

Bible Study Notes & Questions on Paul's First & Second Letters to Timothy

Introduction: Background to Timothy's life

Timothy was a native of Lystra in the Roman Province of Galatia (part of present day Turkey). He was the son of a mixed marriage. His father was a Greek and his mother being Jewish. His mother Eunice and grandmother Lois were believers in Jesus Christ. They must have taught him the scriptures, **2Timothy 1:5; 3:15**. It seems likely that Timothy was converted through Paul's ministry on his first missionary journey, **1Timothy 1:2**. Timothy could well have made much progress as a Christian. When Paul visited Lystra on his second missionary journey he decided to take Timothy along with him and his team, **Acts 16:1-3**. The local church leaders had given their support in giving Timothy that formal commission, **2Timothy 1:18; 4:14**, along with their blessing for Timothy to embark on this ministry. He became a constant, faithful, loyal, reliable and greatly loved companion to Paul. It is shown just how much Paul had such a high regard for Timothy to fulfil God's calling on his life.

Overview of 1Timothy: Paul wrote this letter from Macedonia to Timothy who had a ministry of being an elder in Ephesus. Paul gave Timothy encouragement to fulfil his pastoral and teaching ministry. This pastoral letter was written between Paul's first and second imprisonment in Rome, which is about **64AD**. Timothy was told by Paul to stay in Ephesus whilst Paul was in Macedonia at that time.

In Ephesus, there had been a great number of converts to Christianity which was the fruit of Paul's ministry there from about **54-57AD** during his third missionary journey. Paul was keen to send this letter to Timothy with much instruction in how to live right and to see the Church in Ephesus built up.

The instructions stressed the following:

- 1) Sound doctrine, **1Timothy 1:3,10; 4:6,13,16; 5:17; 6:1,3**.
- 2) Warning against false teachers and their false teaching, **1Timothy 1:19,20; 4:1-5; 6:5,20-21**.
- 3) The place of women in the Church, **1Timothy 3:9-15 & 1Corinthians 11:5-15; 14:34-35**.
- 4) Prayer, **1Timothy 2:1-3**.
- 5) The qualifications for elders and deacons, **1Timothy 3:13; Titus 1:5-9**.
- 6) The work of a leader, **1Timothy 4:16**.
- 7) Treatment of widows and elders, **1Timothy 5:1-25**.
- 8) Relationship between slaves and masters, **1Timothy 6:1-2** and compare with **Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-25; Titus 2:9-10**.
- 9) Warning against the desire for riches but to use them wisely, **1Timothy 6:3-19**.

Questions

Chapter One

Q.1) Why did Paul leave Timothy in Ephesus? See **1:2-7**

Q.2) Show what is known of Paul's calling from God on his life. Read **1:1,12-17**. How had his life changed? Compare your own experience to that of Paul's in how your life has changed after responding to the gospel.

Q.3) What was the purpose of the law? See **1:8-10**. Why is the gospel superior to the law? See also **Galatians 3:16-25**.

Q.4) What did Paul reveal to Timothy of the way God had changed his life? Read again **1:1, 12-17; 2:7**.

Q.5) Show the instructions Paul had given Timothy in **1:18-20**.

Chapter Two

- Q.1)** What did Paul teach on prayer? See **2:1-3, 8**?
- Q.2)** Who should we pray for? See **2:1-3**.
- Q.3)** What should all men need to know whether they respond to God's word or not? See **2:4-6**.
- Q.4)** Make a list of instructions that Paul gave to Timothy regarding women in **2:9-15**.
- Q.5)** What role do you think women should take up in the Church in view of what is written in **2:9-15**?

Chapter Three

- Q.1)** Show the qualities a man needs to function as a bishop (overseer or elder) of the Church. See **3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9**.
- Q.2)** Show the qualities for a man to be a deacon. See **3:8-13**.
- Q.3)** How did Paul give encouragement to Timothy to be able to manage without him being there in Ephesus? See **3:14-15**.
- Q.4)** Make a list of the things Paul has revealed of the person of Jesus Christ in **3:16**.

Chapter Four

- Q.1)** How will some people fall away from the faith according to **4:1-3**?
- Q.2)** Why is every creature of God good? Read **4:4-5**.
- Q.3)** Read carefully **4:6-16** and if possible put down a list of the things Paul told Timothy to teach and to live by as an example to others.
- Q.4)** What things did Paul show to Timothy that were unacceptable? Read again **4:6-16**.

Chapter Five

- Q.1)** How are we as believers to treat elders and widows? See **5:1-4,8,16-22**.
- Q.2)** What is known of godly widows? See **5:5,7,9-10**.
- Q.3)** What problems did Paul see regarding the younger widows and how could such problems be dealt with? Read **5:6,11-15**.
- Q.4)** Read carefully **5:22**. Does this verse teach us about the kind of man called to public service in the Church? Read again **3:13 & Titus 1:6-9**.
- Q.5)** What do we know of Timothy's physical health in view of what is mentioned in **5:23**?
- Q.6)** Read **5:24-25**. Show the ways sins and good works can be revealed.

Chapter Six

- Q.1)** How should servants treat their masters in **6:1-2**?
- See also **Ephesians 6:5-8 & Colossians 3:22-25**.
- Q.2)** Show the warning Paul gave of those men who did not follow sound teaching in **6:3-5**.
- Q.3)** Show Paul's teaching on contentment in **6:6-8** and compare with **Philippians 4:11**.
- Q.4)** What ways can rich believers go astray? See **6:9-10 & James 5:1-6**.
- Q.5)** Read carefully **6:11-14,20-21**. Show how Paul exhorted Timothy to be a good witness for Jesus Christ.
- Q.6)** How did Paul want Timothy to give instruction to rich Christians to trust in the living God? Read carefully **6:17-19**.

Overview of 2Timothy: Paul was now a prisoner in Rome for the second time. He knew his execution was imminent. He was able to write this last letter to encourage Timothy before being put to death in about **67 to 68AD**.

Paul was one of many Christians who had been arrested as a criminal, **2Timothy 2:9**. There had been a great fire in Rome in **64AD** which had been started by Nero, the Roman

Emperor. He had hated Christians and had used this event as an excuse to accuse them for setting up this fire in Rome. Multitudes of Christians were arrested in and around Rome and put to death in the most cruel of ways, such as crucifixion, thrown to wild beasts in arenas for entertainment and even tied to stakes in Nero's gardens. Pitch was poured over the bodies of these Christians which were burnt by setting the pitch alight. There were periods of persecution against Christians during the time of the Roman Empire until Constantine's rule in the fourth century when Christianity became the state religion.

Despite all the difficulties Paul experienced he wanted to prepare Timothy to carry on the work of faithfully serving the Lord. W.Wiersbe in his Bible Exposition Commentary of the New Testament, volume two P240 column one, has written: "Paul's great concern was not for himself; it was for Timothy and the success of the Gospel ministry. As in his first letter to Timothy, Paul encouraged his beloved colleague to be faithful. As we have learned, Timothy was timid, suffered from physical ailments, and was tempted to let other people take advantage of him and not assert his authority as a pastor."

Paul had requested Timothy to come and see him before his execution. Whether Timothy did come and see Paul we do not know. Paul had no regrets for what was about to happen to him believing his time to die was in God's time, **2Timothy 4:6-8**.

The second letter shows further instructions given by Paul to Timothy.

- 1) To overcome any fear to stir up the gift that God had given him, **2Timothy 1:6-7**.
- 2) He was not to be ashamed of the testimony of Jesus Christ but to partake in the afflictions of the gospel, **2Timothy 1:8-10**.
- 3) He was reminded of Paul's calling to be an apostle, preacher and teacher to the Gentiles, **2Timothy 1:11-14**.
- 4) He was warned of the false teachers who may well have taken advantage of Paul's arrest to turn much of the Church against him, **2Timothy 1:15; 2:16-18; 4:14-15**. In Paul's first letter to Timothy some believers had gone into error. See **1Timothy 1:6,19; 5:15; 6:10,21**. In the second letter believers had turned away from Paul, **2Timothy 1:15; 4:10,16**.
- 5) The faithfulness of Onesiphorus, **2Timothy 1:16-18**.
- 6) To be ready to suffer as a good soldier in a warfare that may lead Timothy to face imprisonment and even death, **2Timothy 2:1-14**. It is possible from the Hebrew letter that Timothy may have had some time in prison possibly in Rome at the same time as Paul being in prison for the first time, **Hebrews 13:23**.
- 7) To be faithful in the study of God's word and to live it out so as to instruct others to pass on God's word, **2Timothy 2:15,19-26; 3:14-17**.
- 8) To expect increasing evilness with men becoming so evil in much corruption and opposition to the gospel. Paul reminded Timothy of his experience of persecution which will happen to all believers who wish to live a godly life, **2Timothy 3:1-13**.
- 9) To be faithful to fulfil his work as an evangelist preaching the word in season and out of season, **2Timothy 4:1-5**.

Paul concluded the letter with various personal matters, **2Timothy 4:9-22**, regarding other brethren. Despite sad news of many brethren having abandoned Paul, he was able to know with confidence his Lord's faithfulness to prepare him for his heavenly kingdom, **2Timothy 4:18**. He had no one with him at the first stage of his trial, but it appears God had enabled Paul to make the gospel known, **2Timothy 4:16-17**.

May we take seriously what this letter can teach especially in standing for the truth even if it costs us our lives.

Questions

Chapter One

- Q.1)** What do we know of God's calling to Paul in **1:1,11-12**?
- Q.2)** How did Paul commend Timothy as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. See **1:2-5**
- Q.3)** What did Paul exhort Timothy to do to maintain his testimony? Read **1:6-10, 13-15**.
- Q.4)** Show the evidence that Timothy was becoming fearful because of increasing difficulties at this time in the Church? See again **1:6-8**.
- Q.5)** What has God done for us to become believers in Jesus Christ? See **1:7,9-10**.
- Q.6)** Show the respect Paul had for Onesiphorus. Read **1:16-18; 4:19**.

Chapter Two

- Q.1)** Read carefully **2:1-13**. What did Paul teach on suffering?
- Q.2)** Read **2:14-16,19-22,24-26**. Show the things that a Christian should be doing to live a godly life.
- Q.3)** Show the warnings Paul has given to Timothy which he must avoid.
See **2:14-18,22,23,26**.
- Q.4)** Read through **2:1-26** again. Can you see how Paul represented seven illustrations of a Christian minister.

Chapter Three

- Q.1)** What can we expect to happen to men who reject God in these last days? See **3:1-9,13**.
- Q.2)** How should true Christians be living in contrast to evil men? See **3:10-12** and also **Ephesians 4:20-32 & Colossians 3:1-25**.
- Q.3)** How much should we as believers value the word of God? Read **3:14-17; 2:15**.

Chapter Four

- Q.1)** Show Paul's exhortation to Timothy in how he should do the work of an evangelist in **4:1-2,5**.
- Q.2)** What did Paul reveal to Timothy regarding many people in their response to God's word? Read **4:3-4**. Is this true today?
- Q.3)** What lessons can we learn from Paul who was ready to die? Read **4:6-8**.
- Q.4)** Read **4:9-22**. Consider carefully Paul's concluding statements:
- A)** His requests to Timothy, **4:9,13,20**.
 - B)** His sadness over those brethren that had turned against him. See **4:10,14-16**.
 - C)** The various brethren named who had been faithful. See **4:10-13,19-21**.
 - D)** God's faithfulness to Paul. Read **4:17-18**.
 - E)** Final greeting, **4:22**.

Miscellaneous Questions on 1 & 2Timothy

- Q.1)** What did Paul reveal of Jesus Christ in both letters to Timothy? See **1Timothy 1:1,15,17; 2:3-6; 3:16; 4:10; 6:15-16; 2Timothy 1:10; 2:8,10**.
- Q.2)** Consider carefully the instructions Paul gave to Timothy in both letters. You may wish to make a list of the practical advice given. See **1Timothy 1:18-20; 2:8-15; 3:1-14; 4:7-16; 5:1-25; 6:10-12,17-19; 2Timothy 1:6-15; 2:10; 3:10**.
- Q.3)** Are there any prophecies in these two letters still to be fulfilled? See **1Timothy 4:1-3; 6:14-16; 2Timothy 1:1-9,13; 4:2**.
- Q.4)** In view of much practical advice given by Paul to Timothy, can you see how helpful this advice is to how we should grow as Christians to live right with God? Read carefully through both letters.

Q.5) Show the false teachers and prophets and their false teaching exposed in both letters. See **1Timothy 1:4,19,20; 2Timothy 1:15; 2:16-18,23; 3:8; 4:14-15.**

Q.6) Show the evidence of any believers having fallen away from the faith. Read **1Timothy 1:18-20; 5:11-15; 6:9-10; 2Timothy 1:15; 2:16-18; 4:10,14-15.**

Q.7) What is known of Paul's life in both letters? See **1Timothy 1:1,11-16; 3:14-15; 2Timothy 1:1,11-12; 2:9-10; 4:6-8,17-18.**

Q.8) In the second letter of Paul to Timothy how did he respond to his difficulties being now in prison and knowing he was going to die? See **1:1-5,16-18; 2:7-12; 3:10-12; 4:6-8,17-18.**

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The author does not necessarily agree with all that is written in these resources but they will provide much information of value to understand the message of both letters.

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