 forsake their ways of self-salvation and cried out to Almighty God to forgive them and save them.

It is still amazing to me when I preach and witness men under conviction of sin and then see them turn to Christ for salvation. Only a miracle of grace can explain that.

F. Christ was received up to glory Mark 16:19

When that extraordinary life was over, it was to glory He returned. From glory He came and to that same glory He returned, but now as the God-Man forever.

I Timothy 4:1-5

FRAUDULENT FAITH

The Church's role is to be the guardian of the truth; to keep the Word of God pure; not to mix the pure Word of God with man's ideas or man's feelings of what the pure Word of God ought to say. But Paul says here that there will be a falling away from the pure truth of the Word of God as men who teach the Word of God slip into the teaching of God's Word, their own feeling about what God has said.

When will this falling away or this apostasy occur?

Paul says it will take place "in latter or later times." But we need to realize that Paul is referring to that period from the first coming of Christ until His return. Apostasy will exist throughout that period, reaching a climax shortly before Christ returns.

The Holy Spirit through the Scriptures has repeatedly warned of the danger of apostasy (Matthew 24:4-12; Acts 20:29-30; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12; Hebrews 3:12; 5:11 – 6:8; 2 Peter 3:3; 1 John 2:18; Jude 18).

How do we know apostasy will take place?

Notice I Timothy 4:1: "The Holy Spirit expressly says" ...explicitly says ... clearly says ... specifically says ... plainly says ... distinctly says ... so that there can be no question about what is being said. False teachers will arise in the latter times.

False teachers commit four tragic errors:

1. False teachers "depart from the faith: or "abandon their faith."

Notice that these that abandon their faith are within the Church.

He is not talking about unbelievers out in the world.

When Billy Graham first began preaching, there was another young preacher who preached along-side of him named Charles Templeton. Graham himself described him as more charismatic than he, much smarter than he, knew the Bible better than he, was a better speaker than he. Folks predicted that Templeton would be far better known than Graham. But Templeton began to doubt God.

During World War II Templeton saw the destruction of war. He saw the crippled men who came back from war. He began to ask himself, "If there is a God, how could He let this happen." Templeton began to study the writings of other atheists, like Darwin. Finally, he began to teach and preach that there was no God and tried to get Graham to come over to his way of thinking. Thank God, Graham's faith in God became stronger. Graham went to see

Templeton on his death bed and he told Billy that he still couldn't believe in God, but then he added, "I must admit, though, sometimes I do miss Him."

How does that happen? Slowly and gradually.

Imagine yourself in a room with walls that are papered bright green. You walk to an adjoining room where the walls are green, but the shade has just a slight, almost undetectable touch of blue in it. You enter a third room, bluer than the second. Again the difference is too small to be noticeable. After passing through fifty rooms, each slightly bluer than the last, someone hands you a sample of the wallpaper in the room where you started. You are astonished by how green it is. Suddenly you realize that the room you are now in is not green at all! It is blue!

Something like this often happens when people move away from Christ. Subtle influences gradually edge one away from pure belief to that which is ultimately not belief at all. This happens to many. The tragedy is that their departure is so imperceptible that they did not know their belief had changed.

In 1969 a new law came into our nation. It was the "No Fault Divorce Law." It began to be easier and easier to get a divorce. In the year the law went into effect, the divorce rate was 20 percent. Because in part to that law and the ease of getting a divorce, the divorce rate now is 50 percent.

Our nation has just passed the "Same-sex Marriage" act. Imagine where that law will take us. It will affect everything, our schools, our workplaces, our churches, etc. We have invited the judgment of God on our nation.

2. False teachers will follow deceiving spirits and the teaching of devils.

The method they use is not a frontal attack, not a clear or loud declaration against the truth. They mix some truth with error. Their method is to:

- seduce – lure – persuade
- deceive – entice – charm
- delude – attract – appear as light and truth

3. False teachers will be like hypocritical liars.

They teach something different from what the Scriptures says, and they know it. They know they are not teaching what the Scripture says and some of them take pride in their stand against what they call "a literal interpretation" of Scripture. Some even mock and poke fun at those who believe and hold to the truth of Scripture.

- "Speaking lies" means speaking and teaching what is contrary to the Scriptures.
- "In hypocrisy" means the teacher KNOWS that he is teaching contrary to what the

Scripture says.

4. False teachers will have their consciences seared with guilt, that is cauterized, hardened, and made insensitive. It doesn't bother most false teachers to teach contrary to the truth of Scripture.

Here is an example of their false teaching. Paul mentions marriage and foods – I Timothy 4:3-5.

They were teaching that an unmarried life was more spiritual than a married life. That you could serve the Lord to a greater degree if you were single. One reason for that is they considered sexual relationship as a pleasure and all pleasure, even in marriage, leads you to a partial commitment to God.

Of course, this is contrary to Scripture.

- Genesis 2:18 are the words of God: “It is not good that man should be alone.”
- In Matthew 19:1-9 Jesus put His seal of approval on marriage.
- In I Corinthians 7:1-24 Paul affirmed the biblical basis for marriage.

At the heart of this false teaching is a conviction that self-denial somehow pleases God and you will gain favor through self-denial.

The subtle difference is that self-denial is an attempt to earn favor apart from faith.

The other example involves food – not eating certain foods, especially meat that had been sacrificed to idols.

Notice I Timothy 4:3b-5. Thanksgiving is a recognition that you don't possess anything in yourself, that everything comes as a gift from a loving God. God gave us these things for our enjoyment and enrichment. He did not give them that we might practice denial of them; He wanted us to have them. But God does want us to give Him thanks for what He gives us.

This is one of the clearest teachings on giving thanks before we eat our meal in the Bible.

I Timothy 4:6-16

A GOOD MINISTER OF CHRIST JESUS

In I Timothy 4:6 Paul encourages Timothy to be “a good minister of Jesus Christ.” We need to understand that in the phrase “a good minister of Christ Jesus,” Paul is not thinking of one who is a member of the clergy, like a pastor of a church standing up in front of a congregation. The word that is used here is actually the word “deacon,” rather than minister. It is actually referring to one who serves and in the widest sense includes everyone who is in any ministry of teaching, leading, or disciplining someone.

The number one requirement of being a good minister can be summed up in one word – godliness (I Timothy 4:7). “Exercise yourself unto godliness” . . . “Train yourself unto godliness.”

- The basic meaning for godliness is respect and reverence for God. Godly people are God-fearing people.
- A good minister does all he can to lift up Jesus Christ.
- The word “godliness” is used 15 times in the New Testament; 13 of those times are in the Pastoral Letters, 9 of them are in I Timothy.

David said in Psalm 16:8, “I have set the Lord always before me.”

In Titus 2:12 God calls on us to deny or renounce ungodliness and to live a godly life in the present age.

In I Timothy 4:12 Paul tells Timothy to “be an example of godliness.” The word “example” in this verse literally means the impression left by a blow or stamp. So Paul told Timothy to leave an impression and exact pattern of what believers are to be.

So what does a “Good Minister” look like?

1. A Good Minister is, Above all, a Servant I Timothy 4:6

The word “good minister” could also be translated “noble” or “excellent.” There are two Greek words translated “servant” – one is “doulos” and has the idea of submission; the other is “diakonos” which carries the idea of “usefulness.” Those who serve Christ are called to excellence in their usefulness to Christ cause.

2. A Good Minister is Committed to God's Word I Timothy 4:6c-9

A Good Minister nourishes himself on the words of the faith – I Timothy 4:6c

The Greek uses the definite article “THE faith,” meaning the teaching of the Word of God. True doctrines are doctrines which are based on the Scriptures. Have nothing to do with godless and silly myths (verse 7).

“Timothy, watch what you are feeding on! Be nourished on the Words of the faith and good doctrine. Don't live on spiritual junk food.”

What are you nourished by daily? TV movies? Best selling novels? Soap operas? The Dow Jones averages? What is your habitual input in your life?

A good minister doesn't just study and meditate on the Word enough to prepare a sermon, but he feeds his

heart, soul, and mind as he thinks deeply and carefully on divine truth.

An excellent minister must read the Word, study it, meditate on it, and master its contents. Only then can he “be approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the Word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

Exercise yourself toward (for the purpose of) godliness.” The word translated “exercise” is from the word we get our word “gymnasium” or “gymnastic.” Every Greek city had its gymnasium where the youth of the city ages 16-18 spent much of their time.

There was a great emphasis on physical activity and the glory of winning athletic events. Look at pictures of Greek sculpture and you will sense immediately their admiration for the well-defined, muscular bodies. There was great emphasis on the physique.

Paul says, “Timothy, I’m an older man and I’m telling you that bodily exercise profits little” – or as your margin may read, “a little while.” “Those muscles you are working on are temporary. They won’t last long.”

According to a recent study, for every hour one spends working out, he will live one hour longer. But think about it: The hour he gained was wasted in a hot, sweaty, stinky gym!

If you have to choose between working out and worshiping, opt for worship every time. If you have to choose between Bible study and bodybuilding, always go with Bible study. It’s good to jog and to do deep knee bends, presses, and curls. But I wish people would put the same emphasis on jogging their memory of Scripture, bending their knees in prayer, pressing on in the faith, and curling up with The Good Book – the Word of God!

A life of godliness is a win/win situation because those who choose to follow such a life will be blessed both presently and throughout eternity. (Note verse 8.)

The Christian faith does not undervalue this present life; nor does it look upon it with scorn and contempt as though it were nothing; nor does it overvalue it as though the only object in life is to live it up now. But the Christian faith values both lives: This one that we now live in the earth, and that one which is to come.

Like Jesus would say: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; then all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

“You hold in your hands the greatest Book ever written, the most amazing Book in all the world, the only place in all humanity, in all human history, where you are given the bedrock, undiluted truth about life. The Word of God gives you the insights of God into life, the explanation of who you are, what God intended you to be and what will fulfill you. No book is more important to learn from, to feed upon, than the Word of God. It is a big Book; it takes a lot of reading, a lot of study, a lot of thinking and meditating to grasp what it says, but when you do, it will change your life; it will lead you into fullness, freedom, liberty, and beauty. That is what the Bible is for. So to feed upon this Word is tremendously significant and important. That is why Paul stresses upon Timothy to stay with the Book!”

Notice I Timothy 4:8. Yes, bodily exercise is profitable, but godliness is more profitable, far more profitable. The focus is on godliness. The reason is clear: godliness bears fruit – great fruit – both in this life and in the life to come. God promises to bless the godly person now while he walks upon this earth, and eternally when he receives the life to come.

My hope is built on nothing less

Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

I dare not trust the sweetest frame

But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

Verses 9-10 have caused some real problems because of the phrase, “because we trust in the living God, who is (the) Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.” In what sense is God the Savior of all and especially of believers”?

This does not imply that everybody will be saved; that is Universalism. Nor can it express the difference between the potential (God's desire to save) and the actual (God saving), since the text says He IS the Savior of all, not just that He wants to be.

Paul gives us another verse that is similar to this verse in I Timothy 2:6 when he said Christ “gave Himself a

ransom FOR ALL.” Not all will be ransomed though His death would be sufficient for all. Christ’s death is therefore unlimited in its sufficiency, but limited in its application.

All men will not be saved in the spiritual and eternal sense; yet, the Greek word “especially” must mean that all men enjoy God’s salvation in some way like those who believe enjoy His salvation. The simple explanation is that God is the Savior of all men, only a temporal sense, while of believers in an eternal sense.

Paul’s point is that while God graciously delivers believers from sin’s condemnation and penalty because He was their substitute, all men experience some earthly benefits from the goodness of God. Those benefits are:

a. Common grace

This is a term that describes God’s goodness shown to all mankind universally.

– Psalm 145:9: “The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works.”

– Matthew 5:45: “ ... for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”

b. Compassion – God shows His love to undeserving, unregenerate sinners. God constantly warns sinners to repent because He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 18:31-32).

c. The Gospel invitation is offered to all – Revelation 22:17

3. A Good Minister Teaches with Authority I Timothy 4:11

Paul’s command to Timothy contrasts sharply with much contemporary preaching. Preaching in our day is often entertaining, but seldom convicting; often popular but seldom powerful; often interesting, but less often transforming. A faithful servant of the Lord is bold in confronting sin, unbelief, and disobedience, but his boldness is tempered with gentleness and never causes him to be abusive or ungracious. Nevertheless, every sermon should have an unmistakable tone of authority. He is not afraid to boldly proclaim the Word of God and let it do its perfect work.

4. A Good Minister is a Model of Spiritual Virtue I Timothy 4:12

Timothy was to be an example to the believers. Timothy was a young man (maybe in his thirties); therefore, there was the possibility that some in the church would have difficulty in accepting his ministry. How could he overcome the opposition to his being so young? There was only one way: he had to prove that he was mature well beyond his years. He had to live a mature life, a life that would be an example to the believers.

Setting an example of godly living that others can follow is the single greatest tool of leadership. When a manifest pattern of godliness is missing, the power is drained out of preaching, leaving it a hollow, empty shell. A minister’s life must reinforce what he says or he may as well not say it. To offset his youthfulness, Paul exhorted Timothy to be an example ... a pattern ... a model to those who believe. By doing so, he would gain the respect of his people.

Paul lists six areas in which Timothy was to make every effort to be an example to the church:

a. In Word or Speech

Timothy, and all ministers, is to be an example in what he said and in the way he said it. He had to control his conversation and tongue at all times, no matter the opposition. A man’s speech reflects what’s in his heart (Matthew 12:34-37). All types of sinful speech must be avoided by the man of God: falsehood, angry speech, impure speech. His speech must be good for edification (Ephesians 4:25-29). Our speech should always be honest and loving.

b. In Conduct

His conduct and behavior is to be disciplined and controlled as he lives his daily life.

c. In Love

Love is to be the motivation of our lives. He is to respond and react toward others in love. The good minister gives his time and energy to the people he is called to serve in self-sacrificing service. He must devote his whole life to seeing them strengthened and built up in the Lord.

d. In Spirit

This refers to how the minister feels inside about those he serves; in his disposition and his attitudes toward

them.

e. In Faith

Faith here does not refer to belief, but to faithfulness and commitment. He is to be loyal to the Lord Jesus and to the church regardless of the demands, hardships, trials, or opposition.

f. In Purity

This refers primarily to sexual purity. His life, his heart, his thought life are to be pure.

5. A Good Minister had a Thoroughly Biblical Ministry I Timothy 4:13

His ministry is to be built on the Scriptures. Three things he is to do in public worship. No matter what else goes on, the local assembly should “give attention:”

a. To Public Reading of the Scriptures

Reading aloud from the Scriptures was to be part of the worship service.

The priest read from the Law in Ezra's day: Nehemiah 8:8: “So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God, and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.

Jesus read from Isaiah in the Nazareth synagogue and Luke 4:16 says that Jesus “stood up to read” the Scriptures.

When Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, he charged them when they got the letter, “to have this letter read to all the brothers” (I Thessalonians 5:27).

b. Exhortation

Exhortation challenges people to apply the truths they have been taught.

c. Teaching

This involves systematic theology. It has to do with exposition of the Scriptures.

6. A Good Minister does not Neglect the Gift that is in him I Timothy 4:14

Each of us has been given gifts by the Spirit. But here's the problem: we spend far too much time trying to strengthen our weaknesses – only to find that in so doing, we weaken our strengths.

7. A Good Minister Continues to Grow, to Make Progress I Timothy 4:15-16

Paul closes by encouraging Timothy in his own spiritual growth. No pastor can lead his people where he has not been himself. The pastor who is not growing is actually going backward, for it is impossible to stand still in the Christian life.

Paul encourages Timothy to take regular inventory of his life. A servant of God can be so busy helping others that he neglects himself and his own spiritual walk.

I Timothy 5:1-25

HOW TO TREAT FOLKS IN THE CONGREGATION Part-1

The Church is described in the New Testament by many metaphors and analogies:

- Sometimes they are referred to as Soldiers in an army;
- Sometimes they are referred to as Members of the body;
- Sometimes they are referred to as Competitors in a race;
- Sometimes as fellow servants in the household of faith.

But more frequently than any other way, the members of the congregation are referred to as members of a family.

God is our Father; Jesus is our elder Brother; we are joint heirs with Him; and we are brothers and sisters in Christ.

These verses picture a family. So, how are we to treat one another in our spiritual family? How are we to treat each other in our

church family? Paul says members of a church family are to treat each other with great, deep, Christian courtesy.

Paul deals with three groups: The Church Family as a whole; The Widows Specifically; and The Leaders Practically.

Paul speaks of the care, the openness, and the love we are to have for one another as believers. But what happens when sin enters the church? Sin must be confronted; disobedience must be dealt with. But HOW is it to be dealt with in the Lord's family? That is the important issue Paul deals with in these verses in Chapter 5.

I. The Church Family as a Whole I Timothy 5:1-2

Paul tells Timothy that the sex and age of the people should determine his attitude toward them. Then Paul lists four groups:

1. Older men: treat as fathers (verse 1).
2. Younger men: treat as brothers (verse 1).
3. Older women: treat as mothers (verse 2).
4. Younger women: treat as sisters (verse 2).

A. Treat older men as a Father (verse 1)

The word elder (KJV) does not refer to the office of elder, but to older men.

Older men who are true Christian believers have more experience and wisdom in dealing with life. That's not to say that they are always right, because they are not. But they do have the wisdom of experience.

Therefore, they are not to be ignored, neglected, bypassed, overlooked, or set aside as useless. They are to be treated as fathers, with affection, respect, and honor. Their ideas, opinions, counsel, and direction are to be sought. They are to be a part of the life and ministry of the church.

The Bible makes it quite clear that older men are to be treated with respect. "Don't sharply rebuke an older man." Don't admonish them harshly or abrasively, for that would be disrespectful. Always preserve an older man's dignity and worth.

The Bible makes it clear that older men are to be treated with respect.

Leviticus 19:32 commands: "You shall rise up before the gray-headed, and honor the aged."

Proverbs 30:17 warns in graphic terms of the consequences of not showing that respect: "The eye that mocks a father and scorns a mother, the ravens of the valley will pick it out, and the young eagles will eat it."

The point is this: if an older man ever needs to be corrected, he is to be corrected and disciplined as a father, not as an enemy. He is to be approached and exhorted, appealed to and pleaded with just as we would our earthly father.

Though we don't compromise the Word or condone sin, we speak with love, respect, and gentleness, as to a father. If rebuke must be given, it must be done gently.

B. Treat younger men as Brothers (Verse 1)

We are not to be offensive or needlessly abrasive with young men either, but we don't have to approach them as gingerly as we would older men. With brothers, we can be more direct and to the point than with fathers. We appeal to them as equals and peers – not with an air of superiority – remembering that their good and God's glory are our goals.

C. Treat older women as Mothers (Verse 2)

A church is totally irresponsible if it ignores its older women who are true Christian believers. Their potential contribution to the lives and fellowship of believers is immeasurable. Older women are to be loved, respected, and protected. Their softness, tenderness, guidance, understanding and energy are to be sought and used by the church.

Again, if an older woman needs correction and discipline, it must not be done in contempt and disrespect, but rather with compassion.

D. Treat young women as Sisters, with all purity (Verse 2)

How should a brother treat his little sister? He should treat her gently, recognizing that she bruises easier than his rowdy friends at the schoolyard. He should protect her, respect her, set an example for her. And he should keep his relationship with her pure, avoiding any suggestion of sensuality or immorality that will cause her to compromise her integrity.

Nothing so easily makes or breaks a pastor as his conduct with women. The book of Proverbs gives some very practical advice on how to maintain purity in relationships with younger women.

- Avoid the look Proverbs 6:25; Job 31:1
- Avoid the flattery Proverbs 5:3; 6:24; 22:14
- Avoid the thoughts Proverbs 6:25
- Avoid the house Proverbs 7:25-27
- Avoid the touch Proverbs 7:13

Father, brother, mother, sister. These are family terms. Co-worker, boss, and employee are nowhere found in this passage. Paul's point is clear – the church is not a corporation. It's a family. We should approach one another with the love modeled by our heavenly Father.

II. The Widows Specifically I Timothy 5:3-16

This is the longest portion of Scripture that deals with widows. The word for widow here is broad enough to encompass those who lost their husbands through death, desertion, divorce, or imprisonment.

Notice the first two words of Verse 3: "Honor widows." The word means "to fix the value" as in our word "honorarium," a price paid to a speaker for services. It also means "to show respect or care," "to support," or "to treat graciously."

Paul has been accused by some of being hard on women. But not so. He uses the word "honor" to show his great respect for them.

God has always designed that women be the special objects of care (which is not true of other world religions who mistreat women). They are to be under the umbrella of male protection, provision and direction.

Did you notice that no command is given to support men who are alone, but special care is given to care for women who are alone?

It is not surprising that the first ministry to develop in the early Church involved the care of widows (Acts 6:1-4; 9:36-41). It was one of the reasons deacons were chosen to help care for them.

Paul has four groups of women in mind who have lost their mates:

1. Widows indeed (verses 3, 5, 16b).

These women are desolate, without means of support or relatives to assist them.

2. Widows who have living relatives (verses 4, 8, 16a).

These widows have children, grandchildren, or other relatives who can help support them.

3. Widows who live carnal lives (verses 6, 11-13, 15).

These women, rather than using their new position in life to worship God and serve the saints with undistracted devotion, are living a loose lifestyle.

4. Widows who are "on the list" or "in the number" (verses 9-10).

This refers to widows who qualified for financial support from the church. Some widows were to be kept on the list, others excluded.

The church today has the responsibility to care for widows. James 1:27

Far from being a liability for the church, the older widows are a valuable asset. They have a wealth of wisdom and experience to share with younger women.

They also have time to participate in a wide range of ministries.

They are also some of the most faithful members in the church. It doesn't take much for some young folks to miss church, but in every church I've pastored, I've seen older widows come when they were stooped in pain; yet, always with a smile and encouraging word for others, especially their pastor.

A. Widows Indeed I Timothy 5:3, 5, 16b

- She has no family – no children or relatives to support her.

- She has her hope fixed on God.
- She worships and communes with God night and day.
- The church is to help support her when needed.

B. Widows Who Have Living Relatives I Timothy 5:4, 8, 16a

The word “nephews” (KJV) should be grandchildren. Widows with children or grandchildren are to receive support from them, not the church. The family has the primary responsibility for its widows.

“Piety” or godliness begins in one's own family. Children must “requite” (KJV) or “repay” their parents. They owe a debt to those who brought them into the world, clothed them, fed them, housed them, supported them, and loved and nurtured them. Caring for a mother in time of her need is but a small return for all she has done.

Suppose the relative is unwilling to help support his loved one? Note I Timothy 5:8. Sin is worse in a believer than in an unbeliever.

C. Widows Who Live Carnal Lives I Timothy 5:6, 11-13, 15

Verse 6. A widow who lives a worldly, immoral, ungodly life may be alive physically, but her lifestyle proves she is not saved and spiritually dead.

Paul also told Timothy that the church should not support young widows. Why? Note

I Timothy 5:11-13.

In Verse 12 Paul says not to put young widows on the church's list for support. The phrase “cast off their first faith” means a “pledge.” It refers to a special covenant young widows made when asking to be put on the widow's list. Likely, they promised to devote the rest of their lives in service to the church and the Lord. Though well-meaning at the time of their need and bereavement, they were surely to desire marriage again and thus renege on their original pledge.

The words “to grow wanton” (Verse 11) means “to feel the impulses of sensual desires” – an expression that includes all that is involved in the marriage relationship, including sexual passion.

If the church supported younger widows, because of their lack of maturity, they would learn to be idle (lazy and counterproductive), gossips and busybodies.

Paul's advice to young widows? Verse 14. Remarry . . . bear children . . . keep or manage the house.

D. Widows Who Are “On the List” I Timothy 5:9-10

They must be at least 60 years old – after 60 her sensual passions are not as great and she will not be able to bear children – having been a one-woman-man . . . has a good reputation for good works, like bringing up her children well and showing hospitality to strangers and has a humble, servant's heart. In her earlier days she must have assisted those in distress or under pressure.

In other words, how she lived in the past made a difference as the support she would receive now.

Two important truths:

1. Caring for one's dependent parents is a serious, scriptural responsibility. Scripture commands parents to provide for their children. But there comes a time when the tables are turned. Children must care for their parents when they are no longer able to care for themselves.
2. The church is never expected to support everyone in need. The ministry of compassion and care must be accompanied by discernment and wisdom. What kind of stewards of the Lord's resources would we be if we indiscriminately handed out money to every need that came up without first evaluating its legitimacy?

III. The Church Leaders 1 Timothy 5:17-25

Respect and honor should be given to pastors who serve faithfully – I Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:7, 17.

Note that pastors are to be protected from accusation – I Timothy 5:19.

The word “receive” means “to entertain” or “to consider in your mind.” In other words, turn a deaf ear to accusation . . . that's the best way to protect your pastor.

“A lie can get halfway around the world before truth gets its shoes on.” The conditions under which an accusation against an elder is

to be taken seriously is “on the basis of two or three witnesses . . . the accusation must at least be investigated” and two or three witnesses are to provide confirmation.

To attack someone in spiritual leadership is a very serious matter. In I Samuel 24:5 after cutting off part of Saul's robe, “it came about afterward that David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul's robe.”

Psalms 105:15 warns, “Do not touch my anointed ones, and do my prophets no harm.”

Rebuking elders I Timothy 5:20-21

The word “rebuke” means to “expose,” “to bring to open conviction.”

The sins of a man in a leadership role are more serious and are to be punished more severely (cf. James 3:1). He must be publicly rebuked. Attempts to hush things up and allow a sinning pastor to leave quietly often create the chaos of misunderstanding in a congregation.

The ministry is thus a two-edged sword. Those who serve faithfully are to be honored and protected, but those who sin are to be removed and publicly rebuked. One of the purposes for that public rebuke is so “the rest” (other elders) will have a healthy fear when a sinning pastor is publicly disgraced because of sin.

If churches everywhere maintained that high standard for pastors, unqualified men would be barred from the pastorate. As the standard is being lowered in our day, it is too often true that when a sinning pastor is disgraced in one church, he finds a position of honor in another. The church needs to decide whether to protect man's reputation, or God's.

Verse 21 says we are to do nothing in a spirit of partiality. If we play favorites in ministry, we do so before the watchful gaze of God, Christ and the heavenly host ... so there should be fairness.

We live in a society that plays favorites. It's easy to give special treatment to those who are gifted, intelligent, rich, or beautiful without realizing what we are doing. We can also fall into the trap of deliberately working against people we happen not to like.

Verse 22: If we lay hands upon someone too hastily and publicly identify and authorize that person as a leader, we risk sharing in sin by putting someone in the office who proved to be unfit for the position.

Some very carnal folks have used Verse 23 as justification for social drinking ... or habitual drinking.

W. C. Fields tried that approach when he said, “I only keep a bottle around in case of snakebites. I also keep a small snake.”

Paul said, USE (not drink) ... a “LITTLE” wine for the medical purpose of helping his stomach problems.

I Timothy 6:1-5

HOW TO TREAT FOLKS IN THE CONGREGATION Part-2

First Timothy 5:1-6:5 deals with how to treat folks in the congregation. In I Timothy 5 Paul dealt with how to treat:

1. The Church Family as a Whole I Timothy 5:1-2

Here Paul says the sex and the age of the people should determine one's attitude toward them.

- Treat the older men as a Father
- Treat the younger men as Brothers
- Treat the older women as Mothers
- Treat the younger women as Sisters with all purity

2. The Widows Specifically I Timothy 5:3-16

Paul deals with four types of widows:

- Women who are widows Indeed I Timothy 5:3, 5, 16b
- Widows who have Living Relatives I Timothy 5:4, 8, 16a
- Widows who Live Carnal Lives I Timothy 5:6, 11-13, 15

3. The Church Leaders I Timothy 5:17-25

The church has the responsibility of taking care of the Pastor who teacher the Word in a financial way. Then he warns about laying hands on anyone too hastily. Approve only those who are mature and godly. You identify with and approve those you lay hands on.

Now, in I Timothy 6, Paul deals with two other groups in the church: slaves and their masters and false teachers.

I. Slaves and Their Masters I Timothy 6:1-2

Slavery was a huge issue during the time of Paul. Some historians have estimated that half of the population of the Roman Empire (some 60 million people) were slaves.

Slavery was an effective system – how else would Rome have achieved such durable economic, political, and military might? But, it was a corrupt system, because it regarded human beings as mere property to be used and abused at the owner's discretion.

Many of these people were educated and cultured, but legally they were not considered persons at all. The gospel was bound to reach many of these, and the churches all over the Empire were bound to be filled with slaves. For this reason the New Testament has much to say to slaves. The whole book of Philemon is written to a slave.

However, slavery is never directly attacked by the New Testament. Why not? If it had been, there would have probably been so much bloodshed the scene would have been unimaginable. The slave owners and government would have:

- attacked the church, its preachers, and believers, seeking to destroy such a doctrine.
- Reacted and killed all of the slaves who professed.

Here is a statement in The Expositors Greek Testament on how Christianity went about destroying slavery:

“Slavery is accepted as an existing institution, which is neither formally condemned nor formally approved. There is nothing to prompt revolution action, or to encourage repudiation of the position . . . the institution is left to be undermined and removed by the gradual operation of the great Christian principles of . . .

- the equality of men in the sight of God,
- a common Christian brotherhood,
- the spiritual freedom of the Christian man.

How would you, a slave who found freedom in Christ, have responded to your situation?

Would you have organized a revolt and carried signs which read, “Stop Serving Your Master”, “Don't Submit”, “Strike Back!”

That would not have been the most effective or the most Christ-like response. And the Roman army was equipped to snuff out the first flicker of rebellion.

Paul knew what course of action would best impact the Roman world and bring glory to God. Not rebellion ... but submission.

The Gospel message of salvation and freedom in Christ appealed to the slaves, and many of them became believers. When slaves were able to get away from their household duties, they would fellowship in local assemblies where being a slave was not a handicap (Galatians 3:28).

But there was a problem: some slaves used their new-found freedom in Christ as an excuse to disobey, if not defy, their masters. They needed to learn that their spiritual freedom in Christ did not alter their social position, even though they were accepted graciously into the fellowship of the church.

Note: The principles of the whole section apply to employees and employers in every age. Remember that these are both believing and unbelieving masters (Employers).

Though we no longer have slavery, we all have to deal with authority. Each of us, regardless of our occupation or place in life, is under someone's and ultimately God's authority.

Submitting to authority is not a natural trait. As a sinful people, we prefer rebellion over submission. Some in authority have not earned our respect. It's hard to work for someone you don't respect. But sometimes we find ourselves in a situation that demands we do just that.

What is the believing workman's duty toward an unbelieving master (employer)? Note the specific instructions in I Timothy 6:1. The duty of the workman is to count his employer worthy of all honor. He is:

- to respect, comply, obey, and do what the employer says and requires.
- to do a job and to do it well.
- to be thankful and appreciative for having work to do.

If a man does not give a full day's work for a full day's wage, he dishonors the name of Christ. If the workman is lazy, slothful, and beating the time, or if he is disrespectful, he causes the employer to blaspheme the name of God.

Notice I Timothy 6:2: It's a wonderful thing when a Christian workman can have a Christian employer, for he can expect to be treated justly, fairly, and in a brotherly spirit. But the Christian employee should not feel that he:

- should be given special treatment.
- should be allowed to slack off some.
- should be given more consideration.
- should not be as readily corrected or rebuked for inefficiency or mistakes.

II. False Teachers I Timothy 6:3-5

Paul gives this description of false teachers:

1. The false teacher does not consent or agree with the words of Jesus – I Timothy 6:3

The word “consent” means that he does not agree or attach himself to, or has not committed himself to the words of Jesus.

2. A false teacher is proud, puffed up, and conceited – he lacks good sense – I Timothy 6:4

The false teacher takes pride . . .

- in “HIS” views and ideas over that of Christ's.
- in “HIS” rejection of certain portions of the Bible.
- in “HIS” knowledge that some of the stories and events in the Bible are what he calls fables.
- in “HIS” intellectual ability to dissect the truth from the falsehood about Christ.
- in “HIS” enlightenment – that he knows better than to believe in such things as the miracles, deity, virgin birth, incarnation, resurrection, ascension, and the personal return of Christ to earth.
- in “HIS” new and novel concepts and ideas about Christ.

A false teacher is conceited. His aim is self-display. His desire is not to display Christ, but to display himself. He is more concerned to gain a following for himself than for Jesus Christ.

3. A false teacher has a sick interest in controversial questions.

He turns to secondary sources About the Bible rather than to the Bible. I Timothy 6:4

4. A false teacher focuses on the doctrines and theologies of men rather than God.

They had rather tell you what some man said about something than what God says about it.

5. A false teacher thinks religion leads to financial gain. I Timothy 6:5

This means at least three things:

- a. Some false teachers are concerned with morality and virtue and with man being as good as he can and achieving the most he can. He tries to get him to do the works of religion and do the best he can and try to live moral lives. He never tells them they are sinners and that they need to repent of their sin and put their faith personally in Christ.
- b. Some false teachers enter the ministry as a profession and a means of making a living.
- c. Some false teachers have commercialized religion. He is out for profit – not to serve others, but to advance

himself.

I Timothy 6:6-21

THE SECRET OF CONTENTMENT

Every person strives for contentment. Contentment is the one thing we all want. We want to be fulfilled, complete, and satisfied. But when we look around, this is not what we see. What we see is a society and a world discontented, about as unfulfilled, incomplete, dissatisfied, empty, lonely, and restless as they can be. Why? Why are so many people discontent?

The secret to contentment is godliness. What makes a person content? Godliness alone can take a person and make him fulfilled, satisfied, and complete.

Godliness alone can give a man the sense that he lacks absolutely nothing. Imagine being so content that you sense no lack. You just sense no need whatsoever within your innermost being and soul. This is exactly what godliness does for the human soul. This is the reason Scripture declares that godliness with contentment is great gain. No greater gain could ever come to a person than contentment.

In I Timothy 6:7-8 Paul wants us to think about three stages of life.

1. There is the stage of Birth. At birth we brought nothing into this world. We came with only two things: our bodies and life.
2. There is the stage of Death. Death is absolutely certain and at death we carry absolutely nothing out of this world.
3. There is the stage that is between birth and death – the stage of Living. In this stage there are some necessities that we must have to sustain life. We need food, clothing, and shelter. We “need” nothing else, therefore, a person is to be content with these.

Philippians 4:11: “I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.”

In I Timothy 9:10 Paul says that only godliness will bring contentment. Most folks think money will bring contentment, but it will not and he gives four reasons why money will not bring contentment.

1. Money tempts and enslaves I Timothy 6:9

Notice the phrase, “those who will be rich” (KJV) or “those who desire to be rich” (NKJV). This refers to those who set their whole attention on wealth. It describes those guilty of greed.. They will fall into the temptation of a consuming desire to acquire more.

Money and things have a way of losing their appeal. Too many of us know “the price of everything and the value of nothing.” We have so many luxuries we have forgotten how to enjoy our necessities.

The rich are far more tempted to indulge the flesh and to live extravagantly; far more tempted to control and dominate people through the power of their wealth.

Think of all Lot lost when he set his eyes on the rich planes of Sodom!

2. Money can cause many foolish and hurtful lust.

The rich are not satisfied with the necessities of life, they want extravagant necessities. They don't just want clothes in the closets, they want clothes with special labels on them and lots of them. They don't just want shelter, they want a bigger and better house for recognition. Regular food is not good enough; they must have exotic cuts.

My wife and I were going out to dinner and I thought I'd impress her and put on the dog, so we went to O'Charley's (well, for us that was putting on the dog). We ordered chicken tenders. Some time after that I took her to dinner again. This time we went to Abner's and got grilled chicken tenders again. As we were eating I asked her which chicken tenders she liked better – those at O'Charley's or the ones we were eating at Abner's. She said that the ones at Abner's were larger, more flavorful, and more tender, AND they cost about half of what the tenders cost at O'Charley's.

3. Money drowns men in destruction and perdition.

Such greed may lead these people to suffer the tragic end of destruction and hell.

4. Money – that is, the love of money – is a root of all evil.

Money itself is neutral; the way it is used, and the heart and motive behind it, determines its character. Money can be invested for eternity by using it to bring Christ to the lost, or it can send a man to hell by allowing it to become his god.

- Demas forsook Paul because he loved the world.
- Judas sold Christ for 30 pieces of silver.

Paul knew his time on earth was short so he wanted to groom Timothy and to prepare him to succeed him in the ministry after he was gone. In I Timothy 6:11 Paul calls Timothy, “O man of God.”

Although the phrase “man of God” is commonly used in the Old Testament, it describes only Timothy in the New Testament. Paul used that title to increase Timothy’s sense of responsibility to discharge his ministry faithfully.

The phrase “man of God” first appears in Deuteronomy 33:1 where it describes Moses.

Others who were called “man of God” were Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, and David. All of the Old Testament uses point to an individual who represents God by proclaiming His Word.

How is such a man of God to conduct himself? In this passage Paul lists four characteristics that mark the loyal man of God. What he flees from, follows after, fights for, and is faithful to.

1. The man of God is known by what he Flees From I Timothy 6:11a

There are times when running away is a mark of cowardice, but there are other times when fleeing is a mark of wisdom and a means of victory – as when Joseph fled when he was tempted by his master’s wife (Genesis 39:12).

God’s man must flee from Sexual sin (I Corinthians 6:18), idolatry (I Corinthians 10:14), and youthful lust (2 Timothy 2:22).

But, “these things: (verse 11) are the attitudes and practices that characterize the false teachers – anti-gospel rhetoric, pride, preoccupation with trivial disputes, divisiveness, greed, etc. The word means to keep on fleeing these things; make it a habit, a lifestyle.

2. The man of God is known by what he Follows After

Running from wrong is only half the plan for godliness. We must also run toward what is right ... pursue godliness. There are some things we must cultivate in our lives, or else we will be known only for what we oppose rather than for what we propose.

– “Righteousness” means to do what is right, in relation to both God and man. It is personal integrity.

– “Godliness” is an authentic and abiding desire to glorify God. It is reverence for God flowing out of a worshiping heart While righteousness looks at the outward behavior, godliness has to do with the attitudes and motives.

– “Faith” is faithfulness and dependability.

– “Love” seeks the highest good of the other person (agape).

– “Patience” carries the idea of “endurance.” Sticking to it when the going is tough.– “Gentleness” means kindness. It is strength under control, composure – especially in the face of opposition and wrong.

3. A man of God is known by what he Fights For I Timothy 6:12

Paul isn’t describing an attitude of pugnaciousness, but a struggle against all odds to keep one’s faith strong and growing. It carries the idea of contending for a prize in the olympic games ...which means discipline, training, and movement toward a specified goal ... that goal of eternal life.

Take hold ... get a grip ... on the reality of eternal life so that you might live and minister in the light of eternity.

4. A man of God is known by what he is Faithful To I Timothy 6:13-14, 20-21

“Guard – stay focused on – what has been committed – deposited – to your trust.”

Guard the truth – the divine revelation that God committed to his care. We are stewards of the doctrines of the

faith.

Guard by ... avoiding – verse 20. We guard our faith by keeping ourselves free from the influence of false doctrine, which Paul characterizes as “empty chatter.”

How can we keep our ministry on course?

- Look up. A ministry that squares with Scripture requires consistent Scriptural input. Feed upon God's Word, maintaining pure doctrine and complete dependence on Him.
- Look within. A ministry that remains on target requires strong internal integrity.
- Look around. A ministry that earns the respect of others requires caring for the members of God's family. Serve well.