



1 Timothy

A Verse-By-Verse Study

(Originally written one verse per day)

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CHAPTER 1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope, 1 Timothy 1:1

Welcome to the book of 1 Timothy! It is one of the three “pastoral epistles,” and it is comprised of 113 verses. Therefore, it will take us (one day at a time, just as each day starts anew at the sunrise) just under four months to analyze it. It is hoped that you will be blessed as each verse brings marvelous insights into this beautiful epistle from the mind of God and through the hand of Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles.

As we will see, there are a couple of reasons why Paul wrote this letter to his beloved protege Timothy. The letter is intended to send encouragement to Timothy, and to build him up in his position as a leader in the church. It is also written to warn him about the false doctrines and false teachers who were already steadily working within the church to cause confusion and division.

He begins by stating his name and title – “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ.” Because of this, it shows that this letter is more than a simple personal letter meant for Timothy to read and cherish as his own keepsake. Instead, it is intended to be maintained as an authoritative letter of doctrine for the church at all times.

The title "apostle" in relation to Christ Jesus is something which is incorrectly applied in the church today. True apostles are only those who personally witnessed His work. Paul was called as an exception to this because he only came to know Christ after His ascension. He specifically notes this calling in 1 Corinthians 15:8. The apostolic age ended with the completion of the Bible and the death of the last apostle. Being an apostle of the Lord, then, had a special significance and only came about by a specific calling by Christ himself.

After stating his official title, he next says, “by the commandment of God.” At other times, he says, “by the will of God.” The word translated as “commandment” here is as “an order that arranges things so they build on each other to achieve the needed goal” (HELPS Word Studies). God ordained that Paul would be an apostle in order to assure that His goals of the church age would be properly met. This is an important thought for this pastoral epistle. It is showing that Paul’s words, despite being personally addressed to Timothy, are intended for the proper functioning of the church which had come into existence. Pastors are to read these letters and hold fast to the doctrine which is contained in them.

This “commandment of God,” however, is more fully expressed with the added words, “our Savior.” This designation when ascribed to God by Paul is unique to the pastoral epistles. Jude also uses it in his short letter as well. It is a note that God has saved us through Christ Jesus. Both can be termed Savior, because God is the Author of salvation, and Christ (being fully God) is the means by which salvation is effected.

He then states that the command for his apostleship was not just from “God our Savior” but also from “the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope.” Acts 9 gives the details of Paul’s commission directly from the Lord Jesus. That commission is then stated by Paul in Galatians 1:11, 12 as well. The “hope” that Paul speaks of which is found in Christ Jesus is “the hope of glory” which is noted in Colossians 1:27. It is through the work of Christ, and through that alone, that we have a hope of future glory, dwelling in the presence of God. This hope is found in Christ, and it is one which has sustained the church for 2000 years now.

The stating of this about Christ Jesus shows that Jesus is, in fact, God. If he were a mere man, he could not be our “hope” in the eternal sense. But He is our hope. It is in Him that we place our confidence, something that would be blasphemous to do in anything, or anyone, less than God Himself.

Life application: The pastoral epistles are intended for proper doctrine within the church, and for the selecting, and guidance, of leaders within the church, but they are also to be studied and understood by all in the church. Church members are to be familiar with them so that they can rightly evaluate if a pastor, deacon, or teacher is living and teaching in accord with the word of God. Each individual should be familiar with these letters, and they should refer to them from time to time to keep the content fresh in their minds.

Heavenly Father, how can we know if a pastor, deacon, or teacher of the word is sound? How can we know if they are conducting their affairs properly? There is just one source, and it is found in Your word. You have given us this gift to guide us through the church age, and it contains the necessary guidelines to help us not get stuck with misguided, or even wicked, leaders. It sure would be nice if church members would familiarize themselves with these set and fixed guidelines. Help us to do this, O God. Amen.

To Timothy, a true son in the faith:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Timothy 1:2

Paul, after having identified himself and his commission, now identifies the main recipient of the letter, Timothy. As noted, based on the apostolic identification of himself, something Timothy was perfectly aware of, the letter was certainly intended to be for more than just Timothy though. He was to have it available for any and all to see and read. It is an epistle of church doctrine as much as it is a personal letter.

However, it is still a personal letter, written “To Timothy, a true son in the faith.” The word translated here as “true,” is the Greek work *gnésios*. It literally means, “born in wedlock.” Thus it means “legitimate,” or “genuine.” However, it came to carry an affectionate or endearing sense. Therefore, Paul’s words are not only identifying Timothy as a true Christian, but as a true son of his because of their like-faith in Christ. The bonds were as strong as if Timothy was Paul’s own legitimate offspring. As Paul personally took Timothy under his wings, and as Timothy stayed with Paul while so many others departed, the bond was all the stronger.

In Acts 16:3, Paul even circumcised Timothy in order to ensure that the Jews would be more responsive to the message of Christ. It was not a means of making Timothy acceptable for salvation, but a means of ensuring that Timothy would be properly accepted by those Jews who needed to hear the gospel message of Christ. In circumcising him, it would eliminate pre-judgments about Timothy’s status. In other words, it was a helpful tool for evangelism. In his letter to the Philippians, he noted his full trust in Timothy –

“But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. ²⁰ For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. ²¹ For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. ²² But you know his proven character, that as a son with *his* father he served with me in the gospel.” Philippians 2:19-22

Next, after having identified himself and his recipient, he adds in his customary greeting, but with one addition, “Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.” Here, and in his other two pastoral epistles (2 Timothy and Titus), he adds in the word “mercy.” It is variously speculated on why he adds in “mercy” to this salutation, but many commentators tie it in with Paul’s advancing age and the realization of his soon departure. For example, the Pulpit Commentary says, “It seems in St. Paul to connect itself with that deeper sense of the need and of the enjoyment of mercy which went with his deepening sense of sin as he drew towards his end.”

However, the letter is written to Timothy. Thus the words apply to him, not to Paul. Paul petitions for “mercy” in his pastorals because he knew it is a job which requires a great deal of mercy from God. It is a delicate, complicated, often frustrating, always tiring, and very sensitive job. Where those under a pastor often feel it necessary to heap trouble on him, mercy is all-the-more necessary from the other direction. Without this endowment from God, the job will quickly lay low the pastor of strongest faith and resolve.

Therefore, Paul petitions for these things – grace, mercy, and peace to be bestowed upon his beloved son in the faith. And the petition is “from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Here in this verse, he changes the title of God of verse 1 from “Savior” to “Father.” This then is in line with the petition for grace, mercy, and peace. As a father would grant such things to his own son, so Paul knows that God will grant such things to His sons in the faith, a faith which is grounded in Christ Jesus. And as God is the Father of Jesus, the petition for grace, mercy, and peace will naturally flow from Jesus to the Father’s other true children as well. Paul’s salutation is a full example of a complete understanding of the workings of God towards His ministers who are also His sons by adoption.

Life application: Paul’s addition of mercy to the blessings upon Timothy (and thus all pastors) is only as necessary as the congregation he leads is willing to understand the nature of the job, and the ability of the pastor to effectively handle that job. It is estimated that in America alone, 600 pastors a week leave the pulpit due to the pressures of the job. The more mercy the congregation bestows upon their pastor, the less will be needed from above. In regards to the pastor, show a little mercy when he shows his humanity. After all, he is only human.

Lord God, for those of us who attend church, we have a pastor who leads that church. Do we look to his position as we would of any leader, showing respect and courtesy? Or do we take unnecessary advantage of his time? Are we praying for our pastor? Are we merciful to him when he slips and shows his humanity (oh my!)? Help us to pray for grace, mercy, and peace to be upon him as he leads the church we attend. Amen.

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 1 Timothy 1:3

After his initial greeting, Paul now begins the main portion of his letter by reminding Timothy of words previously spoken to him. “As I urged you,” is a phrase intending to call to memory the conversation of a previous time, which was “when I went into Macedonia.” Some tie this event into Acts 20:1 –

“After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to *himself*, embraced *them*, and departed to go to Macedonia.”

However, various scholars see this as a different trip into Macedonia which occurred after the completion of the book of Acts, which was after his first imprisonment in Rome. This seems more likely, because Timothy was sent to Macedonia in Acts 19:4, and Paul joined him by going to Macedonia in Acts 20:1. After that, they returned together as is recorded in Acts 20:4. Therefore, it is more likely that this is a later trip into Macedonia for Paul, occurring after his first Roman imprisonment.

After this period of time, incorrect doctrine had crept into the church at Ephesus, and it so infected it that Paul’s letter is now required. The Ephesian church had failed to listen to Paul’s warning, accompanied by tears, to stand fast on the doctrine of Christ (see Acts 20:25-38). Because of this, a letter of instruction, doctrine, and warning is now issued to Timothy, but it is a letter which is intended for all to read and understand.

His reminder to Timothy of their previous conversation was that he was to “remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine.” Paul had confidence enough in Timothy that he could remain without him and still be found competent to uphold sound and proper doctrine. Further, he would be bold enough to make a charge concerning what was wrong and what was right. Paul’s words demonstrate this confidence in his young protege.

The word translated as, “no other doctrine,” is one found only here and in 1 Timothy 6:3. It indicates “a different doctrine” and is thus anything other than that which had been once delivered by apostolic teaching. Paul will outline such things considered “other” in the verses ahead. They center on the law, and thus it is the same group of people as had troubled so many other churches – the Judaizers. They came in with their infectious teachings, and they disturbed the believers with their unsound doctrines. As these things pertain to “law,” and as the law is fulfilled in Christ, it is the same concepts which have been dug up and put on display in modern times by the Hebrew Roots movement. Paul warned against this type of nonsense, and his words still warn today.

Life application: There is one doctrine concerning the law – it is fulfilled in Christ and ended. Any resurrection of law observance is to be rejected. This shouldn’t be difficult to grasp, but apparently there are many thick skulls out there. May the words of Paul act as a drill to get through that thick bone, and into the gray area of law-observant heretics.

Lord God, reading the words of the New Testament leaves only one sound conclusion concerning the law – it is finished. Christ is the end of the law for all who believe, and the law is now obsolete. Why anyone would want to place themselves back under that impossible yoke is a bit amazing. Open eyes, turn hearts, and help us to get back to the grace! Thank You, O God, for the grace found in Christ our Lord. Amen.

...nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. 1 Timothy 1:4

Paul had just told Timothy that he was to charge certain members of the church at Ephesus to “teach no other doctrine.” Now building on that, he said, “nor give heed to fables.” This is certainly a word of warning concerning the oral traditions of the Jewish schools of learning. It was held that there was the written instruction which guided the people, meaning the words of Scripture, but that there also existed an oral tradition, or a “law upon the lip,” which was passed down concerning rites and rules of conduct for the people.

The rabbinical schools supposedly maintained these authoritative oral doctrines, and surely they were expanded on any time someone felt the need to further codify some part of Jewish life. Eventually, many of these oral traditions were put into writing by Rabbi Jehuda, becoming the Mishna. This was combined with another document, the Gemara. Together they form the Talmud. The Talmud is the codification of Jewish law which is adhered to by observant Jews to this day.

Paul was a trained rabbi, and he was fully aware of these traditions. He was also aware of the fact that Jesus did not hold them as authoritative. For example, we see His words to those who held to them in Mark 7 –

He answered and said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

‘This people honors Me with *their* lips,

But their heart is far from Me.

⁷And in vain they worship Me,

Teaching *as* doctrines the commandments of men.’

⁸For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.” Mark 7:6-8

Understanding that these things were nonsense, Paul held to Scripture alone as the rule and guide of the faith. With the addition of apostolic inspiration for proper church-age

conduct, the intent of the Lord was clearly laid out, and fully sufficient, for sound doctrine.

Paul next refers to “endless genealogies.” The Bible, particularly Genesis and Chronicles, is full of genealogies. They are scattered throughout other books as well. These genealogies inevitably would be twisted, and spiritually manipulated to show a Jewish line which was superior to all others. Being a rabbi himself, Paul knew that this was the intent of constantly referring to these genealogies. By allowing the Judaizers to teach these things, it would effectually end any idea of a church of both Jews and Gentiles who were unified as one. Instead, two distinct classes – one supposedly superior over the other – would develop and flourish. All things Jewish would be considered as the ideal. All things Gentile would be considered as base and contemptible.

Paul knew that this would only “cause disputes.” Such fables and endless genealogies have no positive bearing on Christian life and the proper conduct of our faith. They are simply divisive issues intended to subjugate Gentile life and culture. Their introduction into Christian life would make it a walk of works, striving to be more Jewish and thus “more acceptable” to God. This is contrary to “godly edification which is in faith.” The entire plan of salvation, which is found in Christ Jesus, is one of faith in what He has done. There is no distinction between Jew and Gentile when it comes to faith in Him. But to introduce these Jewish traditions and genealogies would then inevitably nullify this precept. The ground would no longer be level. Instead, the Gentiles would ever be striving to become more Jewish, and thus somehow more acceptable.

Paul clearly stated to the Gentiles in Athens in Acts 17 that all people are God’s offspring, being descended from one man. The Jewish people were chosen for a specific purpose, and the law was introduced for a set period of time. In Christ, the law was ended. The distinction between Jew and Gentile is set aside. Paul’s words throughout his epistles confirm this precept time and time again. All people are favorable to God by faith in Christ’s work alone, nothing else comes into the equation.

Life application: The Judaizers of today – some Messianic synagogues, and the Hebrew Roots movement – teach the exact poison that Paul warns against in this verse. All things “Jewish” are held in high esteem. Even certain translations of the Bible are supposedly “the best” because they have a Jewish perspective, using Hebrew terms almost as talismans of spiritual insight. Law observance (always in a pick and choose manner) has become fashionable once again. Gentiles are being swept up into this nonsense, and it will only lead to one sad end. If they are attempting to merit God’s favor through these

works, then faith is excluded. Only condemnation can result. Keep far from this heretical nonsense.

Lord God! We are so grateful that at the foot of the cross, the ground is level. There is no superior culture, and there is no need to turn back to an already-fulfilled law in order to please You. Instead, all people, Jew and Gentile alike, are one in Christ Jesus. We can openly and happily display our cultural differences to glorify you, showing that we are accepted by simple faith in the finished work of Christ. Marvelous things You have done! Thank You for our Lord Jesus. Amen.

Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from* sincere faith, 1 Timothy 1:5

Paul now gives a contrasting thought to what was given starting in verse 3. It may, therefore, be better translated as “But the purpose...” The word translated as “purpose” *telos*, signifies an end goal. He relates now what the purpose, or “end goal,” of the commandment is. Because of the word, “commandment,” some have taken this to mean “the Law of Moses.” In essence, “The purpose of the law of Moses is as follows...” This is held to by scholars such as John Calvin. The claim is that the false teachers mentioned in verse 3 & 4 were improperly using the Law of Moses to come to erroneous conclusions, when in fact its purpose is what Paul will next describe. This is not the intent.

The false teachers may have been misusing the law, but he was as much focused on the “fables” they were introducing; things with no true relation at all to the law. Instead, Paul’s words concerning “the commandment” are referring to verse 3 where he said, “that you may charge some.” In verse 3, he used the verb form of the noun found in this verse. In the Greek, there is an article in front of “commandment” as is in the English. It is “the commandment.”

Understanding this, the word “commandment” signifies a practical teaching. It is “‘something announced from close-beside.’ and therefore *fully authorized*” (HELPS Word Studies). This is what Paul is instructing Timothy to now accomplish, and it is this charge Timothy is to pursue that has a purpose of “love from a pure heart.” This indicates a heart of holiness, not one which was self-centered, or which exalted one over another. It is comparable to Jesus’ words of Luke 10:27, where He cited the substance of man’s duty given from the law itself –

“‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself.’”

Paul continues that the purpose of the commandment is to be “*from* a good conscience.” This is contrasted to the “other doctrine” of verse 3 which led to “disputes” in verse 4. Only a defiled conscience would submit such heretical and outlandish things. What Timothy was to charge was to be of a sound mind, and in accord with the truth of the gospel; a gospel which is “*from* sincere faith.”

The word “sincere” is used by Paul in connection with “love” in Romans 12 and in 2 Corinthians 6. It will be used it in connection to wisdom in James 3. The word indicates, “without hypocrisy.” The false doctrines of the Judaizers were introduced with false motives. They were intended not to honor Christ, but to bring honor to themselves. This is the polar opposite of what should be the case.

In his charge, a complete contrast to the workings of the false teachers was to be made. Paul expected Timothy to handle this matter in a way which would be sincere and honoring of Christ. Anything else would be unsuitable to the calling in which he stood.

Life application: For the pastor, preacher, or teacher of the word, he is to conduct his duties with sincerity of faith, displaying an attitude which reflects a good and undefiled conscience, and put forth teachings which demonstrate a pure heart towards God, towards the word, and towards those whom he is instructing. Anything less would be contradictory to the calling of the office.

Heavenly Father – great, gracious, and glorious God. Help us to be aware of those who would present their biblical teachings and instruction in a manner which is contrary to what is expected of a man of God. Keep us from being swayed by false teachers and hypocrites who look for self-gain and self-aggrandizement. It is often hard to tell where a person stands, and so may our prayers to You be heard and responded to. Guide us so that we are kept from such people, and lead us to proper teachers of Your word. This is our desire in Christ. Amen.

...from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, 1 Timothy 1:6

“From which” is speaking of the words of verse 4 which included “love from a pure heart,” “a good conscience,” and “sincere faith.” It is these “from which some” have strayed. The term, here translated as “having strayed,” is a word used three times, all by Paul, and only in 1 & 2 Timothy. It means specifically, “off target.” It is a deviating from

God's target (a line) by walking off of that line. It further "emphasizes the *divine disapproval* that goes with walking 'off (God's) line'" (HELPS Word Studies).

What we are being presented here are true Christians, some may even have been once sound teachers, but they have strayed off of the right path. This must be true because if they were not true Christians, then the elders would have no authority over them. But Paul has told Timothy that he is to correct their ways. The intent is to bring them back to the correct line, and to bring them back to a state of approval in accord with God's will.

For now though, their departure is that they "have turned aside to idle talk." Here Paul uses a noun found only here in Scripture, which is well-translated as "idle talk." It is that which is vain and foolish, like a random babbler. It is the use of words which are unproductive and godless. He will use the adjective form of the word in Titus 1:10.

Paul will further define what this idle talk means in the coming verse. For now, just think of the countless websites and YouTube personalities who make up stuff right out of their own heads, and which have no bearing at all on what is found in Scripture. With these new means of communication, anyone can say anything no matter how unfounded it is. And with a generation of biblically illiterate people who are hungry to be told what to do, there is always a receptive audience ready to swallow their teachings up. This was a problem all the way back at the inception of the church, it is a problem which has continued unabated until modern times, and it is a problem which has literally exploded in scope with the advent of each new type of invention which has arisen.

Life application: Today, there is almost no end to the amount of contradictory information concerning biblical teachings one can choose to listen to. The only way to avoid being completely misled by any of these misguided souls is to actually pick up your Bible and read it – constantly. The more it is read, the less likely one will be duped by crazy ideas which are put forth for public consumption.

Lord God, technology has allowed Your word to reach throughout the world. From the printing press, to the internet, to YouTube, each step has made this precious gift more and more available. But along with this, those who mishandle its precepts have been able to obtain wide audiences. And this for one particular reason – the audiences are filled with people unwilling to pick up the word and to read it for themselves. No wonder the church is in such a state of chaos. The blind are simply leading the blind. Help us, Lord God, to place a high priority on reading Your word day in and day out so that we will be able to discern that which is right from that which is wrong. Amen.

...desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm. 1Timothy 1:7

Paul now chastises the group of people to whom he referred to in verses 3 & 4, and who he then referred to specifically again in verse 6. They are those who taught “another doctrine,” and who give heed to fables and endless genealogies. It is they who he now says are “desiring to be teachers of the law.” They have “strayed,” and “have turned aside to idle talk.” This now, unlike verse 5, is speaking of the law of Moses. It refers to a different word than that translated as “commandment” there.

The single Greek word translated as “teachers of the law” is used only three times. First in Luke 5:17 when speaking of the Pharisees. Next it is used in Acts 5:34 when speaking of Gamaliel, a Pharisee of the ruling council. And now Paul uses it to speak of those who would desire to be in such a position, but who are obviously contrasted to them. This is evident from the words, “understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.”

These people were covetous of having the respect and authority of someone like a Pharisee, but in their zeal to obtain such favor, they overlooked what the law was pointing to, and thus its true purpose. The law was given to lead people to Christ, not to be an end in and of itself. Nor was it to be used as a spiritual map for discerning secrets which God has hidden in it. It is true that the law contains hidden pictures and patterns, but they are all intended to lead a person to Christ, not to magical insights and divinations.

Unfortunately, this is what they were doing. More unfortunately, this is still done to this day. Kabbalists use the Bible to obtain mystical insights, Christians use it in an attempt to determine genetic codes, prophetic codes, rapture dates, and the like. The list of such abuses is almost endless. But the Bible is not for predicting outcomes. Rather, it is there to reveal, after prophetic events occur, that God was in control of those events all along. Only afterward are such things discernible.

But it is a source of pride for people to claim they have special insights into the future, or into the mechanics of God’s providential workings in the stream of time, and so they pursue these unhealthy avenues of interpretation without truly understanding “what they say nor the things which they affirm.”

It is to be remembered that Paul is speaking specifically of people who have been saved by Christ in these verses, and yet they have gone off the deep end in their theology.

Further, it certainly encompasses any misapplication of the law in their teaching. Therefore, it includes those who reinsert the law (or parts of it) as a mandatory part of Christian living. This includes feast days, Sabbath observances, dietary restrictions, etc. In such, these people truly do not know what they say. The law is annulled, obsolete, and set aside. Therefore, such people in the church are to be shunned, not emulated or adored.

In order to show their error, Paul makes another compound word in the Greek. First was *nomodidaskalos*, or “law teachers.” In contrast to this he says, *diabebaioomai*, or “they affirm.” What they wanted to be is not at all what they were, nor what they taught. Paul’s choice of words actually becomes a strong rebuke. He uses the same word once again in Titus 3:8 in a positive sense towards Titus, asking him “to affirm constantly” what is correct concerning belief in God.

Life application: Proper theology will always be Christ-centered. There is never a time that works-based theology will be sound, nor is there any place for using the Bible as a form of mystical insight or divination. Those who proclaim secret codes within the text which can be used for such things are to be rejected. Only when patterns and pictures reveal Christ, and God’s redemptive plans which are worked through Him, are they to be considered valid.

Lord God, what a suitable and remarkable word You have given us for understanding the love You have for the people of the world! Help us to always look for Christ, and the redemption found in Him, as we read the Bible. Equally so, help us to not to attempt to use the Bible as a tool of mystical insight or prophetic divination. May we never be so presumptuous as to believe that we can predict the future. Help us to simply cherish those things which are promised for our future with great hope and faith, and to be content with that knowledge as we wait for those things to arrive. Amen.

But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, 1 Timothy 1:8

Paul stated something similar to this in Romans 7:12. There he was making a point about how sin uses the commandment to deceive a person, bringing about death. In his concluding thought, he then said, “Therefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.” Here as in Romans, one reason he is certainly giving this statement is as a testimony that he is not an enemy of the law. In Acts 21:21, he was accused of exactly this. But he vigorously defends the law as being good. However, it is the proper use of the law which he defends time and time again.

He will state one particular purpose of the law in the next verse, but for now, a second reason he is introducing this thought is to defend against the improper uses of the law which he has already identified. It is not intended for inane arguments, it is not intended for pursuing “endless genealogies,” and it is not intended for stirring up disputes. God has revealed Himself through the giving of the law. None of such things is in accord with this self-revelation. He is God; these uses of the law are ungodly.

As noted, Paul will explain one avenue of why the law was given in the next verse. However, with the coming of Christ, and in the completion of His work under the law, the law is fulfilled and annulled. Above all else, the law was a stepping stone to lead us to the Person and work of Christ. Understanding this, Paul’s particular reason for the giving of the law in the next verse will make all the more sense.

Life application: Just because something is good does not mean it is still necessary. If someone wants to get to Paradise Island, he will need a way of getting there. A bridge for this purpose would be considered good. Once he has arrived at the destination, the bridge is no longer needed to get there. It has fulfilled its intended purpose. This is the error of those who cling to the Law of Moses after the coming of Christ. The law is no longer a working bridge. Christ crossed that bridge and then He offered us a new bridge. At the same time, the old has been dismantled. And yet, people continuously attempt to cross by a bridge which is no longer in service. Paradise Island is forever out of their reach because they have failed to properly use the new and better bridge.

Lord God, Your word is clear that You alone are God, and You have given just one path back to you in the giving of Your Son. When all was hopeless because of sin, You took care of the problem Yourself by sending Jesus. Thank You for this one marvelous path of reconciliation with You. The path may be narrow, but it is wide enough for everyone to pass if they will just take advantage of it. May they wisely do so while there is yet time. Amen.

...knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 1 Timothy 1:9

Paul begins this verse by referring to everyone in a general sense. At least it should be that way. His words are to be taken as a universal axiom. However, not everyone is either intelligent enough to understand what should be otherwise universally accepted, or some people may be intentionally perverse in their attitude and conduct towards the law. Therefore, it is specifically the person mentioned in verse 8 who is more directly the

one being referred to. And so, “knowing this” is speaking of one who uses the law lawfully. As Paul is writing to Timothy, it is then intended for Timothy to understand this and be included in what is being said. And finally, as this letter is intended for the instruction of all people due to its inclusion in the Bible, it is therefore meant for each and every reader of the Bible to understand. With this in mind, he next says, “that the law is not made for a righteous person.”

The Law of Moses precedes the coming of Christ. It is Christ who is wholly righteous, and it is those who believe in Him that are granted His perfect righteousness. Therefore, Paul is saying, clearly and unambiguously, that the Law of Moses is not made for those in Christ. This is simple, straightforward, and obvious on the surface. The believer in Christ stands justified before God because of Christ’s fulfillment of the law on our behalf. Where the law could justify none, Christ surpasses the law. In Him, we stand justified. The law, rather, highlighted man’s sin. It was intended to lead the person aware of their sin to their need for God’s grace and mercy. And these are found in Christ Jesus. As Paul says in Galatians, the law was “our tutor *to bring* us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (3:24). He then immediately follows that up with, “But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor” (3:25).” The law is not intended for those in Christ.

With this understanding, he next says who the law is intended for. It is not for the righteous, “but for the lawless.” The intent here is a person who simply does not recognize any law. Rather than not having a law, it is one who refuses to recognize the law as an authority. These are anarchists who refuse to acknowledge that they are bound to the laws put in place.

Next he says, “and insubordinate.” This is tied in with the lawless. It is those who may recognize a law, but they are disobedient to it. Bonnie and Clyde certainly recognized the law as an authority. In arming themselves in order to fight, they knew the law was valid, but they simply snubbed their noses at it.

Paul then says “for the ungodly.” The ungodly are those who refuse to give God the reverence and respect He is due. In them, there is no fear of God. Supposed “atheists,” like Richard Dawkins, fit this description. This is coupled with, “and for sinners.” Sinners are those who defy God’s law, violating it willfully and flagrantly.

Next he notes “the unholy.” The word describes someone who ignores their duty to God, disregarding it as unnecessary to their life. They will profane the name of the Lord without compunction, and simply give up right living for a life of sin and wickedness. The word used to describe such is only found here and in 2 Timothy 3:2. These degenerates

are coupled with the “profane.” The profane speak of sacred things in a lewd manner. Their actions may carry the same intent. The singer Madonna is an example of one who is both profane in her speech and in her actions.

Paul’s next category is “murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers.” These are those who openly violate the Fifth Commandment. The word used signifies to hit or beat one’s parents; not specifically those who murder them. However, a beating can lead to death, and so the stronger sense is translated into English, even if incorrectly. The possibility of murder by such is not far off.

And finally, he completes the list of those for whom the law is intended with “manslayers.” This includes those who kill others either with malice, or with a passion for killing. In other words, it is inclusive of both the violent and the psycho-killer.

Paul will continue with his list of people for whom the law was made in the next verse. In all of them, it is intended for the most vile and disobedient offenders. For those who suppose they are made holy by the law, they claim they apply the law in that fashion. But that is completely contrary to whom Paul says the law is intended for. Instead of applying it to the holiest, it is meant to convict those least holy. For those who teach that Christians are still bound to the law, they are actually placing themselves into this list of people. Instead of drawing nearer to God through the law, they are placing themselves at further enmity with God through it. How stupid!

Life application: The Bible is absolutely clear concerning the Law of Moses. It was intended for keeping lawbreakers in check, and it was intended to highlight them and remove them from society. It was never intended as a means of attaining holiness before God. You Judaizers and Hebrew Roots movement followers have actually set yourself in opposition to God by ignoring the righteousness of Christ. If you are unwilling to live in the New Covenant, you will die by the Old. Best wishes in your endeavors, but better... come to Christ and be freed from this sad end.

Lord God, Your word explicitly tells us that the law was not meant for the righteous, but for the unrighteous. It is Christ who brings righteousness. So why on earth would we reject His completed work, go back, and place ourselves under a law which shows us how bad we are? Instead, let us rest in Christ and place ourselves in His care, showing how glorious You are! Thank You for our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank You for full, complete, and eternal reconciliation with You because of Him. Hallelujah and Amen!

...for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, 1 Timothy 1:10

Paul continues his lengthy list of who the law is intended for. His next target is “fornicators.” The word is *pornos*. Specifically, it means a male prostitute, however, it is more appropriately speaking of anyone engaging in sexual immorality.

Following this comes “sodomites.” The Greek word, *arsenokoites*, comes from two separate words which translate as “a male,” and “a bed.” Thus it refers to a man in bed with another. More specifically, it is the perversion which today we call “homosexuality.” Although termed “acceptable” in apostate churches of today, the word of God stands, and such who participate in this perversion are exactly who the law was written for. It is to show them God’s standard, and to reveal to them the punishment due for their abominable actions.

Paul’s next class are “kidnappers.” The Greek word is used only here. It signifies a slave, such as a man taken in war and sold into slavery. What is probably on Paul’s mind here is a person who steals free men and sells them into slavery, or one who steals the slaves of others and re-sells them. The Eighth Commandment refers to stealing. Among all theft, this would be one of the most repugnant types, if not the most repugnant of all.

Paul then goes to “liars.” Here the Ninth Commandment is referred to. In John 8:44, Jesus calls the devil a liar, and the father of all lies. Obviously then, a liar is one for whom the law is written. Should someone follow the path of lying, the penalty of the law is intended to instruct him of his just due for that misconduct.

Next, he notes “perjurers.” Again, it is a word only found here in Scripture, *epiorkos*. It is derived from two words indicating “against” and “oath.” Thus is a person who swears falsely. This is also aligned with the Ninth Commandment.

Paul could continue on for a lengthy time with more specific types of people for whom the law is written. Entire chapters of Leviticus identify specific laws, and the penalties for violating those laws. Deuteronomy repeats many of these, and builds upon them. But to sum up his thoughts, he simply says, “and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.” The word translated as “doctrine” is used by Paul 19 times in his letters. He uses it 15 times in the 3 pastoral epistles, and it is found only 2 other times in the New Testament. It means “instruction,” or “teaching.”

The high use of the word in the pastorals shows us the importance of proper teaching in the church, and especially in regards to those in leadership positions. The other two times it is used apart from Paul, it is seen in Jesus' words when speaking of those leaders in Israel who teach "as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9). The teaching of God's people is to be from the word of God, and it is to be taught carefully, in context, and according to the proper dispensation. In the case of the Gentile-led church age, the proper doctrine is to be from Paul's epistles first and foremost.

Life application: It is those who are referenced in his lengthy list of offenders for whom the law is written. How can it be that pastors and teachers throughout the world, and throughout the history of the church age, have continuously picked out select portions of the law as binding upon those in the church? Some go so far as to mandate that the entire law of Moses is still in effect. But this is completely contrary to the sense of what Paul presents. Those in Christ are not at all for whom the law is written. Reintroducing the law is shown to be beyond ridiculous when taken in its proper context. Stand firm and fast on the grace of Jesus Christ alone. Stand firm in the liberty by which Christ has made us free. Do not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage, which is the law.

Lord God, there is liberty in Christ which is so wonderfully marvelous. We have been freed from the yoke of bondage, which is the law, and brought into son-ship with You through His fulfillment of that law. We can see that the law is written for offenders, not for those who are declared "not guilty." Help us to remember this lesson, and to live holy lives to You because of Christ and His magnificent work! Amen.

...according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust. 1 Timothy 1:11

Paul is summing up his thoughts of verses 3-10 now, but the words "according to" are more specifically directed to verses 8-10. He has been speaking of the law as being an instrument not intended for righteous people, but for those who are unrighteous. This was its full intent and purpose. And this concept is nothing invented by him, as if he had found some new meaning in it. No! In fact, he had served under this law all his life, striving for righteousness, and falling short of it continuously. And then came Christ Jesus! When Paul found true righteousness in Him, he also found the true intent of the law. Thus, his words concerning the law in relation to the unrighteous are "according to" this precept.

After this, the English translation of the NKJV is argued to break down. Rather than it saying, "according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God," Greek scholars say it is

better translated as, “according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God.” This then speaks of “the glory” in relation to God. In other words, the gospel which tells of righteousness apart from the law is seen in “the glory of the blessed God.” It is a reference to the work of Christ Jesus who is “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God” (2 Corinthians 4:6). The gospel may be glorious, but it is only in relation to the One who brought it forth.

It is Christ Jesus who is this “glory of the blessed God.” The glory of God, in His infinite grace and mercy, is seen in and through the work of Christ. Apart from God’s works in Christ, these things would be unknown, and unattainable. But because of Him, we can see a glory which transcends the marvel of creation. We can see that all of the majesty of creation is only a container for man to exist in, and into which God Himself would enter and demonstrate the fullness of His glory to us. Understanding this, Paul notes that this amazing treasure, the gospel which reveals these things, “was committed to my trust.”

These words set his message apart from the false teachers noted in verses 3-7. They had a false gospel which revealed no glory at all. Instead, adherence to the law which they proclaimed was a part of earning salvation (or even a convoluted misuse of the law), was only a means of obscuring the glory of God, not a means of revealing it. What they put forth was only darkness and damnation, but that which Paul put forth was light and life. This trust given to him, and to the other apostles, is the true and marvelous gift of God, revealing the Person and work of Jesus Christ on our behalf.

Life application: Again we need to consider Paul’s words. If the gospel of Jesus Christ reveals the glory of the blessed God, and if the law is simply an instrument intended for the unrighteous, then why O’ why would we shun the cross of Christ and place ourselves under the law? Who on earth would throw away salvation in hopes of gaining condemnation? And yet, this is exactly what those who hold to the Law of Moses are doing. Be freed from this heresy! Turn to Christ, and be saved through a reliance on His finished work!

Great, glorious, and gracious God! How we treasure our hope of glory – Christ in us! We are freed from condemnation because of His fulfillment of the law. When His body died on the cross, the law died with Him. And in His burial, there it too was buried. Help us to be wise, and to leave the law there. It didn’t resurrect! But Christ did! May we only put our hope in Him, trusting in His merits alone for our entrance into Your glorious presence. Great are You, O God, and greatly are You to be praised. Hallelujah and Amen!

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, 1 Timothy 1:12

Paul bursts into praise because of the words he just said in the previous verse –

“...according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.” He probably stopped for a moment and thought, “God counted me – even me – worthy of this honor. How can it be?”

As readers of the word, we may place Paul on a super-spiritual level, but he certainly didn't feel that way. He will explain his time before Christ in the coming verses, but for now he says, “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord.” To thank someone for something generally means that they have obtained from the person something they did not previously possess. Paul directs his thanks to the Lord because it is He, as he says, “who has enabled me.” The word translated as “enabled” is one which indicates that an outward source of strength is bestowed. The word “empowered” conveys the thought well.

In this, Paul claims that the strength required to conduct his affairs in conveying the gospel came from Christ and not from himself. This is in accord with the words of the Lord when He spoke to the disciples the words of John 15:5, “without Me you can do nothing.” Paul confirms this in his own life as an apostle.

Next, he states why the Lord enabled him. It is “because He counted me faithful.” As the Lord is omniscient, this is not an “after-conversion” judgment, but a “pre-conversion” judgment. The Lord saw the makeup of Paul, and knew that it was exactly what was needed to meet the grueling demands of the office which would be placed upon him. In the verses ahead, Paul will describe some of his negative traits, showing his unworthiness to hold the position he was placed in. However, Jesus looked at his positive attributes and knew that with the proper guidance, Paul was the right man for the task which lay ahead.

Because of this, Paul says that it was for this reason that the Lord put him “into the ministry.” What may be a better translation is that the Lord had “appointed him to His service.” The word translated here as “ministry” is not simply one used as a reference to a religious duty. Rather, it is a general word which covers both secular and religious affairs. Paul was called into the service of the Lord, having been appointed by Christ specifically because he was reckoned as faithful.

Life application: Each of us has a general makeup which determines who we are. The Lord knows that makeup, and He will use it for His purposes. If we run ahead and jump into a ministry that fails, we shouldn't be upset at the Lord. Rather, we should praise Him for ending something that was not meant to be. Having said this, there are many "ministries" which are highly successful, but which are not conducted in accord with the words of Paul in the pastoral epistles. Success in a ministry which is not in accord with the word of God is not a successful ministry at all. Let us not delude ourselves into thinking that a church is sound because it is growing, popular, well-funded, etc. A successful ministry is one which is first and foremost aligned with the word of God.

Heavenly Father, help us to evaluate our ministers and the ministries we see in accord with the word of God alone. May we never assume that a ministry is successful because it is popular, increasing in number, or for any other reason. A ministry which is not in accord with your word may be successful by worldly standards, but it is actually just another worn stone laying on the side of Apostasy Avenue. Help us to remember this and to adhere to Your word alone when evaluating pastors and churches. Amen.

...although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. 1 Timothy 1:13

Paul now contrasts his state in Christ to his life before Christ. He just said in verse 12, "He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry." In contrasting words, he explains his life as a Pharisee, and as a strict adherent to the Law of Moses, saying words which place Christ Jesus as the object of his words. He begins with, "although I was formerly a blasphemer."

As an observant Pharisee, how could he be a blasphemer? Unless Christ is the end of the law for all who believe, which He is, this couldn't be the case. But in failing to come to Christ, he had rejected the entire purpose of the law. His words here show that adherence to the law is enmity with the Lord! The two are incompatible. God cannot smile upon one who attempts to be justified by the deeds of the law when Christ has fulfilled that law. It is blasphemy to attempt to do so.

After this, he says he was "a persecutor." The first word, blasphemer, applies to his conduct toward God. This word now applies to his conduct towards God's people. The word he uses, *dióktés*, is only found here. It is a person who pursues and hunts down another. His actions in this regard are well described in the book of Acts.

And then next, he says that he was “an insolent man.” This word, *hubristés*, is found only here and in Romans 1:30. One can see the modern word “hubris” in it. It indicates “someone ‘damaging’ others by lashing out with a nasty spirit.” It is someone who revels in hurting others. Again, as noted above, Paul uses these words to describe himself as a man strictly adhering to the Law of Moses.

How is it that those who feel they are right with God by adhering to the law think that they are acceptable to God? Such is not the case. It shows that all, including law-observers, are in need something else. It is something that Paul says he found with the words, “...but I obtained mercy.” One who obtains mercy is a person who needed mercy. Paul found this, despite his wretched condition. Through the law comes the knowledge of sin, but in Christ both grace and mercy are found. Paul then qualifies his statement by saying, “because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief.”

The word “ignorantly” gives the sense of lacking the proper knowledge of the matter. He looked at the law as a means to an end, failing to see that Christ is the end of the law. His efforts were intended to please God through the law, and through destroying those who were not in conformity with it. But he found that he was the one who was in the wrong. It was those he persecuted who were adhering to the “fulfilled law” found in Christ. The law wasn’t a means to an end, it was ended.

Paul’s words here are contemplated by some to indicate that ignorance of a law will lead to a mitigation of the punishment, or even complete forgiveness of the penalty for infractions of the law. This is not Paul’s intent here. Though it is true that those who sin in ignorance may receive a lessening of punishment, it is not true that one will stand guiltless for ignorant violations of the law. Atonement of sin must be granted, and that can only be found in Christ the Lord. Those not covered in Christ will be judged accordingly.

Life application: In Christ, even the worst of offenses can be forgiven. If you have a sin which wears you down because of its enormity, you must realize that it has been forgiven if you have come to Him. Do not be so presumptuous as to assume that your sin is greater than His ability to forgive. Cast away the feeling of guilt, and replace it with an attitude of confidence in your forgiveness, and of praise for how it came about!

Lord God, at times we bear a heavy guilt in our hearts for things we have done against You. But Your word tells us that in Christ we are forgiven, completely and wholly, for such things. Help us never to think in such a twisted way as to assume that our misdeeds are greater than Your mercy which is found in Christ. Instead, help us to simply be grateful

for our cleansing, and filled with praises for what You have accomplished through Him. Amen.

And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 1:14

Paul has explained his “from” and “to” status. He went from a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man. He went to one who was placed into the ministry because he was counted faithful. Now he attempts to explain the incomprehensible nature of what came about in that transformation by saying, “And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant.” The single Greek word translated as “exceedingly abundant” is found only here in Scripture. It gives the sense of superabundance. It is as a number which cannot be counted.

In other words, Paul is stating that the grace upon him could not be properly explained. Only a descriptive word which asks the mind to reach off into infinity could be used in an attempt to describe it. And then along with that, he adds, “with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.” These are the two principle tenets which came to exemplify the life and apostleship of Paul. They are set in contrast to his former life.

He was a blasphemer, now he was a man of faith. He was a persecutor and an insolent man, and now his life was marked with love. The transformation was as complete as that of going from utter darkness to brilliant light.

Life application: How did coming to Christ change you? Did you simply go from being a regular person, stepping from unbelief in His work to a belief in it, calling on Him as Lord? If so, you are saved by that belief and the call that you made. Or, did you go from being a really wicked person to a person who was completely transformed? If so, you are saved as well, but you probably have a burning desire to serve the Lord. The fact is that all, those who felt they were just regular folks, and those who felt they were the worst of all people, were in exactly the same boat. In both, there was an infinite separation from God, and in both, there is a complete reuniting to Him. Let us all come to the realization of this, and let us all be willing to expend ourselves in this life for the furtherance of the gospel. And in this, let us be people of faith and love which is found in Christ Jesus.

It was an infinite gulf between the two of us, O God. The chasm was impassible, and I stood dead in sin. But then came Christ. With His divine hand, He reached out to You – infinitely pure and holy. And in His human hand, he reached down and cleansed a miserable sinner like me. Now, this Bridge has reconciled me to You. Thank God for

Calvary's cross, and the blood which was shed there. Thank You, O God, for what You have done through Christ Jesus my Lord. Amen.

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. 1 Timothy 1:15

The words Paul opens with here are only found in the Pastoral Epistles, “This is a faithful saying.” Literally, the Greek states, “Faithful is the word.” He will use this same formula five times in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus. There is also a similar saying used by Jesus in Revelation 21:5 & 22:6. It is a way of emphasizing what is connected to it, and it is rather similar to that which is found in the Old Testament, and in the sayings of the gospels, where a word is repeated for emphasis. For example, Jesus says “verily, verily” (literally “amen, amen”) many times in the gospels. In this same manner, Paul is making a statement of profound emphasis.

In it, he then adds, “and worthy of all acceptance.” This is only used here and then again in 1 Timothy 4:9. It is a phrase which indicates the exclusion of all doubt. It is to be accepted at face value. Understanding the emphatic and absolutely sure nature of what will be said, he then states what is on his mind – “that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

Here we have an implicit reference to the eternal nature of Christ. For Him to “come into the world” indicates that He was there before the world existed. He was in the position of glory in the eternal state, but stepped out of that in order to join with us in the stream of time. This is certainly the thought on Paul’s mind. That God Himself was willing to enter into this existence, become a part of it, and save those who were otherwise set to perish. The idea ties naturally back to the words “worthy of all acceptance.” In order for sinners to be saved, they need a Savior. Further, being saved implies “from” something. If there was no harm coming to sinners, then they would not need to be saved.

Further, as this is worthy of “all” acceptance, then it must apply to all sinners. If not, then it would not be an absolute statement. But because it is, Christ is fully capable of saving all sinners. And as all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), then Christ came to potentially save all. He did not come just for Jews, but for all – Jew and Gentile alike. All are destined for separation from God, but Christ is the means of rectifying that state. The purpose of Christ coming was not to take us to heaven, but to save us from hell. Heaven is merely a benefit of our salvation.

But Paul's thought does not end with this. As a note of the immensity of what Christ has done, he adds on (when referring to the word "sinners), "of whom I am chief." Albert Barnes notes that this "means that he occupied the first rank among sinners. There were none who surpassed him. This does not mean that he had been the greatest of sinners in all respects, but that in some respects he had been so great a sinner, that on the whole there were none who had surpassed him."

In Ephesians 3:8, Paul calls himself "the least of all the saints." His conduct in persecuting Christians, and thus Christ Himself (see Acts 9:4), led him to realize that he was indeed the first of all sinners. The reason for this is that he was schooled in the law. He was an Israelite, and he was a Pharisee as well. In his studies, he should have recognized Christ for who He is, and yet it took a supernatural appearance of the Lord to open his spiritually blind eyes. Surely no one could be more sinful than the man who used God's own law to pursue God's own Son!

But in understanding Paul's words, each and every Christian should be able to empathize with Paul and even to argue as to whether he or she is not truly the chief among the sinful people of the world. Our sin, no matter how large or how small, necessitated the crucifixion of Christ. All are guilty of the act, and all must acknowledge this in their hearts. "Lord, I am chief of the sinners." If we fail to understand this, then when we look at other sinners, we may find them less deserving of God's mercy than we were. May this never be!

Life application: Love sent Christ Jesus into the world. Our sin nailed Him to the cross. His perfection brought Him forth from the grave. We are the recipients of that which is wholly undeserved. Let us remember this, and then let us share this marvelous truth with all. May we never hold back the gospel because we feel someone else is undeserving. Christ didn't hold it back from us, and we were certainly undeserving.

Lord God, not one person deserves the grace of salvation through Jesus Christ. We are mere beggars in need of the Bread of life, and You gave it to us. Should we then presume that another is not worthy of hearing the same message? Help us to never hold back that which we were so graciously granted. Keep our hearts soft, even towards the worst offenders, because they often become the most stalwart of your faithful. Praises to You for each person You have so lovingly redeemed. Amen.

However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. 1 Timothy 1:16

Paul, after having claimed that he was the chief of sinners, now proceeds to give a reason for his selection despite that unhappy claim to fame. “However” is stated to set the tone of this new thought. “I was the chief of sinners, however..” This is immediately explained by, “for this reason I obtained mercy.” He points out that the very fact that he was the chief of sinners is why he was selected! God, infinitely wise, looked at Paul’s heart and knew that he would feel as he does, and He knew that Paul would use his state before Christ as an example of comfort and reassurance to any and all who felt as he did.

Never waiving in his assurance of salvation, he continues with, “that in me first Christ Jesus might show all longsuffering.” Anyone who thought, “I cannot be saved, my sin is too great,” only needs to come to Paul’s words here to see that such is not the case. Instead of being too great of a sinner to be forgiven, Paul clearly shows that such a notion is wholly unrealistic. “Look at me, and be assured that Christ will forgive you as well!” is his adamant cry to the one burdened by his past life.

The longsuffering of Christ towards those who would otherwise be objects of His wrath is highlighted in Paul, making him “a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.” This is the reason for Paul’s calling, supernatural as it may be. He was the chief of sinners, but God literally manifested Himself to him in order to make him an example, a pattern, for those who would bear the weight of their own sin. Despite their desire to believe, even when it seemed futile, they simply couldn’t accept that God would be willing to forgive them. But because of Paul’s calling, they too can be reassured that their own salvation, because of faith in Christ, was not impossible. Instead, it is rather both possible and assured.

The final words, “for everlasting life,” are a resounding note of eternal salvation. There is no hint here, or anywhere else in Paul’s writing of anything but Once-Saved-Always-Saved. Everlasting life means exactly what it says, and it is based on belief. One leads to the other, and the deal is done. How sad that so many curse this doctrine of assured salvation. They have failed to properly and accurately see that God’s grace is a gift. A gift with conditions is no gift at all. Paul, unflinching in his salvation, and unflinching in the eternal nature of it, asks us to likewise be assured of these things. The Lord has set him as the pattern, and we are to look to it with confidence.

Life application: Let us be assured that there is no thing that we have done which will keep us from being saved if we hand it over to Jesus. And, let us then be assured that there is nothing that can keep us from continuing on in that salvation. Faith – it saves you. Have faith in that.

Lord God, Your word says that we are saved by grace through faith. When we completely blow it after that point, Your word says that as children of adoption we may be disciplined, but we will never lose our position in Your family. Help us to be people of faith, accepting Your word as true, and standing fast on its promises. When our hearts overwhelm us because of our sin, help us to remember again that nothing can separate us from Your love which is found in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. 1 Timothy 1:17

After contemplating his calling and position in Christ which was so very undeserved, Paul breaks forth into a doxology, recognizing God's great glory. It is the God who pulled him out of the clutches of Satan, and brought him into His marvelous light, that he now breaks forth in praise to with the words, "Now to the King eternal."

This is from a commonly used Hebrew phrase – *melech ha'olam*, or "King of the ages." Directly translated from the Greek, it also reads, "King of the ages." It signifies the eternal nature of His rule. Time came into existence at His command, and since that moment, ages have come and gone. During these successive generations, God is on the throne. And as the ages continue on, even for all eternity, He will still be there. Whereas all else is created, He is uncreated. His rule has no beginning and no end.

Paul continues with "immortal." The word literally means, "incorruptible." Whereas "King of the ages" defines the scope of the rule of God, this word speaks of His being. He is without beginning and without end. While other rulers come and go, facing their own morality, God is eternal. The position of His rule is without end, and it is He who fills that position endlessly.

Next Paul states, "invisible." The word used is a compound adjective signifying "not seen." It is closely associated with the Greek word for "faith." In other words, He is (figuratively) *spiritual reality* as perceived through God's inbirthings of *faith*" (HELPS Word Studies). The reason this word is highlighted here (and elsewhere) as an attribute, is to continue to demonstrate His incorruptible nature. Whereas the idols of the nations wear down, are destroyed, are stolen, etc., such is not the case with the invisible God.

After these descriptive words, Paul continues His praise with, "to God who alone is wise." Some manuscripts leave out "wise," thus saying, "the only God." Which is correct is debated, but with or without the descriptor, the intent is that God alone is above all else. Though there are other invisible created things, such as angels, principalities, and

powers, God is the sovereign ruler over them. They are not “gods,” but are subject to Him.

It is to him that Paul ascribes, “honor and glory.” To Him alone all worship, praise, and veneration is to be given. He alone bears the eternal glory as He rules from His position of honor. Thus these things rightly and wholly belong to only Him. And this is, as Paul next says, “forever and ever.” This is another Hebrew phrase. It literally states, “to the ages of ages.” It is a superlative expression meaning “to all eternity.” There will be no time that another may receive His honor and glory. Rather, for as long as eternity lasts, which is forever, this is to be ascribed to Him.

Paul then finishes with “Amen.” It is the traditional ending to any such doxology, signifying “So be it.” This is how it is, and this is how it ever shall be. There is finality in the expression. God is God, and He was, is, and ever shall be. By faith, such an expression is made, and it confirms in the one making it that what has been said is agreed to in heart and soul.

Life application: God is invisible, and thus our Christian walk is one of faith. Christ has returned to the Father and left us with His unseen Spirit as our Comforter and Helper. During this dispensation, we are to live by faith, not expecting, nor receiving, a physical manifestation of God’s presence. This is what the Bible expects of us. Someday our faith will be sight as we stand in the presence of Christ Jesus. Until then, let us be steadfast in our faith, not wavering in conviction, and not waffling in our doctrine.

Lord God, Your word says that we live by faith and not by sight. But it also indicates that our faith will be rewarded. If we have sight, then faith is excluded. A hope which is seen is no hope at all, but rather is substance. Help us to not expect signs, sights, and visions, but instead help us to be people who study Your word and receive its truths by faith. In this, You will surely be pleased with us now, and You will be ready to reward us on that great Day when we stand before You. Amen.

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 1:18

There is as much debate about what “charge” Paul is committing to Timothy as there is about a glass being half full or half empty. Commentaries are lengthy, and disagreement is piled upon disagreement. However, there is nothing at all complicated in this. Paul’s words, “This charge I commit to you,” are based upon the “purpose of the commandment in verse 5, and that is then based upon Paul’s words of instruction to

Timothy in verse 3 that he “charge some that they teach no other doctrine.” The same word he uses now in this verse was used in verse 5. And verse 3 uses the verb form of this same noun.

After that, Paul then described the purpose of the law in verses 8-11, summing up the thought with the freedom found in the gospel which was committed to his trust. After that, in verses 12-17 he explained the charge, meaning right doctrine as is in accord with the gospel, as it worked through him. Now, he is committing this same charge to Timothy. The scholars at Cambridge sum up the entire thought as, “This is my charge to teach the old simple truths, with a heart and life that retain still the old penitent gratitude and devotion; I trust to you this life and work, as a precious jewel; so precious that to guard and keep it you must be never off duty, always Christ’s faithful soldier and servant.”

With this charge placed in Timothy’s hands, he fondly calls him, “son Timothy.” This is not a term he uses lightly, but rather it is a truth which Paul carried with him always. In 1 Corinthians 4:17, he calls Timothy “my beloved and faithful son.” He then called him a similar term at the opening of this letter as well. After this, Paul then describes one particular reason why he has placed this most important charge in the hands of Timothy. It is an action which is “according to the prophecies previously made concerning you.”

The words here could easily be taken to unintended extremes. In 1 Timothy 4:14, it says, “Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.” In Timothy’s ordination, the elders who ordained him spoke of the sacred trust which was being placed in his care. 2 Timothy 1:6 then says that Paul was certainly one of those elders. He says, “Therefore, I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” Paul and the other elders would have made proclamations that he was to faithfully carry out his duties, never straying from that which was committed to him.

Now, looking back on those things, Paul is reminding Timothy of this. There is nothing supernatural about the prophecies which were made upon him. Instead, Paul’s word now reminds him of the importance of the trust which was committed to him. These prophecies were simply observations of Timothy’s life and conduct which brought him to the point of ordination, and which were then proclamations based on that known character that he would excel by staying close to that same gospel-centered life and conduct.

Finally, Paul says concerning these prophecies, “that by them you may wage the good warfare.” Throughout Paul’s writings, there is the constant theme that a battle is raging around Christians. It is a spiritual warfare. In the case of true Christians, they are on the good side of this battle, struggling against the forces of evil. As a highlight of this, and how to protect oneself, and even go on the offensive, Ephesians 6:10-20 gives valuable insights. Timothy was ordained as a minister of this cause. Because of this, he could be considered one of the commanders within the battle. He was to align himself and those under him in the proper battle array, and together they were to press on with the charge forward. This is Paul’s intent concerning these words of admonition and encouragement to his young protege.

Life application: The Bible says that we are in a spiritual battle against the forces of wickedness. If the Bible is true, and it is, then what kind of a leader do you wish to serve under while engaging in this battle? Would you rather follow Commander Commendable, or Lieutenant Less-than-Competent? Each pastor must be evaluated based on one standard alone, and that is adherence to the word of God. Sitting in a church filled with uplifting music followed by a sermon by a pastor who fails to hold close to the word of God is a complete waste of time. If you want uplifting music, listen to it on the radio. Your time in church is not first and foremost for you to feel good. It is intended for you to worship the Creator, and to be properly instructed in the word of God. This is your one life before facing Christ. When you stand before Him, will you say, “I really loved the music at the church I attended,” or would you be more commended for saying, “I spent my time learning Your word, and learning how to apply it to my life.” Don’t spend your time foolishly. Stand approved and commended!

Lord God Almighty, our time at church is the most valuable of time we may spend throughout the week. Are we there to feel good about the music we listen to? Or are we going in order to be properly instructed in Your word? What a sad day when we stand before You and say that we really loved the music at church despite the weak and ineffective sermons we listened to. We may retain just one or two points each week. How good it would be if those points were found in Your word, and not in how we should feel. We can listen to fun music all day. Rather, help us to put You above our temporary emotions and attend where the word is exalted. Amen.

...having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, 1Timothy 1:19

Paul’s thoughts about faith and conscience are rather consistent, having stated almost the same thing as he did in verse 1:5 –

“Now the purpose of the commandment is love *from* a pure heart, from a good conscience, and *from* sincere faith.”

He unites the two again here in relation to the “good warfare” of the previous verse. One cannot enter into the spiritual battles of Christian life without “having faith and a good conscience.” If one lacks faith in what he is battling, the battle is already lost. Imagine a group of soldiers knowing that their commander is a drunk and is going to lead them to certain death. They have no faith in him, and they have no will to fight. They will be quickly defeated.

Likewise, having a good conscience is necessary in order to fight the good warfare of Christianity. If one has been engaged in the very sins they are supposed to be fighting, his conscience will be defiled, and he will be ineffective in his conduct. If a soldier is treasonous, and assists the enemy, how will he effectively fight the battle in which he is engaged? He will not! Rather, he will be harmful to the side he is on, and destructive to his own person if the battle comes directly to him. Such a person is like those spoken of by James when he says that the demons believe there is one God, but despite believing, they tremble. Their conscience is defiled, and they are set for a bad end.

Paul next gives a real life example that Timothy would be aware of. In doing this, he highlights the failings of others, and the inevitable result of their failings. He begins to describe them by saying, “which some have rejected.” Obviously this is so, because he has already said that Timothy is to “charge some that they teach no other doctrine” (verse 3). He is speaking of those passing on false words instead of sound doctrine. Because of this, he concludes the verse with words which directly reflect their state, “concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck. “

Here he returns to the same metaphor that he used when writing to the same church Timothy is at now. In his letter to the Ephesians, he implored them to hold to proper doctrine. In so doing, he says “that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting” (Ephesians 4:14). He equated our life in Christ as a ship on the seas. We are to hold to the fair winds of sound doctrine which will carry us along safely and smoothly. However, when we introduce crazy, nutty, unsound, or theologically bizarre doctrine into our lives, then we are like ships on a sea, tossed to and fro. This is what was occurring at Ephesus, and it is what resulted in those who held to such doctrine as, “concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck.”

Their faith was misguided, having held to the law rather than to Christ, and their consciences were defiled because they were fighting alongside an already defeated foe. With Christ's completion of the law, salvation and a right walk before God can only be found in Him. Anything else will result in shipwreck. In such a case, there are sad consequences which result. This will be seen in the coming verse.

Life application: How incredibly sad that people get duped into crazy theology. There are those who hold to parts of the Law of Moses as still binding. There are those who add in unbiblical doctrines such as praying to Mary and the saints. There are those who hold to single versions of the Bible as being the only "inspired" and correct translations. On and on it goes. These things are not sound, and they lead to disharmony, dysfunction, and unsound conclusions about what is right and what is wrong. Be wise, be discerning, and test all things. Hold fast to what is good. Don't suffer shipwreck because of crazy theology.

Lord God, the epistles of the New Testament are given to instruct us in proper church-age doctrine. They argue against bad doctrine, and even heresies, which cropped up even at the earliest times of the church. And yet, how many people feel they can do without reading, studying, and applying these books to their lives. These comprise less reading than most people do on news websites in a couple of days, and yet they never take time to read the most important news of all for happy living. What a crime. Help us to not be so fruitless in our walk before Your presence. Help us to be sound in our theology, right in our doctrine, and well versed in Your word. Amen.

...of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. 1 Timothy 1:20

Paul now speaks of two people who "have suffered shipwreck" concerning the faith that he just noted in verse 19. They are Hymenaeus and Alexander. Hymenaeus is mentioned again with Philetus in 2 Timothy 2. In that letter, Paul instructs Timothy to "shun profane and idle babblings." He then says that "Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some."

The name Alexander was (and still is) a common one, and it is not likely that he is the same Alexander mentioned in Acts 19. However, he may (or may not) be the same one mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:14. Regardless of that, Alexander and Hymenaeus were obviously well-known to both Paul and Timothy, being hearty heretics who, as Paul says, "I have delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme."

The Greek word translated as “learn” signifies training, often involving punishment. It signifies specifically “a child under development with strict training” (HELPS Word Studies). In saying that they have been “delivered to Satan,” it is indicating a saved believer. It is the same term, used only one other time in the Bible, when speaking of a sexually immoral brother in 1 Corinthians 5.

It is obvious that what Paul is speaking of here is the same as that of 1 Corinthians 5. It is a corrective measure for a wayward Christian. How is this obvious? Because he says that he has delivered them to Satan “that they may learn not to blaspheme.” If this was not a corrective measure, they wouldn’t learn anything. Satan would teach them to blaspheme, not the opposite! In other words, they are being handed over to Satan as a punitive, corrective tool. This is exactly the same as the sexually immoral believer in Corinth.

Satan is the ruler of this world, but he is defeated before Christ. He has no power over a believer; he can only afflict them as they continue in their earthly walk. The choice belongs to each believer. Will we will follow the truth or follow falsehood? It is a constant battle (see Romans 7:13-25). These believers had decided to follow falsehood. Paul has delivered them to Satan as a corrective measure. This is the intent behind the words of Hebrews 12, where the same word is used three times –

“My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord,
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;

⁶For whom the Lord loves **He chastens**,
And scourges every son whom He receives.”

⁷If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father **does not chasten**? ⁸But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For they indeed for a few days **chastened us** as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Hebrews 12:5-11

Paul is the Lord’s instrument for the establishment of doctrine. Therefore, he is also the authorized representative to accomplish that which is spoken of here in Hebrews 12. In these words, only the doctrine of eternal salvation, not a loss of salvation, can be found. The oft-asked question is, “What will happen to a person who walks away from the

faith?” The answer is right here in Paul’s letter to Timothy. It is found elsewhere in 2 Peter 1:9. A person can walk away from the faith, or they can completely forget that they were ever saved, but God does not let them go, nor does He forget. If a person is truly saved at one point, they are truly saved forever. The doctrine of “loss of salvation” is proven false.

Life application: Do you have a loved one in your life who received Christ as Lord, believing in his heart that God raised him from the dead, but who has now walked away from his faith? Be assured that God has not given up on him, even if he has given up on God. The lesson of disobedient Israel as a group follows through with disobedient individuals. God may punish, but He does not cast away forever.

Lord God, it is so wonderful to come to passages in Paul’s letters where it is explicitly shown that those who have shipwrecked their faith do not lose their salvation. They may suffer your discipline, but they will never suffer Your abandonment. Just as Israel has been set for discipline, but has never been rejected by You, so it is with the individual believer in Christ. We have the surety of eternal salvation, despite ourselves. What a great comfort this is as we strive through this difficult world. Thank You for Your strong and eternal hand of salvation. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 1 Timothy 2:1

The word “exhort” falls short of a command. For Paul, it is an urging of a matter in order to ensure that what is spoken will lead to happiness and a positive outcome. With this in mind, his exhortation is concerning the communication of Timothy, and indeed all appointed ministers, with God. It certainly includes those of all people who are in Christ, but Paul’s words are more directed to the pastoral conduct of the church. That this is speaking of communication with God is seen in the words, “all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks.” Each of these is a type of communication between an individual and God.

Note that the actual meaning of the words in Greek are rather difficult to pin down, and translators have done their best to give the sense of what they believe each word is speaking of. Understanding this, the meaning of the English is explained, trusting the translators efforts here.

Supplications are types of prayers for petition. It is requesting the filling of a want or need that is on the heart of the individual. “Look upon me, O God, and be merciful to me. My sin is great, and I desire your hand of forgiveness.”

Prayers are general utterances for whatever is hoped for, desired, needed, and etc. And actually, most communication with God is a type of prayer. If we are speaking to him as our Creator in a respectful way, it is prayer because it is transcending the sphere in which we live, rising to Him.

Intercessions are petitions made on behalf of others. We can plead for their needs, hopes, health, desires, and so on. This is not a mediatorial role, which alone is filled by Christ, but it should be an active and vibrant part of the true prayer person’s life – looking out for the needs of others, and bringing them before God.

Paul then adds in, “and giving of thanks.” God gives, and so we would be truly remiss in not thanking Him for all good things that we have. We can thank Him for restored health, a pretty flower, a new job, or any and every other good thing that comes our way.

He then concludes with, “for all men.” In these words is a complete and total refutation of the Calvinist view on election and predestination. Calvinism teaches “limited atonement” is seen in the cross of Christ. In essence, He died for the elect, and He simply passes over those who are not a part of His plan. How can it be said by Paul that we are to pray “for all men” if the scope of God’s atonement is limited? Salvation is the number one issue for all men. What is the point of praying for those who would be passed over? Of course, a Calvinist would say, “Well, I don’t know which person is elect.” Then why pray for anyone? If God’s decision to elect cannot be thwarted, then why bother praying for anything at all. Again, salvation is the highest need of all. Everything else is secondary to that. Accepting the doctrine of limited atonement is like starting a factory to build football bats. It is pointless, and it is a waste of time.

Life application: Paul tells Timothy to pray. If prayer were not effective, then there would be no point to do so. Due to the heavy stress of Paul in all of his letters concerning prayer, we should be pay heed, and make prayer a constant and vibrant part of our walk with the Lord.

Glorious heavenly Father, how good it is to know that You hear all prayers of those in Christ, and that You will respond to them according to Your infinite wisdom. Surely we pray for things we should not have. You know those things and keep them from us. We pray for needs, and You respond according to those needs. We pray for others, and You are pleased to hear and respond as is right. And so, we send our prayers to You, and we trust that they will be handled in the most perfect way. Thank You for hearing our prayers. Amen.

...for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. 1 Timothy 2:2

Paul now especially identifies those who are to be included in “supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks.” In the previous verse, he said, “for all men.” It is an all-inclusive statement, but now he continues by making special note. It is “for kings and all who are in authority.” Paul understood that in praying for those in authority, he was praying for those who would be able to protect and bring peace to those under them.

This doesn’t mean that prayers for salvation for such people were more important than for those who were commoners. Rather, high positions could affect commoners, whether they were held by believers or not. In praying for them, there would be a natural, positive result if the prayers were responded to. That is then stated in his words, “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life.”

It is certainly preferable that those in high positions be saved believers, but whether they are or not, if they are favorably disposed towards believers, then it would naturally follow that a quiet and peaceable life was possible. And if this was available, then it would be a life lived “in all godliness and reverence.” The older KJV uses the term “honesty.” What that meant in 1611 is completely different than what it means today. Reading such an outdated version leaves a wholly wrong impression of what is intended.

The word *semnotés* gives the sense of gravity and dignity, not in honesty or fair dealings. It refers to that which is august. It beckons for reverence from others, and it is intended to exalt what is noble and morally refined. Achieving “godliness and reverence” is the anticipated benefit of leading a quiet and peaceful life. This then is the purpose of praying for “kings and all who are in authority.”

Life application: Better to read multiple translations of the Bible, looking for differences which will then highlight where inaccuracy lies. From there, one can go to the original and determine which is correct. When captivated by a single version, a complete misunderstanding of what is being said is the expected result. Don’t allow this narrow mindset to affect your study of Scripture.

Lord God, it is so wonderful to live in an age where we have multiple versions of the Bible which allows us to find the mistakes which riddle older versions. By seeing the differences between the two, we can then go to the original and determine which is correct and which is wrong. Words change, languages evolve, and we must return to the fountain from time to time to update what is passe. Thank You for how easy this has become in our lifetime. We are blessed with such access! Your word stands, and we can appreciate it in our modern tongue! Thank You. Amen.

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 1 Timothy 2:3

“For this is good and acceptable” ties the verse to what was just stated –

“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.”

It is “good and acceptable” to pray as stated, including “for all men.” This included “kings and all who are in authority.” What is apparent from these words of Paul is that God desires that all would be saved, and that our prayers are a part of that process. Otherwise, Paul could not write these things. In fact, he would simply say, “Don’t bother

with prayer. God has sovereignly chosen those who will be saved, and has predetermined all that will occur. Your prayers are a waste of time.” This is never hinted at in the Bible. Instead, we are given the high honor of praying for others, and for receiving what God offers. That is great stuff. And the reason why it is great stuff is because it isn’t just good and acceptable in a general sense, but that it is “good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.”

God is well pleased when we pray for others in the ways he described. And it is good and acceptable that these are given “for all men” including “for kings and all who are in authority.” God looks at our prayers in these situations and finds them acceptable because we are not just praying for ourselves and our own needs, but we are praying for others, even some who may not currently be favorably disposed towards us. This is a truly noble thing.

Life application: Let us do our best to follow through with the words of this verse, even if those appointed over us are really crummy people. They too need Jesus, and so we should do our utmost to pray for them in hopes that they will come to God through Christ and be saved.

Lord God, today we lift up those who are appointed over us at all levels of life. We have bosses, mayors, governors, congressmen, and presidents, kings, or prime ministers that we are accountable to. Hear our prayers for them, guide them to right decisions which will honor You, and if they don’t yet know Christ Jesus, we pray for them to come humbly to the throne of grace for salvation. Wouldn’t that be great to have faithful believers making godly decisions in this world. Yes, we pray for our leaders today. Amen.

...who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:4

Paul’s words of this verse continue to be based on what he said in verse 1. There he exhorted Timothy to pray “for all men.” It is this which is on his mind. The fact that prayers are to be made immediately excludes the doctrine of universal salvation. Some will use this verse, torn out of its full context, and state that if “God our Savior” of verse 3 “desires all men to be saved,” and if nothing can thwart His will, then all must be saved. That is an abuse of the immediate context, and it completely denies numerous passages in Scripture which clearly refute such a false claim.

There is a difference between God actually saving all men and Him potentially saving all men. God’s desire is that all be saved, but His nature demands that all must be saved in

a certain way. Even God cannot violate one of His own intrinsic traits. God is merciful, but He cannot violate His righteousness in order to grant mercy, or He would then be unrighteous. The plan of redemption includes (in fact it necessitates) the free will of man. The fact that God sent His Son into the world to die as a payment for man's sin shows that He desires that all be saved. However, if man does not accept the payment, he remains unsaved. Therefore, Jesus died potentially for all, but He actually only died for those who receive the offer of His atoning death.

Jesus' work is fully sufficient to pay for every sin ever committed, but not every sin will be paid for because the payment is not received. Thus the doctrine of "universal salvation" is false. On the other side of the same coin, the doctrine of "regeneration in order to believe," which is taught by Calvinism, is also false. It excludes free-will as well, but instead of claiming that all are saved, it instead claims that only those God predestines, and then regenerates in order to believe, will be saved – the doctrine of "limited atonement."

In this, the claim is that God regenerates a person in order that they may believe, they then believe, and they are then saved. In other words, they are saved before they are saved. There are several logical arguments against this, chief among them is that the Bible never teaches this. It is convoluted and denies the unlimited scope of God's atoning sacrifice of Christ Jesus – something implied in Paul's words here, and in Peter's words of 2 Peter 3:9 (and elsewhere). Again, one must look at what is potential and what is actual. Christ's death can potentially save all; it does not actually save all.

The salvation of man is then tied up in Paul's final words of the verse, "and come to the knowledge of the truth." In order to be saved, one must "come to the knowledge" which will allow this to happen. Like praying for "all men," it is the responsibility of believers to share the gospel to all men as well. Paul's implication is that one cannot be saved unless they come to the knowledge of how to be saved. This statement dispels both universalism (all are saved) and Calvinism (God regenerates a person in order to believe/limited atonement). Logically, without the knowledge of the truth, salvation will not occur, and logically if God actively does something to change the heart of man before he receives God's offer, then there is actually no need to evangelize anyone. Instead, He would simply instill in the one He has chosen this knowledge and be done with it. But even Paul said that he could have resisted the truth. In Acts 26:19, he stated that he was "not disobedient to the heavenly vision" that was given to him. This implies that he could have rejected it. He was not regenerated in order to believe, and neither is anyone else. It is a false doctrine.

Albert Barnes gives three points on this matter – 1) That salvation is provided for all; 2) That salvation should be offered to all people; 3) That people are to blame if they are not saved. Score 1 for right thinking. Albert Barnes is correct.

Life application: It is too bad that people feel the need to rip verses out of their intended context in order to justify bad doctrine. Even when shown to be wrong, they will allow pride to step in and override what is painfully obvious. May we never presume to do this. Instead, let us search the Scriptures with a desire to teach what God has submitted in this magnificent book of clear doctrine, right thinking, and in accord with the offer of salvation to all who will but come.

Lord God, it is more than glorious that You have offered Jesus as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of man. And it is more than incredible that You have allowed us the choice of accepting or rejecting this offer. In the end, You are shown gracious and merciful, and yet You are shown holy and righteous. If we fail to accept Your offer, we only have ourselves to blame. It is a magnificent display of love and wisdom, and one which displays Your infinite glory. Great are You, O God, and greatly are You to be praised. Amen.

For *there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,*
1 Timothy 2:5

Wow! So much for prayers to Mary or the saints. So much for a separate and elevated priestly class within the church! So much for a pope exalted upon his stool! Such notions not only rob Christ of His authority and position, they are idolatry – granting to the created that which belongs to the Creator alone.

Paul begins with “For.” The words to come are based upon that which has been written. He just said that God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” This is what the “for” is alluding to. Because this applies to all men, and because God desires their salvation, a way has been opened for this to occur, but it is an extremely limited way – a narrow path. It is through the giving of His Son. To set the stage for this, he says, “For *there is one God.*” This truth eliminates all religions on earth except one which is monotheistic. But he is not finished. This is the first necessary qualifier.

Any religion which does not accept the premise of there being one God is noted as false. Further, as there is one God, then “all men” of the earlier verse are accountable to this one God. Understanding this, Paul then further refines the matter by saying, “and one Mediator between God and men.” That there is a God is established, but that mediation

between God and men is necessary is now established as well. We cannot go directly to God, but we must go through a mediator. But more to the point, we must go through one Mediator. Paul has limited the truth of who God is to one narrow path. Any path which is followed apart from this one path is a false path, and thus it is a false religion which is incapable of finding peace and harmony with God. And next, Paul clearly and completely defines which path that is by saying that the one Mediator between God and man is "*the Man Christ Jesus.*"

As closed, limiting, politically incorrect, and intolerant as it might seem, this is what Paul shows us defines true religion – the Christian faith. But even some who claim the title are excluded. Refer to those (and those like them) who attempt to go to God through other "mediators" in the first paragraph. They have no Mediator, and they are excluded from His mediation. They have cut themselves off from God by refusing God's appointed Mediator. A church cannot save, and the mediators chosen by a church are incapable of filling the role assigned by the church. Mediation comes solely through Jesus Christ who Paul highlights as "*the Man.*"

This is the only time Paul uses this phrase, but he chooses this point in his letters to do so for a reason. He is highlighting the humanity of Christ in order to refute the doctrine of Docetism which was already creeping into the church. This teaches that Christ's body was not human, but rather it was some type of phantasm. Or, if real substance, that His sufferings were not actual but only apparent. Paul will refute this in the coming verse, but his highlighting of Christ's manhood is a theological necessity. God is infinite, we are finite. Because of our sin, without a human Mediator, we are infinitely fallen. Christ Jesus came into the world to live perfectly and then offer that perfect life for those He came to save. Without the stain of sin, He could pay our sin debt, and then He could become our acceptable Mediator between God and man.

In His divine nature, He can mediate to His infinite Father, and in His human nature, He can do so for finite beings. The Bridge is restored; the path is made; restoration with God is possible. Believers can intercede only as those who petition, praise, and give thanks as an expression of good will towards others, but Christ Jesus intercedes for others because He has merited what He asks for on our behalf. The difference is infinite in scope and in acceptability. The author of Hebrews explains both scope and acceptability in one verse—

"And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." Hebrews 9:15

The scope is “the eternal inheritance,” and the acceptability is “by means of death.” Jesus Christ is both capable and qualified to mediate for those who are His.

Life application: For mediation between yourself and God, you need Jesus. If you are reading this today, and believe that God hears your prayers apart from Jesus Christ, you are mistaken. But even Christ cannot mediate for you unless you come to Him by faith. The Bible gives the gospel message by saying, “that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4). It then tells how to appropriate that by saying, “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” Until you, by faith, receive Jesus Christ – meaning His work on your behalf – you stand condemned before God, having no Mediator. Call on Christ today, and be reconciled, completely and eternally, to the God who loves you enough to make this one, narrow, path available.

Lord God, Your word tells us that there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus. If that is so, then it is very limiting indeed. It means that no other religious expression is acceptable to restore us to You. Hear our prayer for those who are not yet included in this offer of peace – that their eyes would be opened, that their hearts would be softened, and that their souls would be saved – through the shed blood, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ Jesus the Lord. May it be so. Amen.

...who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, 1 Timothy 2:6

This is a wonderful verse which builds upon the words of the previous verse. Taken together, they read, “For *there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time...*” Paul says that “the Man Christ Jesus” is He who “gave Himself a ransom for all.” The word “ransom” here signifies the act, not the means of the redemption.

The first thought that must be understood is that a ransom was required for man. In other words, without that, there can be no mediation between God and man. That is obvious on the surface. Therefore, if one is not ransomed by the Lord Jesus, then there can be no access to God. That becomes obvious based on the first thought. Further, as only Christ is the satisfactory ransom for man, then there can be no vicarious mediation by any other. Only He was qualified to give Himself up to death as the price of redemption for fallen man.

Stated explicitly, what this means is that personal prayer to God is not acceptable to Him apart from being “in Christ.” It also means that apart from Christ Jesus, no other person can mediate for another. The doctrine of priestly mediation within the church is as far from biblical truth as east is from west. One can only come to God through Jesus Christ. And yet, he (meaning any in Christ) can freely come to God through Him. There are no restrictions when one is in Christ. Being in Christ means that access to the throne of grace is ever available.

The words, “for all” must be kept in their proper context here. Christ died for all potentially. The issue is not one of efficacy, but of sufficiency. His death was sufficient to redeem all, but not all are necessarily redeemed. His life was given to redeem fallen man, and any and all who come to Him are ransomed. There are none who will be excluded when they come to God through faith in Christ, and there are none who are accepted who do not come to God through faith in Christ. This is the reason why Paul exhorted in verse 1 that prayers, intercessions, and etc., be made “for all men.”

Again, as noted in a previous verse, this is completely contrary to the doctrine of Calvinism. If God elected those for salvation apart from free will, none of these things would have been stated by Paul. That doctrine is likewise as far from the truth as the east is from the west. One is saved by faith, and that is an expression which proceeds from the man by a volitional act of the free will. The entire thought thus far is a resounding proof that God desires the salvation of all, and that it is our job to share this message, pray for the lost, and that the lost must then choose.

Finally, the words, “to be testified in due time” are literally rendered “the testimony in its own times.” The word “times” is plural, and it is thus shows that “the gift of Christ as a ransom was to be the substance or import of the testimony which was to be set forth in its proper seasons” (Vincent’s Word Studies). Jesus Christ was determined in the eternal counsels of God’s mind to give Himself as a ransom at a particular time in redemptive history. When that moment came, Christ entered into the stream of humanity and fulfilled the work which was set forth for Him to accomplish.

Life application: Doctrine matters. Who we pray to (or through) matters. How we pray to God matters. The decisions we make, or fail to make, matter. Each of these things must be fleshed out of what is said in Scripture. When we begin to veer off of what is sound and reasonable, we eventually come to a point where we are completely apart from God, even though we think we are near to Him. This is why we must continue to search the word and evaluate its truths with care and contemplation.

Most gracious heavenly Father, Your word tells us that Christ came to give Himself a ransom for all. But it also tells us that not all are saved. Christ is sufficient to redeem all mankind, but we have a part of the responsibility. We must first believe by faith that He has done this for us. And then we are to get out and share this as well. Unless we act, the Gift has no value. Help us to be wise, and to do our part. And thank You that the Gift is available to us still. Thank You for Jesus. Amen.

...for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ *and* not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. 1 Timothy 2:7

“For which” is speaking of that which he just stated in verses 5 & 6 – there is one God; there is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; and Christ Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. This explains Paul’s “For which.” It is these things for which he then acknowledges that “I was appointed a preacher.”

The word “preacher” here is literally “a herald” or a “town crier.” In essence, he was one who proclaimed critical news to the public, such as at a town gathering. This is exactly what he did as is recorded in Acts. At times, the entire town would show up at a synagogue to hear his words. When in Athens, he spoke at the public meeting at the Areopagus. Paul also states that he was appointed “an apostle.”

Paul’s calling is recorded in Acts 9, he was called personally by the risen Christ, and he is specifically said to be designated as the apostle to the Gentiles on several occasions in the New Testament. In Galatians 2, he is contrasted to Peter, whose apostolic ministry was specifically to the Jews –

“But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as *the gospel* for the circumcised *was* to Peter ⁸ (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles)...” Galatians 2:7, 8

After making his claims of authority concerning his ministry, he then adds in, “I am speaking the truth in Christ *and* not lying.” This is a claim similar to the one he makes in Romans 9:1. He is herein making a solemn oath, and a resounding declaration, that what he says is the truth. This statement actually shows us that this letter is more than a personal letter to Timothy, but one which was intended to be read by all in the church.

Timothy was already aware of these things, but those in the church at Ephesus where Timothy was were probably arguing against his apostolic authority, saying that he was converted after Christ's death. Because of this, it would be argued that he couldn't have been called by Christ. But Paul's call was supernatural. His ministry as an apostle was, as he says in 1 Corinthians 15:8, "as one born out of due time." The need for stating this apostolic authority openly in this letter probably finds its source in the Judaizers & false teachers referred to early in chapter 1. They had a beef against Paul and worked to diminish his authority in the eyes of others.

Paul then continues with the words, "a teacher of the Gentiles." This is probably what irritated the Judaizers the most. Paul was teaching the Gentiles their freedom in Christ. They wanted the Gentiles to look to all things Jewish through "fables and endless genealogies" which were intended to highlight them as a superior line, deserving of emulation. Paul completely refutes this nonsense throughout his letters. What the Gentiles have to offer is equal to that of the Jews. In fact, throughout the church age, it has been the Gentiles who have faithfully carried the untainted gospel of freedom from works of the law. It is they who have sent missionaries and established churches throughout the world. It is they who have, for 2000 years, searched out the word, faithfully translated it to almost all languages on the planet, and have held it in the highest of esteem as the true and undefiled word of God. This is the legacy of Paul who here defends his apostolic ministry in the presence of God with a firm and sure vow. He then finishes that his teaching is "in faith and truth."

This combination of words concerning his teaching is found only here. Vincent's Word Studies says about it that, "The phrase must not be explained in true faith, nor faithfully and truly. It means that faith and truth are the element or sphere in which the apostolic function is discharged: that he preaches with a sincere faith in the gospel, and with a truthful representation of the gospel which he believes." Paul has completely contrasted himself to the false teachers of Chapter 1, and he has set the example for all pastors to follow in the future.

Life application: The closer one sticks to the word in their teaching and preaching, the finer of a teacher and preacher of the word they are. Superfluous words of oration do very little to build up and edify others in proper instruction of the word of God.

Lord God, Your word is given and it is a marvelous gift of love and instruction. How sad it is to go to a church and hear a sermon which has lovely oration, but which doesn't really bear on what Your word says. The closer a preacher sticks to the word in their message, the more competent the congregation will be in their own walk with You. Help each of us

to reject flowery sermons which edify for a moment, and to search out a word which analyzes and explains Your word carefully and competently. Amen.

I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; 1 Timothy 2:8

We now begin a passage which contains Paul's commands which are more and more spoken against in the church. Because of his words, he is called a chauvinist and a misogynist. Some arbitrarily claim that the passage only applies to a certain time, but not today. To others, the words are said to be irrelevant to the true workings of the church. On and on go the attacks against his directions in this passage, and on and on those attacks are misguided and will be dealt with by the Lord Himself when He judges those in the church for not adhering to His word.

For now, Paul begins this section with, "I desire." Paul uses the word *boulomai* which is translated as "I desire." It "is a strong term that underlines the predetermined (and determined) intention driving the planning" (HELPS Word Studies). Rather than "desire," Paul's words give the sense of "I resolve." As the apostle to the Gentiles, whose writings determine church-age doctrine, Paul is resolving that the conduct he now writes about be set. These are not words isolated to the church at Ephesus, nor are they words which are isolated to the culture of the time. Rather, they are words which form instruction for the church at all times. Paul, bearing the authority granted to him by Christ Jesus, is laying down church doctrine.

His resolved decision is now stated, "therefore that the men pray everywhere." He is addressing public prayer within the group who meets as a church. It is in this context that he writes his thoughts for proper conduct. The word for "men" here is one which indicates males only. It is preceded by an article, and thus it rightly reads, "the men." The word "everywhere" is literally, "in every place." In every place that the church meets, it is the men who are to conduct the prayers. The idea of "every place" means that the church is not restricted to simply meeting in a particular building, but it is free to worship anywhere and at any time. However, when the church meets, it is to be conducted as Paul outlines. The men are to conduct the prayers.

The reason for Paul's rendering of this may stem from the practice of women prophesying and praying during the early church period as is recorded in Acts. Like the bulk of the book of Acts, the words are descriptive of what occurred as the church was becoming established. They are not prescriptive, nor can they be used as a basis for what should be done in the church at later times. Instead, Paul's letters provide what is

prescriptive. If Paul's letters are not followed, then the church is not acting in obedience to the set directives authorized by Christ Jesus Himself. Understanding this concerning prayer, that of men being those who are to pray, he then adds in "lifting up holy hands."

The phrase is unique in the New Testament. The idea of lifting up holy hands means "pure hands." It is reflective of the attitude of prayer found in the Psalms and elsewhere in the Old Testament. A few examples to explore would be Psalm 24:4, 28:2, 63:4, 119:48, 134:2, & 141:2. The term is used to show that the prayers are undefiled because the person is undefiled. If one's hands are "unclean," it indicates active sin. If one's hand are bloody, it indicates a person who has shed blood or even committed murder. If they are clean, it indicates purity in the person. Whether one actually raises their hands or not is less on Paul's mind than what the term signifies – purity of heart and openness towards God. However, the lifting of the hands continues to be an outward demonstration of the inward purity desired by the Lord, even to this day.

Paul then continues. He states that the men should pray "without wrath and doubting." Again, he uses a combination of words which is found only here. "Without wrath" clearly shows that there is a connection between the heart which is angry towards others, and the acceptability of prayers before God. When we bear wrath in our hearts, it is as if a wall is built up between us and God. The "holy hands" are proven to be tainted with the presence of an unholy attitude. This "wrath" is tied to the next word. The translation of "doubting" does not give the proper sense of what is being conveyed. A word such as "disputing" or "dissension" is what is intended. There is not to be an attitude of dispute mingled with the wrath. Instead, when prayers are offered, they are to be humble and heartfelt. The idea here can be seen in two contrasting prayers which might be given in a church –

- "Lord, we have a brother in the church who is intolerable. We are angry at his attitude, and we are tired of his childish behavior. We pray that you will judge this offender and bring ruin upon him and those like him."
- "Lord, our hearts are broken today at the lack of fellowship which has arisen in this holy place. There is strife and conflict, and we have been unable to resolve it. Our heart's desire is that peace be restored, felicity return, and true Christian fellowship be felt between those who have been divided. Hear our prayer, O God. We turn to You for Your kind hand of grace and help. Amen."

The difference is one of the heart, and this is what Paul is addressing for "the men" as they make their prayers and petitions to God.

Life application: There is nothing wrong with women praying to God. However, in the gathering of the saints in a church setting, Paul has directed that prayers be conducted by men. There is nothing discriminatory about this, but rather it is what is ordained by God, and through the hand of the apostle Paul. May our churches pay heed, and be conducted according to these prescriptive words.

Lord God, You have ordained certain roles for men in the church. They are set and defined by Paul in his letters. His words are doctrine for the church age, and they are set to ensure proper functioning of the church which You have established. How sad it is that many churches attempt to justify blurring the lines of what is determined, and to ordain those who are not authorized to be ordained. What a giant rebellious streak has grown in our churches, and which continues to grow in them today. How displeased You must be with our disobedience. Help us to put aside our pride, and to accept Your word as set doctrine. Surely with this, You will be pleased. Amen.

...in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing,
1 Timothy 2:9

Paul is continuing his directives for public worship within the church, as they gather and meet together. He began in the previous verse with directions for the prayers of the men. He now says, “in like manner also.” In other words, “As I have directed for the conduct of men, I now direct the following.” He then immediately follows up with “that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel.”

The words here have been taken to unnecessary extremes, being applied to the women at all times. Some denominations have crept up where women are dressed in brown, blue, or black bags at all times. They look plain and dull with bonnets on their heads and nothing to highlight or accentuate their natural beauty. This is not Paul’s intent here. The word “likewise” is being used to direct women during church gatherings, not at all times. The idea is that when gathered in church, it is the Lord, not the women who are to be highlighted.

Just as the men are to lift holy hands to the Lord as specified in the previous verse, thus placing the attention on the Lord, so women are to have the attention of others on the Lord, not on their glamorous apparel. If a woman wants to be a plain Jane 24/7, that is her decision, but it isn’t something the church is being asked to impose on them. This is a directive for propriety within the church.

He next says exactly this with the words, “with propriety and moderation.” As Solomon says, “To everything *there is* a season.” There is a time for women to adorn themselves in glorious apparel and to wow their audience. Church is not the time for this. During church, they are to first have what Paul says in the Greek, *aidós*, or modesty. It is derived from another word which means “to be ashamed.” The idea then is that women are to be modest in their dress. To act otherwise would be to deprive the Lord what He is due – the attention of the people on Him, not on a glamorous beauty.

The second word, translated as “moderation,” indicates self-control or soundness of mind. The more a woman accentuates her own beauty in the church, the less soundness of mind there will be concerning where her attention (and that of others, certainly) will be focused. Again, the idea is that the Lord is to be focused on. To further define this, Paul then gives an example of what would be contrary to this by saying, “not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing.”

Each of these things he has mentioned are not only acceptable on a female, they can be a wonderful highlight to her natural beauty. The problem is that in wearing such things in a church setting, she is indicating that this is what she wants people to look at. It becomes a self-centered state of mind when church is supposed to be a God-centered place. Later, Peter will discuss the outward appearance of women as well (see 1 Peter 3:1-6). His words, like Paul’s here, are intended to highlight a woman’s position in relation to her relationships. Paul’s speaks of that relationship in regards to the church. Peter speaks of it in regards to the husband. Neither forbids the wearing of beautiful adornments, and it would be contrary to other parts of Scripture where such things are worn by women. But the main goal of a female worshiper of the Lord, either single or the wife of a husband, is to be naturally beautiful – with a right heart and attitude.

Life application: At times in Scripture, women’s beauty is highlighted by external adornments. Isaiah 61:10 says that a bride is adorned with jewels. It is her moment to shine when the wedding day has come. However, when gathered to worship the Lord, it is the Lord’s time to be highlighted and exalted. Everything has a place, and each moment must be handled according to the appropriate situation.

Lord God, when we come before You as a congregation, are we there for others to see us, or are we there to magnify and glorify You? Help us to not attempt to be the center of attention through the clothes we choose to wear, the things we say as we gather, or how we act at such times. Instead, may we come before You with all of our attention and respect directed toward Your glory alone. Surely You are worthy of all our focus. Amen.

...but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.

1 Timothy 2:10

The idea of this verse is combined with the word “adorn” of the previous verse. It is that women are to “adorn themselves ... [in] godliness, with good works” instead of in “braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing.” Paul is making a point that what is right and proper for a woman in church is a spiritual adornment of godliness, mixed with a physical adornment of doing that which is right and honorable. He was probably thinking of someone like Tabitha (Dorcas) of Acts 9. Peter was called to heal this woman and the same general idea of her character was seen there –

“At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did.” Acts 9:36

This Tabitha was a Jewish woman who followed the noble traits of the faithful women of her culture, exemplified by the faithful wife of Proverbs 31. She was a person of deed and exemplary action. Paul is thinking of such women of God and directing the Gentile women of the church who were coming into the church of God to act in this manner. His directions are to Timothy, and it was Timothy’s responsibility (and thus that of all later pastors) to nurture this in the women of God.

In Paul’s words the “professing godliness” signifies her state as a believer in Christ. “Jesus is my Savior, and I will honor Him with my life.” This profession is then displayed in the “good works” of such a person. Albert Barnes captures the sense of how this is highlighted in the woman of God who accepts and exemplifies this station –

“The nature of woman seems to be adapted to the performance of all deeds demanding kindness, tenderness, and gentleness of feeling; of all that proceeds from pity, sympathy, and affection; and we feel instinctively that while acts of hardy enterprise and daring in a good cause especially become a Christian man, there is something exquisitely appropriate to the female character in deeds of humble and unobtrusive sympathy and benevolence. God seems to have formed her mind for just such things, and in such things it occupies its appropriate sphere rather than in seeking external adorning.”

Life application: It is a sad thing that women of the church, especially since the mid to late 1800s, have pursued roles not intended for women. When Paul says in Galatians 3:28 that all are one in Christ, he is speaking of the spiritual state of believers. However, males and females are given different roles to carry out God’s purposes within the church. To ignore Paul’s words in the pastoral epistles is to obscure what God has

ordained. It has led to great dysfunction within the church, and that has led to total apostasy in many large denominations. Let us look to the structure of the church as it is outlined in the pastoral epistles, accept what God has ordained, and not fight against what is right and proper in His eyes.

Lord God, You have ordained the roles of men and women in the church, and those roles are set out in the pastoral epistles for us to read, consider, and put into practice. When we ignore what is given there, only a degradation of the proper functioning of the church can result. Let us accept Your word, hold fast to its precepts, and be responsible members of the church which You have established. To Your glory we pray. Amen.

Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. 1 Timothy 2:11

Paul continues with words directed to the conduct of women at church gatherings. His words are prescriptive, and they apply to all churches at all times during the Gentile-led church age. In other words, they are church doctrine. Not adhering to them is then disobedience to the word of God. He says, “Let a woman learn in silence.” This is not the only time he has said this. Similar words were written to the church at Corinth –

“And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.” 1 Corinthians 14:35

Paul’s words are consistent, and they are intended as a means of ensuring proper order within the church. For this reason, women are asked to “learn in silence with all submission.” The word “submission” here means to not exert authority, but to be in subjection to the rule which is established. Paul will continue with this line of thought in the verses to come.

It needs to be repeated that his words are not “cultural,” they are not addressing a single church with a specific problem, and they are not time-limited. Instead, they are doctrine for all churches at all times during the church age. As churches sway from the words of this epistle, they quickly break down into ineffective churches. One line which is ignored from God’s word sets the standard that it is OK to ignore others as well. Soon, the word of God is no longer treated with the respect and high position it deserves in the church, and in the hearts of men.

Life application: God is the Author of Scripture through the hands of His chosen instruments. Are we to ignore Him and His authority because we don’t like what He

mandates? What a sad thing to stand before the Lord and hold up hands blackened with disobedience.

Most gracious and glorious heavenly Father, give us hearts to be obedient to Your word, even when we come across verses which sting our sensibilities. Should we ignore what You have ordained, then how can we expect to face You without receiving the consequences of our disobedience. Help us to never justify wrongdoing in violation of the holy precepts You have laid down for us. Amen.

And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. 1 Timothy 2:12

There is an emphasis in the Greek of this verse which is given to indicate the set and determined meaning of the words. It begins with the word “teach.” Thus the Greek emphatically reads, “To teach, however, a woman not I do permit, nor to have authority over a man.” The words are clear, they are concise, they are prescriptive, and they are no less the word of God than any other portion of Paul’s writings. Women are not to teach men, nor are they to exercise authority over them.

Paul is writing of church matters in a pastoral epistle which is included in the word of God. It is not “culturally” driven. It is not “time” driven. The letter is for guidance of the church, at all times, and in all cultures. To be sure, both testaments of the Bible speak of women who bore authority, or who prophesied. Among these are Deborah, Hannah, Anna, Huldah, and the seven daughters of Philip. However, context applies in all matters of doctrine. All of these are either under Old Testament times, or they are in the book of Acts. Acts is a book which is descriptive in nature, and which is given to show the progression of the church until the prescriptive writings of Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, would finally and firmly set church doctrine for this dispensation. Paul’s letter to Timothy is such a prescriptive writing.

Paul will explain, in detail, why he writes these prohibitions, and they have to do with the natural order of things, as ordained by God. To dismiss what he writes is to then ignore what God has ordained. Paul continues with his thought. Not only are women not permitted to teach or have authority over men, but they are “to be in silence.” This is fully in line with his words of 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35. No exceptions are given, and this is to be the practice of all churches who operate in accord with the word of God.

What this means is that women are not to be ordained to fill any pastoral position, nor any position as a deacon. They are to remain quiet within the church as is fitting with the

word of God. In today's world, one must think this through when evaluating well known female pastors and teachers. Several who are immediately recognizable are Beth Moore, Joyce Meyer, and Paula White. At times, these women will openly preach to congregations, including men in attendance, numbering in the thousands. And each word they speak is in direct disobedience to the word of God.

The question must be, "If their ministries are effective in teaching men about the word of God, then isn't it acceptable that they continue?" The answer is clear. "No." The end never justifies the means. God cannot violate His own word when judging such disobedience. In other words, when such a woman stands before the Lord, He will not (and He cannot) say, "What you did was in disobedience to My word, but I will overlook your disobedience because it led to a good end." This is contrary to the nature of God to even consider. There can be no reward for their disobedience, only loss.

When a challenge to a portion of the word of God arises, one must be firm on their stand that such challenges are not based on personal feelings, but on what God has ordained. For example, when a man or a woman challenges or twists the meaning and intent of this verse, we have the full right to say, "I did not write these words, but I will stand upon them, because they are God's words." To challenge or dismiss them is to challenge the apostolic authority of Paul. In so doing, no portion of his writings can then be considered authoritative. All Gentile-led church doctrine becomes up to the church body.

The violation of Paul's words here, since the first ordination of a woman in a mainstream denomination in 1853, have led to a complete degradation of adherence to the word of God in those churches where such action has taken place. From this springboard of disobedience, the natural next steps are allowing perversion to run amok, ordination of homosexuals, and a total apostasy of the church. And it all starts with ignoring 1 Timothy 1:11, 12. The issue here is that serious, and it is that destructive.

Life application: We are never to base our theology on emotion. Nor are we to base church decisions on our own personal standards or mores. Guidance for church conduct, including ordination to various offices within the church, is to be based solely on the word of God. To depart from the word in one matter will naturally and eventually lead to a total disregard of all of God's word. Let us never depart from sound theology, even if it conflicts with culture or personal preference.

Lord, Your word is written, and it is to be adhered to. How very sad that the church has turned away from your guidelines for ordination found in the letters of Timothy and

Titus. First, women were ordained in violation of Your word, and since that time, churches have quickly turned from sound morality. Now, perversion fills the pulpit. One thing has led to another, and Your word is shunned and ignored in order to promote cultural and political correctness. What a sad day we live in where we justify open sin in disobedience to Your word. Turn our hearts back to Your word, and give us church leaders who are ordained in accord with it alone. Amen.

For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 1 Timothy 2:13

Paul will now give a logical and reasonable explanation for why women are not to be teachers of men, nor to have authority over them. He says, “For Adam was formed first.” Adam was created directly by God out of the dust. This is recorded in Genesis 2:7 –

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

Because of this, Adam is the head of the human race. He stands then as a type of Christ who is the Head of the church. That Adam is a pattern of Christ to come in this regard is explained in 1 Corinthians 15 and elsewhere. Only after creating Adam does the Bible then record the creation of the woman. As Paul says, “then Eve.” This is recorded in Genesis 2 as well –

“And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. ²² Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.” Genesis 2:21, 22

Eve was not formed from the ground, but rather from the man. If only chronology of formation was considered, beasts would be above men because they were formed before Adam. However, not only was man formed before the woman, but what formed her was taken from the body of man,. Thus she is the weaker vessel, and the one who was to be in subordination to the man. The typology seen here looks forward to Christ and the church. As woman came from man who was in a deep sleep (typical of Christ’s death), so the church issued forth from the death of Christ. Thus there is a set typology which was ordained from the beginning concerning men and women. To violate this typology is to then usurp what the typology points to, the rule of Christ as Head of the church. Paul explains this in 1 Corinthians 11. An incorrect argument for women to be preachers and teachers today issues from the words of Paul which state in Galatians 3:28

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“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

The argument is that because Paul says “there is neither male nor female,” and that all are one in Christ Jesus, that it is now acceptable for women to preach and teach, in direct contradiction to Paul’s words here in 1 Timothy 2. The verse in Galatians is speaking of spiritual position in Christ. Just as Jews once alone held the spiritual blessings, now Gentiles do as well. The very fact that Paul uses categories – Jew, Gentile, male, female – indicates that there is a difference between them, even if there is no distinction in spiritual blessing. A Gentile does not become a Jew when he comes to Christ. And both men and women remain as men and women when they come to Christ. In other words, the logic in using Galatians 3:28 is a category mistake.

Charles Ellicott wisely and correctly states, “This teaching of St. Paul’s respecting the public position of woman as regards man, in which he shows that she is to hold a subordinate place—is based upon no arbitrary human speculation, but upon God’s original order in creation—that divine order which first created man, and after man’s creation, formed woman as his helpmeet.”

The divine order set by God, when overturned by the church, violates what God has ordained. It ignores His divine will, and it is in direct disobedience to the prescriptive writings of the New Testament. How terrifying it will be for such disobedient women – and those men who ordained them in disobedience to the word of God – when they stand before Him for judgment. It will not be a day of accolade and praise for their willful ignoring of His word.

Life application: The Bible is a book of logic. There is no logic in violating God’s word. The emotional decisions which authorize a violation of God’s word in order to justify the ordination of women are thus illogical. As we will be judged based on a reasonable, logical, and moral application of our adherence to the word of God, our emotions should always be ignored when making theological decisions. How unfortunate that this is wholly ignored in the ordination of women in the church today.

Lord God, it is certain from an understanding of Your word that our judgment will be made based on a logical and moral application of Your word to our lives – one which is reasonable as guided by adherence to Your word – and not based on our emotions. And so, help us to not base our theology on our emotions. Instead, may our emotions be a result of our theology – ever grateful and rejoicing in what Christ has done. In this, we will not err, and we will surely be found pleasing in Your sight. Amen.

And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

1 Timothy 2:14

Paul continues with the Genesis account in order to establish the “why” of instructing that women are not to teach or have authority over men. He says, “And Adam was not deceived.” This is recorded right in Genesis 3 –

¹ Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’”

² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³ but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’”

⁴ Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

The account is recorded for a multitude of reasons, but one of them is to show exactly what Paul is referring to. The devil went to the woman, not the man, in order to bring about his deceptive plan. It is this act which brought all of humanity to ruin. Paul’s logic is that the serpent went to the one he knew was susceptible to being deceived. If this were not so, then the Bible wouldn’t have bothered with telling us this.

What the Bible implicitly declares, and what is obvious from human nature, is the truth that women are beings which are formed differently from men, and who follow different internal guidelines in order to make decisions. And so in order to avoid the error of what first occurred at the fall, meaning falling into deception, being repeated in the church, Paul gives specific directives to which there are no exceptions. The problem with exceptions is that they eventually become the rule. This is not how affairs are to be handled, and so rules of conduct are set and fixed. The woman was deceived and fell into transgression. Lesson learned; guidelines are established based on this. Doctrine set.

This is then fully confirmed in the words, “but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.” It is a fast and notable distinction which the Bible calls out to us. Adam was not deceived, Eve was. The implication is that it was based on her nature as a woman that this came about. It is implied in Genesis, and it is made explicit in this epistle. There is an immense amount of theology tied up in what occurred in the garden, but Paul is here solely focused on this particular issue at this time. Both sinned, but Eve alone was deluded. To keep the church from repeating this cataclysmic mistake, Paul reasonably, without chauvinistic bias, and based on a proper understanding of both human nature and Scripture, lays down his guidelines.

And as has been unfortunately seen, Paul’s requirements (and thus the Lord’s requirements) here have been violated time and again, and the church has very quickly turned from sound theology. It is the churches which have accepted a rejection of Paul which have devolved into perversion, contempt of the word, and hatred of all things biblically moral and sound. The problem is that because these things have crept in over time, there is the feeling that it is not because of the ordination of women. However, the pattern has remained unchanged in one major denomination after another. Once the precepts of Paul are violated in this particular aspect, all other areas slowly but surely devolve as well.

Life application: Ignore Paul’s prescriptive writings, and your church will quickly start building diving boards for a leap into hell.

Lord God, You are so very marvelous. We praise You for Your wonderful works. Everything is right that comes from Your hand and from Your wisdom. Thank You for the beauty of each new season. Thank You for the many tastes, smells, and wonders to the eyes which surround us every moment. Help us, Lord, to take time and to appreciate the countless delights You have placed in our paths. You are so very marvelous. Amen.

Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control. 1 Timothy 2:15

As noted in the previous verses of this particular subject, Paul has set strict boundaries on women in the church as to what is not permitted. The reason for his guidelines was then based on the pattern set at the very time of the creation of man on earth, and which was then highlighted by the fall of man. It was the woman, not the man, who was deceived. Both were disobedient, but the devil went to the one he knew was susceptible to deception. This nature remains, and it is a trait which thus excludes women from teaching or having authority over a man.

However, Paul next says something which seemingly makes no sense at all unless the context is maintained, “Nevertheless, she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.” First to note here is that the translation is incorrect, and so no wonder it makes no sense.

There is an article in front of “childbearing” which is left out in almost all translations. A direct translation says, “She will be saved, moreover, through **the** childbearing.” Paul’s context is the creation and fall of man. From there, he immediately went to the idea of salvation – “she will be saved.” The Genesis account comes alive once again at the hand of Paul – Creation/Fall/ Salvation. It is all there waiting to be unpackaged.

What is Paul speaking of here? A woman will be saved in the childbearing? If they don’t have children, will they go to the fiery furnace forever? Will they be “more” saved if they have lots of children? Isn’t a woman saved in the same way as a man? Aren’t people saved by grace through faith? Isn’t it a gift and not of works? How can Paul say that a woman is saved by doing certain things? That seems completely contrary to what the epistles say elsewhere. Such things are debated among scholars, and none of these things apply.

The second thing to notice is that the account goes from the singular to the plural. It says, “She (singular) will be saved, moreover, through the childbearing, if they (plural) abide in...” Obviously two things are on Paul’s mind, which are completely overlooked by angry women who want to be deacons and elders in the church, despite being told it is not allowed. Paul has explained why, and now he tells them that for them there is a great honor which they possess anyway.

In order to contemplate what is going on, let’s see how difficult this verse is when one is trying to force theology into it instead of drawing it out. Below are various translations of the verse. See how they attempt to translate their way out of a theological dilemma –

- Women will be saved through childbearing.
- She will be saved through childbearing.
- Women will be preserved through the bearing of children.
- Even though she will be saved through the birth of the Child.
- She shall be saved in childbearing.
- She will be delivered through childbearing.
- She [and all women] will be saved through the birth of the child.
- But she lives by her children.

- She shall be saved through the childbearing. (literal)
- Yet a woman will be brought safely through childbirth.

These pretty much represent all of the translations. Only one is literal, the one which includes the article before “childbearing.” A couple of them are so wrong it’s hard to imagine what they were thinking. Of the two paraphrases that get the intent of what Paul is saying, the ISV does the best job. It reads as follows -

“...even though she will be saved through the birth of the Child, if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, along with good judgment.” ISV

Paul has already taken us back to Genesis 3. He has shown us what happened at the fall, after the creation, and he then explains how that is corrected in the same passage. In Genesis 3:15, the Lord spoke to the woman. And then while cursing the serpent, He said what is now known as the Protoevangelium, or “the first gospel.” There, a promise was made that One would come who would destroy him and his works –

¹³ And the Lord God said to the woman, “What *is* this you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

¹⁴ So the Lord God said to the serpent:

“Because you have done this,
 You *are* cursed more than all cattle,
 And more than every beast of the field;
 On your belly you shall go,
 And you shall eat dust
 All the days of your life.

¹⁵ And I will put enmity
 Between you and the woman,
 And between your seed and her Seed;
 He shall bruise your head,
 And you shall bruise His heel.” Genesis 3:13-15

The Lord promises the woman will bear, and from her would issue the Messiah who would crush the head of the serpent. So who was Paul speaking of when he said, “and she shall be saved through the child-bearing...” Who is “she?” The nearest antecedent is found in the previous verse when speaking of “the woman” who was deceived, meaning Eve. Therefore, Paul is referring to her. That is why it is in the singular. She, Eve, will be

saved through the bearing of a Child. Not directly, but through her, because she stands as representative of all women.

That is why Paul then switches to the plural by saying “if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.” It is the call of the gospel – to live in faith. And in living in faith, the woman will be saved, just as the man will be saved. And this faith is based on the grace which was given to humanity in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is nothing sinister here. There is nothing chauvinistic in Paul’s mind. There is the logical doctrine that women are more easily deceived and are thus not to be teachers of men. However, they have a great honor in being the gender through whom would come the Savior of the world! God has ordained all things according to His knowledge of what is right and proper. It is right and proper that Christ would be born of a woman. It is also right and proper that a woman is not to teach or have authority over a man.

Life application: It cannot be said enough that to stick to one translation of the Bible will normally end in very sad theology. In realizing that a single article is left out of a translation, and in noting a simple move from the singular to the plural, a complete change one’s understanding of what is being presented can come about. Further, to stick to the commentary of one individual is just as bad. We are to study, evaluate, contemplate, and decide. And we are to do so without injecting our emotions or presuppositions into the text. Let us stand approved in our study and application of the word of God.

Lord God! It is simply amazing to study Your word again and again, and to find new things each time we do. There is a seemingly limitless treasure of wonder in this precious word. And yet, how many of us avail ourselves of reading it daily, contemplating it always, and carefully applying it to our walk in Your presence? Help us to be sound followers of You by being well- informed in the study of Your word. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. 1 Timothy 3:1

Paul, having excluded women from any position of authority within the church, now turns to those positions which need to be filled, and what the qualifications for the men who will fill them will be. He uses the same expression that he used in verse 1:15, "This is a faithful saying." Literally, the Greek states, "Faithful is the word." Paul is making a statement of profound emphasis, and this introduces it. From there, he begins what is the "faithful saying" with the words, "If a man desires the position of bishop."

The word translated as "bishop" is *episkopé*. It literally means "overseer." It should be noted that the term is used in the elsewhere synonymously with "presbyter" as well as with other positions. Thus, this can be translated as "elder," "overseer," "bishop," etc., without doing damage to the context of the words. A literal translation of "overseer" would be best for clarity though. It actually is one who was to care for, or oversee, the church without regard to actual rank. In larger denominations today, the idea of what is considered a "bishop" is actually not a biblical concept at all. Such hierarchies are unknown in Paul's pastoral designations. For a lengthy and thorough commentary on this, one can refer Albert Barnes' evaluation of this verse.

The word "man" is not in the Greek, but it is rightly supplied based on his words which concluded chapter 2 concerning women. It is men alone that are entitled to this position. In today's play church, women who hold such a position, and act as if their authority of oversight is valid, are not acting in accord with God's word.

Next, the word translated as "desire" gives the sense of stretching oneself out in order to reach an object. It implies more than simply desiring, but to seek after. Thus a term such as "aspire" would be more fitting. The person desires, and works towards the fulfillment of that desire with anticipation. In this stretching himself out in order to become a bishop, Paul says that, "he desires a good work."

The word "desires" here is not the same as was just used. Instead, it means "to set one's heart upon." The office to which such a man desires is truly a good work because it is one of the highest callings of all. Such a man has the desire to lead others in holy living, right doctrine, and a more perfect understanding of the things of God. It is a job filled with difficulties, often tiring in the extreme, and one which is frequently marred by people who wish to usurp the position through various means. This doesn't mean that

those wanting to usurp actually desire the position themselves, but they wish to show their supposed qualifications by making the overseer look bad in order to make themselves look good. One must be ready for many obstacles, and many fiery darts from Satan, when assuming such a position.

Life application: For those who know the rewards and trials of being an overseer in a church, aspiring such a position is truly a good work. The people of the church have need for sound doctrine, patient teachers of the word, and someone willing to repeat his thoughts again and again (and again). For those who persevere in the teaching of right doctrine, those who they oversee will truly be blessed in their knowledge of the word.

Lord God, Your word notes that for a man to aspire to being an overseer in the church is to desire a good work. And yet, it is a work fraught with many complicated challenges. Help each of us to look to our leaders with gratitude, keeping them in prayer, and granting them grace as they fill such a difficult duty. And thank You for those overseers who are faithful to Your word, attending to it as the most cherished gift which they can then impart to us. Amen.

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; 1 Timothy 3:2

Paul has just said that a person who aspires to being an overseer desires a good work. He now continues with this by describing what the qualifications for such a person must be. He uses the same word for “bishop,” or “overseer,” as in the previous verse.

It is to be of special note that these qualifications are moral and social qualifications. Unlike the priests of the temple in Israel who were restricted from the ministry because of physical defects (see Leviticus 21), no such restrictions are placed on leadership in the New Testament. The reason for this was typology. The Old Testament priests were made to be types of Christ to come, and thus they were to reflect His perfection. Now in Christ, all such things are no longer considered. Physical defects are wholly left out of Paul’s requirements. However, the moral and social traits are specifically stated. First, such a person must be “blameless.”

The word Paul uses is seen just three times, all in 1 Timothy. It signifies being above reproach in all ways. HELPS Word studies says, “...without blame in light of the *whole picture*. Here the person (accuser) trying to seize someone’s character by unjustified censure is shown to be groundless, i.e. when the matter is understood in *full context*.” If

accusation comes, there should be complete vindication that the accusations are false, because he has lived his life without fault.

Next, Paul says that he is to be “the husband of one wife.” Two major thoughts are to be derived from these words. The first is that Paul is speaking of males. Women don’t have wives. A female has already been explicitly forbidden from such a position, but this is a further confirmation of that fact.

The second thought is that this is not speaking of having been married twice. If so, it would mean that a man in such a position whose wife died would not be allowed to be remarried. This is rather speaking of polygamy. No polygamist was to be considered for such a position. What this implies, however, is that polygamy was something Paul does not forbid. And he could not. He is the Apostle to the Gentiles. His words have been carried to cultures throughout the world, many of which practiced polygamy. There is no instruction forbidding this practice anywhere in Scripture, except for church leadership positions. Further, polygamy was acceptable in Jewish religion and culture. He could not forbid what his own culture allowed. Rather, this prohibition is given to church leaders – no polygamy for them to be accepted. It immediately shows that Mormonism was founded on disobedience to the word of God, and its leaders were not “blameless” at all. Instead they were false teachers who founded a false religion.

Next Paul says the bishop is to be “temperate.” The word is used three times, and only in the pastoral epistles. It indicates “sober” or “not intoxicated.” Although there is scholarly disagreement on its meaning, this does not mean that a person in such a position could not drink alcohol at all. That would be contrary to the entire body of Scripture in both testaments. Rather, it would extend to mean that they are not to be intoxicated from alcohol. As much as the word speaks of sobriety, it is figuratively used to mean “circumspect.” It is a warning not against drinking alcohol, but allowing any sin to infect his conduct. A person not known for such an attitude was to be rejected.

Next Paul says, “sober-minded.” It is a word found four times, and only in the pastoral epistles. It signifies soundness of mind. Such a person is to be well-balanced from God’s perspective. It is a person who lives according to the word of God, setting the boundaries of his life in accord with that word. Thus, a good definition of this word would be “discreet and discerning.” HELPS Word Studies gives the following example: “An opera singer controls the length (quality) of their tones by their *diaphragm* which even controls the ability to breathe and moderates heartbeat. Hence it *regulates* (“brings safety”) to the body, keeping it properly *controlled*.”]

Paul next adds in, “of good behavior.” The word is found only twice, and only in this epistle. It signifies outward conduct. It comes from the word meaning “world,” and thus it signifies conduct which is well prepared and well ordered.

Next the bishop is to be “hospitable.” It is speaking of one’s conduct – being fond of guests, and good towards strangers. Such a person is to be naturally given to hospitality.

And then Paul notes that he must be “able to teach.” It is a word found only twice, here and in 2 Timothy. It is exactly translated.

Life application: Does the overseer of your church meet the qualifications set here by Paul? If not, you are in the wrong church.

Lord God, Your word very clearly defines the parameters for the man who can be selected as an overseer in Your church. How is it that churches have gone so far from these guidelines in our modern world. There aren’t many requirements, but they are very exacting. Grant us the wisdom to look them up, evaluate if the leader meets those qualifications, and then to determine whether we will stay or leave the church based on what is said there. May we not be disobedient to Your word by allowing someone not in accord with those guidelines to be in leadership over us. Amen.

...not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; 1 Timothy 3:3

Paul’s list of qualifications for those in a leadership position within the church continues now. He says that they are not to be “given to wine.” The single Greek word so translated is used just twice – in 1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7. It signifies one addicted to wine; a drunk. It comes from two words indicating “near” and “wine.” Thus it is someone who is always consumed with drinking wine.

Next he says a leader should be “not violent.” This is again used only in 1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7. It signifies a brawler or a contentious person. This person would be quarrelsome, and one who prefers using his fists to settle a disagreement. It would be wholly unsuited to the position of an overseer to come out of the pulpit and beat up everyone in the church who disagrees on doctrinal matters.

After this, Paul says he shouldn’t be “greedy for money.” These words are left out of many manuscripts, but whether it is an erroneous insert or mistakenly left out, it is something which is important for leaders in the church to be aware of and stay away

from. Those greedy for money have their priorities in the wrong place from the start. Paul's example of working with his hands is an important lesson for all, especially those who are called to lead in the church. There is to be more, not less, output from leaders. And the output should be because of a love of Christ, and a love of those who are pursuing Christ. If money is the objective, then this will never be the case. As Christ said, "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

Instead of these things, Paul next says, "but." A contrast is now made to those things. First in his contrasts is that the overseer is to be "gentle." The word properly means "equitable." It signifies "'gentle' in the sense of truly fair by relaxing *overly strict standards* in order to keep *the 'spirit of the law'*" (HELPS Word Studies).

Along with that, he is to be "not quarrelsome." It is a single word in the Greek which is again used only here and in Titus. It gives the sense of "peaceable." He is to abstain from fighting and not be contentious.

Paul's list for this verse finishes with "not covetous." This is another single compound word which signifies "not fond of silver." Silver is used in the sense of financial gain. Thus, the leader is to not be one who is materialistic or dominated by the thought of getting rich. If an overseer understands the heavenly rewards of his work, then earthly gain will have far less importance to him. The word is used just one more time in the Bible, in Hebrews 13:5. There it is applied to all believers, not just leaders. How much more then should leaders display this attitude.

Life application: Look at those who are in church leadership positions, and evaluate them based on the words of Paul. If you see a defect in the conduct of such a leader, it should be addressed and corrected. If the disobedient behavior continues, either he will have to go, or you should find a new place to worship.

Lord God, be with our church leaders, and help them to apply to their lives an attitude which is appropriate to their position. Keep them from harmful temptations which arise, and keep their hearts free from all things which could cause division or distraction. It is a tempting, frustrating, difficult world in which we live. And so how much more so for our leaders who face a daily onslaught of attacks by the devil. Protect them and defend them, O God. Amen.

...one who rules his own house well, having *his* children in submission with all reverence... 1 Timothy 3:4

An overseer's requirements continue from Paul's hand here, beginning with the note that he shall be "one who rules his own house well." Albert Barnes states, "This implies that a minister of the gospel would be, and ought to be, a married man." That is a giant leap. Some obvious inferences can be made, such as an overseer being a male because it says that he is to be the husband of one wife. However, a single man can have a household as much as a married man. The word *oikos* means "a house" and is speaking of the material building. That extends to the idea of family which lives in such a building, if applicable. However, it does not necessarily do so.

A single overseer could have a house which is a pig-sty. Thus he would set a poor example of cleanliness and order. He could live with his aged parents, whom he neglects. That would set a poor example. Etc. There is no reason, except as a kick-back against the Roman Catholic policy of single priests, to make such an assumption. Despite this, whether married or single, he is to be one who rules his own house well. The idea of the household of verse 3:2 is returned to and further defined. If an overseer is incapable of guiding his own house well, he is certainly not going to make an acceptable example for others in the church.

Also, the word "rule" tends to make one think of issuing orders and the like. The Greek is a compound word which gives the idea of "standing before," or better "pre-standing." It signifies a "pre-set (well-established) character which *provides the need model to direct others*, i.e. to positively impact them *by example*" (HELPS Word Studies). For this reason, a word like "maintain" or "manage" may be more suited to what Paul is relaying.

Next, Paul says, "having *his* children in submission with all reverence." Using the logic of Albert Barnes (above), this would imply that an overseer would be unqualified if he had no children. Rather, this is a statement of "if," not "as." In other words, "If he has children they should..." not "As he has children, they should..." This is not something hinted at elsewhere in Scripture. As Paul was single, and as he said, "For I wish that all men were even as I myself" (1 Corinthians 7:7), it must mean that he is giving directions for "if" one is married or has children. If this is the case, then the overseer is to ensure he has them "in submission with all reverence."

If an overseer has unruly children, or those which are irreverent, then how can he be expected to instill in others these same qualities. They will see the behavior of his family and think, "Well, it's OK for Pastor Peter, he can't say anything about our own defecto kid." Eventually, the whole congregation will look at the children of others and realize that there is only dysfunction and a bad end for each of them when their own old age arrives. And as the church is to be the epitome of those in society, how much more will

the greater society lean to accept a world full of spoiled miscreants from the example of those in the church.

Life application: Be sure to know how your church leaders live, what type of family members they are responsible for, etc., and then determine if they are meeting the qualifications which are set down here or not. If their homes resemble Animal House on Apostasy Avenue, then what kind of an example will they be to those who see them on a daily basis – both from within and without the church?

Lord, we thank You for leaders of the church who set a proper example in their own lives – as husbands, fathers, and neighbors. Help us to be sure that we know the character of men applying for leadership positions as regards their family and social lives, so that we don't make the mistake of getting someone who can't even run his own house! But for those who can, and who lead us in our churches, please send a blessing upon their families so that peace and happiness guides their lives. Amen.

(for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); 1 Timothy 3:5

Paul asks an obvious question. How could a church, of whatever number of people, and who are outside of the regular workings of a man's household, be guided by that person if he can't even run the operations of his own household? It is true that a man could have a very large household, including a wife, many children, and others who – by law – are considered as a part of that house. That household could be even larger than the church he has been selected to oversee.

However, regardless of its size, he is the one in charge. If that house is dysfunctional, and all in it are under him and aware of his character and traits, it would be unimaginable that he could be a proper steward of a church setting of people wholly unfamiliar with his character, idiosyncrasies, etc. Only dysfunction could be expected. This is especially true because people come and go in towns and cities, and between churches within those local areas, all the time. The constant change of a church is expected to be quite unlike the greater stability of a regular household, and so the demands are much higher.

And so the words, "...for if a man does not know how to rule his own house," are to be a set standard of consideration for the leader of any congregation, regardless of its size. The reason is because it then begs the question, "How will he take care of the church of God?" The phrase, "will he take care of" is from a single compound word in the Greek. It means "to care for (physically or otherwise)" (HELPS Word Studies).

The responsibility of the pastor is the full care of those under him. If he is unable to tend to his own household in this way, then it is certain that he will be ineffective in doing so for those under his care, but not of his own household.

Life application: In modern churches, one person in charge may have a large staff under him. Therefore, they may take care of personal issues that the main pastor is unable to address. But this should not be the case. If the pastor cannot fill each pastoral role in the church, because he can't do it in his own house, then he is not to be placed in such a position of authority. Full adherence to the word first, then the position can be filled.

Gracious heavenly Father, You have a household which is run perfectly from Your end, even if we are individually disobedient from our end at times. May our churches emulate Your example, and may they be first and foremost obedient to Your word which reflects Your will for us. Only then will we have the proper example for right conduct of each member in the church. Help us in this, O Lord. Amen.

...not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the *same* condemnation as the devil. 1 Timothy 3:6

Paul continues on with his requirements for an overseer. He says that such a person is not to be “a novice. The Greek word is *neophutos*. It is only used here in the New Testament, and it is where we get our modern word neophyte from. It is a compound word signifying “newly planted.” In other words, it is a recent convert to the faith. A young plant is unable to endure the full effects of the elements. Full sun, strong wind, fierce cold, etc., would easily destroy it. Until a plant has roots deep enough to reach down and hold it fast, it is always in danger of lacking water and withering up. A plant without enough leaves and branches is easily destroyed, it having nothing to spare when it is trampled upon.

Each of these is figurative of a new convert. They don't have a grounding in the word, they are unable to withstand attacks which come at them, etc. But Paul focuses next on one particular aspect of being young in the faith as an excluding factor for being an overseer. He is not to hold such an office, “lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the *same* condemnation as the devil.” The Greek words translated as “puffed up” is one which properly means, “to blow smoke,” or “to cloud up the air.” It would then be one which has a cloudy mindset, “meaning a moral blindness resulting from poor judgment which brings further loss of spiritual perception” (HELPS Word Studies).

In the end, the word looks to the sin of pride. A new convert will easily become conceited or arrogant. Here is this little plant with no roots wielding spiritual authority over those which have deep roots and are set in proper doctrine. This can only lead to disaster. This disaster is to fall under “condemnation.” The word “same” is not in the Greek, but is supplied – not wisely – by the translators. The word translated as “condemnation” is not signifying a loss of salvation. Salvation is not the question here. What is being relayed is condemnation in the passive sense. It is, according to the scholar Bengel, “the internal condition of the soul: *reproach* is opposed to ‘a good report from those that are without,’ and the devil may bring a *reproach* upon men, he cannot bring them into *condemnation*; for he does not judge, but is judged.”

In other words, it is the devil’s accusing judgment, and not the judgment which was rendered upon the devil. There is a world of difference between the two. The first is speaking of the devil standing and accusing the person, as he did towards Job. The second would be speaking of the end result of the devil, meaning being cast into the Lake of Fire. It is the former, not the latter, which is being brought to mind here. For the devil to bring accusation against such a person is to then bring disgrace upon the position. In this case, it then brings disgrace upon the Christian faith which stems from Christ. In order to not have this occur, new converts should never be ordained.

Life application: Let us ensure that those ordained within the church are well grounded in Scripture. A thorough examination of overseers must be made, and they must demonstrate that they not only know the principle tenets of the faith, but that they actually adhere to them. Head knowledge does not always signify life-application.

Lord God, help us not to look to those with great head knowledge of Your word, and yet who fail to apply that knowledge to their lives. Also, let us not look to leaders who live properly, but who are unfamiliar with the principle tenets of the Christian faith. To have one or the other, but not both, is a recipe for certain disaster. May we be extremely careful to ordain only men qualified in both ways so that our churches will be free from the many griefs which would otherwise come knocking at the door. Amen.

Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. 1 Timothy 3:7

“Moreover” is stated to show that this is a continuation of the previous thought which began in verse 3:1. Paul has been describing the qualifications for being an overseer. He just said in verse 6 that an overseer is not to be newly planted into the faith, but there is

even more than that. He is also one who “must have a good testimony among those who are outside.”

In other words, there should be a full and complete understanding by the outside world that this is a person of good character, and fully capable of leading a church of people in righteousness. This, however, cannot mean that someone who was once lacking good character is not acceptable for the position. Such a view is held among many scholars, but it is contrary to the example of Paul, who is writing this very epistle. His words testify to this –

“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, ¹³ although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief.” 1 Timothy 1:13

These words, among others from Paul’s own hand, show that he is speaking of a present condition of things at the time of ordination (and the Greek verb for “have” is in the present tense). A person who was on the wrong path, and who makes a sudden and noted change to the right path, and who continues in that walk, is going to be noted as such by those who see the change. In due time, they will know that the individual is a true and sound convert. This is noted of Paul in Galatians 1:23. Those who knew of Paul’s past, and then saw the change in him, were amazed at the change. As Paul says, “And they glorified God in me” (Galatians 1:24).

Although Paul’s words concerning himself are only describing him, and although his call was an exceptional one – especially for the apostolic ministry – the fact that he includes his details in the pastoral epistles is surely an indication that he is showing us the contrast between life before Christ, and life in Christ. One who desires to be an overseer then must have a good testimony among those who are outside, based on his character of who he is in Christ. As he is not to be a new convert, this then takes care of such a testimony being flawed by a quick, but not proper, change. Those who are outside, and who can testify of the high quality of a non-recent convert, are to be sought out for their confession of the integrity and right-standing of the person in question.

This is especially important, and Paul gives the exacting reason for it by saying, “lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.” Paul presents two distinct ideas. The first is, “lest he fall into reproach.” This cannot simply mean as Matthew Poole states, “lest men reproach such persons for their former infamous life, and so prejudice others against the doctrine they bring.” As seen, Paul’s life was surely “infamous” as he went

out to destroy the Christian faith. And yet, his teaching – based on his conversion – brought glory to God. And so the idea of falling into reproach must be a turning back to the old ways and bringing discredit upon the Lord. This is why the candidate must not be a new convert. He must have a proven record of a change that has taken hold, grown deep roots, and which demonstrates that he will not be swayed by the many challenges which come from holding the position of overseer.

The second thought is falling into “the snare of the devil.” This is tied into falling into reproach, but it is also the thing which causes it to be magnified. The devil lays traps to break believers. Each person has weaknesses which must be guarded against. A snare does not reflect the result of a person’s failings, but rather the cause of them. When the devil lays a snare for an overseer, it is to entrap him and cause his destruction. In order to hopefully ensure that an overseer will not be so snared, his record is to be evaluated carefully. If he is prone to weakness before ordination, how much more so when he assumes the position and is pursued relentlessly by the devil. The devil then is portrayed as a patient hunter who sets his traps. When he sees an overseer’s falling into reproach, he will use that failing, which has led him to disgrace in the eyes of others, to drag him further from the straight path. Instead of acknowledging his sin and stepping down from the position, he will be dragged into further apostasy because of the pride which takes over. The church which he leads will be one which goes off onto a completely misguided path.

Life application: How many times have leaders of churches fallen from favor because of past sins, but who then come back to leadership positions again. Quite often their doctrine ignores the failings which brought them to reproach in the first place, leaving a void in their ability to fully adhere to the word of God in regards to the lives of the congregants. As an example, a leader divorces and remarries, but stays in the leadership position. He now has a void in his own ability to counsel those in the church about this issue. The congregation’s idea is, “It was OK for Pastor Newpartner, and so it must be OK for me.” One such flaw can lead to a total turning from sound doctrine. Paul’s instructions are intended to stop this before it can occur.

Precious Lord God, we pray for those who are considering becoming leaders in the church, and we pray for the congregations who must choose whether to place them there or not. May the applicants, and those who ordain, abide by the instructions found in Scripture for making their determinations. You have laid out the guidelines for a reason, and so in following them, there is a greater chance of a sound person being ordained if they are followed. In this, there will be the hope of bringing glory to You as they live out their lives in their positions. We certainly pray for this. Amen.

Likewise deacons *must be* reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, 1 Timothy 3:8

Paul now turns from the position of overseer (aka elder, lead pastor, etc.) to that of the deacon. The requirements for a deacon are likewise set in Scripture to ensure that only qualified men are ordained to such a position. The Greek term is *diakonos*, coming from two words which indicate “through” and “dust.” Thus, this is a subordinate position to the overseer. The deacon will carry out the necessary tasks which will assist the overseer. He will scurry through the dust, kicking it up as he goes, assisting in whatever manner he can in order to ensure the effective working of the church. In the gospels, the word is translated as “servant.”

At a very early time in the church, deacons were selected to meet the needs of the church. The selection of seven men to assist the apostles is recorded in Acts 6:1-7. Thus, the office of deacon within the church goes back to its very inception. The position is then noted at various times in Paul’s writings. His words help define some of the things that deacons were to do. Here in Timothy, he defines the character they are to possess, beginning with the note that they must be “reverent.” The word signifies that which is honorable, or which bears dignity. HELPS Word Studies says that it indicates, “deeply respected because viewed as majestic (having gravity).”

Next he notes that deacons should not be “double-tongued.” It is a word used only here in the New Testament. It carries the same meaning as “forked tongued” does today. It is a person who is deceitful because he says one thing at one time, and then says another. It is literally “two-sayings.” When a person is noted as such, he will take different sides of the same issue whenever it is convenient. Such should never be the case. When dealing with the word of God, we are to stand on it without equivocation or manipulation. The same is true when dealing with others at all times.

After this he notes that they should not be “given to much wine.” The words obviously speak of someone who drinks too much; a drunkard. It is sad that not being “given to much wine” has been manipulated by many scholars to mean “total abstinence.” Such is not to be inferred from the words, and it is wholly inappropriate to the entire tenor of both Scripture and the verse itself. Even a clumsy study of the word of God will reveal that the prohibition of alcohol is found in only two specific instances in Scripture, both in the Old Testament, and neither having any bearing on New Testament theology. Obviously, one “given to much wine” is wholly unsuited to serve in a leadership position, either in the church or in society at large. It is a state which is harmful to an individual,

and it can only be harmful to the ministry if someone with such a proclivity is installed as a deacon.

Paul's words of this verse finish with, "not greedy for money." This has already been said of the position of overseer in verse 3 (at least in some texts). Those greedy for money have their priorities in the wrong place. If money is the objective in one's life, then they will never be effective in the ministry. The heart must be devoted first, foremost, and with the greatest zeal to being an effective helper, not one concerned about getting rich off of the flock.

Life application: When a church is big enough to select men as deacons, they should be well-known already, carefully evaluated for the greater responsibilities, and not set on pedestals in the church. Each has a position which is to be filled, and none should be exalted over another. If the overseer is leading through hard work and dedication, how much more should those who are appointed to help him do so as well.

Thank You, O God, for those who help out at our churches, filling in with the meeting of many needs to ensure the church runs properly, and effectively meeting the needs of the people, while bringing glory to You. May our leaders and deacons be blessed with a special blessing as they conduct their tasks. And help them to closely stick to the tasks and requirements for their offices as laid out in Your word. May our times of gathering be times of blessing upon all through the work of their hands. Amen.

...holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. 1 Timothy 3:9

The words here are still referring to requirements of being ordained as a deacon. Not only are such men to be outwardly exemplary in nature, but they are also to have that coupled with a particular inward qualification. The external orthodoxy of an individual may cover over and hide a corrupt mind towards the gospel itself. And so Paul says that such a person is to be one who is "holding the mystery of the faith."

The "mystery of the faith" is the subject. It is that which was concealed in God until it was revealed in Christ – that a person is saved by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ. It is called a mystery because it was hidden from man's knowledge until it was revealed at the time which was divinely appointed by God. And it remains a mystery until it is revealed to the soul who has not heard it. In other words, it cannot be deduced apart from special revelation. And this mystery-revealed, although sufficient to save, does not necessarily save. It must be received as truth. Thus Paul says that he is to hold to the mystery "with a pure conscience."

As Vincent's Word Studies says, "An intellect, however powerful and active, joined with an impure conscience, cannot solve but only aggravates the mystery; whereas a pure and loyal conscience, and a frank acceptance of imposed duty along with mystery, puts one in the best attitude for attaining whatever solution is possible."

It is not appropriate to ordain someone simply because he meets the external qualifications, and who also has a mental understanding of the gospel. These things must be coupled with a pure conscience towards the gospel. In essence, "I have heard the gospel, and I believe it to be the truth of God. I am saved not by any works, but by faith alone in Christ Jesus. Now I desire to be a deacon who works out that knowledge through a life dedicated to Him."

Life application: If you have the most intellectually grounded pastors and deacons in the world at your church, it doesn't mean that they have a true heart towards the gospel. True men of God will be willing to defend the gospel of salvation by grace through faith in the finished work of Jesus above all else. External works are wonderful to see in our leaders, but they must be men who will hold fast to the heart of the gospel at all times. It is Christ, and Christ alone, who brings salvation – apart from any merit of man.

Lord God, Your word shows that we are completely excluded from the process of salvation. There is no thing we can do to be saved, except to trust in the finished work of Christ. What a stumblingblock to the people of the world who think being right with You stems from something that we do. Rather, it is all about what You have done through Christ. And thank You for the simplicity of this offer. Thank You for reaching down to us and making all things new. Amen.

But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. 1 Timothy 3:10

Paul, after stating the requirements of those who will fill the office of deacon, now tells how individuals are to then get to that point. He begins with, "But let these also first be tested." The word "these" is speaking of men who otherwise appear to meet the qualifications laid out by him. There are different opinions on what "first be tested" means. Some think it means by filling the job in a probationary way at first. Others, by a searching inquiry of the general community. And still others look to it as being actually tested via a proper trial. The word used signifies "to try (test) to show something is acceptable" (HELPS Word Studies). It is not a test which focuses on disproving something, but rather approving. What makes the most sense is that all three of the options should be employed.

Some of the qualifications must be determined by being placed into the position to see if the person has the metal to match the requirements. Others can certainly only be determined by asking others about the known character of the individual. And how can a person's proper doctrine be known by others unless they hold a trial of inquiry into what he plans on teaching? Due to the important nature of the duties, the more thorough of an examination that is made, the more likely the filling of the job will be one which is proper.

Only after these (whatever particular testing is made) are complete, Paul says, "then let them serve as deacons." The order is set:

- 1) read the requirements as laid out by Paul;
- 2) test the individual to fill the position, and then;
- 3) ordain the one who meets the requirements and passes the test. The ordination necessarily follows this logical progression to ensure the one selected has been found "blameless." The Greek word signifies one who is not convictable when properly scrutinized, as if in a court of law. He is found without reproach, and is therefore suited to the job.

Life application: Are you aware of how the overseers and deacons are selected and evaluated in your church? If not, you should be. You have a right to know who is assigned in leadership positions, and how those selections were made. The qualifications are not secreted away, but are laid out in the Bible. Therefore, all people should have access to how the church is making these selections.

Lord God, the qualifications for appointment of elders and deacons are laid out in Your word. The process to ensure these qualifications are met is also laid out there. Because this is so, each person has a right and a responsibility to ensure that the process of selection is also done in accord with it. Help us to be responsible church-goers, willing to carefully evaluate the process of ordination so that only qualified men will serve. Surely, with this, things should go well, and You will be pleased. Amen.

Likewise, *their* wives *must* be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.
1 Timothy 3:11

This words of this verse are highly debated. What is certain is that one with presuppositions concerning what it says will look to justify their position based on the seeming ambiguity of Paul's words. The Greek reads either, "Women, likewise, *must*

be..." or "Wives, likewise, *must* be..." If this is referring to "women," then it means there is a class of deaconesses being addressed. For those who hold this view, they look to the fact that no restriction on the wives of overseers was given, and so it naturally means that it cannot mean deacon's wives are being singled out. However, Meyer's NT commentary reads –

"The reason of the special exhortation would then be, not, as Heydenreich says, that even the domestic life of the deacons should be considered, but that the office of the deacons, consisting in the care of the poor and the sick, was of a kind in which their wives had to lend a helping hand. Hence we can explain why the wives of the bishops are not specially mentioned."

That actually would sufficiently resolve why the wives of the overseers is not mentioned. The duty is one of service (scurrying through the dust, as the term "deacon" implies). The wife, if a deacon is married, assisting in this would be an obvious part of his duties. Albert Barnes gives further reasons why "wives" is the correct interpretation –

- (1) it is the obvious and natural interpretation.
- (2) the word here used – "wives" – is never used of itself to denote deaconesses.
- (3) if the apostle had meant deaconesses, it would have been easy to express it without ambiguity; compare notes, Romans 16:1.
- (4) what is here mentioned is important, whether the same thing is mentioned of bishops or not.
- (5) in the qualifications of bishops, the apostle had made a statement respecting his family, which made any specification about the particular members of the family unnecessary. He was to be one who presided in a proper manner over his own house, or who had a well-regulated family; 1 Timothy 3:4-5. By a comparison of this passage, also, with Titus 2:3-4, which bears a strong resemblance to this, it would seem that it was supposed that the deacons would be taken from those who were advanced in life, and that their wives would have some superintendence over the younger females of the church. It was, therefore, especially important that they should be persons whose influence would be known to be decidedly favorable to piety. No one can doubt that the character of a woman may be such, that it is not desirable that her husband should be an officer in the church. A bad woman ought not to be entrusted with any additional power or influence."

As a final note of confirmation concerning this, the “deacon” is specifically addressed in verses 8, 10, 12, and 13 as “deacons.” Verse 11 is instructive of verses 8 & 10 as pertaining to the deacon, meaning qualifications of the wife of the deacon being described. Verse 12 is instructive for the deacon based on what is said in verse 11. In other words, the words of verse 11 describe the necessary qualification of the wife. After that, the deacon is then forbidden from having more than one wife. A “deaconess” is never mentioned or alluded to. The entire passage speaks of what pertains to the deacon directly, or to his wife who directly affects his qualifications.

The entire tenor of Paul’s words, from the restrictions placed on women in Chapter 2, all the way through his letter to Titus, along with his precise words of 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35, shows that this is speaking of “wives” specifically, not “women” in general. And so for these wives, Paul says that they “*must* be reverent.” It is the same word used in verse 8. Like the husband, the wife of the deacon must be honorable and bear dignity. She should be “deeply respected because [she is] viewed as majestic (having gravity)” (HELPS Word Studies).

They are also to not be “slanderers.” This signifies a false accuser, or one who unjustly criticizes others in order to hurt them, even to the point of severing relations. When an article is used in front of this Greek word, it speaks of the devil.

Along with this, they are to be “temperate.” The word means “clear minded,” “sober,” “circumspect,” etc. It was used to describe the overseer in verse 2.

And finally, the wife of the deacon is to be “faithful in all things.” The word signifies “full of faith.” In other words, her faith in what God has done is to direct all aspects of her life.

Life application: It is obvious that a verse such as 1 Timothy 3:11 will be looked at differently by those with presuppositions or personal biases in order to establish a desired doctrine. When difficult verses like this come along, the more conservative view should be considered first. Secondly, the context of the entire passage should be considered, and thirdly, the rest of Scripture which is prescriptive in nature should be considered. In the end, a misinterpretation will eventually lead a congregation away from soundness of doctrine. Therefore, difficult passages must be carefully and prayerfully evaluated.

Lord God, when we come to difficult verses in Your word, and when we desire to know the truth of their meaning, please hear our prayers for clarity, lead us to sound

explanations, and keep us from biases which will draw us from what is right and proper. May our evaluations of Your word be conservative, well-considered, and ever-cautious that they are sound and proper. To Your glory we pray. Amen.

Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling *their* children and their own houses well. 1 Timothy 3:12

This is almost a mirror of the requirements for an overseer. Deacons are to “be the husbands of one wife.” As before, this is not speaking of having been married and then remarried, such as in the death of the wife. It is speaking of polygamy. No polygamist was to be considered for such a position. The implication is that polygamy was something Paul does not forbid other than for leaders. And he could not. As the Apostle to the Gentiles, his words were carried to cultures which allowed this practice. Since then, they have been carried throughout the world to various cultures, some of which practiced polygamy.

There is no instruction forbidding this practice anywhere in Scripture, except for these church leadership positions. Polygamy was acceptable in Jewish religion and culture. He could not forbid what his own culture allowed. Rather, this prohibition is given to church leaders – no polygamy was allowed for deacons to be accepted. Any cult which allows church leaders to have more than one wife is not in accord with Scripture, and it is to be rejected.

Next Paul notes that all deacons are to rule “*their* children and their homes well.” This is a close repeat of what is instructed for an overseer as well. To understand all this means, refer to the commentaries on verses 4 & 5.

Life application: Being a deacon carries specific requirements. These are mandated for the selection process, and they are to be maintained during all the time a person performs the duties of a deacon. Due to the stress of the job, it would be good for the church to lift these men up in prayer, and also to be willing to give them the much needed support and encouragement the job requires.

How good it is to be in Your presence Lord. When we we rise, You are there. When we face a troubled moment, You are there. In the times when all is rosy and enjoyable, we know that You are there as well. Through good times and bad times, it is so wonderful to know that You are with us. Your presence is wonderful, and our fellowship is sweet. Thank You, O God, for being with us at all times. Amen!

For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 3:13

Paul now explains the benefits of having served as a deacon. He has spoken of their qualifications in order to hold such an office, and now he goes directly to the end result of having obtained that appointment. He does this with the words, “who have served well.” They are then the basis for the benefits. What is to be anticipated is based upon the previous verses concerning their qualifications. If they met the necessary qualifications as outlined, and then had served in accord with those expectations, a positive benefit will result. Therefore, those who were ordained who were not qualified, or those who failed to serve in accord with those expectations, are not to be included in the benefits he will note.

Understanding this, he says that the deacons who have served well will “obtain for themselves a good standing.” The Greek word for “standing” here, *bathmos*, is found only this once in the entire Bible. It is actually a step in a staircase, and so figuratively it indicates a degree or a rank. The tense of the verb “have served” changes to the present “obtain.” It is that they “have served well” being necessary for the step, or standing, which they then obtain. Some find in this a note that being a deacon is a qualifying step to that of an overseer or a preacher. Others see this as indicating a great reward in their eternal station at the bema seat of Christ. However, it could be simply that such a person is to be recognized thereafter as a person of dependability and integrity within the church – “Paulonious was a deacon who served well, and so we know that he can be trusted in all he does.”

Paul then adds in, “and great boldness in the faith in Christ Jesus.” The Greek word translated as “boldness” is one which speaks of confidence in speech. Being combined with the thought of the faith which is in Christ Jesus, it then is referring to someone who has gained confidence to speak of the faith. He is thus one of firm convictions, who will stand on the faith. He will proclaim it without wavering, and he would therefore be recognized as a sound and dependable believer in Christ. Whether this means he will ever become a preacher or not is probably not the issue on Paul’s mind. Rather, he is continuing to refer to someone who can be trusted with imparting proper counsel – “Paulonious is someone you can go to when you need advice about the faith. He served well as a deacon, and he is a valuable resource when you need counsel.”

Life application: The more time one spends faithfully ministering, the more grounded he will normally be in his own convictions, and in his ability to communicate those convictions to others in their times of need. For deacons, they were already subject to

scrutiny concerning their character. By serving in that office well, their character will continue to be developed. Such people will always be considered as valuable resources for others to seek out.

Lord God, we thank You for the ability to serve You in whatever way You have selected for us. You have molded each of us according to Your wisdom, so that some can serve through giving, some through prayer, some through encouraging others, or in many other ways. Help us to use our gift of service properly, and help us to mature in our lives so that others will find us dependable to come to in their own times of need. Help us to use our time wisely. Amen.

These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; 1 Timothy 3:14

This words of this verse are intended to cover everything already stated that ensures right ordination of those who are selected as leaders. The statement, “These things I write to you,” are generally considered to be concerning the ordination of men to the positions of overseer and deacon, but are certainly inclusive of the exhortations and prohibitions of the previous chapter, particularly the prohibitions. In order to determine who was qualified, he first had to exclude those who were not to be considered in the process.

His next words include a thought which has to be understood from the context. He says, “though I hope to come to you shortly.” Charles Ellicott notes, “The participle here has a concessive form, ‘though I hope,’ &c. ‘I write these special urgent directions to you, though my hope is that I shall be with you sooner than such detailed instructions presuppose.’”

In other words, it was Paul’s hope to be present for the selection and ordination process, but that may or may not actually occur. These words show us that Timothy was probably not the permanent leader of the church at Ephesus. If he were, then he would be the one to make these selections. But the need existed, Paul was unavailable, and so Timothy is being instructed in the process as an expediency.

Life application: The wisdom of God is seen all over this epistle. Even this verse shows us that the Lord had kept Paul back from Ephesus so that there would be a need to write these directions. In writing the epistle, it would eventually become a prescriptive part of the Bible, maintained for all time to ensure that proper selection and ordination procedures would be followed from that time and thereafter.

Lord God, the more Your precious word is studied and contemplated, the more the wisdom behind its writing is seen. What a beautiful tapestry of wonder and delight is found in this glorious gift, given graciously, by Your guiding hand. Thank You for revealing to us Your wisdom in the pages of the Bible. Amen.

...but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth... 1 Timothy 3:15

Paul had just written that he hoped to come to Ephesus shortly, but now he notes this may not be the case. The word translated as “delayed” is found only here and in 1 Peter 3:9 when speaking of the supposed slowness of the Lord’s return. Paul may not actually make it in a timely manner, and what if he never made it back? The words are a necessary instruction for Timothy (and for all of the church throughout this dispensation), as he says, “so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself.”

Though this is written in the singular, it is speaking to all men and women. He has given instructions to all, concerning right and proper order within the church. He has also given instructions for the selection of leaders over the church. His words are for that proper conduct for Timothy, for the church at Ephesus, and for all churches at all times. The words are for conduct “in the house of God.”

This term, “house of God,” is derived from Old Testament symbolism. The house of God was the tabernacle/temple which was among the people of Israel, and it was also a term used of the people of Israel. Paul now transfers this to the church and to the people within the church. More importantly, his letters are directed to Gentiles and Gentile locations. Thus, the church is something unique and entirely different than that of the Old Testament’s definition. It is a spiritual entity which is comprised of any and all who have professed faith in the completed work of Christ Jesus. This is explicitly stated in the words, “which is the church of the living God.”

There is probably quite a bit on Paul’s mind when writing these words. The word translated as “church” is *ecclesia*. It is a called out assembly. However, it is rightly translated as “church” here because he has just called it “the house of God.” It is the people who form the church, and who are, according to Ephesians 2:21 a “building, being fitted together” into “a holy temple in the Lord.” This is a church in which God Himself, the living God, will dwell in and among His people. He is set in contrast to the false god of Ephesus, Diana (aka Artemis) which is described in some detail in Acts 16.

Further, He is set in contrast to any false god of any location. Only He is the living God. This church of the living God, is then called by Paul, “the pillar and ground of the truth.”

Some scholars say that this term is to be applied to the truth which will next be stated by Paul, and not to the church itself. This is not correct. The church is the pillar of the truth, and the purpose of a pillar is to support. Pillars throughout history have borne inscriptions. The church bears the inscription of TRUTH which it maintains and supports. As long as a church within the church proclaims the truth of God’s word, it is such a pillar. And the true church as a whole is the pillar of truth. Further, a pillar is a two-way structure. It stands on a base, and it is a base for continued support. Thus, the pillar that stands on Christ (John 14:6 – I am the way, the truth, and the life) is founded on the truth, and it then supports the house which sits upon it. The truth to the world is the church which proclaims Christ, and without that church, there can be no truth of God.

Life application: The importance of Paul’s letter to Timothy, and adhering to what is stated by him concerning proper functioning of the church, is not to be understated. When a church veers off of the words of Paul, which outline the structure and requirements of the church, it is no longer a sound pillar of the truth. How important it is then to be obedient to what is written by him here!

Lord God, Your word places a very heavy emphasis on the church and its proper functioning. Without a church based on Jesus Christ, there is no truth to be expressed concerning who You are and what You expect. And when a church does not adhere to what You have outlined in Your word, then the world will see a church which is not reflective of Your truth. Much is tied up in how our church is based, and in how it is conducted. And so help us to be obedient to Your word and the truth of Christ which is found in it. Amen.

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: 1 Timothy 3:16

Due to the length of 1 Timothy 3:16, it will be divided up into several readings.

The words of this verse form an axis on which the book pivots. Paul now says to Timothy words which are truly astounding to contemplate. In this, he begins with, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness.” This is being stated to support what was said in the preceding verse, which is that the church is “the pillar and ground of the truth.”

The word translated as “without controversy” is an adverb, literally it says, “confessedly.” It gives the idea of “by common consent.” What this means is that there can be no dissent in what he will proclaim. The authority of God in heaven, the Source of godliness, is in full agreement with what will be said concerning his words.

What will be written by Paul is what that truth consists of in its fullest and most poignant sense. In other words, it is a paraphrase of the word “truth” in relation to Christ and the church. The church is what rests on, and what supports, the truth; and this truth is revealed in, and consists of, the mystery of godliness. As Charles Ellicott states, “Yes, confessedly great – so great that the massive grandeur of the pillar is only in proportion to the truth it supports.

Vincent’s Word Studies shows how the word “godliness” is meant to be expressive of how the believer in Christ is to conduct his life – “The contents of this truth or mystery is Christ, revealed in the gospel as the Savior from ungodliness, the norm and inspiration of godliness, the divine life in man, causing him to live unto God as Christ did and does.” Vincent’s further states, “The mystery of godliness is the truth which pertains or belongs to godliness. It is not the property of worldly wisdom.” In other words, without Christ, the world could not understand or attain godliness.

Paul’s use of the word “mystery” tells us that these truths of Christ were unknown before the coming of Christ, and they are only revealed in His Person and work. The use of the word “mystery” here does not mean that this is the first unveiling of the mystery, which is something that occurred, for example, in telling about the rapture in 1 Corinthians 15 (“Behold, I tell you a mystery...” 1 Corinthians 15:51). Rather, this is his explanation of the mystery that had become known to the church because of having observed Christ’s work in relation to Scripture.

What he will say in the rest of this verse is the explanation of that mystery of godliness. In understanding the example, man can then apply the example to his life. In doing so, godliness will be attained. In attaining the state, the man will attain what is required to be pleasing to God.

Life application: Paul’s words in 1 Timothy 3:16 form a snapshot of the gospel. In accepting, by faith, the words of this verse, one is accepting the gospel message. It is that which reconciles fallen man to God once again. Always be ready to tell others of the truth of the gospel. Without that knowledge man cannot attain godliness. And without godliness, man remains separate from God.

Lord God, Your word shows that we attain godliness through faith in the gospel message. Christ came in the flesh, he was justified in the Spirit, he was seen by angels, he was preached among the Gentiles, He was believed on in the world, and He was received up in glory. It is through faith in the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, that we are reconciled to You once again. Help us to share this message of life with all people. Let us be bold in our proclamation. Give us this desire and ability, O God. Amen.

God was manifested in the flesh, 1 Timothy 3:16 ^(cont)

This may be one of the most contested lines of all in the New Testament. It either says, “God was manifested in the flesh,” or “He was manifested in the flesh.” The difference comes down to whether the Greek letters “Ος (*He who*) are correct, or if it was Θεός. The possible reason for the difference would be a contraction of the word Θεός to Θς. The reason it could be such a contraction is that if a word was contracted, a line would be placed above the letters to show it was a contraction. This occurs in some ancient manuscripts, but it then it is believed by some that the line was added later. Microscopic evaluations of the manuscripts have been made, but the controversy remains. And yet, it shouldn’t.

If this is “*He who*,” it is speaking of either God or Christ. Some versions simply say, “Christ was revealed” (NLT). This is because the following lines are obviously speaking of Christ. The question then comes down to whether the true reading is “God,” and thus it is an explicit reference to the Deity of Christ, or it is speaking of Christ, without any hint of a comparison to His divine nature. In the end, it really doesn’t matter, except to those who have a presupposition that Christ is not God. To anyone who simply picks up the Bible, and reads it without any presuppositions, it is as apparent as the rising of the sun on a clear day that Jesus is God incarnate, something implied in this verse, even if it says “*He who*.”

To say, “*He who was manifested in the flesh*,” implies that the Being in question preexisted; there was existence prior to His time in the flesh. Understanding that, and taking all of the rest of Scripture in proper context, the incarnation of God in human flesh is the only logical conclusion of what is being relayed. One must disregard countless references to the incarnation, both implicit and explicit which are found elsewhere, in order to say that the One being referred to is a created being.

This One existed, and then He appeared in the flesh of a human body. He is the One who was promised at the very fall of man in Genesis 3:15. He is the One anticipated thousands of times in the writings of the Old Testament. He is the One who is exactly

described by the authors of the gospels. He is the One explained time and again in the epistles, and who is the center of every theological explanation of what God has done in the stream of human existence. He is the One revealed in John's apocalypse, the book of Revelation, who is worshiped and adored by the heavenly host. He is the One to whom the final sentence of Scripture is devoted. He is Jesus our God. The use of "God" or "He who" by Paul is important, but it is not at all necessary to determine Deity of the reference for the sound reader of Scripture. Those who come to this verse and who will then use it to argue against the Deity of Jesus Christ have already proven themselves biblically illiterate fools. Whether implicit or explicit, the truth remains that "God was manifested in the flesh."

One thing is certain, the writers of the gospels and epistles all believed that Jesus is God. One, of countless examples of this, is to be found in Luke's gospel. In Luke 8, we read the following –

"Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹'Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.' And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him."

Jesus told the man to "tell what great things God has done for you." Luke then interprets this literally, explaining the great things "God has done." This is not an isolated instance. The words of Scripture are clear. Jesus is God.

Life application: If you struggle with the Deity of Jesus Christ, you need reread the Bible without any presuppositions, praying first to God that He will reveal to you the truth of the matter. His Deity is so obviously referred to that you will literally overflow with notes pointing to this truth.

Your word, O Glorious God, tells us that You were manifest in the flesh in the Person of Jesus Christ. What a marvelous story of love! What an incredible story of glory. For those who saw and believed, how blessed they were. For those of us who have heard and believe, how much more blessed are we! And so we proclaim that Jesus is Lord, to Your glory. Amen.

...Justified in the Spirit, 1 Timothy 3:16 ^(cont)

This continues Paul's poetic offset concerning "the mystery of godliness." First Paul said that "God was manifested in the flesh." Next he says that He, meaning Jesus, was

“Justified in the Spirit.” There is dissension among scholars whether this is speaking of His own spirit, that which animates Him, or the Holy Spirit. Some, not wanting to be definitive and possibly err say that it is speaking of both.

The same Greek preposition, *en* or “in,” is used in both clauses so far. Therefore, unless Paul is equivocating on the meaning of the word between clauses (something unlikely), it is speaking of two different aspects of the life of Christ. Rather than being instrumental (by), He was “Justified **in** the Spirit.” But this justification isn’t purely in form alone (a mode of justification), but rather Paul is surely speaking of a local form of justification; His sphere of life.

God (Jesus) was manifested in the flesh – it is the sphere of physical existence.
Jesus (being God) was justified in the Spirit – it is the sphere of His physical existence.

With this understanding, we can then apply this to His life. First, however, the term “justified” must be explained. Vincent’s Word Studies notes that based on Paul’s use of the word in relation to Christ elsewhere, it should be understood to mean “vindicated.” This is generally agreed by scholars to be the case. And so Paul’s intent is that Jesus was “vindicated in the Spirit” in His advent when he was manifested in the flesh.

This came about through the conduct of His life. On one hand, while in the flesh, He was ridiculed, He was hated, He was attacked, and He was dismissed. He claimed to be God in the flesh, and He was rejected by those who heard His claim. Their rejection however, did not change the truth of the matter at all. There were those who seemed to realize that He was, in fact, God and yet He was crucified and died. Even Mary, His mother, must have had some type of doubts as to what Christ’s nature was when she stood at His cross and watched Him breath His last. And even the heavenly host (including the devil himself) did not grasp what God was doing in Christ. Upon His death, the devil must have thought he was the victor. Surely none could imagine what lay head. It was believed that His life ended in futility, and yet... He was justified in the Spirit.

He was raised from the dead, proving His claims. His manifestation in the flesh (meaning being God) was vindicated. His life of troubles and woes was seen for what they truly were meant to be, and He was vindicated. Those who said He was insane were proven wrong through His resurrection, thus He was vindicated. Everything about Him that was so very misunderstood was realized to be the work of God, and by God Himself.

And this is fully in accord with what the apostles say of Him in their speeches in Acts, and in the New Testament epistles. The Holy Spirit is called “the Spirit of Christ” in Romans 8. Again in Galatians 4, the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of God’s Son. Again and again throughout the epistles, the work of the Spirit and the work of Christ are spoken of interchangeably. Therefore, though having been crucified and died, Christ as Spirit is justified, or vindicated. He was manifested in the flesh – fully Man and yet fully Divine.

The body of support for this vindication actually requires placing all the words of Scripture before a man and saying, “Here, God was manifested in the flesh (a thought which you may find incredible!), but He was justified in the Spirit.” From the first pages of the Bible, through the entire Pentateuch, in the writings, in the psalms, and in the prophets as well, all of Scripture shows what God would do. And when it happened, it could not be believed or understood until the resurrection. But in His resurrection, Christ was JUSTIFIED IN THE SPIRIT. Praise God for His amazing wisdom, revealed in the “mystery of godliness.” Surely it is great.

Life application: If you don’t believe Jesus is God, you have a serious theological meltdown. You have completely missed the entire point of Scripture. God could not have made this any clearer. To miss this point is like missing the fact that trees are made of wood.

Lord God, the most obvious thing found in all of Scripture is that You stepped out of eternity and manifested Yourself in the flesh. Nobody could have believed it, and surely those who were told still had doubts. Mary looked at the lifeless body of Christ and must have wondered what You had done. But all was vindicated in the resurrection. Every doubt can be dismissed, every naysayer is proven foolish. Great is the mystery of godliness, O God. But once it is revealed, it is marvelous. Thank You, O God, for Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Seen by angels, 1 Timothy 3:16 ^(cont)

The word *aggelos*, or angels, simply means “a messenger,” or “a delegate.” It is used in the New Testament elsewhere to speak of humans. However, despite this being the case, this is most certainly speaking of the heavenly host, not earthly humans. There is no article in front of “angels” in the verse, thus it doesn’t fit that this is speaking of the apostles. Instead, heavenly angels – both during His earthly ministry, and upon completion of it – are what is being written about by Paul here.

His coming was announced by Gabriel to Mary. Though this mighty angel may not have understood the full implication of what was to occur, the proclamation was made. Angels attended Christ at various times in His ministry, and there is no doubt that the heavenly host viewed His life, even at times when no such attendances are recorded. As Christ Himself said in Matthew 26:53 – “Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?” The implication is that the angels were ever-ready to attend to Him.

These same angels would have seen His crucifixion and death, and they would not have known what to make of the sight. It was a mystery kept by God alone until it was revealed. Even the heavenly host had to wait to see what God had planned. And they did see it. In fact, an angel is recorded to have been at the tomb, ready to announce that He was no longer there. That the attending angel was unaware of what would occur is recorded by Paul in Ephesians 3 –

“To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,⁹ and to make all see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;¹⁰ to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*,¹¹ according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Ephesians 3:8-11

Peter as well said that what the prophets had written was unknown to both them and even to the angels, saying that they desired to look into those things (1 Peter 1:12). The reason Paul includes the angels in this is to show that all of creation was a witness to the spectacle of Christ’s coming, His ministry, His death, and His resurrection. No part of creation would miss the significance of who Christ is. And thus, for all eternity, it would be evident that Jesus Christ is God incarnate. The angels of this clause will be contrasted to the Gentiles in the coming clause to show the scope of the mystery.

Life application: Angels were in attendance at the time of Christ’s earthly ministry. As we are in Christ, it is logical to assume that God has us being watched by angels as well. This cannot mean that we will be free from harm, but that if we ever have an event which appears miraculous occur around us, we may have been attended to by them. In other words, God has our lives safe and secure in His capable hands. Should times of trial and great sadness arrive, it is not that He doesn’t care, but that He has allowed these things to occur for His own sovereign purposes. Christ suffered, and we too may do so, but in

the end, we shall be brought safely into that glorious place attended by all of the heavenly host.

Glorious God, knowing that Christ suffered and died for us is to then be assured that our own sufferings are not out of Your control. And because He rose from the dead, we have the absolute guarantee that we, who have received Christ as Lord, will likewise raise from the dead. No grief on earth, and no power in heaven, can prevent us from being raised to new life. Thank You, O God, for Your gift of Jesus to us. Amen.

Preached among the Gentiles, 1 Timothy 3:16 ^(cont)

The words here are set in contrast to the previous words “Seen by angels.” From the highest of the heavenly host, to the lowly Gentile, the mystery of godliness is revealed through the Person and work of Christ. God had set Israel apart from the nations, and thus the work of Messiah was believed to only pertain to them, or so they thought. But God had shown in advance that this was not so. In Isaiah 49, he shows that the coming Christ would be for all –

Indeed He says,
‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,
And to restore the preserved ones of Israel;
I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles,
That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’” Isaiah 49:6

And not only would the Christ be a Light for salvation to the Gentiles, but the word through Isaiah shows that they would stream to that Light –

“And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse,
Who shall stand as a banner to the people;
For the Gentiles shall seek Him,
And His resting place shall be glorious.” Isaiah 11:10

Despite being in their own writings, none could have guessed what lay ahead. Certainly even the heavenly host missed it, as did Israel. But Paul was called to reveal what had been hidden. The irony of Paul’s selection for this wonder is almost palpable. He was the epitome of Jewish life and culture, and he was one who actively and openly sought to destroy the message of Christ. And yet, he would not only become a herald of the

message, but he would carry it outside of his own people to the lowly Gentile. This was his calling, and this is the mystery that he was selected to reveal –

“...the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. ²⁷ To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Colossians 1:26, 27

The message was preached, it was received with gladness, and it eventually was carried by the Gentile throughout all of the world. The deepest analyses of the word, the greatest zeal for missions, the highest desire for the glory of God – all of this for 2000 years – has been carried on by those Paul first was called to minister to. Surely, the mystery of godliness is great.

Life application: There is a strong push in the modern church to return to all things Jewish. Although understanding the Bible from its original perspective is important, it is highly damaging to reject the theology which has been developed through Gentile efforts. This is especially so when reinserting the now-fulfilled and obsolete Law of Moses into our life. It is a setting aside of the grace of Christ which is exactly what Paul warned against throughout his ministry. Let us be sound in our theology, and hold fast to the principle tenets of the faith without getting caught up in the idol-worship of all things Jewish.

Lord God, Your word prophesied that You would send Messiah to be a light to the Gentiles. It also says that the Gentiles would seek Him out. Surely that has been the case. The knowledge of Jesus Christ has filled the earth as the waters cover the oceans. Thank You for redeeming those once thought unworthy of Your favor. Together, Jew and Gentile are united in Christ Jesus. What a glorious thing You have done, O God. Amen.

Believed on in the world, 1 Timothy 3:16 ^(cont)

The fact that Christianity is believed at all is almost incomprehensible. A man, believed to be God, is said to have entered the stream of humanity, been born of a virgin, never held any high position, was supported by women as he taught, stayed within a very confined geographic area, was eventually rejected by His own people, and was then nailed to a cross where He died... and then He came back to life. The entire account seems almost too incredible to imagine. And yet, it is exactly this message which is understood to be the only cure of the fallen human condition.

The message of Christ has been “believed on in the world” because it makes sense. Humanity understands its disconnect from God. It understands the concept of sin. It understands the idea of substitution, atonement, and justification. These things don’t take a rocket scientist to understand. They also don’t take a certain culture to grasp. The child, barely old enough to leave mommy’s watchful presence for a few minutes will get the simple gospel. The lost soul in Asia, the Americas, in Europe, or in Africa – or even in the remotest island in the ocean – all hear the message and respond.

Different cultures, languages, and traditions all seem to have hints tucked away in them which point directly to what God has done in Christ, being realized after the message is revealed. It is as if God has woven the tapestry of humanity together so that when the message is heard, people say, “I get this; I need this.” The message is truly “believed on in the world.”

And the message is believed on by those who have offended God in a very small way, as well as by those who have done so with the greatest of offenses. In fact, it is often the case that the greatest offender becomes the most ardent believer. The more depraved a person felt they were, the more resolutely they hold onto the message as the cure to their illness.

The simple message of grace through faith in the finished work of Christ is a message that heals the human soul, repairs the infinite rift, and it brings gladness to both sinner and angel. It is the message of God which is found in the giving of His Son, Jesus Christ for the sin of the world. And this message is “believed on in the world.”

Life application: The wisdom of God is revealed in the belief by humanity in the gospel. Surely, the mystery of godliness is great.

Most glorious, gracious, and exalted heavenly Father – what an incredible thing to believe! The gospel seems like the least likely thing to change hearts at first, but when it is spoken and believed, it has cured the deepest wounds, reconciled the greatest sinner, and changed the course of nations and peoples. Thank You for the wisdom of the simple gospel message – we are saved by grace through faith in the work of another; in the work of Jesus Christ our Lord. Hallelujah and Amen.

Received up in glory. 1 Timothy 3:16 ^(cont)

To close out “the mystery of godliness” which he has been describing, Paul now speaks of Christ’s final act of His earthly ministry. He was “Received up in glory.” The actual

record of this is found in Acts 1. There it records, just after his final words to the disciples, that momentous event –

Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.” Acts 1:9-11

Being received up in glory means this was an actual event for us to contemplate, and it is not just a minor add on by Paul. Instead, it is to show that this Man, fully human, had prevailed in His earthly ministry. The ascension confirms what the resurrection speaks of. He was crucified, and He was raised. And to further demonstrate God’s approval, He was not only raised, but He was taken up in glory. The Man, Jesus, is the One who was accepted because of the perfection of His life and work. As a sign of that acceptance, He was taken up directly to heaven where He will remain until the appointed time for His return.

Until then, He sits at the right hand of the Father with all power and authority at His command. The record of the ascension is a vital part of the mystery of godliness because in that record is also included the record of His promised return. It is not that He simply ascended and will bring Himself to us as we die, but that there is a true and literal return expected as well. It is a time when the blessings of the messianic kingdom will be realized on earth. Until that time, we have the sure and complete promise that He now sits at the right hand of God.

Life application: Are you (or someone you know) facing your own mortality? Is death’s hand close to you? If you (or your loved one) are in Christ, death is not the end of your story. The mystery of godliness which speaks of Jesus Christ also speaks of you. If you are in Christ, you are under the safe care of the Ruler of the universe. Every promise He has made has a 100% guarantee of being fulfilled. Rest easy in the surety that all is well with your soul.

Lord God, surely all is well with the soul of the one who is in Christ Jesus. There is no greater surety that exists than the promises which are granted to those whose faith is placed in Him. Death cannot hold us, the devil has no authority over us, and glory awaits us – all because of the work of Another; all because of Jesus’ most kind hand upon our lives. Thank You, O God, for Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 1 Timothy 4:1

The words of Chapter 4 now show a contrast to the ending thoughts of Chapter 3. Paul had been writing of the high standards and qualifications for men entering the ministry, focusing on their faith, and on their faithfulness. He then wrote about the “mystery of godliness.” In contrast to that, he says, “Now the Spirit expressly says...” The word “but” rather than “now” is used by some translations to show this stark contrast. The mystery of godliness has been revealed, and it is a revelation which should direct the hearts and souls of men at all times. The focus of the believer should be on Christ, and the greatness of what He has done. Instead, there is a contrast which he will now state, which is “that in the latter times some will depart from the faith.”

The term, “in the latter times” is not some nebulous time which will occur all of a sudden, and which will somehow indicate that the rapture is close at hand, or some thought similar to this. These words are often used to support such a conclusion – “See the things that Paul wrote about are happening now. We must be in the ‘latter times.’”

Rather, the things Paul will describe have been occurring since the Lord departed. In fact the epistles are written to expressly refute much of what Paul will mention in these coming verses. It may be true that wickedness is filling the world more and more as the end draws near, but that is not the context of Paul’s words now. The truth of this is seen in the words of past scholars. In fact, Charles Ellicott said several centuries ago, “The errors foreseen then, have more or less affected the internal government of the Church during the eighteen hundred years which have passed since St. Paul’s words were written. In no age, perhaps, have they been more ostentatiously thrust forward than in our own.”

In the latter times (as indicated), he says that “some will depart from the faith.” Departure from the faith has already been noted as an occurrence by Paul in verses 1:18-20. Hymenaeus and Alexander had shipwrecked their faith. And in his next letter, Demas will be said to have departed from Paul, “having loved this present world” (2 Timothy 4:10).

Such a departure is to walk away from the faith, or it also includes adding to or subtracting from the faith. All of these are addressed by Paul in his letters. This is nothing that is solely expected in the extreme end times, but is a constant theme of the

age since Christ ascended. That a much larger departure is occurring as time goes by simply shows that the church itself has grown to the point where a large departure is to be expected – even on a national scale – as is the case with many national denominations.

Paul then explains that such a departure from the faith involves, “giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.” The words, “giving heed to deceiving spirits” are set in contrast to giving heed to the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God has spoken to us through the writing of Scripture. Therefore, anything which is codified into a church law or book of discipline which contradicts the word of God, adds to it, or subtracts from it, is to be considered in this category.

The words, “doctrines of demons” may include that which concerns demons, or that which is taught by demons. It could therefore include odd things which are inculcated from other religions, such as spiritual reliance on eastern meditations, the reading of palms for divination, and etc. It could also refer to the worship of other “deities” in place of Christ, such as worshiping the Virgin Mary, adoring the saints, etc. Paul’s words are certainly inclusive of all such things. Anything not based on Scripture, and an adherence to Jesus Christ, would fall into the category of these words.

By default, any faith-directed worship which is not of Christ, is ungodly; it is satanic. The devil and his armies are working actively to destroy sound doctrine. He is there inserting his own perverse doctrine. The spiritual warfare which is on-going in this world is described by Paul in the book of Ephesians. Paul explains this clearly in Ephesians 2 –

“And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.” Ephesians 2:1-3

He further describes the spiritual battle the church faces in Ephesians 6. There, he tells how to defend against it, and even go forward in battle against it. His thoughts, in particular, center on the word of God, and holding fast to the doctrine which is found there. But the devil and his armies have their own twisted view of what is correct. Paul will give several of the false doctrines which they promote in the words which lie ahead. Understanding these things is an important part of not getting misdirected by the lies of the devil.

Life application: We must hold to Scripture alone for our doctrine. If we fail to do this, we can become swayed away from soundness in our faith very easily. Let us be faithful, reliable readers and followers of the word of God in order to not be duped by the things Paul so carefully warns against.

Lord God, Your word warns that anything which is not based in Scripture can very easily draw us away from right living and soundness of faith. May we never hold to catechisms, books of discipline, church canons, or any other teachings which do not align with the truth of Your word. In doing so, we are told that we are following deceiving spirits and the doctrines of demons. Help us in this, O God. May we follow that word which leads us to the truth of Jesus Christ alone. Amen.

...speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,
1 Timothy 4:2

The Greek correctly reads, “through the hypocrisy of men who speak lies...” It is tied to the previous thought. There is a hypocrisy which comes through from the demons, and which is then transmitted by liars. These people willingly and intentionally lie about the truth by giving heed to deceiving spirits and the doctrines of demons. What they teach is not freedom in Christ, but bondage. Their intent is to hold those under their sway captive with their lies. How they do this will be seen in the coming verse, but the fact that they teach such things, knowing them to be false, shows that they have “their own conscience seared with a hot iron.”

The idea here is that of being branded. The word is used just once in Scripture, and it means that one has an implement which is burning hot applied to him, marking him. At the same time, it destroys their nerve impulses of pleasure or pain. Figuratively Paul is saying that their spiritual nerve endings have been destroyed. They no longer care that God is watching, they don’t care that they are leading others to destruction, and they have no regard for any truth or goodness in the message of Christ. Though their words may speak of Christ, they are false words which have been deadened to the truth.

Life application: The words of this verse are being applied to a certain group of people whose teachings will be described next. How frightful it is to think that someone is so willing to openly and brazenly teach what is contrary to the truth. Although the next verse is speaking of something different, just think of those who teach that homosexuality, or any other aberrant doctrine which is now being taught in the church, is somehow acceptable. These people have no shame, and no spiritual feeling that they

are wholly displeasing to God. We must know what Scripture teaches in order to know what is a lie.

Lord God, how can we know if what the pastor of our church is teaching is correct? It is his job to study Your word and to properly explain it to us. But what if he is mishandling it? What if we are being told that which is untrue? Where can we go to know if this is the case? Lord, we already know that answer, but it takes effort on our part – great effort. Help us to be responsible followers of You, and help us to be willing to do our part by reading and carefully studying Your word. Better to trust You, than a thousand eloquent deceivers. Grant us this desire to be pleasing to You. Amen.

...forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 1 Timothy 4:3

Paul, understanding human nature, and having seen various sects of his own faith and of others, knew that control of the faithful comes through certain aberrant observances. By controlling the family of the faithful, both sub-leaders and congregants, and by controlling their diet through the imposition of certain laws, there would be a type of bondage instilled in them. Through these things, other areas of control would be so much easier to instill in them as well. And so Paul preempts them in the church by giving these words. And yet, because people fail to read their Bible, or fail to take it in proper context, they fall into exactly the same trap as Paul warns against.

He first notes that these people who depart from the faith, and who then give heed to deceiving spirits and the doctrines of demons, will control those below them by “forbidding to marry.” Control the natural human sexuality and family structure of the followers, and you have immediately brought the person into a submission which will lead to any other control one desires to impose. It is that simple. The Essenes imposed this on their followers at Paul’s time. The gnostic heretics would later follow suit, along with countless other aberrant cults. But it is also a major tenet of Roman Catholicism where priests are not allowed to marry; nuns are not allowed to marry; etc.

In this, the entire congregation is led into a belief that these people are more holy than the lay people. There then becomes a multi-tiered level of supposed holiness leading up to divine authority at the top of this unholy pyramid. Paul warned against it, and yet over a billion people have been duped into accepting this false teaching; this doctrine of demons. Anytime someone goes beyond the limits of Scripture concerning human sexuality and approved family life, it should be the very first clue that their teaching is not of God and should be rejected entirely.

From there, Paul then states, “*and commanding to abstain from foods.*” The second trap to ensnare those within religion is through the stomach. The Old Testament had a set of dietary laws which confined the people of Israel. This was both limiting on them, and it was instructive. It was intended maintain separation from the nations, and it was to lead the people to understanding the Person and work of the coming Messiah in a more perfect way.

However, in the New Covenant, all such dietary laws eliminated. Paul speaks of this elsewhere. For example, in Romans 14, he says the following –

“Receive one who is weak in the faith, *but* not to disputes over doubtful things. ² For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats *only* vegetables. ³ Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. ⁴ Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.” Romans 14:1-4

As there are no biblical food restrictions levied upon New Covenant believers, anyone who imposes dietary restrictions is teaching the doctrine of demons. This includes those who reinsert Old Testament dietary laws which were fulfilled in Christ. As Christ fulfilled them, and as the Old Covenant is now obsolete and annulled, to reimpose those standards is against Christ’s work, and is – by default – a demonic doctrine.

Other aberrant cults and sects add in their own flavors of dietary restrictions. Seventh Day Adventists, Mormons, etc., all have their own restrictions on their people. Some are based on the Old Testament, while others make up restrictions as they go. And once again, we have the largest branch of Christianity, the Roman Catholic Church, which imposes dietary restrictions at certain times of the year. There is nothing Scriptural concerning their traditions, but rather there is the intent of control. As noted above, when one can control the diet of adherents, even if in a limited way, it becomes much easier to control other aspects of the people’s lives as well.

Paul understood that marriage and food are such important tenets to be biblically based and free from any other restrictions, that he singles them out here in his letter to Timothy. To stray from his words will immediately bring about bondage and control by those who have evil intent instilled in their minds.

Instead, we are to understand, that “which God created” is “to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.” The Lord has given all foods into

the hands of man for consumption. We are to receive what He has created, we are to be thankful for it, and we are to learn and know the truth of these things, never turning from them in order to supposedly become “more” holy. We are made acceptable through the Person and work of Christ. Is that not sufficient? Yes, it is all sufficient.

Life application: In marriage and in food, we are to hold to the standards of the New Covenant, as defined in the New Testament epistles, and we are not to add to or subtract from what is stated there.

Lord God, how can eating certain foods, or not eating certain foods, make us “more holy?” Christ has done everything necessary to make us acceptable to You. As Your word has declared all foods acceptable because of His work, we shall enjoy what You have created with thanksgiving. We are told that imposed dietary restrictions are “the doctrine of demons.” May we never attempt to follow that unholy path. Thank you for the wonderful delights of food that we are free to enjoy! Amen.

For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; 1 Timothy 4:4

As stated in the analysis of previous verse, the dietary laws of Israel had a set purpose. They were both limiting on them, and they were instructive. Their intent was to maintain separation from the nations, and it was to lead the people to understanding the Person and work of the coming Messiah in a more perfect way. In reality, however, Paul says that “every creature of God is good.” This does not mean that every creature can be eaten. Anyone who is looking for a quick trip to glory can eat a creature bearing poison, and that trip would be arranged. The same is true with poisonous plants, and yet Genesis 9:2, 3 says –

“And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move *on* the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. ³ Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs.”

Context is always important, and such is the case with both plant and animal life when preparing a meal. An example of this is found in 2 Kings 4 –

And Elisha returned to Gilgal, and *there was* a famine in the land. Now the sons of the prophets *were* sitting before him; and he said to his servant, “Put on the large pot, and boil stew for the sons of the prophets.” ³⁹ So one went out into the field

to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered from it a lapful of wild gourds, and came and sliced *them* into the pot of stew, though they did not know *what they were*. ⁴⁰ Then they served it to the men to eat. Now it happened, as they were eating the stew, that they cried out and said, “Man of God, *there is death in the pot!*” And they could not eat *it*.

⁴¹ So he said, “Then bring some flour.” And he put *it* into the pot, and said, “Serve *it* to the people, that they may eat.” And there was nothing harmful in the pot.

-2 Kings 4:38-41

The Lord said in Genesis that all of the greenery was given to man as food, and yet, a prophet of the Lord took some of that greenery for the preparation of a meal, and it was poisonous. However, there was nothing stated in the law forbidding the consumption of such plants. The purpose of the dietary laws was not to “promote the health” of Israel, as is so often claimed. It was also not to show that certain animals were actually “not good.” These laws were given for the reasons stated above. When those reasons had met their fulfillment in Christ they were set aside (annulled along with the law), and they are now obsolete.

What God has created is good, as is attested to in the story of Peter in the heavenly sheet full of previously unclean creeping animals found in Acts 10. God cleansed them (made them acceptable), and thus they are clean. The symbolism of those animals is that the unclean Gentiles are cleansed through the work of Christ – Gentiles whose stomachs were full of every unclean animal of the Law of Moses. Their dietary habits were not expected to change in their conversion to Christ because the Law of Moses is no longer in effect. Instead of turning away such tasty treats, Paul says, “and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving.”

The word translated as “to be refused,” *apoblétos*, is found only here in the Bible. It signifies “worthy to be cast away, worthless, regarded as vile” (Strong’s Concordance). Paul selected a word which beautifully takes a stand against what would have otherwise occurred by someone adhering to the strict confines of the Law of Moses. Instead of casting such food away as vile and unclean, the opposite is true. It is to be “received with thanksgiving.”

Life application: The words of Paul are plain, obvious, and perfectly clear in their intent. All foods of all kinds are acceptable to the faithful. However, this does not mean (as noted above) that all things are actually acceptable as food in content. So, please refrain from a hemlock adorned fugu fish this evening.

Lord God, surely the foods that are available for us to eat show how caring You are for Your people. We have tastes too innumerable to imagine, and in mixing in spices and herbs, we can produce countless more. Instead of just filling the world with one thing and with one taste, You have given us delights galore. Each meal we partake in is a testimony to Your kind care of us. Thank You, O God, for such pleasures! Amen.

...for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. 1 Timothy 4:5

Paul said in the previous verse that “every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving.” Any person who reads that without a presupposition would obviously conclude that there are no dietary restrictions of any kind levied upon the believer in Christ. No other conclusion could be made. Paul now explains why this is so. He says, “for it is sanctified by the word of God.”

These words are not without debate as to their intended meaning, but what is certain is that Paul uses the exact term “word of God” about ten times when speaking of the Bible. He also calls it “the word of the Lord,” and “the word of truth.” Though the term “word of God” is not limited to the Bible, it encompasses what we would now call “the Bible.” If God has spoken, and if it is recorded in the Bible, then what is said is “sanctified” or “made holy” through His proclamation.

In Genesis 1:29, God gave all the herbs which yield seed, and every tree whose fruit yields seed, to man to eat. Thus all plant life of this kind is sanctified for food. In Genesis 9:2, 3, every beast of the earth, every bird of the air, and every fish of the sea – indeed “every moving thing that lives” was granted as food to man. The only restriction at that time was consuming the blood. Thus every creature of God is sanctified through His proclamation.

The dietary laws of the Law of Moses were given to Israel alone. They were given for a set period of time, and for specific purposes (as explained in the previous verse). The set period ended at Christ’s fulfillment of the law, as did the set purposes. The proclamation of God in Acts 10 to Peter concerning the annulling of these dietary laws, along with Paul’s explanation of these things in the epistles (including this verse), show that God’s proclamation has sanctified all creatures for food.

There are now no dietary restrictions to be placed upon any people, because the word of God has spoken. To say that dietary laws are still in force, is to deny the word of God. It is to call unclean that which God has purified. It is to reject the word of God, and it is to bring condemnation upon oneself.

But Paul does continue by saying that every creature is acceptable, having been sanctified by God “and prayer.” What God has authorized is to be accepted with thanks and praise. Prayer itself has a sanctifying power in our lives, because it shows that our consciences accept what God has allowed, and that we are grateful for it. If we have a defiled conscience and eat, we sin. As Paul says in Romans 14:23 (in a passage speaking about that which is clean and acceptable for eating and drinking, meaning all things), “he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *he does* not eat from faith; for whatever *is* not from faith is sin.”

As a final point concerning the words of this verse, though they are speaking of food, the precept surely stands for any precept of our lives. Quite often people ask, “How do I know if I should accept this job?”, or “How do I know if I should marry this woman?”. The answer is found in the precept laid out by Paul here. If something is not forbidden in the word of God (meaning Scripture), then it is – by default – something that one can participate in with a clear conscience. If it is something they desire, they should sanctify that decision with prayer, and they should then proceed on with a clear conscience. God is not going to give us a sign in heaven over such things, and he does not expect us to ask approval from our pastor if it is OK to do such things. Rather, He gives us free will to direct our lives, and expects us to do what is lawful, but to sanctify what we choose through prayer.

Life application: The more you speak to the Lord about the affairs of your life, the closer You will be to always being in God’s will. But You must know first what the word of God allows, and what it forbids. If your words to the Lord are in accord with His will (meaning His word), then speak to Him about it, asking Him to bless or inhibit your desire according to His will, and then proceed on with what You have raised to Him in faith.

Lord God, may we understand that those things which are not forbidden for us are acceptable for us. And so if we have a life-decision to make, and it is not contrary to Your word, help us to remember to sanctify our desire through prayer, and then to go forward with a clear conscience, and in faith, with our decision. If it is meant to be, it will come to pass, and if it is not Your will, then surely you will inhibit its happening. But help us always to first check if what we desire is allowed, and then we shall move forward in faith. Amen.

If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. 1 Timothy 4:6

The words “If you instruct the brethren in these things,” is referring to that which was just stated by Paul in verses 1-5, but specifically the details provided in verses 3-5. There is sound doctrine concerning what foods are acceptable, and there is bondage in teaching anything else concerning dietary restrictions. Timothy was being warned against any such teaching which stood contrary to that which the Bible proclaims. Ascetics, with their brand of dietary restrictions, and Judaizers with theirs, both had the same end goal. When you control the diet of an individual, you have a means of controlling him. The same is true with imposed vegetarianism as well.

In teaching what is proper, and in teaching what is improper, concerning these things, Paul tells Timothy that, “you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ.” Who could desire a more noble title than that which Paul names here! But it is only to be obtained through right doctrine. Thus any teaching which is contrary to what is said concerning the imposition of unscriptural dietary restrictions means that the teacher is not a good minister of Jesus Christ. Think of how many sects and cults are immediately excluded because of Paul’s words here! Any minister who imposes dietary restrictions beyond what Scripture allows is, by default, a crummy minister.

But in teaching right doctrine, the minister will be “nourished.” The verb here is a present participle, “being nourished.” It signifies, “to be trained up” or “to be educated in.” Paul is making a distinction between being improperly nourished by foods, and being properly nourished by spiritual truth. Being a present participle, it indicates a process which is continuous and permanent. Timothy (and thus all ministers) are to be constantly training themselves, and they are to stand fast on their training. And this training is to be “in the words of faith.”

There is actually an article in front of “faith” in the Greek. It reads, “in the words of the faith.” It is speaking specifically of right teaching (the contents of belief) of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. In addition to this, he is to be nourished in “the good doctrine.” This is used almost synonymously with “the faith.” Paul implores Timothy to never stop training himself in sound and proper doctrine. To let down his guard would eventually lead to falling away from that, and towards that which is improper. For the minister of Christ today, our doctrine is to come from Scripture, and it is to be taken in the proper context of what is being said concerning New Covenant theology in relation to Christ’s fulfillment of the Old Covenant.

Paul finishes his thought to Timothy with the words, “which you have carefully followed.” The words are well translated. Timothy had carefully followed the faith and the good doctrine thus far. He was being commended for this, and was being implored

by Paul to continue to follow these things always. In doing this, he would not stray away from what is right, sound, and proper.

Life application: Just because a minister is a minister, it does not mean that he cannot get derailed from the sound tracks of right doctrine. The minister of Jesus Christ is to constantly be aware of the devil's tricks, stand firm on the truth of the word, and never allow himself to be misguided. Reading and studying the word, remaining in close prayer with God concerning right doctrine, and being faithful to the word once delivered to the saints, are necessary steps for the minister of the Lord at all times.

Lord God, we pray that our ministers of the faith are kept safe from being derailed from right and proper doctrine. Give them the desire to continuously study Your word, to remain in close contact with You concerning their doctrine, and to be kept safe from those who have poor doctrine and evil intent towards the truth. Be with them and protect them as they defend the truth of the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Amen.

But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness.

1 Timothy 4:7

Paul had just exhorted Timothy to be "nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine" which he had already carefully followed. In contrast to this, he now implores his young protege to "reject profane and old wives fables." The word "profane" is used only by Paul in the pastorals, and once in Hebrews. It is derived from words which together mean, "crossing a threshold." Thus it gives the sense of improper entrance. The idea is that instead of that which is spiritually proper, it is worldly and godless – one has entered into the realm of unreasonable, or even goofy.

There are two Greek words for "old wives' fables." The first is *graódes*. This is its only use in the Bible. It bears the sense of "belonging to an old woman." The second is *muthos* (from which we derive our modern word "myth"). It signifies an idle tale or a fanciful story. Just as an aged grandmother might say to her granddaughter, "Don't eat the watermelon seeds, or you will get pregnant," so it is a silly or ridiculous explanation of a matter. The idea is that of something which is completely without merit, but appears religious and geared towards explaining a doctrine. In Titus 1:14, Paul explicitly ties these "myths" in with Jewish culture, demonstrating that this is what is on his mind. The Jewish society had inculcated countless such things into its religious life in order to culturally explain things. They had also adapted many such things to explain, or add to, what Scripture taught.

Timothy was warned against such things. There is sound interpretation of Scripture, and then there is that which is completely irrelevant to it. The same is true in the church today. Countless fables have been made up about what the Jews believed in the first century, and then those things are used to explain what Christ meant in His words. One of countless examples of this concerns the folded handkerchief referred to in John 20:7. There have been several totally unscriptural explanations of why this was included by John. The stories have been circulated to the point that they are taken as factual by hosts of believers. And yet, they are based on “old wives’ fables” which are completely bogus. This is but one of countless examples of very poor handling of biblical doctrine because people are unwilling to stick to the facts, letting Scripture interpret Scripture.

Paul implores Timothy to reject such things. Instead, he is instructed to “exercise yourself toward godliness.” Just as he was to “nourish” himself in the words of faith and good doctrine, he is also to “exercise” himself towards godliness. To nourish is to feed upon. To exercise is to take that substance and work it out into that which is productive. One cannot do this when pursuing old wives’ fables. Instead, he must take the sound doctrine, and then use it to rightly divide the word of God. In doing this, he would then be exercising himself towards godliness.

Life application: Have you ever been told that Rosh Hoshana is a day known to the Jews as the time of the year that they say, “Of this day and hour no one knows.”? In saying this, the implication is that Rosh Hoshana is the day that Jesus was speaking about concerning the timing of the rapture. This is an old wives’ fable that has no bearing at all on the truth. It is a lie made up by someone in order to justify their prediction concerning the rapture. Be sound in your theology, know your Bible, and don’t believe everything you read. Unless something is grounded in Scripture, it is suspect and should be considered as such.

Lord God, it is so sad that there are so many fables attached to interpreting Your word. When they are included in our study, they can only harm our knowledge of what You actually intended for us to know and understand. Help us to be able to discern that which is biblically sound and that which is just plain goofy. In this, we will be sound in our doctrine and pleasing to You. And thank You that Your word is sufficient for what You desire us to know! Amen.

For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. 1 Timothy 4:8

Paul now makes a metaphor for his reader to consider. He brings in the thought of “bodily exercise.” The words are *sōmatikē gymnasia*. We could think of “gymnastics for the body.” It means the same today as it did then – physical training, physical exercise, boxing, racing, and so on. He says that it “profits a little.” The Greek word can mean “a small amount,” or “for a short period of time,” and both are probably on Paul’s mind. What he is referring to is the ascetic practices referred to in verse 3, meaning abstention from certain foods, and forbidding to marry.

Just as physical exercise profits for a very short amount of time, and then man ages, sags, weakens, and dies (think of the once strong and robust Arnold Schwarzenegger), so these practices – which seem to promise abundant spiritual health – will prove to be vain and pointless. They will be swept away in due time. Further, they actually put up a barrier between God and man. It is God who has done all of the work needed to reconcile us to Himself through Jesus Christ. In pursuing these “gymnastics,” we feel that we are meriting His favor on our own. Thus, it is a slap in His face concerning what He has accomplished. “That’s OK God, You did Your best in Jesus, but I will improve upon that.”

Paul then says, “but godliness is profitable for all things.” The ascetics profit themselves (or so they think), but their supposed piety does nothing for anyone or anything outside of themselves. There is no true gain of any kind to be realized in anything they do. However, godliness (see the “mystery of godliness in 1 Timothy 3:16), is profitable for all, and in all ways. Anyone who hears of Christ is profited when he acts upon the words. Anyone who tells of Christ is profited when he speaks the words. The world is made safer through those who come to Christ. The world is brought closer to the day when Christ comes for His church when godliness is shared. On and on, there is only benefit (great gain) to be found in godliness. It is not a self-centered thing, but an outwardly-directed thing.

It is godliness which Paul then says is the message, “having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.” True and purposeful life in this earthly existence is found in knowing Christ. The nations of the world which are truly Christ-centered will pursue peace. The kings in authority who have bowed to Christ will bring about peace in their kingdoms. The benefits are to be found in all ways in the life that now is. And they are also to be found in the life “which is to come.”

Heaven’s doors are opened through the godliness that Paul has written about. Peace with God is restored through it. Eternal abundance, broadness of space, joy to its fullest extent, and on and on and on, will be realized for all of eternity for those who receive

the godliness which is the Person of Jesus Christ – His life, and His work. This is what is “profitable for all things.”

Life application: Do you want to be profited in all ways? Do you want the highest joy, the greatest reward, and the fullest measure of blessing? Then come to Christ. Put away your gymnastics of faith, and come to the godliness of faith, formed and perfected, in the Person and work of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Glorious God Almighty! You have shown us what is truly profitable. We can exercise our bodies, but we will grow old and we will sag and weaken. Eventually we will die. We can also abstain from certain foods in order to hopefully be “more holy” in the eyes of others, but this helps no one other than ourselves. What Your words ask us to do is to seek true godliness by pursuing Christ, sharing Christ, and living for Christ. In this, there is great gain, both now in this temporary world, and in the ages to come as well. Help us to be wise, and to pursue this true godliness with all of our hearts and minds. Amen.

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. 1 Timothy 4:9

Paul repeats a portion of the words of verse 1:15 again in this verse. The Greek literally reads, “Faithful is the saying.” Instead of tying the thought to that which follows, as he did in verse 1:15, it is connected to that which he has just said, “For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things...” In other words, this was probably a proverbial saying of the time, comparing bodily exercise to something else. In Paul’s case, he has compared it to godliness, which is “profitable for all things.”

In saying that this is “a faithful saying,” it is then understood to be “worthy of all acceptance.” We are to remember the lesson, carry it in our minds, and apply it to our lives. If we go to the gym and spend time there exercising our bodies, how much more should we seek godliness! If we head out to the beach or the lake and swim in order to tone our muscles, then how much more should we immerse ourselves in the word of God and then endeavor to apply it to our lives. If we go out for a morning or an evening jog in order to start or close out our day, how much more should we first open the word when we rise, or open the word before we lie down, more honorably starting and finishing the hours that we spend awake in the Lord’s presence.

In other words, whatever we do for our physical bodies, we should seek to do all the more for our spiritual lives. It is hard to imagine that the Christian believer would spend five hours a week doing one or more of these body-caring activities, and then spend almost no time on spiritual-healing activities. Which is more important? Which will

perish, and which will endure? Which is more pleasing to the Creator? Though it may be only He who sees our spiritual activities which are intended for seeking godliness, it is His approval that is infinitely more important than the many eyes which look at us in admiration of the results of seeking bodily improvement.

Life application: Try making a note on how much time and effort you spend on the various activities of your daily life – exercise, TV, going to the movies, reading your Bible, attending church and Bible studies, etc. When you have a list of these things, compare them. If your pursuit of godliness is less than the other things you have written down, it is time for you to adjust your life to change that.

Lord God, if we were to honestly evaluate the amount of time we did the various things which fill our days, would seeking godliness be high or low on the list? How much time do we watch TV? How much time do we spend at the gym or pursuing some other type of exercise? How much time do we spend at the movies or shopping? And then... how much time do we spend reading Your word; sitting alone with You in prayer; attending services to praise You; and so on? Help us to get our priorities right Lord. May You be first in the conduct of our daily lives. Amen.

For to this *end* we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is *the* Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. 1 Timothy 4:10

In the previous verses, Paul spoke of godliness. It should be what we work towards because “godliness is profitable for all things.” He further stated it has the “promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.” In view of these words, “For to this *end*,” meaning godliness, Paul now says that, “we both labor and suffer reproach.”

It is for the sake of godliness, that “we,” meaning all who are faithfully pursuing Christ, are willing to work constantly, devote ourselves completely, and toil tirelessly. This is exactly what the word he uses, *kopiaó*, means. It gives the sense of toiling both physically and mentally, and doing so until worn-out.

Along with that, the faithful believer is willing to “suffer reproach.” Some translations say “strive” rather than “suffer reproach.” Whichever is correct, they both carry a heavy meaning. To suffer reproach signifies a willingness to bear shame, accept verbal abuse, and the like. To strive signifies agonizingly pressing on in the exhausting labors.

The reason why the steadfast Christian is willing to bear these things is “because we trust in the living God.” The words here fail to give the fullest sense of what is said. They

rather say, “we have our hope in the living God.” Because of knowing God personally through Jesus Christ, we have a sure foundation on which to rest our hope. Paul described godliness in verse 3:16. Each point of that explanation dealt with the Person and work of Christ.

Because God accomplished those things through Christ, our hope in God is both strong and rational. We can place our hope in the living God because of what He has already done for us in Christ Jesus. Think on it! He was “manifested in the flesh.” He was “justified in the Spirit.” He was “seen by angels.” He was “preached among the Gentiles.” He was “believed on in the world.” And, He was “received up in glory.” Anyone who truly believes these can confidently place their hope in the living God.

Paul then defines the “living God” with words which must be taken in the proper context. He says that He “is the Savior of all men.” The word *sótér*, or “Savior,” means just that. It is consistently translated as this throughout the New Testament. But because of the seeming difficulty these few words cause, some scholars equivocate on the meaning of the word by calling Him the “Provider.” That is also an acceptable translation of the word, and it would square with Old Testament verses about God, but it is not Paul’s intent. He has been consistent in his use of the word to indicate “Savior.”

However, Paul does not stop with the words which say that He “is the Savior of all men.” Instead, he continues with the words, “especially of those who believe.” The Bible’s words are consistent on the doctrine of salvation. Paul’s words follow in this consistent teaching throughout His epistles. Neither teaches the heresy of Universalism, meaning that all are saved, nor do they teach the false Calvinist doctrine of “Limited Atonement.” Rather, the Bible teaches salvation under two broad concepts – potential and actual.

Paul’s words concerning the living God (meaning Jesus whom He described in verse 3:16) being “the Savior of all men,” is that He is potentially so. He and no other can bring salvation, and He offers it to all. Thus He alone is the *potential* Savior of all men. This is the doctrine of “unlimited atonement, potentially.” However, Paul’s words state further, “especially of those who believe.” This is God’s *actual* salvation in Christ for those who have actively believed and received. This is the doctrine of “limited atonement, actually.” Paul never denies the doctrine of free-will in man, nor does he ever teach that all men are saved. Rather, he actively teaches that man must receive God’s offer of Jesus Christ, and those who do not will not be saved.

Life application: The gospel message is simple and pure, but it is something that is not universally applied to all men. Rather, it is universally offered to all men, and it then

must be received. Be a receiver, be saved, and be reconciled to God through the precious saving blood of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Glorious God, how good and precious it is to see the depth of Your love. You were willing to enter the stream of time and human existence and come in the Person of Jesus Christ, and then to endure the difficulties we face, to endure the reproach of those You came to save, and to bear the burden of a cross-death for our sins... such love is actually beyond our ability to fully grasp, but we can know it is there. May we be wise and discerning, and may we be willing to call on and hold fast to Christ our Lord. Thank You for Your love, displayed in Him. Amen.

These things command and teach. 1 Timothy 4:11

The order of the Greek is “Command these things and teach.” Timothy is charged with ensuring that what has been relayed to him thus far be commanded to the church. The word for “command” is *paraggéllō*. It means “to charge, give a command that is *fully authorized* because it has gone through all the *proper* (necessary) channels” (HELPS Word Studies). In other words, Paul didn’t arbitrarily make up the directions for Timothy to pass on. Instead, they are authoritative because he is the designated apostle, having been personally commissioned and instructed by the Lord Jesus. The words are prescriptive, and they are binding.

The words here are inclusive of all that has been presented so far in the epistle. This is certain, because he uses the same term, “these things,” in verse 3:14, speaking of all that preceded that verse. In other words, he gave instructions up to that point and then said, “These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly.” He then explained why those things were written to him, and that followed with an explanation of “the mystery of godliness” which was an explanation for having written up to that point. He then showed what was contradictory to the mystery of godliness, and also what was in accord with it. Therefore, the word “command” is inclusive of all directions given by him up to this point.

Paul tells him to command those things, but also to “teach.” In other words, Timothy wasn’t just to say, “The requirements for being an elder or a deacon are...” But he was to explain the reason for those requirements. This is important, because in understanding why a command is given, it will then ensure that the people will more readily follow through with it in the future.

Life application: A wise leader will give the reason for his decisions, and not just bark out commands. At times, giving a command without the reason for it is necessary, but this should not always be the norm. When people understand why they are being instructed to do something, they will – if they agree with the reason – generally be more content to continue obeying the directive in the future.

Heavenly Father, Your word gives us all kinds of commands and exhortations that we are to follow. But it also gives us the reasons for doing those things – either implicitly or explicitly. In this, You have graciously shown us what is right and proper for our well being, for the well being of those around us, and for the proper working of the church. Thank You for tending to us through Your word, and also for allowing us to understand why these things are so. Praises to You for this loving attention! Amen.

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. 1 Timothy 4:12

Here we see a truth that youth does not preclude being a preacher, or teacher of the law. Nor does it exclude being an overseer. Paul's words of Chapter 3, which say that he is not to be a novice, are speaking of maturity in Christ, not physical age. Understanding this, Paul say, "Let no one despise your youth." The age of Timothy is unknown, but he was obviously so young that some may have thought him unfit to be an overseer of the church. Some scholars have identified him in his 20s. Others figure him between 38 and 40 years old at this time. Where this is derived from is not stated, and such ages can only be mere conjecture.

Regardless of his age, because of his youth, Timothy's actions may cause some to despise him. When we see someone younger than ourselves acting in an inappropriate manner, we will often make a judgment on their actions because of their age. This is the intent of Paul's words here. Paul wanted Timothy to avoid this pitfall, and to be held in esteem despite his age among those in the congregation. In order for this to be realized, he continues with, "but be an example to the believers."

Timothy's life was to be dedicated to right and proper living in the presence of all, but Paul specifically mentions "believers." They would have their eyes on him, and if his actions were not proper, the congregation would follow suit. This truth is seen throughout the books of Kings and Chronicles where the leader of Israel set the example. As the king pursued holiness, so did the people. As he pursued wickedness, the people followed suit. The same thing is seen in any leader. The people will follow the example of the leader, and their habits will emulate his.

In order to ensure then that those in the church would pursue godliness, he tells Timothy to be a proper example in six specific ways, beginning with “in word.” This signifies his speech and conversation concerning Scripture. It then includes preaching and teaching others in proper doctrine. The word used specifically signifies the expression of a thought, and so it can also include his normal conversation with those whom he associates.

Next, Paul says, “in conduct.” The word signifies the manner of life displayed to others. It is the “the outward behavior from an ‘up-turn’ of inner beliefs” (HELPS Word Studies). This is followed with, “in love.” This signifies that Timothy is to have a truly loving attitude towards those of the faith. Whether one likes the person or not is not considered. He is to love them nonetheless, and his attitude is to be reflective of this.

Paul then says, “in spirit.” These are the external attributes which are directed towards others, such as being meek, forgiving, helpful, patient, kind, and the like. He then notes, “in faith.” There are always times when people will be disheartened or anxious. But Paul admonishes Timothy to never let down his unshakable, complete, and wholehearted confidence in God, and in His promises. A leader who demonstrates such confidence is truly necessary when the congregation faces immense challenges.

Finally, Paul notes, “in purity.” It is a word used only here and in 1 Timothy 5:2. It signifies the quality of cleanliness, but especially in chastity. Thus it is a word concerning morality. Timothy was being implored to always reflect an attitude of the purest moral conduct, never allowing there to be a hint of impropriety in his actions.

Life application: Leaders in a church are people, just like all others, but they are expected to live their lives in a state of constant wholesome conduct before those they minister to. As this is a difficult thing for humans to do, it is appropriate that congregants help the leader along by not bringing him into a tempting or difficult situation. When all are cautious concerning wholesome character, it will be an easier thing for the leader to not get drawn into temptation himself.

Gracious heavenly Father, we pray that you will help us to live as Your word calls for us to live. You ask us to be holy, faithful, pure, loving, and sound believers who will bring You glory. Give us leaders who will meet these precepts, give us hearts to pursue righteousness, and give us the desire to glorify You at all times. As a people, help us in this Lord. Be glorified in us, O God. Amen.

Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. 1 Timothy 4:13

Paul's words, "Till I come," give the hope of the apostle that he would, in fact, be coming to Ephesus at some point. He has already said once, in verse 3:14, that this was his intent. However, due to his absence, there was a need for doctrine to be established and maintained, and there was the need for Timothy to be the one to ensure that it was properly laid out for the people. And so Paul gives him three specific exhortations to ensure things would operate properly. The first is that he was to "give attention to reading."

The public reading of Scripture was something practiced in synagogue, and that then carried over to the church. In Luke 4, it is recorded that Jesus read openly from the book of Isaiah "as His custom was." In other words, there was a public reading of the Scriptures which was followed with words of explanation or instruction. This is then repeated in Acts 13. The Scriptures were read, and then Paul stood to speak. In 2 Corinthians 3:14, Paul mentions this same practice as well. Now he explicitly instructs Timothy to carry on this practice. Thus it shows us that it is something which is expected in all churches. The Scriptures are to be read, and then they are to be explained.

Next he says, "to exhortation." The Greek word gives the sense of "holy urging." It "is used of the Lord directly motivating and inspiring believers to carry out His plan, delivering His particular message to someone else" (HELPS Word Studies). In context, it can refer to exhortation, warning, encouraging, and comforting. A modern "life-application" sermon might be used for exhortation.

And finally Paul notes, "for doctrine." The Greek signifies instruction and teaching. It is properly applied teaching which then extends to necessary lifestyle modifications.

These things Paul specifically instructs Timothy to do. They are intended for the soundness of the church, and for the well-being of the congregants. To be deficient in any area, will then lead to a congregation which is not sound, and which can be easily swayed merely by a change in leadership. And how many times does this come to pass! One pastor moves out, and another moves in and changes the core doctrines of the church while the congregants stew in an unholy broth. This occurs because there was not the application of reading, exhortation, and doctrine all along.

Life application: The Bible is the word of God. Unless it is read and taught constantly and properly, there will be a sad void in the soundness of a congregation. Within a single changeover of leadership, the people can go from adherence to God's word, to accepting perversion and false teachings. History has shown this to be true time and

time again. Beware! Stand on the word! Follow the sound path of Scripture! Pursue Christ!

Lord, Your word is like a treasure chest filled with the greatest of riches. But treasure is absolutely worthless if it is at the bottom of the ocean, buried in an unknown location, or even sitting in a room with us – if the lock is still on the box. How many Bibles are lost in a pile of other books, covered in ages of dust, or simply carried to and from church, but never opened? All of the treasure... uselessly wasted for lack of initiative – on the part of church leaders, on the part of God’s people, on the account of seeking other riches in landfills of garbage. How we waste the true riches! Change our hearts, and open our minds to the radiant glory which issues forth from Your superior word. Please effect this change in us. Amen.

Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. 1 Timothy 4:14

Paul – after telling his young protege Timothy to be an example to the believers, and to give attention to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine – now reminds him to “not neglect the gift that is in you.”

Based on an analysis of the word translated as “gift” here, this is surely not referring to something that was uniquely endowed to him at the time Paul will mention next, but it is the whole body of who he is as a person, recognized as such by those who ordained him. It is referring to his life as created by God, his circumstances, his training as a youth, his growth into an adult, his meeting Paul and being mentored by him, and so on. All of this was recognized as his gift that was found in him. For a very thorough study of this, refer to the commentary on this verse by Albert Barnes.

It is this concept of the whole person that “was given to you by prophecy.” In other words, the elders saw this young man’s qualifications, and they pronounced over him that he was suitable to the task of being an elder – with all that the job entails (and which Paul has been carefully detailing to him once again) and they noted this when they laid their hands on him. The laying of the hands did not impart this gift. Rather, it was an acknowledgment that it existed, and that it would be exactly what was needed for the church to move forward.

This recognition was noted “with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.” This act was a formal pronouncement, and a solemn act which acknowledged the gift in Timothy, and that it was now to be set apart for the glory of the Lord. The laying on of hands is an

act, like baptism, which is intended to relay a truth to the world of a certain state of things. One is not saved through baptism, nor do they receive any special gift at the time of baptism. A careful study of the descriptive verses concerning baptism in Acts, and Paul's prescriptive letters to the church, will clearly show this. The same is true with Timothy's ordination here.

Having said that, there was certainly a divinely inspired selection of Timothy by Paul. The leading of Paul to Timothy is recorded in Scripture, and the marvelous father/son relationship which grew up between them is carefully noted for us to see and understand that the Lord was behind them coming together. It is a beautiful thing to read and understand, because through such things, we can then look back on our own lives and see how God has woven them together in a similar fashion. What at times may have seemed out of control, is later realized to be perfectly orchestrated by the Lord.

Life application: We are all a product of the many variables which wove our life together. Because of this, we all have a gift which we can use for God's glory. This should be sought out and fanned into flame so that our particular abilities are properly used and not neglected. This is what Paul is reminding Timothy, and this is what we should pursue in our own lives.

Lord God, You have given each of us unique abilities as gifts of who we are. In Christ, we should use our gifts to Your glory. And so help us not to squander out time and our energy on that which is vain, but instead to fan our gifts into flame and let them be used as is fitting of the people of God that we are because of Christ. May it be so, and to Your glory! Amen.

Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. 1 Timothy 4:15

The Greek word translated as "meditate" is used only here and in Acts 4:25 where "the people plot vain things." In classical Greek, it gives the sense of attending to something carefully. Thus, by implication, it would be to revolve something around in the mind – meditate, ponder, imagine, etc. Paul is asking Timothy to be diligent in caring for the things he has been instructed in, and to think on them constantly.

He then says to, "give yourself entirely to them." Paul's obvious intent is that Timothy was not to merely have head knowledge of these things, but to put them into action, devoting his time and energy completely and wholly to accomplishing them. The more

distractions he allowed into his life, the less effective he would be in being the example that Paul has so carefully admonished him to be.

And the reason again is obvious. Paul follows up with, “that your progress may be evident to all.” The spiritual growth of a pastor is something that should be lifelong. There should be no time that he is not moving forward in the faith. If he stagnates, then those he teaches will likewise stagnate. It is for this reason that Paul had just told him to not neglect the gift that is in him.

Life application: The job of a pastor who cares about his responsibilities is a tiring and difficult job. If it appears that he is beginning to stagnate, it may be that he is having trials that he is keeping to himself. It is always a good thing to have an attentive eye on how he is progressing, and to offer a sympathetic ear to his situation. A trusted confidant is a valuable thing for his position. Maybe you are the one to be such a person.

Lord God, Your word implores pastors to ponder right doctrine always, to give themselves entirely to their labors, and to always move forward with those he leads. Help each of us to make this possible by supporting our pastor's needs, giving encouragement as necessary, and keeping an eye on times when he seems to be struggling. Whether a little church on the hill, or a big church in the city, help us to be aware of the needs of the one who leads our church. Amen.

Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you. 1 Timothy 4:16

Paul now closes out Chapter 4 with words which support what he has already said a few verses ago. He begins with, “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine.” Scholars generally agree that it should say “to the teaching” rather than “to the doctrine.” What is noteworthy is that Paul implores Timothy to first take heed to himself. If he cannot tend to himself, then his teaching of others would naturally be faulty as well. The words of Paul are always logical and orderly.

Next he says, “Continue in them.” Taking heed to oneself, and right teaching for the man of God, are things that are never to be set aside. Rather, pursuing these things should be a daily practice. In our walk with the Lord, there is nothing static. We are either moving forward in right conduct, or we are moving backward. This is what Paul is saying to Timothy here.

Finally, he closes out the verse with, “for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.” The words appear to be pointing to works-based salvation, but that is not the case at all. In teaching right doctrine, those who are taught will be saved (if they choose to accept God’s gracious offer in Christ). In caring for the salvation of others, a minister is demonstrating that he cares for his own salvation. It is the gospel which brings salvation to men. Paul is ensuring that Timothy understands that he has an enormous responsibility in teaching the word.

Life application: Right doctrine really matters. If false teachings are introduced into a church, those who have not yet come to Christ, and are led astray by these teachings, will never be saved. What a terrible burden to bear... all for the sake of being unwilling to study and show oneself approved in that which is proper.

Lord God, thank you for Your kind hand upon us. You lavish your creatures with blessings unimaginable, and you meet our needs according to Your wisdom. We so very much appreciate all You do for us. Help us to let our gratitude shine forth by telling others about the wonderful and eternal blessings which are found in Christ our Lord. Praises to You in the highest. Amen.

CHAPTER 5

Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort *him* as a father, younger men as brothers,
1 Timothy 5:1

The term translated here as “older man” is the same Greek word used to speak of an elder within the church. Though there is disagreement, the NKJV is probably correct in stating “older man.” The word can mean either, and the likelihood, based on the feminine word being used of an older woman in the next verse surely settles the matter.

Timothy is being asked to not rebuke an older man, using a word which signifies “to strike at in a vulnerable place.” Thus it figuratively means to sharply rebuke someone with insensitive or brutal words. The older men in the church may have come from a long life of debauchery or licentiousness. Old ways are hard to let go of, and so Paul asks Timothy to be sensitive towards an older man, and to “exhort *him* as a father.”

Unless one is perverse, he will not lash out at his own father. Instead, he will be kind to him and willing to put up with his failures. He is, after all, the one who raised the son, even if in a failing manner. To establish this now, at the beginning of the church age, Paul writes this to Timothy, and it is expected to be followed through with by all pastors at all times.

Finally, he directs him to exhort “younger men as brothers,” In other words, just as a normal person would treat their own brother, so should pastors treat the younger men of the church. There is no point in being harsh to brothers in Christ, because we truly are “brothers” in Christ. It is for this reason that Paul now admonishes Timothy.

Having said this, if someone is openly sinning in the church, there are other guidelines which are to be followed in order to bring them back into the fold, or have them excommunicated.

Life application: If you have a pastor who openly rebukes people in church for no valid reason, you should probably find a new pastor. He is not being careful to follow the guidelines laid out here by Paul.

Heavenly Father, it truly is a delight to fellowship with other Christians, but there are those who can wear us down as well. Grant us patience to deal with them, and not to become unhinged too quickly. Help us to be gracious, patient, and thus pleasing in Your eyes as we deal with those who are a bit rough around the social edges. Amen.

...older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity. 1 Timothy 5:2

Paul now continues with his directives for Timothy concerning interpersonal relationships within the church framework. He next says that they are to exhort “older women as mothers.” Like the “older man” of the previous verse, Timothy is instructed to show the same respect and care for the older women. No normal, respectful person would purposefully denigrate their own mother, and the same respect is to be extended to all older women. This is especially true if they have a lifetime of service and knowledge as Christians. That surely is to be given praise and commendation.

As a note, the word for “older women,” in Greek indicates only distinction in age. Some have tried to connect it to an official position which is referred to. This has no further Scriptural support, and must be read into the word, but this is done in order to justify the ordaining of women into leadership positions of the church. It is an unjustifiable, and improper twisting of intent.

Next Paul instructs that he is to treat “younger women as sisters, with all purity.” Unless one is a depraved person, he would never treat a sister as anything but a unique and special person, to be guarded, defended, and cared for. And in caring for her, he would do so “with all purity.” Paul is exhorting Timothy, and thus all pastors henceforward, that this is how women in the church are to be treated. If one were to get too close emotionally to a younger woman, the inevitable end is that inappropriate conduct will result. This should never be the case. Paul’s words are proper, and they are to be taken as authoritative in the church at all times.

Life application: Relationships between men and women in the church, and especially such relationships which involve church leadership, must be very carefully handled, and they should be done so publically so that there is no hint of impropriety. It may be that things start out innocently, but how easy it is for that to change. And how much damage has been done because this precept has not been carefully adhered to.

Dear and precious Lord, how easy it is for us to fail in our personal relationships because we allow ourselves to get a little too close to someone we have no right to be with. And nobody ever comes out of such things unscathed. Divorces, broken homes, devastated children... the list goes on in many sad ways. Help us to be discerning. Help us to use godly wisdom. Help us to be faithful followers of You, and to act in purity and holiness. To Your glory we pray. Amen.

Honor widows who are really widows. 1 Timothy 5:3

Paul's directive here is an important precept to understand. His words, "Honor widows," indicate more than just giving them respect and attention, but actually includes care through either money or direct support. It is the precept seen in Acts 6 -

"Now in those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution." Acts 6:1

This is what Paul means through "honor." The same thought is brought into our language with the term honorarium. The ideas are united. Paul meant that as the church had been caring for widows, this was to be the case with those in Ephesus as well. If they needed care, they were to be provided with that care. However, this was not a blanket admonition for Timothy to hand out money or food to every old lady who showed up at the door. He will set more restrictions on this type of thing in the verses to come. He also continues with, "who are really widows."

His words here indicate what he will define in the next verses.

Life application: The church should be a caring entity that is willing to help those who truly have needs, but it is also to be an entity that expects standards of those it cares for. It is great that many churches head out and help the homeless, the downtrodden, and the like. It is noble indeed. But the church must always put Scripture first when handing out its resources in various ways. Much of what is done in the "social-gospel" churches of today has no basis at all in biblically-based Christianity. Be wise and discerning... know your Bible.

Lord God, help us as Christians to be kind, generous, and willing to help others. But Lord, help us to be wise and discerning concerning the extent to which we will do so. May our charity be in accord with Your word, and not simply an arbitrary type of charity that demands, or offers, unrealistic things. In other words, may we know Your word, adhere to what it expects, and follow through with those things in particular. In this, you will surely be glorified. Amen.

But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.

1 Timothy 5:4

Paul had just instructed Timothy to "honor widows who are really widows." Those who are really widows would be left destitute and in need of the care of the church.

However, he shows how the church can be less burdened, and how the family should truly operate, by stating, “But if any widow has children or grandchildren.” Such a person may truly be a widow, but she is not without a source of help. Unlike a widow who is left alone to fend for herself, there are those to whom a moral responsibility is due. Upon them, he says, “let them first learn to show piety at home.”

It is one thing to come to church and act in a pious and giving manner, and it is another to act that way when only the family sees. People find satisfaction when others can see the great things they do, but the real heart of charity comes when we burden ourselves and get no credit for it from those around us. And so Paul says that such charity at home is “to repay their parents.” It is the parents through whom they came. It was the parents who spent their efforts and their earnings to raise them, etc. They may not have done the best job of it. Surely all parents learn as they go, but they were given the joys and trials in the birth of the child, and they followed through to the point where an adult was finally realized. This means many years of care and support. Now, the tables have turned, and the widow is in need of that same care and support. Such repayment is now expected because “this is good and acceptable before God.”

Honor of the parents leads to caring for the parents. It is a precept found in both testaments, and even one Jesus speaks of directly in Matthew 15. It is something God expects, and with such an attitude, God is pleased. Despite the normal times of difficulty which arise between families, there is to be a bond which is not set aside when the child reaches an age where those bonds can be cut. They remain, but the one responsible for guarding the bond changes. To break, or to neglect, this responsibility is to cast off that which God has ordained. To keep it intact is to do that which pleases God.

Life application: It is hard to find a family where the unit is so strong that what Paul mandates here would come naturally. It is much easier to pass off one’s responsibility in order to ensure that the next generation is properly cared for, instead of the previous one. But caring for the previous one is a duty which is not to be ignored. Let us take the words here to heart, and do our best to be pleasing in the sight of God in this way.

Lord God, thank You for our parents. They tended to us with each day as a new duty, and without an instruction manual. As the days unfolded, and as we tested and tried them, they did what they could with the resources they had. And today, we are the product of their efforts. They may not have been perfect, but here we are, bearing the decisions which they made, and which formed us in this way. Thank You Lord, for placing us into their care in order to form us as we are. Amen.

Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. 1 Timothy 5:5

Paul continues to explain verse 3 which spoke of honoring widows who are really widows. By definition, a widow is one who has lost her husband, but for the sake of care in the church, there is the need to ensure that it is not burdened with caring for someone who could otherwise be cared for by others. He continues now, describing the situation of one who is really a widow by saying, “Now she who is really a widow, and left alone.” This is a widow, but more than just lacking a husband, she has no one who is there to care for her. She lacks the care of “children or grandchildren” of the previous verse, and she may even lack friends. As the wife to a husband, her life may have been so dedicated to him that she didn’t really acquire friends close enough to say, “Come, live with us.” And so she now faces life alone, probably for the very first time.

Such a person “trusts in God.” The Greek more rightly indicates, “has her hope in God.” She has nowhere else to turn. She has never taken care of herself, her husband is dead, and there is no one else who can take care of her. In such a state, her hope of daily sustenance is found in God alone. Because of this, such a poor soul “continues in supplications and prayers night and day.”

When one has nobody else to trust in, even self, God will inevitably be the recipient of the strains of the heart. When she wakes, “O God, be with me today,” and when she lies down again, “Protect me, O God.” Throughout the day, He is the only One she can direct her attention to. Such is the life of a God-fearing widow who simply desires comfort, companionship, and support. One who followed this pattern well after the death of her own husband is Anna, the daughter of Phanuel. She is noted in Luke 2:36-38. In the loss of her husband, she directed her heart to the Lord, and faithfully prayed and fasted for the rest of her many years.

Life application: At what point in your life will you call out to the Lord? Will you wait until there is a family emergency? Will you wait till death leaves you alone and without any other help? Until your money is all lost in a financial collapse, do you feel secure enough to ignore God? Isn’t it better to ask Him to be near now? Should any calamity come when He is near, you have already obtained a place of refuge from the storms which lie ahead. Call on the Lord, and speak and pray to Him always. He is there, but have you acknowledged it yet?

Heavenly Father, truly You are but an afterthought (at best) to most of the world. Our last thought may be You, but You certainly aren’t our first thought. And yet, what

happens when things suddenly go bad? "Help me O God. Don't let this terrible thing happen!" Forgive us for only putting You first when You are the last resort. Help us to put You first now, tomorrow, and always. May our hearts and minds be filled with You at all times – both in the good and the bad times. Amen.

But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. 1 Timothy 5:6

In what could be considered typical apostle Paul abruptness concerning doctrine, he now introduces a thought concerning the widow which contrasts the true widow of the previous verse who "trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day." Instead of such a troubled soul, who has turned her whole hope for comfort to the Lord, there is another type of widow who "lives in pleasure." The Greek word is used only here by Paul, and once by James (5:5). It is one who lives in a wanton fashion, or indulges in unneeded surplus. The idea is less of sexual indulgence, and looks more to wasteful living. Whatever she received from her dead husband is simply squandered away without a care or a thought. Fast living and excess define her situation.

For such a perverse soul, Paul says that she "is dead while she lives." In Romans 8, Paul shows the contrast between living carnally and living according to the Spirit. In verse 13, he says, "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." A person who lives for their flesh is fulfilling temporary, vain things. All food is temporary to the body, all clothes wear out, all purchases for indulgence can be stolen or burned up in a fire. In the end, when it is all gone, there is nothing left – not even a hope in God to sustain the body and the soul. The contrast is amazing, and yet it is a contrast which has been seen from one generation after the next for all of human history. There is nothing of learning for those whose minds are blinded by the temporary pleasures of this world.

Life application: We have two accounts running at the same time. There is our earthly existence which accumulates things for whatever purpose we think they will serve. And we can accumulate heavenly treasures in hopes of an existence beyond this life. The earthly things will all come to an end. If that is where our hope is, the filling of that account was a vain and pointless venture. For those who are wise, they will save what is right now (save for your children's children it says in Proverbs 13:22), but they will expend their greater energy in saving up for that which is eternal.

Lord God, what point is heaping up treasure in this world? We can't take a thing with us, and even while we remain, the things we have can be stolen, lost, or burned up. It is a vain and pointless thing to hope for abundant wealth on our deathbed. But there is

treasure which is eternal. Help us to accumulate that. May we glorify You now, praise You now, pursue You now, and seek after You now – all in hopes of the great and true wealth to be found on eternity's vast shore. Give us this wisdom. Amen.

And these things command, that they may be blameless. 1 Timothy 5:7

The words here encompass both the responsibilities of the family for caring for widows, and for the conduct of the widows as was then described. "These things" encompasses both. It is inappropriate for believers to thrust the care of their own family upon the church, and it is inappropriate for widows who have sufficient means to care for themselves to live in wanton pleasure. In both situations, they could not "be blameless."

But in following Paul's commands concerning the matter, the church would be secured from undue burdens, and the families would properly bear the responsibilities God has placed in their path concerning women found in this sad position of widowhood.

Life application: Each church has its own method of conducting its affairs, but each church should use the Bible as its over-arching rule and guide. Not all issues that arise are discussed in Scripture, but general principles are. When a church follows what is mandated, it will be more likely to properly and effectively handle those things which the Bible is silent on. Stay in the word, and be schooled in the Bible at all times. In this, the unexpected can be more appropriately handled by the church.

Thank You, O God, for the general outline of principles laid out in Your word. The things that aren't addressed there are more easily handled nonetheless because of the overall guidelines which touch on so many issues in our lives. Your word gives a broad outline of human responsibility, and from it we can fill in the many blanks of day to day life. And when we do, things go so much better for us. Thank You for this precious word. Amen.

But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. 1 Timothy 5:8

Paul's attention has been on the widow, showing what is proper concerning the care of a widow, what is the possible plight of a widow, etc. Now in this verse, he explains why the care expected of a widow (and others within the family) is a necessary part of the Christian faith. "But if anyone does not provide for his own," is speaking specifically about a widow, but he is doing it in a general sense. There are those who need help, and there are those who are morally obligated to provide that help. The word he chooses for "provide" is one that signifies careful consideration of the matter involved. It is the

Greek word *pronoéō*, coming from two words, *pró*, meaning “before,” and *noiéō*, “think.” Thus it signifies “to think before,” and it shows necessary forethought to act properly, meaning in God's will.

A person should have attentive care for those who are dependent on him. Paul then explains further with, “and especially for those of his own household.” A person may have people dependent upon him for a variety of reasons. He may be an employer, he may have slaves or servants in his house, etc. Whoever his responsibilities extend to, he is to provide for them, but this is especially so with immediate family. This is an almost universally understood precept. It is something that would have to be taught out of a person, rather than taught into him. Throughout the world, the care of family is taken as an obvious responsibility. And so for a Christian to not follow through with such a basic moral tenet, “he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

Paul was writing his words to Christians who lived in the Greek frame of mind. The writings of many of the Greek philosophers and elite showed that this was something they clearly understood as a right moral precept. As Charles Ellicott notes, “The rules even of the nobler Pagan moralists forbid such heartless selfishness.” If this is so, then how could a person be considered a properly acting moral Christian and not follow through with something so universally understood? He has “denied the faith.” In other words, the moral precepts which define the right conduct of being a Christian are not being applied as they should be. To refuse the duties of the faith is a denial of the faith itself.

His intent is for all Christians, at all times, to be aware of the need to care for their family, be ready and willing to meet their needs, and to not allow the church to be burdened with needs that should be taken care of at home.

As a final note, Paul does not say that such people have proven themselves to be unbelievers. A person is not saved by taking care of family members. They are saved by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. However, once someone is saved through that belief, they are expected to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, not ignore it as something which is unimportant to the Lord who saved them in the first place.

Life application: How often do finger-pointy people say, “That person can’t be a Christian because of XXX! Sometimes it is because of a pet peeve that they just can’t let go of. Sometimes it is because they know what is required of Christians, and they don’t see that requirement being worked out in the person’s life. They forget that salvation is a gift based on faith in the finished work of Christ. Instead of jabbing others over what they

are doing wrong, they should be willing to face the person and instruct them in what they should be doing right. Some people may simply lack proper instruction. Be careful with those pointy fingers. Such an attitude might lead others to wonder if you are a Christian yourself.

Lord God, thank You that salvation has been made so simple for us. You sent Jesus to accomplish what we could not, He then gave His life in exchange for what is wrong with us, and through faith in that we are saved. The atonement is provided, the substitution is accepted, and our misdeeds are no longer considered. Thank You for this marvelous gift of life and restoration. Help us to be willing to share it with others. Amen.

Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, *and not unless she has been the wife of one man*, 1 Timothy 5:9

Scholars have taken the words of this verse, words which are plain, simple, and unambiguous, and they have developed all kinds of crazy notions as to what Paul is saying here. Some have built an entire class of senior women who have a special office and authority in the church. Others have manipulated the term, “wife of one man,” to mean something other than what the words clearly signify. On and on go strange analyses of the verse, based on absolutely nothing. What Paul says isn’t suddenly a new subject at all. Rather, it is the same thing he has been referring to since verse 3.

“Do not let a widow under sixty years be taken into the number” is speaking of the group of women who can be supported by the church. Paul has been speaking of the care of widows, he has shown that it is a family responsibility, he has shown what type of woman would be unqualified to receive the churches’ help, etc. Now he is showing how to care for a widow “who is really a widow” as noted in verse 5. Such a destitute soul must be sixty and above.

A younger widow could remarry, she would normally have enough strength to care for herself, etc. Paul is setting an age in order to avoid all the pitfalls which could otherwise arise. He does not provide an exception, and thus the church is expected to not make any after the issuance of his letter. Once a widow who is truly a widow reaches sixty, she has met the first qualification for assistance. This is perfectly in accord with the account in Acts 6 concerning the daily distribution of food to the widows.

Paul then states the next qualification is that she must have “been the wife of one man.” The words are not complicated, but numerous scholars attempt to help them along with unnecessary inferences. Some have said this means “one man at a time.” Others have

taken it to be speaking of divorce, but “death and remarriage” is excluded, etc. Such analyses go beyond what is written. To be the “wife of one man” is a necessary qualifier for a “widow indeed.” A woman who faithfully lived with her one husband, and then who never remarried, showed a special dedication to her husband that is emblematic of fidelity to Christ alone. It is a badge of honor which allows her to enjoy the rights of the table of widowhood.

Life application: Too often, commentaries about Paul’s words in the pastoral letters will attempt to dismiss the very intent of what is being said. Such would never be the case with his other letters, but because the pastorals touch on such personal subjects, scholars will allow their own emotions or biases to cloud the original intent and meaning. Pick up the word and read it as it is written. The obvious interpretation is what should be adhered to unless there is an exceptional reason to tie in an inference which is related to another portion of Scripture.

Heavenly Father, your care of the widow and orphan which is seen in Your word shows us a heart for the downtrodden. How caring and loving You are. Help us to emulate You in this Lord. Help us to be gracious and merciful to those around us, and to be willing to expend ourselves, even to a great degree, to relieve others of their times of trouble and affliction. Amen.

...well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints’ feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work. 1 Timothy 5:10

These words continue on from verse 10 concerning eligibility for a widow to be “taken into the number,” meaning acceptable for assistance by the church for her livelihood. She is to be “well reported for good works.” It is an obvious statement. A widow who is truly a widow is to have been known as one who is of good repute concerning helping others. The Greek literally reads, “in good works.” She should be known for beneficence both by believers and unbelievers.

Paul then defines those good works beginning with, “if she has brought up her children.” The words here can indicate either her own children or others. In other words, she should be well known for having been as a proper light of instruction and education to the children who grew up around her. It is true that some of the finest lessons that a child can receive can come from the mother of a friend. Playing at the house of a god-fearing woman can be an inspiration to a child whose parents are non-believers.

Next Paul says, “if she has lodged strangers.” Abraham and Sarah accommodated those who came by their tent. Others in Scripture are noted for this as well. To open one’s doors to strangers can be a reflection of common hospitality which is an important part of human interaction. It shows a willingness to assist others, even at the expense of one’s own privacy.

The next qualification is, “if she has washed the saints’ feet.” Washing one’s feet is a Middle Eastern custom. The land is hot and dusty, and this clings heavily to the feet. Open sandals were often the customary footwear as well, and so when coming to a house, people’s feet would have lines of filth wherever they were not covered. In the world of pants and full-cover shoes, this is not something we worry about. But for those times when it is seen, the washing of the feet of guests was considered an act of humility, as well as a special honor upon the one whose feet were washed. When David proposed to Abigail, her response was reflective of what Paul speaks of here –

Then she arose, bowed her face to the earth, and said, “Here is your maidservant, a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.” 1 Samuel 25:41

Paul next says, “if she has relieved the afflicted.” Such would be the soul who would take hot chicken soup to someone who was down with the flu. She would make meals for the mother who just gave birth. She would go sit with the mother of the child in bed with the fever. Such things would reflect the caring quality of a woman willing to relieve the afflicted.

Finally in this verse, Paul says, “if she has diligently followed every good work.” The character of her life is to be defined as a tireless helper of those around her. Her husband, her children, her neighbors, and any of the local people who interacted with her often, would know that she was one who was willing to expend herself in doing right and acting properly. With such a record behind her, and in meeting the age requirements laid out by Paul, she would be a suitable candidate for having the church tend to her after her long life of tending to others.

Life application: A person reaps what they sow. In the case of a widow who was an attentive and helpful mother and friend, she should be reasonably rewarded with proper care by those she tended to. The Bible instructs that this is to be so. It would be inappropriate to not help someone who had given so much of her own life to others when she was able to do so.

Lord God, help us to be attentive to those around us who are kind and caring. May we see their actions, file them away in our minds, and remember to tend to them when they have their own times of need. Goodness should be a two way street, and so help us to not only accept the goodness of others, but to respond with goodness to others as well. In this, our lives will be reflective of selfless, happy people. Surely this is good in Your sight. Amen.

But refuse *the* younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, 1 Timothy 5:11

Verses 9 & 10 gave the requirements for allowing a woman onto the rolls of widows in a church. When they met the requirements, they would be allowed to receive care from the church. However, he now notes an exception which he will continue to explain through verse 16. Instead of the widow who is to be accepted for care, he says, “But refuse *the* younger widows.” Paul doesn’t deny that they are widows, but he sets a distinction between these (younger), and those qualified by age (over sixty). Younger widows are not to be included because “when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry.”

Here he uses a word translated as “have begun to grow wanton,” which signifies the feeling of impulses of sexual desire. It is a word unique to the New Testament, not being found in classical literature. What Paul is saying is that the natural desires of a younger woman may get aroused once again, and she would begin to long for companionship in the form of a husband. In doing this, her obligation to the church which had been supporting her, will falter. It is expected that if a woman were to receive her sustenance from the church, that she would be faithful to that same church. Her duty would be as if to a new husband, Christ. But in having her heart strings pulled towards a new man, that allegiance would become distorted or even completely neglected.

It is Paul’s intention here to ensure that no arbitrary commitment to serving the Lord be exhibited. Instead, the widow is to be an example to other women of a faithful devotion to Christ. He in no way is speaking against the remarriage of widows, and in fact, he will argue for exactly that in the verses to come.

Life application: When one makes a commitment to Christ, be it as a missionary, a pastor, a musician, or whatever else, they take on a new perception in the eyes of others. To be in such a position, and to fail in the commitment which has been made, can only bring discredit upon His glorious name. Let each of us remember our duty to the Lord first, foremost, and always.

Heavenly Father, for those who have made an open commitment to serving Christ Jesus, give them wisdom to do so with unfailing attention. Whether it is a commitment to serve as a missionary, a minister, a musician, or in any other such capacity, help them to always remember their responsibility to the name they bear. Be an ever present reminder to them of their first calling. To Your glory we pray. Amen.

...having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith. 1 Timothy 5:12

Paul's words here must be considered in their context, or a wholly false reading of what is being conveyed will result. He has said in Romans 8:1 that, "*There* is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus to those who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." There, an intensified form of the word *krima*, or judgment, which is found here is used. This verse is not speaking of being condemned and losing salvation as the word may imply to those who hear it.

Rather, this is speaking of a form of judgment for disobedience. It is the condemnation of living in prison which results from living in sin. As Vincent's Word Studies states, "...they carry about with them in their new, married life a condemnation, a continuous reproach." If we "walk according to the Spirit" we are living a life of freedom from the bondage of sin. If we fail to conduct our lives according to this walk, then we will suffer the prison of our walk.

And so Paul's words, "having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith," speaks of the state of their lives now, not a future condemnation based on a loss of salvation. The widow who committed to a life dedicated to Christ, and who then turns her back on that life, will continuously suffer the reproach of that decision during this life, and it will certainly affect her hope of rewards in the life to come.

Life application: Each of us must determine to follow Christ in our own way. For those who commit to a life of service, and who then walk away from that life, there will be consequences for their rejection of the path they had set their feet upon. Let each of us be circumspect in how we walk before the Lord, remembering our commitments, and adhering to them according to the words we have spoken.

Lord God, help each of us to be people who are faithful to our commitments. For those who have committed to giving, may we be faithful in what we give. For those who have committed to serving, may we serve faithfully. For those who have accepted roles as pastors, missionaries, or evangelists, give us strength and wisdom to adhere to our

commitment with zeal. Grant each of us to be faithful to what we have vowed in our hearts. Amen.

And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.

1 Timothy 5:13

Paul's words here are still speaking of younger widows. He had just noted that by marrying again, after having committed themselves to Christ, they are "having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith." Now he adds to that with, "And besides, they learn to be idle." If they were receiving their support from the church, it is possible that they would find it easier to simply receive the care of the church and to not go beyond that as far as productivity is concerned. Anyone who doubts this would be the case has never studied the effects of welfare, government housing, and food stamps. Such things, like care directly from the church, become inducements to laziness. Paul is not saying that this will always be the case, but it is the standard human condition, and it is to be avoided.

He then says what the effect of being idle will be with the words, "wandering about from house to house." With nothing productive to do, an idle person will inevitably go looking for someone else who can fill their time. They will interrupt families, show up at any given time (even when the wife may be out, thus possibly bringing about inappropriate relations with the man inside), and carrying along whatever words will fill the hearers' mind with their own thoughts. In the last case, Paul explains that such are "not only idle but also gossips and busybodies."

This is the natural state of people with too much time on their hands. They have nothing productive to do, and so they put their noses into the affairs of others. They then pass these things on, stirring up the nest of hornets in the neighborhood. Just because a family has a fight, it doesn't mean they are at the end of their marriage, but when that fight is broadcast around the neighborhood, it suddenly becomes an issue which is no longer tucked away and gone. Rather, it can explode into all kinds of other unnecessary and untrue accusations. And this is all because the idle widows keep "saying things which they ought not."

The entire set of problems which Paul has noted stems from putting someone too young onto the roles of the church. As noted, this is no different than putting someone too young, and otherwise able, onto the roles of government welfare, food stamps, and public housing. One is deprived of their dignity by those who didn't think through the

consequences of handing out charity in an inappropriate manner. The intent may or may not have been good, but the end result invariably is one which is not good. People who are young enough to work and lead a normal life, and who are also healthy enough to do so, must be required to do so.

Life application: Not following the biblical model, as outlined by Paul here, has the highest probability of leading to disaster. Case in point: All such entitlement programs initiated by liberals in governments around the world. Their ungodly stand leads to unproductive people who are trained to be shiftless busybodies who only cause more harm to the society at large. The church should not be a participant in this unholy crusade, and yet it is the leader in it in many cases.

Lord God, we pray that the world will see the harm that government programs cause when they are applied inappropriately. Giving money to people who are fully capable of working for themselves causes them to be idle, busybodies, gossips, and unproductive members of society. Such programs deprive them of the honor and dignity of being productive. And our churches often take the lead in this unholy trek. Help us to not be a participant in such things, but to actively work for the dignity of all people by having them earn their own daily bread. Amen.

Therefore I desire that *the younger widows* marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. 1 Timothy 5:14

Paul now continues to refer to the widows he has been speaking of. Some versions incorrectly state “younger women,” as if the verse is referring to all young women. This is incorrect. He has been speaking of the widows, and the conjunction translated as “therefore” continues to identify these widows now. Understanding this, he says “Therefore I desire that *the younger widows* marry.” In order to avoid the serious pitfalls which he has identified, Paul gives his will for them to consider. He does not state this as a command, but rather, as an apostle of Christ, guided by the Spirit, and with a detailed understanding of human nature, he explains what path he feels is best for the younger widow.

If they were to pursue a life of asceticism, and to openly renounce marriage in order to serve the Lord, and then if they failed at that high and noble calling, they would only bring discredit upon themselves, and upon the Lord, to whom they had made their vow. In order to keep from such a thing occurring, he would have them “marry, bear children, manage the house” according to the natural way of the world, fulfilling the role of a spouse and mother in a new family. In this, Paul definitively shows that a second

marriage is in no way to be considered inappropriate or ungodly. Instead, remarriage in this case is to be considered the right and proper course. The natural state for a younger woman is to have children and to manage a home, and this is what Paul would recommend for the younger widows as well.

In doing these things, the widow will “give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.” The word translated as “adversary” is one which is used for the last of eight times in Scripture, all by Luke or Paul. It means to “lie opposite” and thus to be adverse, contrary, or in opposition. Therefore, Paul is referring to those who would find a cause to slander the Christian faith because of the woman who made a vow to dedicate herself to Christ, and then who later took a path contrary to that vow. This would be one who fits the words of verses 11-13. In her specific actions, there has been a chance to bring accusation against the faith in general. The next verse will show where such an attitude is derived from, and why it is such an effective means of discrediting the faith.

Life application: Although Paul’s words are not a command, they reflect both the intent of God, and a right understanding of human nature. A widow may feel she is somehow betraying her dead husband by remarrying, but this is not the case. Instead, after her time of mourning is past, she is following the correct and proper path to pursue a reestablished family life, and to fulfill the role of wife, mother, and manager of the house as is right and proper for the woman of God.

How necessary it is, O God, to read Your word continuously. There are so many precepts in it that we can easily forget what is right and proper for the conduct of our lives. But by reading Your word daily, reflecting on it always, and applying it to our lives properly, we will continue on as rightly-established and faithful followers of You. Help us in this Lord. Give us a hunger and a desire to pursue you at all times through Your magnificent and superior word. Amen.

For some have already turned aside after Satan. 1 Timothy 5:15

Paul now gives the result of what he warned against in verses 11 through 13. Some widows had left their profession of devotion to the Lord which they made when they became widows. Instead, they had turned, growing wanton against Christ. This is exactly the reason for having implored the younger widows to marry, bear children, and manage the house. In this, there would be no opportunity for the adversary to speak reproachfully.

What is important to understand, is that the very reason for writing these words to Timothy was because this situation had already arisen. Instead of following Christ, they had “turned after Satan.” This does not mean that there is a loss of salvation. It means that their lives would be judged according to their actions which were lived contrary to Christ. This is made explicit in the examples of 1 Corinthians 5, and which penalty is summed up in verse 5 of that chapter, and then, Paul again uses the same terminology in chapter 1 of this epistle. In verse 20 Paul told Timothy that he had handed Hymenaeus and Alexander over to Satan “that they may learn not to blaspheme.” In both of those cases, no loss of salvation can be inferred. Rather, Paul’s words indicate a corrective measure.

In the case of these widows, they had left the path of the Lord, and they had turned after Satan. In following that path, they would suffer both in this life, and they would suffer loss in the next, but a saved person is saved. To say that one must do something in order to “keep” being saved is to nullify salvation by grace through faith. Either salvation is by grace through faith once and for all time, or it is a false doctrine. And it is certainly not a false doctrine.

To grasp this, just be honest and answer the question, “Have you ever told a lie since coming to Christ?” The answer is probably “Yes.” Pretty much every saved believer has. But is telling a lie following after Christ, or is it following after Satan? Jesus said of the devil, “When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 10:44). If one were to say that Paul’s words concerning these widows indicated a loss of salvation, then logically, he would be saying the same thing about himself. Whether one turns aside for a lengthy period, or one turns aside for a short period is irrelevant. If you have lied, you have turned aside after Satan. Doctrine matters, and doctrine is logical and orderly because God is logical and orderly.

Life application: Paul’s words are often so easily misunderstood because they are taken out of the greater context of his writings. Keep things in context, study the entire body of Paul’s letters, and use logic and order when considering the nature of God, the nature of salvation, and the consequences of being disobedient to the Lord. In having sound doctrine, you will also have soundness in your walk with the Lord.

It is a beautiful thing to have one’s sins atoned for, O God. To realize what You did in order for that to come about is the most amazing, the most humbling, and the most marvelous thing that we can ever consider. Thank You for the giving of Christ, our Lord that His work would satisfy Your righteous requirements of the law, and that His atoning

death would satisfy Your wrath for our failure under that law. Thank You for the peace which is found in coming to the cross. Hallelujah and amen!

If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows. 1 Timothy 5:16

There is a dispute in texts as to whether this says “If any believing man or woman,” or if it says, “If any believing *woman*.” Apart from this, the issue remains the same. The church was not to be burdened with what the family could attend to. This follows along with the words of verse 5:8 then. Paul is stressing the importance of the care of one’s family, in particular needy widows, instead of passing it along to others. He is speaking to believers, and they are to pay heed to his word. As he is an apostle, his words were considered authority. As they are written, they continue in that same authority beyond the church at Ephesus to all churches. They are prescriptive, and they are expected to be attended to.

When a believer (woman/man or woman) has widows, “let them relieve them.” This specifically means “to support them.” There is no exception given by Paul. If there is a need, the need is to be met by the one who the Lord has placed in the position of nearness to the widow. They are to ensure the widow is cared for. As he then says, “and do not let the church be burdened.” To ignore this responsibility means that the church will then receive the burden. If it is a compassionate church as it should be, the people will ultimately pick up the tab, even if it causes an unnecessary weight to fall upon it. But this should not be the case. Instead, the church has another, greater responsibility which is “that it may relieve those who are really widows.

This is referring to the widow who is “really a widow” of verses 3-5. Such a person has no one to tend to her. The church would certainly want to help such a poor, pitiful soul with its resources. The number could be larger than expected because the admonition to care for one’s widow is to believers. However, there could be believing widows whose only family were non-believers. In that case, there would be no authority by Paul to command the family care for them. If they had no desire to do so, she would be “really a widow” even though she had a family. This is why Paul is so adamant about the care of widows by believing family. He isn’t writing arbitrary rules, but rather he is looking at the circumstances of the world in which we live realistically. The church can only do so much, but it would do what it could for those who were truly in need.

Life application: It is not uncommon for people to come to church and ask for help from the church, but quite often this puts an undue pressure on the church. For those looking

for assistance, there should be the careful consideration of other options for needs to be met before asking the church, or individual members, to carry a weight which is not at all their responsibility.

Lord God, thank You for the fellowship of believers, and for the joy that comes from sharing in life with them. But help us not to get overly dependent on others, and inconvenience them for our every need. Help us to remember that other people have lives, responsibilities, desires for private personal time, etc. And so help us to give them that needed space. May our desire to fellowship with others not turn into something that they will find overly consuming of their own lives. Amen.

Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. 1 Timothy 5:17

The words of this verse are highly debated, and so they must be taken in context as to whom he is speaking of. The word “elders” can be referring to the aged in the congregation, but that is not the only intent of the word. In Israel, it was used “to denote the body of men that presided in the synagogue” (Albert Barnes). Others agree with this, and it is the logical extension of everything Paul has been saying. The church is a body led by men, regardless of their age. Instead, “elders” here is a positional word. It is those who rule and have authority. It is these who are to “be counted worthy of double honor.”

Those who rule within the church have a very tough job. They are not simply dealing with paper, numbers, valves, electric wiring, laying bricks, or a host of other jobs which are routine and stable. Instead, the church is a dynamic organism which changes constantly in its makeup, and which is comprised of individuals. Each individual has personal needs, each person has complicated emotions, and so on. For an elder to deal with all that comes his way, especially in matters of religion, there is a high level of stress at times. Because of this, Paul would ask that these leaders be given “double honor.” The term, based on the next verse, certainly indicates monetary compensation, but it is not limited to that. And the word “double” is not strictly intended in its literal sense. Instead, it indicates “more honor.”

With this understanding, he completes the verse with, “especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.” Studying, preaching, and teaching the word is the highest responsibility any person could have. In taking the word of God, and explaining it to those within the church, there is the truth that this person has become, in a very real way, responsible for the souls of those under him. If he teaches incorrectly, their lives

may be completely erratic and chaotic. Or, they may never come to a saving knowledge of Christ. People in a congregation, especially before the modern printing press, were wholly dependent on what they were told. There may have been one copy of Scripture in an entire town.

Even today, people who have ten copies of the Bible in their home may have never read it even once. People commit their trust in what is stated by teachers, and they follow closely to what they have been taught, even if it is completely wrong. This is a real problem, but it is one which exists and cannot be ignored. Therefore, sound teachers are an especially important commodity, and they are to be given the proper honor for their efforts. This is stated by Paul elsewhere, such as in 1 Thessalonians –

“And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³ and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves.” 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13

Life application: When dealing with people, especially over spiritual matters, great divisions, great anger, and great bitterness can arise. People want to know if dogs are going to heaven, if the rapture will happen on a certain day, if one can lose their salvation, and etc. In such questions, most people have already decided on the answer, and it is usually based on emotions. When they ask an elder for an answer, they are not usually looking for an answer, but an affirmation of what they want to believe. When they hear something contrary to what they want to believe, they get upset and often nasty. This is a common thing, and it is debilitating to always be second-guessed by those who actually have no idea except one formed in their own minds. Understanding this, it is good to give elders the honor of their position. They have probably already received their daily dose of grief by the time you get to them.

Lord God, how often do we decide in our own minds about spiritual matters, and then go either to Your word, or to a pastor, and look for affirmation about the thing we have decided. Instead of letting You be God, and instead of accepting an explanation in the proper context from Your word, it is easier to go off and find a teacher who will tell us what we want to hear. No wonder churches today are so filled with perversion and other horrifying doctrine. Grant us the wisdom to not read into Your word what we want to hear, but instead to have drawn out from it what You have said. Amen.

For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer is worthy of his wages.” 1 Timothy 5:18

Paul, referring to the preceding verse, now provides scriptural support for the “double honor” which is to be provided to the elders who rule well. He cites Deuteronomy 25:4 in order to make his point. He notes that even animals which were engaged in labor were not to be muzzled as they tread the grain which had been harvested. They were to be treated with respect and were to be allowed to benefit from their labors. If this was so with an ox, then how much more should those who ruled the congregation well, especially those who labor in word and doctrine, be allowed to participate in the fruits of their labors. To get an even fuller understanding of Paul’s intent here, one should refer to 1 Corinthians 9, where Paul cites this same verse and further explains it –

Do I say these things as a *mere* man? Or does not the law say the same also? ⁹ For it is written in the law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.” Is it oxen God is concerned about? ¹⁰ Or does He say *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. ¹¹ If we have sown spiritual things for you, *is it* a great thing if we reap your material things? ¹² If others are partakers of *this* right over you, *are* we not even more?

-1 Corinthians 9:8-10

One can see that those who sow spiritual things for others should be allowed to reap material benefits from their efforts. After this, Paul continues with, “and, the laborer *is* worthy of his wages.” Because he uses the conjunction “and,” he is saying that this next citation is also *graphē*, or Scripture. However, there is no match to his words to be found in the Old Testament. Where it is to be found is in Luke 10:7, which says, “And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages.” This is also loosely cited in Matthew 10:10 in the words, “for a worker is worthy of his food.”

What seems to be the case, is that by this time the synoptic gospels were already considered as authoritative words of Scripture. In other words, Paul’s citing of them means that they were considered as having the same authority as the Old Testament. Others disagree and say that this was a proverbial saying of the time. However, Paul does not cite proverbial sayings as “Scripture.” One other view is that the words of Christ had, by this time, become an oral tradition which was considered as Scripture, and this was Paul’s intent in citing it this way. This is found, for example, in Acts 10:35 which states –

“I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

The problem with this view is that Paul doesn’t say that they are simply “the words of the Lord Jesus” as in Acts, but here in Timothy he calls them “Scripture.” Therefore, it is a good indication that the gospel of Luke, which was compiled not much earlier, was already considered an authoritative source concerning Scripture.

Life application: Although the dating of the New Testament books is debated, there is a good certainty of when most of them were written. These dates can be determined by internal evidences found in the books themselves, and in other areas of the New Testament. A thorough study of these things will demonstrate that we have a sure word that is reliable, and that tells us accurately about the things it proclaims. Let us conduct our walk with this confidence, and be assured that we have our faith in God’s true and complete revelation of Himself.

Lord God, it is so very good to know that the word You have given us is reliable, and it is self-validating in so many ways. We don’t need to worry if we are following carefully devised fables, but instead we can be assured that we are reading the words which You determined should be revealed to us in order to understand Your wonderful work in bringing about our redemption. Thank You for the surety we possess in Your precious and superior word. Amen.

Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.

1 Timothy 5:19

Paul’s words of this verse are to be taken in context with the previous verses. An elder here is not simply an “older man” as was noted in verse 5:1. Rather, it is speaking of one in a position in the office of elder of verses 17 & 18. This is the subject under discussion, and he is continuing with it now. These words then are specifically being given to protect those in leadership from slanderous attacks and the like. Therefore, “Do not receive an accusation against an elder,” is specifically to be considered in this way. The elder is one in the church who is in a position of teaching, instruction, authority, and so on. But Paul doesn’t stop there. He completes the sentence with, “except from two or three witnesses.”

If someone came forward and made an accusation against someone who had already met all of the requirements of the office (which he has already laid out in the epistle),

then the accusation was not even to be considered without additional support, meaning two or three witnesses. This individual has gone through the entire process for ordination, he has met the requirements, and he was duly installed. This would have included an investigation which interacted with many people. For one to come forward, make an accusation, and destroy that work by himself was not to be acceptable.

But, if an accusation was confirmed by more than one, then an investigation could proceed. This precept was a part of the law and culture of the Jewish people. It was given in Deuteronomy 17:6 concerning the death penalty. It was given in Deuteronomy 19:15 concerning any crime. It is cited in John 8:17 by Jesus, and Paul states it as a precept in 2 Corinthians 13:1. Though it is a part of the Law of Moses, Paul has carried it into the New Covenant as a protection for the people of the church as well.

The reason for this should be obvious. Anyone who bore a grudge against another could make up anything he wanted about that person and simply lie about it. In bringing discredit upon the person, it would then lead to discredit upon the faith. And this may be the underlying motive as well. It is the desire of the enemies of Christ to do whatever they can to harm the Christian faith. Accusing an elder is an easy way to do this.

Further, if a person has betrayed the office, having two or three witnesses who can substantiate the offense would be a valuable means of having him removed. As is seen in church hierarchies, there is often an unhealthy protection of true offenders. This is not limited to the Roman Catholic Church, but they are a great example of this. The high level of perversion among priests and bishops is hidden away by the Pope and his minions at the Vatican. But this should not be. The precept goes both ways. It is to secure an elder against unjust accusations, but it is also a precept which is intended to ferret out miscreants, and offenders of the Christian faith as well.

Life application: The sad state of accusations being levied against godly men is on the increase. As the world devolves into perversion, faithful preachers will continue to be attacked by those who want their perverse agendas to succeed. However, the sad state of protecting perverse people within the church is also something that has been on-going for centuries. An entire system of perversion has been built into many major denominations. These things need to be called out by the faithful, and highlighted to show the contrast between true Christianity, and that which is false.

Heavenly Father, help us to be faithful to Your word alone. When something happens in a church which brings discredit to the faith, may we faithfully follow Your word, and work to see that it is ended. And yet, may we not simply accept accusations without proof.

There is a whole world of people who are working to destroy the reputation of decent leaders and faithful attendees, simply to bring a stain upon the name of Christ Jesus. Give us wisdom and discernment in how we respond to such challenges. Amen.

Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.

1 Timothy 5:20

The words, “Those who are sinning,” are not as obvious as may be realized. Ask first, “Who is Paul speaking about?” Two possibilities arise. He has been speaking of elders since verse 17. Verse 19 then singled out the elders concerning accusations being brought against them. From the immediate context, one might assume that this is obviously speaking of the elders who were found to be properly accused. This is the view of most scholars. It is a fitting view, and holding it is acceptable.

Having said that, Paul may be summing up his thoughts now by including all in the church. Verses 22 (sharing in other people’s sins) and verse 24 (“Some men’s sins”) are speaking in a general sense. Thus, verse 20 could be a transition verse from the specific to the general. This is even more possible because of the verb used, which is in the present tense – “sinning.” This could be speaking of anyone who is actively sinning, such as the offender mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5.

And so, rather than being dogmatic about this, it should probably be considered as a general principle, to be applied to both elders and lay people alike. “Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all.” The sinful actions of the offender are to be brought forth, and they are to be addressed. This speaks of spiritual matters. The church had no authority in the affairs of the government, and so those things which Paul writes of are spiritual matters. Obviously, later in the church age, some governments have mixed state affairs with church affairs, but Paul’s words are directed specifically to spiritual matters. These sins were to be addressed in the open church for all congregants to see for a specific reason. It is so “that the rest also may fear.”

Whatever sin is being addressed – be it the teaching of improper doctrine, inappropriate sexual behavior, stealing, or whatever else arises – the people would see the case being brought out openly. The embarrassment of being addressed in this manner by the offender would then warn the entire church that the same type of formal charge would be brought against the next person who would presume to violate the set standards of guidelines found in Scripture. In this, the people would learn to fear acting inappropriately, and confine themselves to what is sound and proper.

Life application: The words of this verse are instructive, and they are prescriptive. But a problem arises in the modern world which didn't exist in the past. In many places, there is a church on every street. If someone is accused of doing something illicit in a church, even before an open trial can be held, all they have to do is head down the road to the next church and sit in obscurity there. This doesn't negate the need of the church to do its job, but it does make it a bit more difficult to follow through with what needs to be done. However, for the person who is willing to stay and receive his rebuke, both the offender and the congregation will ultimately be edified and built up together through the proper conduct which was displayed in accord with God's word.

Lord God, You have given us the church to fellowship in, and you have given us other believers to share our hearts and our desires with. We thank you for these things, and it is so very encouraging to be able to share in life with those we attend with. Outside of our weekly services, there is the phone, email, or video chats where we can continue in our fellowship. Help us to use these things so that our hearts and minds are used in building one another up, and in staying close to You at the same time. May our every action each day be directed towards You. Amen.

I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality. 1 Timothy 5:21

Paul now directs his attention to Timothy himself, especially pointing out what is expected of him. He begins with, "I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ." The word translated as "charge" bears more weight than the translation implies. It is rather, "solemnly charge." It is a compound word comprised of "thoroughly" and "witness." Thus, it is a solemn charge or an earnest testimony. Paul's words then hold great weight as presented to Timothy. This is all the more seen by including both "God" and "the Lord Jesus Christ" as witnesses.

Paul is making the most solemn charge possible by calling the infinite God, and His designated Mediator who comes from Him, to witness Paul's charge to Timothy. He then calls on "the elect angels" as well. This term is highly debated. Some see this as not meaning "some of the angels," but "the choice, or preeminent, among the angels" (John Gill). Others see it as all angels which are not fallen. Those which are fallen are then recorded in Jude, where it speaks of "...the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode" (verse 6). In contrast to these fallen angels would be those recorded in Hebrews 12:22. There it says, "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels."

In the end, the term is used just this one time in the Bible. The doctrine of angelology is a valid point of study, but much of it rests on inferences and speculation. Even when these inferences are particularly obvious, it is better to not be overly dogmatic on a subject which is otherwise not explicitly stated. What can be inferred without going beyond what is written, is that Paul is using these “elect angels” in his charge to Timothy, thus implying that they are to be witnesses to Timothy’s life and actions, and they will probably be a special part of testifying to his life’s conduct when he stands at the Bema Seat of Christ. Otherwise, there would be no need for them to be witnesses.

Logically then, it follows through that all saved believers are likewise viewed by this heavenly host. Each of us is implicitly included in this. The charge to Timothy is given in this solemn manner because of the especially weighty position to which he has been elevated. Therefore, he is expected to “observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.”

The idea of “prejudice” is that he is to not make a judgment apart from the facts. The word, *prokrima*, is unique here in Scripture. It is a compound word signifying “to judge before.” He is not to decide before hearing a matter based on the status of another, his affiliation or friendship with another, or for any other reason where he might be inclined to make a pre-judgment based on anything but the facts that will be presented.

The idea of “partiality” indicates a pre-inclination. The Greek gives the sense of a balance-scale inclining one way or another because it is tipped in that direction. Rather than such an attitude, proper application would demand that justice is blind-folded, and that the balances are properly aligned through the entire process of discerning a matter. As the leader of the church, he is to properly weigh out all matters – doctrinal, interpersonal, etc., fairly and without any sort of bias being allowed to enter into his decision making. He is to hold to the highest standards of fairness and proper discernment.

Life application: Due to presuppositions, and due to our personal likes and dislikes as humans, the words given to Timothy are exceptionally hard to apply to our decisions. But this is what is expected of those in the ministry. If we conduct our affairs with bias, or with pre-judgments, we will inevitably corrupt our doctrine, and err in our decisions. First and foremost, we are to hold to Scripture as the ultimate source of our faith. And then we are to apply its high and noble standards to our decision making process at all times. We are not to twist the word in the process as well. Instead, our doctrine should be fixed and unchanging as we deal with such matters.

Lord God, where can we go to find the right way to deal with others in a fair and proper manner? If we trust in our own selves in this, we will surely fail. We are a product of our makeup, and that makeup is faulty. But Your word is not. And so help us to put aside our fallen inclinations, and to apply the precepts of Your word to our lives in all matters. In this, our decisions will be fair, our judgments will be sound, and Your will is what will be revealed in those things we do. Help us in this, O Lord. Amen.

Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure. 1 Timothy 5:22

Various ideas have been given about what "Do not lay hands on anyone hastily" means. Some equate this with the laying on of hands for healing. Others say it is concerning the absolution of sins. Neither of these fit the tenor of what Paul has been referring to in the pastoral epistles. Rather, it is quite clearly referring to the ordination of others into the ministry. The laying on of hands for Timothy was referred to in verse 4:14 and in 2 Timothy 1:6. The laying on of hands for special ministry purposes is mentioned also in Acts 6:6 & Acts 13:3.

The laying on of hands in this way does not impart to the individual some type of power he had not previously possessed, it does not give "more" of the Spirit to the individual, and it is not a type of talisman (as some churches seem to infer) giving them the apostolic authority which has been passed down from generation to generation. Each of these are unscriptural, and without any basis at all, except what was conjured up from the heads of those who want to appear more "spiritual" than others.

The laying on of the hands is simply a formal pronouncement, and a solemn act which acknowledges that a person is to be set apart for the glory of the Lord. Like baptism, it is a sign intended to relay a truth to the world of a certain, already existing, state of things. This is why Paul then states, "nor share in other people's sins." If laying hands on another for ordination injected that person with super concentrated Spirit juice, there would be no need for Paul to include the one ordaining in a warning about laying on of hands. But by laying hands on someone who is not fully qualified, and whose sins are evident, the one ordaining actually shares in the sins of the one ordained.

As he works in the ministry, sinning and performing in an unrighteous manner, the person who ordained him bears the responsibility for his actions in allowing the miscreant into the ministry in the first place. This is exactly why the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican/Episcopal Church, and a host of other churches have gone the way

of complete apostasy. They ordained those who should never have been considered for ordination, and together they reap what they have sown.

Instead of following such an unholy course of action, Paul admonishes Timothy to, “keep yourself pure.” The decisions Timothy must make include ordaining ministers, deacons, elders, missionaries, etc. In carefully evaluating each person, praying over them, testing them according to the guidelines given in the pastoral epistles, and etc., Timothy would keep himself pure, and he would be free from sharing in the sins of others.

Life application: The laying on of hands for ordination does not make a person holy. Rather it is to be an acknowledgment that the person has lived in a holy manner and is acceptable to be ordained and set apart for service to the Lord. In ordaining perverts, greedy people, and any others who are specifically unqualified according to Scripture, the church does not gain a good new minister. Instead, it gains a new problem, and it heads quickly down Apostasy Avenue and onto Heresy Highway. It is better to have nobody to fill a job in the ministry than to fill that job with a moral minuscule.

Lord God, may our churches learn to be wise in who they ordain to the ministry. Ordination is not a way of obtaining holiness. The one ordained, if not already living according to Your word, will only continue down his depraved path. May our churches go to Your word, and then carefully evaluate what ordination requires. Only then should they choose men who are qualified according to those guidelines. There are enough deviants in the pulpit. May they be replaced with men of God whose hearts are set on honoring You. Amen.

No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach’s sake and your frequent infirmities. 1 Timothy 5:23

The addition of this verse by Paul brings with it a wonderful note of authenticity concerning the epistle itself. It is a spontaneous thought which would not have been included by someone forging the letter. In other words, for those who claim that this epistle is a later writing by someone who was aware of a more developed hierarchy within the church than that which would have been seen at this early stage, they are actually shown to be wrong by verses like this. The flow is spontaneous and natural, and it demonstrates an affection between Paul and Timothy which is borne out by the other times in the New Testament when the two are mentioned in connection with one another.

The words in the Greek are more purposeful than this translation. It is more precisely rendered, "Be no longer a drinker of water." The word "only" is implied in here though. It tells us that Timothy probably kept a rather strict diet, including only drinking water. Paul is giving advice that is meant to correct the very thing which seems to be the cause of Timothy's ailments. In having too strict of a diet, he is probably doing more harm to himself than good. To correct this, Paul says, "but use a little wine."

The degree of lunacy which is provided by tee-totaling scholars concerning this verse is beyond the pale. Some insist (without any biblical support at all) that this means wine "mingled with water." Some go so far as to provide the ratio of water to wine, such as 3:1. This is wrong on the surface. Paul had just told Timothy to not drink only water. It would be pointless to drink wine after cutting it down to where it was 75% water. The word *oinos* means "wine." The Bible never mentions cutting wine with water.

Others say that this is merely "grape juice." Note: Grape juice doesn't lead to inebriation. The word *oinos* comes from the Hebrew word *yayin*. Both indicate fermented drink containing alcohol content. A 15 minute study on this is sufficient to figure that out. The Bible has two specific times in the Old Testament when drinking alcohol was forbidden. Neither of which apply today, nor could they apply because the law is annulled in Christ.

Rather, and correctly analyzed, Paul is telling Timothy to drink a little wine. He doesn't say how much "a little" is, and other than telling Christians to not be drunk with *oinos* (or wine) in Ephesians 5:18, no amount is set for the believer. At one time, Paul even acknowledges that those in the church were drunk, and he doesn't rebuke them for it (1 Corinthians 11:21). Instead, he tells them to conduct such affairs at home, not at the Lord's Supper.

Understanding that abstinence is not biblical, and understanding that Paul is admonishing Timothy to not be an ascetic to the point that it actually harms his health, he then explains why he should drink a little wine. It is "for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities." It can be inferred that Paul actually believes Timothy's abstinence from wine is what is causing him the stomach troubles he has. In order to correct this, he gently recommends that he drink wine in order to take care of this issue. The "other infirmities" are not explained, but Paul believes that the wine will help with those things as well. He had been around Luke the physician for many years, and he had probably learned to give advice about things like this by watching how Luke handled them. Whether this is the case, or whether it was simply Paul's understanding of the benefits of wine from having

grown up in the Jewish culture, he imparts his note of wisdom to Timothy here in a gentle, caring, and loving manner.

Life application: If someone tells you that the Bible promotes abstinence, ask them which Bible they are referring to.

Lord God, thank You for the many grains which rise from the earth to nourish us, and for the fruit of the vine which gives our hearts joy and delight! You have provided us with blessing in abundance, and we are satisfied by the bounty You give. Help us to be grateful for all such things, and to always reflect on how good You are to us. Let us never be unappreciative of Your open hand of blessing. Amen.

Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later. 1 Timothy 5:24

The words here now continue with what was said up until verse 22. Verse 22 was a parenthetical thought which Paul felt the need to insert for the sake of his beloved protege. Now, continuing on, he says, "Some men's sins are clearly evident." The idea here is obvious. There may be someone who has immense talent, who is a great leader by the world's standards, an effective orator, etc., but he has sins which are evident in his life. He may drink too much. He may openly support perversions such as homosexuality. He may teach that it is OK to divorce at will. A person who holds to such sins is wholly unqualified to be ordained, regardless of his other excellent qualifications. He, and those like him, have sins "preceding them to judgment."

And then there is another class. Paul says, "but those of some men follow later." When attending seminary, there are students who seem to be the epitome of right conduct, who apply biblical precepts to their walk, who appear worthy to be followed, and etc. However, eventually, it is discovered that they actually bear faults which are grievous sores that would keep anyone from being ordained. Such faults would have been missed if the individual had not been carefully evaluated according to the guidelines set down by Paul in the pastoral epistles. This is the idea here. To ordain someone into the ministry is one of the most solemn and important things that occurs in the church. And therefore, there must be a careful, methodical review of each person to be so ordained. This is the idea of Paul's words now.

Life application: It is never expedient to ordain someone to the ministry simply because there is an empty position which needs to be filled. The Lord allowed the void, and He is

fully capable of sending the right person to fill it in due time, or to keep the position from being filled for His own reasons. He may be testing the church or pastor concerning a willingness to trust Him. Whatever the reason, the church is the Lord's, and we are to not set aside His word in order to ensure the church continues to run as we believe it should be.

Great, gracious, and glorious heavenly Father! The church is Yours. Help us to treat it as such. Help us never to rush into filling a vacancy or a need while neglecting Your word in the process. You have given us directions in how to meet such needs, and so may we trust that You will also provide the solution, which is in accord with Your word, when the time is right. May we never jump ahead, assuming that we must act without sticking closely to Your word in the process. Amen.

Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden. 1 Timothy 5:25

Paul has been speaking of placing men into the ministry. In the previous verse, he spoke of those who have sins which would exclude them from ordination. Now he writes a thought which is probably intended to reassure Timothy concerning finding the right man, or passing over a qualified person. It may have been a point of concern that someone who was truly qualified might not be recognized as such. Paul says that this would hardly be the case. Just as some men's sins are clearly evident (vs. 24), so "Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident."

Many men who are qualified will be known as such because they simply exude good works in all they do. It is hard for a person who is always doing what is good, proper, and glorifying of God to hide himself and his deeds. What he does, even if it is done quietly and without the sounding of trumpets, is usually clearly evident. However, even if there is someone who falls into this category, but does his best to completely hide his good deeds, Paul says of such that, "those who are otherwise cannot be hidden." This corresponds to the sins of men which "follow later" of verse 24. Just as those sins will eventually be exposed, so the good, but hidden, works of a faithful soul will eventually be brought to light as well.

Paul's words are to be taken as true, and inspired by God. If there is a person who should not be ordained, and he is carefully investigated as should be the case, then that person's flaws will come to light. And a person who should be ordained, but whose good deeds have remained hidden, will eventually be brought forth if the proper procedures are followed.

This is why it is so sad that there have been so many people who should never have been ordained who have still been placed into the ministry. There are faithful people who could have been selected, but because of carelessness on the part of those responsible for the process, the wrong choices are made, and churches quickly devolve into all sorts of perversions and apostasies.

Life application: It is of the utmost importance that the procedures for ordination which are outlined in Scripture be held to. That, along with prayer, are the most effective tools available to ensure that the right people are placed into the ministry, and the wrong people are given the boot before they can infect the body.

Lord God, Your word tells us that if we desire wisdom, we should ask it of You, because You give to all liberally and without finding fault. And so Lord, grant us wisdom in abundance. Help us to be people who will fear You, who will treasure Your word, who will apply the precepts of Your word to our lives, and who will seek to glorify You in all we say and do. May this be so, and may it be a sight for others to see and desire as well. Amen.

CHAPTER 6

Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and *His* doctrine may not be blasphemed.

1 Timothy 6:1

Among other things, Paul has been speaking about the requirements for, and duties and responsibilities of, ministers in the church. He has then talked about the treatment of those in the church such as the “older man,” “older women,” and “younger women.” He then turned to the treatment of, and expected conduct of the widows. After that, he mentioned the honor expected to be granted to elders. He has methodically written about these many categories, but there is yet another category which existed openly in Roman society, which has existed in societies since then, and which – though highly frowned on by the world at large – is still on-going in parts of the world today. It is the issue of “bondservants,” or “slaves.”

As there is not such a category in most of the world today, one could then say, “Well, this no longer applies, and so I can overlook this portion of Scripture.” However, this would not be wise. We may not have bonded servants in the world today, but we have employees in companies, hired hands on ranches, and on and on. Though not a one-to-one comparison, the precepts should still be applied to those who are under “masters,” whether bonded servants, or “lowly” paid employees.

Paul says that “as many bondservants are under the yoke.” This means those who are obligated to masters. The word “yoke” shows that this is a difficult, and a disagreeable position in which the bondservant finds himself. A yoke is generally considered in this light, although it can simply be a symbol of authority without difficulty as well (see Matthew 11:30). The believing slave is specifically being addressed here, but let us in our minds also consider an employee in this capacity for the moral purposes which are laid out. Paul says that they are to “count their own masters worthy of all honor.”

In our minds, a slave is one who should attempt to get his freedom from his cruel master – the one who has no right to rule over another in such an undignified way. Such a slave should be able to rebel, speak against, and vilify his owner. But Paul says otherwise. Instead of such a negative state towards his owner, he is to actually do the opposite, counting him worthy of all honor.

And in a comparable sense, today it is fashionable to rage against the employers. How unfair they are! They make more than the peon workers and are to be rebelled against,

spoken against, and vilified, but Paul would argue against this as well. He would tell the employee that he owes special honor to his employer. The word “count” gives the sense of making a sure, conscious judgment concerning the matter; it is to be the leading thought in what is being considered. And there is a reason for this. It is “so that the name of God and *His* doctrine may not be blasphemed.”

A believer is to be honoring of the master (or the employer) because he bears the name of Christ. In acting in a disobedient and disrespectful manner, it is Christ who will then be reviled by the owner (or employer). Anyone who can't see this, doesn't understand the nature of humanity who inevitably looks to the highest authority of a particular matter as the one who is ultimately responsible for unappreciated conduct. For example, when a nation has an argument with another nation, it is the leader who is reviled, thus he stands representative of all below him who are implicitly reviled at the same time.

And so it is to be understood that when a slave (employee) who is a believer acts in a manner which is unsuited to his position below the master (employer) it is the Lord, and the teaching of the Lord, who will receive the blame. “Oh that ‘Christian’ is such a bad slave (employee). That Jesus whom he follows is not good, and His teachings are contemptible!” This is what Paul means with his words. This should never be the case. Instead, the master (employer) should say, “Graham is such a marvelous soul. I have never had such a faithful person under my charge, and it is truly a wonderful reflection on his faith, and on Jesus. I need to find out more about this wonderful religion he believes in.”

Life application: Our actions as believers reflect directly on the Lord we serve. Let us attempt to remember this at all times, and to act in a manner which will bring Him, and His glorious gospel, much acclaim.

Lord God, help us as believers to remember that You are who we represent. Our actions will always be judged in relation to You. When we act like fools, then Christianity, and our Lord who leads the faith, will be reviled. When we act as faithful followers of Christ, then people may still hate You and our faith, but they will not be able to bring discredit upon You in the process. Grant us wisdom to remember this always. Amen.

And those who have believing masters, let them not despise *them* because they are brethren, but rather serve *them* because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things. 1 Timothy 6:2

Paul continues with the responsibilities of bondservants. He has addressed their state in general with the previous verse, and now he specifically addresses those “who have believing masters.” A believing slave who has a believing master is under an additional obligation. The situation could seem cumbersome or illegitimate, but such is not the case. Paul specifically demonstrates this with his words. The master/slave relationship is valid, even when both are believers. And so as instruction to the slave he says, “let them not despise them because they are brethren.”

There should be no time that a slave (think the same of the employee relationships of today) should say, “Because my master (boss) is a believer, I should be treated in a new and unique way, no longer under the old way.” Rather, there is no reason why the status between the two should be changed. A master has a right to his property, and a boss has a right to be in control of those under him. The master (or employer) is to be served faithfully and without some type of questioning about his status as a Christian being addressed at all. Instead, in relation to the master, the bondservants should “rather serve *them* because those who are benefited are believers and beloved.”

These particular words are highly debated as to what Paul is saying. The ones “benefited” are argued by some to be the slaves – in other words, the slaves receive the kindly acts of the masters. Others say that it is the masters who are “partakers of the benefit of the labors of the servant.” Others see this as “the benefit which the gospel imparts.” Each of these is possible, but Paul’s words are directed to the bondservants, and so it is likely that the ones benefited are the masters. The onus is on the slave, and the reward is to the believing master. This is because they “are believers and are beloved.” Charles Ellicott says the thought of this is, “Every good piece of work I do will be a kindness shown to the one who my Lord loves.”

This adequately explains the entire thought. The slave (or employee) is to serve all the more faithfully because he is serving not the master, but the Lord through the master. This is supported by Paul’s words to the bondservants at Ephesus in his epistle to that church as a whole –

“Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; ⁶ not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, ⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he* is a slave or free.” Ephesians 6:5-8

Paul then finishes the thought with, “Teach and exhort these things.” The words are probably not limited to the issue of bondservants, but instead cover everything from Chapter 5 through to this verse here. All of the interactions between people within the church, all of the responsibilities of those same people, and all of the things which have been exhorted by Paul are to be taught to them, and then they are to be exhorted regularly to the body.

Life application: It is our duty as those who serve under others to do so faithfully and honorably. How much more should this be the case when we are serving fellow Christians. We are honoring the Lord in following this course of action.

Lord God, help those of us who serve others to do so faithfully and with the attitude that You are being honored through our service. And for those of us who work under fellow Christians, let us be all the more willing to serve them because they are beloved by You, and so in serving them faithfully, we will be honoring you. Help us in this, O Lord. Amen.

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness,
1 Timothy 6:3

Paul is referring to what he has just said about bondservants honoring their masters, especially if they are believers. However, his words are certainly not limited to this. He is using it as a springboard to identify miscreants within the greater umbrella of “Christianity.” In this, he is probably referring all the way back to his words of verse 4:1 where he speaks of people departing from the faith, giving heed to doctrines of demons, etc. Again though, the immediate context is that of the honoring of masters by bondservants. This is what brought the greater subject to mind.

With this thought fresh from his pen, he then says, “If anyone teaches otherwise.” He has shown that there is to be orderliness in master/bondservant relations, and there is to be submission by the slave to the master. To teach otherwise would be to promote insubordination and disobedience in what was an established hierarchy within the culture. Insubordination would lead to strife, strife would lead to an unhealthy situation between believers which is contrary to what the Lord expects in such matters. But instead of being obedient to the command given by Paul, there may arise someone who teaches something contrary, “and does not consent to wholesome words.”

The Greek word translated as “consent” signifies “to draw near.” In other words, such a person stays far from what is wholesome. Instead, he teaches words which divide the

church, causes division between believers, and upsets the hierarchies which have been legally established within the society. His teaching then is disobedient even to “the words of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The words of Christ teach a life of harmony, peace, and patience. Insubordination, leading to rebellion cannot be found in His doctrine, nor can it be found in the writing of the apostles inspired by the Holy Spirit. This body of writings, on the contrary, contain “the doctrine which accords with godliness.”

The words of Scripture, Old Testament and New, reflect a humble attitude towards others, obedience to duly established law, and honor of God. These things are lacking in those who would teach words contrary to the precepts Paul has laid down. He will continue with this thought for the next few verses, and then, in contrast to what false doctrine produces, he will show what sound doctrine concerning godliness produces.

Life application: The words of the Bible are given to lead believers into godliness. The problem with humanity is that understanding what true godliness is has been so marred by sin, that it is literally impossible for us to pursue it apart from God’s special revelation. In our natural selves, we align godliness with all kinds of things which are completely ungodly. Some of the time, this may be intentional, sometimes it might just be because we are completely confused about the nature of God. No matter what the reason, we need to study Scripture, and apply it to our lives in order to truly live in a godly manner.

Lord God, the world has so many ideas about how to be godly that without Your word it is simply impossible to determine what is correct. But You are God, and You have shown us directly what You expect. Thank You that we don’t need to guess, we don’t need to listen to various opinions, and we don’t need to be misled by false teachers. All we need to do is pick up Your word and study it. In this, we find what it means to live a godly life. And in following Your word, we will then be pleasing to You. And as all Scripture points to Christ Jesus our Lord, then we have the ultimate example set before us to emulate! Thank You for Christ our Lord, and the word which reveals Him to us! Amen.

...he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, 1 Timothy 6:4

Paul continues to describe the one who teaches doctrine contrary to the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ. He says that “he is proud.” This follows along with the person mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:6. There he was speaking of a recent convert who, if ordained, might let pride step in and take over. In this, he would “fall into the *same* condemnation as the devil.” This is what pride leads to. It is pride which causes

arrogance, boasting, the belittling of others, etc. A person filled with pride becomes a fanatic, even though he may have no idea at all about the truth of the matter he is prideful about. Instead of having a reasonable understanding, Paul says he actually is “knowing nothing.”

In this, he shows that what such a person thinks he knows is actually completely wrong. Paul, writing to those in Corinth, says it this way, “...if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know” (1 Corinthians 8:2). Having incorrect knowledge of a matter, and still trying to teach on it, is highly detrimental. Instead of properly expounding on what should be taught, such a person “is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words.”

This takes us back to a similar thought that was mentioned in Chapter 1 concerning those who “give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.” Some people, in their perverse desire to show that they are always right, will argue over words. Someone might argue over what the meaning of “is” is. Or, he might take a word which has 20 possible meanings, each which must be derived from the context, and he will arbitrarily pick one meaning and then argue that it is what is being referred to, even though the context says otherwise. The list of such arguments over words could go on all day. It is a perverse-minded soul who is simply obsessed with disputes, and who finds any and every reason for getting into one.

Next he says that from such disputes “come envy.” A person who is argumentative in this way has shown that he is actually unqualified to teach. When he faces a person who rightly divides the word and teaches soundly and with proper authority, envy runs through him. From this will then come “strife.”

The one who argues over words, knowing that he has no sound footing, will simply become contentious and strive to make his point, even if it is completely wrong. He will gather people to his “side” in order to argue against others, thus dividing the congregation. It is his pleasure and his great desire to argue for the sake of argument, and to strive simply because he is supposedly elevated in his own eyes and in the eyes of those he has swayed with his falsities. From such strife then comes “reviling.”

As he lacks true soundness in his teaching, and as it becomes obvious that his words have no merit, he will then begin to revile those he disagrees with. Harsh, abusive language is directed at others when they will not concede to his point of view. He gets myopic, focusing on one or two pointless issues, and he continues to exalt them to an unhealthy status, as if what he is focused on is of the utmost importance. Anyone who

tells him to “lighten up” and redirect to what is important is slandered with insults. An easy way to find people like this is to simply post a challenging theological question on social media. The post will light up with a dozen of these reviling “specialists.” When anyone shows them the folly of their way, “evil suspicions” about them are immediately cast forth.

In this, the direction changes from direct reviling, to a conspiratorial attitude. He will attack those who disagree with him by questioning the source of their knowledge, as if it was evil which led them to their conclusions. And this could be evil in the source itself, or evil in the intent behind their ideas directly. The first is a source fallacy. It doesn't matter where someone learned something. If it is true, how or where he obtained the information is irrelevant. The second is a common attack over those with whom one disagrees. He might say something inane like, “Your point is of the devil because your intent is simply to argue against me.” He projects his own state of mind on those with whom he disagrees.

Life application: The Proverbs give sound advice concerning the people whom Paul mentions in this verse. Solomon says –

Do not answer a fool according to his folly,
Lest you also be like him.

⁵ Answer a fool according to his folly,
Lest he be wise in his own eyes. Proverbs 26:4, 5

What Solomon is saying is that in arguing with a fool one reduces himself to the state of that fool. However, there are times when a fool is to be answered in order to keep his foolishness from being vindicated and continued on. What this means is that if one is going to engage a fool, do so with precision, defeat his argument, and when he continues to argue, ignore him. Playing Scripture tennis with a fool can only end in you looking foolish as well. Leave the perverse to wallow in his own wretched pool of mud.

Lord God, Your word tells us that there is a time when we should answer a fool, lest he be wise in his own eyes. But Your word also tells us to not answer a fool, lest we become like him. Give us wisdom to deal with the fools of this world so that we can quickly shut down their foolishness, but to not let our dealing with them turn into a fool-fest that we become a part of. Grant us this wisdom, and help us to be sound in our teaching, especially in that which pertains to godliness. Amen.

...useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a *means of gain*. From such withdraw yourself. 1 Timothy 6:5

Paul continues his list concerning those who do not consent to teach the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ. This verse begins with teachings which lead to “useless wranglings.” The Greek word is based on a root which gives the sense of rubbing away or constant friction. It is only found here in the Bible, and the sense is that of someone who wears away time, arguing over minutiae. This perverse attitude demonstrates someone who consumes his time, and the time of others, arguing over things that have absolutely no practical value at all. This, and the other things which Paul has already described in the previous verse, come from “men of corrupt minds.”

The meaning of this is that these people have hearts which are wicked and they focus on evil, teach what is evil, and spread any falsehood which suits their depravity. They are men who are “destitute of the truth.” Vincent’s Word Studies says that the meaning of this indicates that they once knew the truth, but they put it away from themselves. Thus, they have nothing but that which is false to pass on to their hearers. This type of person doesn’t look to Christ for godliness at all. Instead, Paul says they “suppose that godliness is a *means of gain*.”

To grasp the meaning of this, all one needs to do is think of the modern day “prosperity gospel” preachers. They live lavishly, they have expensive cars, they have planes, and they have large houses. But more, they teach that by giving them your money, you too will prosper and become wealthy. Thus, Jesus becomes to them a cosmic ATM – put money in, and money will come out – but with interest added. When someone has attained wealth, it is attributed to godliness. The more godly a person is, the more gain they have. Paul says to Timothy that, “From such withdraw yourself.”

He is saying that Timothy (and indeed all true Christians) are to have nothing to do with such people. We are to withdraw from them, not be a party to their depraved state of mind, and not support their views at all. They are to be exposed and shown for the frauds that they are.

Life application: Godliness has nothing to do with one’s bank account, and it cannot be said that a godly person will find material gain in this world. To even hint at this is a complete departure from the truth of Scripture. The prosperity gospel, which has enriched many TV evangelists and others of their ilk, is a poisonous lie which is not to be tolerated by those who call themselves followers of Christ.

Lord God, many teachers say that godliness is a means to gain. They teach that if you are living a godly life, that prosperity will naturally follow. They also then instruct their audience that by sending money to their ministry, a person is showing obedience to the gospel, and they will be blessed for that. Lord, it will be good when people realize the lies of such a message, and it will be even better if these false teachers are vaporized for their lies. Help us to realize such false teachings, and to be sound, faithful followers of Christ, regardless as to our state of wealth in this world. Amen.

Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 1 Timothy 6:6

The words now given by Paul show a complete contrast to what he has just written concerning those who teach ungodly doctrine. In those verses, he described the perverse nature and teaching of those people, and then he said that they “suppose that godliness is a *means* of gain.” But Paul teaches otherwise by saying that “godliness with contentment is great gain.”

The false, ungodly teachers looked at godliness resulting in material gain and worldly wealth. But Paul shows that instead true gain for the godly is an internal thing – contentment. The word he chooses is found only here and in 2 Corinthians 9:8. It speaks of self-sufficiency. It is used of the Spirit-filled believer in Christ. Instead of pursuing supposed “godliness” in order to gain more and more material wealth, the faithful, godly Christian has all he needs through the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ.

In this, there is a self-satisfaction, but it is based on possessing everything necessary because of what Christ has done, and also because of what Christ grants. Thus, it is a sufficiency which is valid in times of difficulty and suffering as well as in times of prosperity and abundance.

Life application: If one is looking for contentment in worldly possessions, his contentment will end with the next market crash, the burning down of his house, or in the termination of his employment. Such times of trouble easily lead to extreme depression or even a leap out of the 14th floor of a building. But when one’s hope and trust is in Christ, the Christian can look beyond the temporary and see the eternal promises which lie yet ahead. Where is your hope? Where is your contentment? Where is your sufficiency?

Lord God, if our hope and joy is found in the things of this world, that is a pretty temporary and shallow place for it to be. Markets crash, houses burn down, and when jobs end the pay stops coming in. If our hope is in those things, where will we then turn?

But for the soul who knows Christ and His eternally glorious promises, nothing can truly steal our contentment, joy, hope, and sufficiency. Instead, these things are found in Him, and in His lasting promises to His faithful. Great is our promised inheritance! And great are You, O God, our Hope. Amen.

For we brought nothing into *this* world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

1 Timothy 6:7

The words of this verse carry a similar thought to that of Job 1:21 –

“Naked I came from my mother’s womb,
And naked shall I return there.
The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away;
Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Solomon also states something akin to this thought in Ecclesiastes 5:13-17. There is an understanding that we all came into the world with nothing but our physical bodies attached to the soul which animates us. Nobody would dispute that. Things like time, place, family, etc., accompanied our birth, but those things are not physical in nature. Paul is speaking of material gain in these verses, and there was nothing material which accompanied us at our birth.

As we had nothing material with us that the world didn’t have before our coming, no such thing was introduced into it at that time. In like manner, there will be nothing lacking from the material world when we depart. Everything we accumulated will remain behind. The Egyptian pharaohs seemed to think otherwise, and stored up vast amounts of things to take with them on their journey into the afterlife. Other cultures and individuals have attempted to do this as well. And yet, when their tombs are discovered, all that stuff is still here. As Paul says, “*it is certain we can carry nothing out.*” When our ticket is punched, the only thing going on that ride is the soul. Even our physical bodies don’t go along.

Paul’s point in saying this is to demonstrate that we should be content with the lives we live. In the coming verse, he will show where contentment should rest.

Life application: If you are storing up worldly wealth in anticipation of being ahead of others when you die, you haven’t thought things through very well. In fact, your reasoning is completely lacking any sense at all. The most you can do is save up things which will be passed on to others after your death, but what you have treasured up will

not profit you a bit when you pass on. Think on this, and be gracious – and yet be wise and discerning – during this life with the fruit of your labors.

Lord God, Your word teaches us a sure truth in saying that we came into this world with nothing, and we will depart it with nothing as well. All we had besides our bodies was the time, place, and circumstances into which we were born. Now, during our earthly walk, help us to use our life and circumstances to honor You, to help others in their own lives, and to be ready to return to You with the safe assurance that we will meet on friendly terms because of having received the gift of Christ Jesus Your Son. Amen.

And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. 1 Timothy 6:8

Paul just cited the thought of writers like Job and Solomon who noted that we brought nothing into this world, and we will not be carrying anything out when we finally kick the bucket. This is why we kick the bucket instead of carrying it along with us full of stuff. As we are simply passing through without the hope of any material gain on the way out, then what we have in that regard is really not that important. Our walk here is a few short years, and our walk in the next life will be for all eternity. A million years isn't a scratch on the surface of what we can anticipate.

With this in mind, he says, "And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content." The Greek word translated as "we shall be content" indicates sufficiency. Those things that are necessary for meeting our needs are sufficient for the conduct of our lives. The words "food and clothing" are intended as the meeting of those general needs, whatever they may be. We cannot do without food, and we should not do without clothing. Food is a necessary thing to keep us physically fit, and clothing is a necessary thing to keep us morally covered.

Thus, if we have the things which are necessary for our physical lives, and the things which are needed for our spiritual lives, we should be content, for they are sufficient for meeting our main needs. Medicine would fall under the "food" category. The Bible would fall under our "clothing" category. The first attends to our physical needs, the second attends to our spiritual needs. In understanding what things are actually necessary to meet these needs, we can discover which things are actually superfluous in our lives. It is those things that we need to not give great priority to. Instead, if we have them, we can (and should) be grateful for them, but we should not let them consume who we are.

Life application: Tickets to a sporting event, a nice TV, lipstick, a new car... such things are not a part of our necessary needs. They may make life fun, easier, more pleasing, and so on, but they add nothing of true value to our walk towards glory. Let us keep these things in mind, and let us be attentive to the things that are truly important first. And then, let us show gratitude for the extra blessings which have come our way.

Lord God, there are things which are necessary for our physical and spiritual lives, and then there are things which are simply blessings which benefit us in a temporary way. Help us to understand the difference between the two, and to not let things which are actually unimportant for our walk towards eternity consume us and divert us from keeping our eyes on You. Instead, help us to be grateful for our blessings, but not consumed by them. Amen.

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 1 Timothy 6:9

Paul has been speaking of our state in this life, and that we should be content with “food and clothing.” Now he adds in a qualifying thought on this by beginning with, “But those who desire to be rich.” He does not say here, nor does he ever say, that it is wrong to be rich. It is the desire, not the possession, which is being noted. When one has a desire for wealth which consumes a person beyond their desire for honoring God, then things are upturned. The schools of asceticism took the opposite view, and supposed that if being rich brought about a conflict with one’s relationship to God, then through a purposeful vow to poverty, one would be brought nearer to God. Paul’s words here dispel that notion. It is desire which is being discussed.

This desire to be rich will lead a person to “fall into temptation.” If someone looks to wealth as their heart’s desire, then they will be tempted to do whatever it takes to become wealthy, even if it is not legally or morally right. The Lord doesn’t include this in His model prayer. Instead He said, “Lead us not into temptation.” The one desiring wealth acts in a manner contrary to the guidelines of properly honoring God.

Paul then says they will also fall into “a snare.” Birds and animals are caught in snares. They are tempted by something which is in the snare, and they head into danger without even realizing what lies ahead. This is what Paul is saying here. People who are tempted by riches will find themselves entrapped without even having seen the snare which is lying there waiting to capture them. The idea of a snare is found throughout Scripture, warning God’s people to be attentive and not get trapped. Solomon speaks this way about men who are not attentive –

“For man also does not know his time:
Like fish taken in a cruel net,
Like birds caught in a snare,
So the sons of men *are* snared in an evil time,
When it falls suddenly upon them.” Ecclesiastes 9:12

Paul next continues with the thought that such people fall “*into* many foolish and harmful lusts.” These are the things which a desire for wealth, and often the attainment of wealth, produce in the human heart. The word translated as “harmful” is found only here in Scripture – *blaberos*. It signifies something injurious.

With wealth often comes the temptation by others to misuse that wealth. They do this so they can also benefit from the riches. Women will tempt men (or vice versa) because of their wealth. Those who deal in drugs will tempt the wealthy in order to drain them of their wealth. When one has an expensive sports car, they will be tempted to speed in it and drive recklessly. The list could go on all day. A person desiring wealth, or who has attained his desire, is drawn into “foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.”

The Greek word translated as “drown” is one found only here and in Luke 5:7. It means to sink, submerge, or drown. If one thinks of something being plunged into the deep, that is the idea which well describes this. Paul’s words are carefully selected to show the inevitable outcome of those whose desire is to attain wealth. Inevitably, they drown in “destruction and perdition.”

The word “perdition” is not appropriate here. That gives the thought of an eternal damnation. This is not the intent. Instead “ruin and destruction” gives the sense. The idea is that the person who has his priority on riches will normally end up ruining himself, his wealth, and the things that he touches, such as family and friendships. To get the sense of what this is relaying, all one needs to do is to think on the many televangelists whose priority is money. How often do they end up shamed, penniless, or imprisoned. They may actually be saved, but they got misdirected by wealth, and they suffered the consequences of their failings.

Life application: In all things, a balance is needed. There is nothing wrong with being wealthy, and so giving up all one’s goods for a life of asceticism is ridiculous. But there is nothing wrong with not being rich. And so to strive for wealth can be a hugely detrimental thing for a person to pursue. In the end, if we have our basic needs met, then with this we should be content.

Lord God, help us to not desire wealth and riches which perish. Rather, help us to desire the true riches, and the eternal wealth, which comes through a faithful life of pursuing You, May we direct our heart, our affections, our eyes, and our efforts towards holiness in Christ Jesus our Lord. In this, we will surely attain the greatest riches of all! Amen.

For the love of money is a root of all *kinds* of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

1 Timothy 6:10

The first clause here is widely translated. Several examples are:

- For the love of money is a root of all *kinds* of evil. (NKJV)
- For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. (NLT)
- For the love of money is the root of all evil: (KJV)
- But the root of all these evils is the love of money. (Aramaic Bible)
- For a root of all the evils is the love of money. (YLT)

The Greek reads, “Root indeed *of* all the evils.” There is no article in front of “root,” but Charles Ellicott says that by not including it, one is watering down the intent. He says that “the article disappears before the predicate, in accordance with the well-known rule respecting subject and predicate.” Vincent’s word studies disagrees saying this is incorrect because, “It is not the only root.” Vincent’s is correct; the KJV is incorrect. The love of money is not the root of all evil. Money did not cause Satan to fall, nor did money cause man to eat the forbidden fruit. Pride was the cause of those evils.

The Aramaic and the YLT attribute the “evils” to the preceding verses. This is both interesting and probably correct. In this, they follow the logic of Charles Ellicott concerning the inclusion of the article, but they do so based on what has been said. Further, the adjective “evil” is plural, and so “evils” is correct.

But most other translations shy away from even this specificity, and they say simply that money is a root of all sorts of evils. One thing is for sure, the KJV is wrong. Instead, loving money is either the root of the evils Paul has written about (a truth in itself), or it is a root of those evils and all sorts of other evils (also a truth). One way or another, the evil produced by the love of money, Paul says, is “for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness.”

It is not “the love of money” for which these have strayed, but for the money itself. This is not an error, but an explanation. It is the love of money which then takes the opportunity to attain the money that is desired. In this, these people “have strayed from the faith.” The idea is that we can only direct our eyes and affections to one thing at a time. If we are looking west, we are not looking east. This is what Paul is saying. Instead of looking to the glory of God, they are looking at earthly gain. They have left their first love and gone after a harlot. And this is a result of “their greediness.”

The heart attitude is misdirected, and they are not “hungry for the Lord.” Instead, they are “greedy for gold.” As a result, Paul then says that they have “pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” The word *peripeiró*, translated as “pierced,” is found only here in the Bible. It is used when putting meat on a spit, and thus it signifies “to wound deeply.” The people Paul is speaking of are real people that he is describing to Timothy. However, his words describe any believer who has gone down this sad path.

In pursuing money, there is found to be a nagging conscience of the wrong which is being pursued, and of the judgment for that wrong which lies ahead as well. But this is not always the case. Some people (think of the perverse televangelists) have completely seared their consciences to the point where they no longer consider this. Therefore, what Paul is probably referring to is the future judgment which lies ahead of them. He is saying it as an accomplished fact. They think they have great gain, but in their judgment, there is to be only great loss.

Life application: If you want to help a greedy televangelist, don’t send him your money.

Lord God Almighty, and indeed you are almighty, why would we forsake a faithful commitment to You and pursue worldly wealth instead? As You are almighty, then You are the Source of all things. Money is just a thing, and it is transitory and corruptible. Help us to be wise in our pursuits in this life. May we only seek after that which is glorifying of You and worthy of rewards in Your presence. Those rewards will be eternal. Help us to think clearly, and then to act on that clear thinking. Amen.

But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. 1 Timothy 6:11

In verses 9 & 10, Paul relayed words to Timothy which concerned those people who followed after riches instead of pursuing Christ. His words spoke of some who had actually strayed from the faith at that early time in church history. In contrast to taking

such a sad and painful path, he now addresses Timothy directly with, “But you, O man of God.”

Paul knew Timothy well enough that he could confidently call him a “man of God.” He had proven himself faithful, and he was a faithful servant of the Lord. However, Paul still says, “But...” This shows us that Timothy was not above turning to such things as Paul had just mentioned. Paul himself spoke of the inward desires which warred in him in 2 Corinthians 11:29. There was nothing “super spiritual” about these men of God, and they were not above falling into temptation. This is the reason for the warning and admonition now given. Paul tells Timothy to “flee these things.”

Those things which are harmful to a right walk with the Lord, meaning those things which he has just described concerning loving money and pursuing worldly wealth, were to be fled from. Fleeing is an active action. Timothy wasn’t simply told to not pursue those things, but to flee from them. He was to put a distance between himself and such things, and to continue to increase that distance at all times. And while fleeing from those things, at the same time he is instructed to “pursue righteousness.”

Timothy (and each of us) don’t have to simply flee from unhealthy desires, but while doing so, we can pursue that which is proper at the same time. This same basic sentiment is found in Romans 12:21, “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” In pursuing righteousness, the desires of worldly gain will be lessened. One overcomes the other. The righteousness which Paul speaks of is that of which God is the Source. It is a divine righteousness which comes with the approval of God as one pursues it. Along with this, Paul tells him to pursue “godliness.” This is the “inner response to the things of God which shows itself in godly piety” (HELPS Word Studies). It is a godly response of the heart to those things God is pleased with.

Likewise, Timothy is instructed to pursue “faith.” The word signifies being persuaded. It is not the same as belief, but the two are similar. Hebrews 11:1 says that “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” This is something that Timothy is charged to pursue, and it is something that every believer is to pursue as well.

Next Paul adds in “love.” The word signifies love which centers in moral preference. In this case Paul is certainly referring to divine love. In pursuing this, the believer will then be able to live out that which is attained through pursuit. To understand what this means, Paul’s words of 1 Corinthians 13 should be referred to.

Following love, Paul instructs him to pursue “patience.” The word signifies endurance and steadfastness. This is especially as God makes it possible for the believer to endure those challenges which are allotted to us in this life. Paul has noted Timothy’s infirmity already (1 Timothy 5:23). He gave him advice concerning it, but here he adds to that (and indeed any challenge) by telling Timothy to pursue endurance in and through such things.

And finally, Paul notes “gentleness.” The word signifies “meekness which expresses power with reserve and gentleness” (HELPS Word Studies). Timothy is in a position of authority, and yet he is to wield that authority in a meek and gentle manner. Where he could be severe, he should consider being mild.

Paul’s words to Timothy are to keep him on the right path, and to keep him from desiring that which is unhealthy and unproductive in his life as a minister, a man, and a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Life application: Though Timothy was in a position of authority in the church, the same words of this verse can (and should) be applied to our own lives as we live in the presence of the Lord. In pursuing these noble things, we will be restrained from pursuing that which is contrary to what God would desire for us.

Lord God, help us to live our lives in a way which is pleasing to You. Give us the wisdom to flee that which is unhealthy, and to pursue that which is noble, righteous, and godly. Help us to understand that we are not above falling into temptation, and to always fix our eyes, our hearts, and our attention on that which is good. To Your glory we pray. Amen.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 1 Timothy 6:12

Paul has just previously exhorted Timothy with direct words of what he should do. He now continues to exhort him with strong and direct challenges to grow in the faith in a steadfast and hearty way. He begins with, “Fight the good fight of faith.” Actually, there is an article in front of “faith,” and so it should read, “Fight the good fight of the faith.”

He is using the terminology of the Grecian games here, having done this at other times in his epistles. They were as well known then as the Olympics are for us today. In this expression, he is equating Timothy to a fighter on a set team (the faith) and he is

encouraging him to fight that good fight on its behalf. The goal of this fight is to “lay hold on eternal life.”

Again, there is an article in front of “eternal,” and so it more rightly says, “lay hold of the eternal life.” All people will live out an eternity somewhere. For those who are not in Christ, it will be an eternity, but not one of life. Instead, it will be one of corruption, but it will be eternal nonetheless. This is another reference to the Grecian games. Just as the crown of victory is held out to the victor to lay hold of, Timothy is exhorted to grasp this far more worthy prize. It is that which the victor will possess forever.

He then notes that it is this eternal life, “to which you were also called.” There are two aspects to this. The first is spiritual and inward. It is the call of any believer, who then responds to that call – accepting Christ Jesus and coming to salvation. In Timothy’s case, that call then transferred to a greater inner call to the ministry. In conjunction with this, there is also the outward calling which came by those who recognized his inward calling, confirming it in him as a minister of the Lord. This is evidenced by the words, “and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”

In these words, Paul could be referring to Timothy’s conversion and baptism, or he could be referring to his acceptance into the ministry. What is more likely is that Paul is thinking of both. He is looking at the entire process of Timothy’s conversion, growth, inner desire to serve, review by those who would eventually ordain him, and his actual ordination process. In this, Timothy confessed the good confession at various times, and certainly “in the presence of many witnesses.”

The entire thought is one which is united, from beginning to end. Paul is exhorting Timothy based on who he is as a believer, and the process of his walk in Christ which brought him to the position he now is in. He is to continue that good fight, and continue to lay hold of the eternal life as the prize which is set before him.

Life application: How willing are you to continue to lay hold of that which you already possess? Is it wearisome to grasp what Christ has offered and pursue it continuously? Or is it your heart’s desire to grab it, hold it fast, and not let it go for a second? Don’t be the faithless Christian that says, “Yes, I’m saved. I’m good with that.” Instead, let the fire burn inside you always. “Yes, I’m saved. I will do all I can to continue to work out this salvation with joy and zeal.” May it ever be so in your life.

Lord God, for those of us who have called on Christ, may we never just be content with that. Instead, stir our hearts to not just “get saved,” but to pursue that salvation. Give us

the hunger to read Your word, share in Your goodness, tell others about Your glory, hold fast to Your precepts, and never depart from a walk which is pleasing to You. Help us to be like those in a contest, striving to be the best that we can at all times. To Your glory, may this be so. Amen.

I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and *before* Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, 1 Timothy 6:13

Based on his words just given in the previous two verses, Paul now urges (or charges, as the word also signifies) “in the sight of God.” This is similar to the charge he gave in verse 5:21. Timothy is being reminded that everything which occurs, including Paul’s charge, is in the presence of God. He is there, He is watching, and Timothy is to remember this. He is to take to heart the words of instruction, and apply them steadfastly to his life and doctrine.

He then adds in a special thought concerning God. It is He “who gives life to all things.” God isn’t just a being who watches as things unfold, and who may direct things to happen as he sees fit, like a chess master. Rather, God is the Creator, and He is the Sustainer of all things. No matter what happens in this stream of time, God is there tending to the beings He created. For those who are in Christ, nothing can separate us from His eternal promises. Therefore, Timothy has no reason to fret over the awesome charges he has been given. He is simply to be obedient to them, and God will direct according to His wisdom.

Paul next adds in a second witness to his charge by saying, “and *before* Christ Jesus.” Jesus was named in the charge of verse 5:21 as well. Paul is not making a distinction between God and Christ Jesus by saying this, but rather is calling on the name of Christ Jesus as the Mediator between God and Man, and the One who is the example for man to God, and of God to man. As this is “in the sight of” Christ Jesus, it is an obvious reference to His omniscience and omnipresence. One cannot actually call a witness before a being which is not present, and who does not have knowledge of the witness.

From there, Paul says that it is “Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate.” There are two major views on what this actually means. The first is that He suffered under Pilate. He was a faithful witness to the truth of God, making His confession through the Cross of Calvary. In this confession is seen the love of the Father through His sacrifice. In this witness, there is found emulation in each faithful believer who is willing to follow Him even unto death. Revelation 1:5 gives this sense –

“...and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.”

The second view is that the witness was before Pilate. He had spoken to the leaders of Israel, claiming that He was the Messiah, the Son of God (John 19:7). They then explained this to Pilate who then interrogated Him further. Christ Jesus made the good confession which is then the “warrant for the truthfulness of Timothy’s confession” (Vincent’s Word Studies).

What is probably the case is that Paul is referring to the entire sum of what occurred. Both His words and His actions became a united confession “before Pontius Pilate.”

It is of note that the mentioning of Pontius Pilate here is similar to many other early Christian writings where the crucifixion is connected to him. For this reason, it is assumed that Paul’s words are a part of a liturgical confession of early Christian believers.

Life application: As a Christian, are you willing to stand on the truth of Christ’s words and deeds as your own charge, and as your own confession? To what point will you follow through with this? Even to death itself? We have been given the example in Christ. Are we willing to follow that example as it was given if called upon to do so? Let us determine now that no matter what we are faced with, we will confess Christ unflinchingly.

Lord God, where does our faith stand? Most of us have never been tested in it, but if we are someday faced with confessing Christ or giving up our life, will we be willing to follow His example even to death itself? He made the good confession, and so grant us the fortitude to also make the good confession of our faith if called upon to do so. May we never shy back from our faith and trust in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

...that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing, 1 Timothy 6:14

These words are tied to the beginning of the previous verse – “I urge you in the sight of God ... that you keep this command without spot.” It is specifically speaking of this, but it may also be inclusive of the entire body of words thus far detailed since verse 11. Either way, Timothy is urged by Paul to hold fast to what has been commanded “without spot.” That means in an unsullied manner. The Greek word specifically speaks of that which is morally untainted. There should be no deviation from Paul’s charge, and it is to be

carried out in a faithful and zealous manner. How good it would be if all of the Lord's ministers acted in such a manner today!

Paul continues with the word "blameless." This gives the sense of "above reproach." There should never even be a hint that someone could bring a charge against him in light of the entire scope of his conduct. Any charge that may be brought would be found groundless. Such is the meaning of what Paul conveys now to Timothy.

With these points of character in mind, he then says that Timothy is to continue in this spotless and blameless state "until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing." The word for "appearing" here is found only in Paul's writings, and all of them are in the pastoral epistles with the exception of 2 Thessalonians 2:8. It is speaking of Christ's literal appearance in a physical manifestation.

Timothy then stands representative of any and all ministers who would follow after him. They are to conduct themselves in the manner stated by Paul, and they are to guard against anything that would bring reproach upon themselves, and thus upon the church and the Lord Jesus Christ. They are to remain morally pure as they conduct their duties.

Life application: How sad it is that pastors and priests throughout the world have departed from the words of this admonition. Pulpits are filled with perverts, and immorality is found in what should be places of purity and holiness. How displeased with the church of today the Lord must be. To get an idea of what His attitude towards such behavior is, take the time to read the seven letters to the seven churches found in Revelation 2 & 3. A couple minutes of reading will show you the Lord's displeasure at such things.

Lord God, if we want to know how You feel about the unholy conduct being condoned by pastors and churches today, all we need to do is to spend the five minutes it takes to read the seven letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 & 3. If our hearts are still soft to what concerns You, we will then mourn over what is happening. Give us hearts and minds which are willing to stand against the great immorality found in the church, and to hold fast to Your eternal precepts. May we be found pleasing in Your sight, not caring what man thinks of our conduct, but only concerned about what You think of it! Amen.

...which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 1 Timothy 6:15

Paul, while giving Timothy a solemn charge, exhorted him to keep the commandment faithfully “until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing.” Now he continues with that thought by saying, “which He will manifest in His own time.”

It doesn’t say here that God will manifest Christ Jesus on a date when rapture date-setters say will occur. Paul leaves His manifestation up to God. There will be no hint of His appearing until He chooses to appear, and it will be a specific moment in time which is completely at His choosing, and His alone. As Charles Ellicott states, “Here the language of fervid expectation is qualified by words which imply that in St. Paul’s mind then there was no certainty about the period of the ‘coming of the Lord.’ It depended on the unknown and mysterious counsels of the Most High.”

From there, Paul then states, “*He who* is the blessed and only Potentate.” The word here is *dunastés*. It is where our modern word “dynasty” comes from, and it signifies one who is a ruler or potentate. It is someone mighty in power. In this case, it means that only God is truly in such a position of rule and power, and that any other is below Him. The position He rules from is above all others. This is then explained by the words, “the King of kings and Lord of lords.”

Any king or lord on earth is subject to His true kingship and lordship. The scepters they possess are only because of His allowance. It is He who sets up kings and deposes them. No rule and no authority attains to His position, and all will acknowledge this rule when they are gathered before Him.

In the words found here and the coming verses, scholars attribute these titles to God directly. And rightly so (see verse 13). The next verse describes that which can only pertain to God. However, the same title, “King of kings and Lord of lords,” is given to Christ Jesus in Revelation 19:16 (and a modification of this term is found in Revelation 17:14, which is also speaking of Jesus). Thus, we have a clear and obvious reference to the Deity of Jesus Christ.

Life application: Paul has once again said, clearly and unambiguously, that which is stated in Acts 1:7 and in 1 Thessalonians 5:1. We are not privy to the timing of the Lord’s return. That information belongs to God alone, and it will not be made known until it occurs. Rapture date setters are disobedient to the word of God. Do you think God will tell them when Christ is coming when they are already in disobedience to His word? Nah, not going to happen.

Precious heavenly Father, how good you are to us to have sent Christ Jesus as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. You have cleansed us in His precious blood, and You have reconciled us to Yourself. All You ask us to do is to believe. Christ died for our sins; He was buried; and He rose again, proving He had no sin of His own. By a simple act of faith in that, we are restored to You. Open eyes and hearts to this wonderful message, O God. And help us to be willing to share it so that those eyes and hearts can respond. Amen.

...who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen. 1 Timothy 6:16

In the preceding verse, Paul described God as “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords.” It was noted then that this same title is used elsewhere of Jesus, showing that though Man, He is also God. Paul now continues on with His description of God with the words, “who alone has immortality.”

Angels are created beings. Even if they are eternal from their creation, they were created. Men are created and finite in their existence (in the state they are now in). Only God is without beginning or end. He is infinite in His existence and stands apart from His creation. He is self-existent and a Necessary Being (one who cannot “not” exist). He is. It should be noted that Jesus is described elsewhere as immortal. Thus, as there is only one God, He is God; a part of the Godhead which Scripture describes.

Paul notes next that God is “dwelling in an unapproachable light.” The Greek reads, “dwelling in light unapproachable.” Eternity itself is described as light from which proceeds the eternal God. It is as a covering in which He is enveloped, and which no finite being can approach. The reason is that God is infinite. No being in creation can look at the infinite, only whatever portion God has revealed to him. To be able to see the infinite in its entirety would mean that the being is God.

As there is only one God, it excludes any created being from beholding and grasping all that God is. Psalm 104 says of God, “Who cover *Yourself* with light as with a garment, Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.” Both His infinite nature in time and in space are indicated in those words. And again, in Daniel 2:22, it says that “light dwells with Him.” The Bible is consistent on this infinite nature of God.

Paul continues with, “whom no man has seen or can see.” There is abundant support in the Bible for this statement. God said to Moses that, “no man shall see Me, and live.” To fully peer into the infinite is impossible. If God were to fully reveal Himself to finite eyes,

it would destroy them; overwhelming them with glory. John repeats this concept in his first epistle by saying that “No one has seen God at any time.”

This is the purpose of the Incarnation of Christ. God entered into His creation, uniting with it in a unique way in order for us to “see the Father” as He reveals Himself in Christ. Jesus stated this in John’s gospel. There He said, speaking of the Father, “...from now on you know Him and have seen Him” (14:7). He then said directly, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (v. 9). This does not mean that we have seen all of the Father, but the means by which the Father chooses to reveal Himself, which is through the Son. Jesus Christ is the bridge between the infinite God who cannot be seen, and the finite beings He has created. Thus, in eternity, we will never fully “see” God the Father. Rather, we will ceaselessly, endlessly, and eternally see Him as the Son reveals Him.

Paul then says of Him, “to whom be honor and everlasting power.” This is a description of God which is explained by Paul’s words to the Romans. There he said, “For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever” (Romans 11:36).

"For of Him" indicates that He is the Creator and the Source of everything. For "through Him" indicates that God is the Sustainer of all things. He is the unseen agency of our continued existence. " For "to Him" shows that He is the end-purpose and goal of all things. He is the final and ultimate reason for everything which was created. To more fully understand this, read the commentary on Romans 11:36.

The power in creation came from the Creator. The beauty of creation came from Him as well. All things honorable first came from Him. Those things continue to exist because of Him. And the glory which He has created finds its purpose for being glorious in Him. Thus, when Paul says “to whom be honor and everlasting power,” it is an indication that everything done by God is a reflection of who He is, and it is there as a demonstration of His infinite being, calling out to us to reflect on His glory which exceeds that which is created.

Paul then closes with “Amen.” It is a statement reflecting “truth” or “so be it.” He has made a point concerning the Creator which is truthful, and we are to consider what he has said as such.

Life application: One of the greatest errors in the minds of Christians is that we will someday fully see God the Father. As noted above, this is impossible. He is infinite, and we can never see all of what is infinite. However, Jesus has showed us that if we have seen Him, we have seen the Father. In other words, we have seen the exact

representation of the Father, but not all of the Father. When we look to Jesus, we are seeing the Father revealed to us in a manner which we can comprehend without being destroyed. This will continue on for all eternity as the Son reveals the infinite Father to us.

Lord God, how simply astonishing it is to think of Your glory. We peer into the heavens, even for countless light years, and we see wonder beyond comprehension. We can look into the atom and continue finding smaller and smaller workings which go beyond our ability to see. Everything works as it should, even though we can never perceive it all. And yet, it was created by You. If this is so, then You are greater than all we see, and all we have yet to see. How glorious You truly are. May we stand in awe of Your holiness, and never assume that life is out of control. You have created, and You sustain. Why should we fret with such magnificent power tending to us. All glory and honor belong to You! Amen.

Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.

1 Timothy 6:17

Who is Paul speaking to in this verse? Timothy. And who is Paul speaking about in this verse? Believers in the church. Paul is wholly unconcerned with the status of those outside the church. And how does Paul describe those he is speaking about in this verse? Rich in this present age.

Paul has spoken about slaves at the beginning of the chapter. In verse 6, he spoke of what true riches are in saying, “Now godliness with contentment is great gain.” He then explained that we came in with nothing and will depart with nothing. He then spoke of those who desired to be rich. After that, he spoke of Christ, the Possessor of all of heaven’s riches – King of kings and Lord of lords – and yet it is He who made the good confession before Pontius Pilate, stripped of all worldly wealth, and about to be crucified.

Now Paul returns to the rich. He is not speaking to those “who desire to be rich” of verse 6, but of “those who are rich in this present age.” These are believers who possessed wealth. How they obtained it is not stated. Maybe it was through inheritance. Maybe it was through conquest while in the military. Maybe they invented something useful to the empire and were rewarded for it. It doesn’t matter how they obtained it. Instead, Paul simply acknowledges that they possess worldly wealth. To those, he commands them “not to be haughty.” The word Paul chooses is found only here. It is a compound

word signifying “high” and “inner perspective regulating behavior.” In other words, someone high-minded, or someone who elevates himself above others. It would be someone who has unwarranted pride because of his wealth.

The connection to the bondservant of the earlier verses shouldn't be missed. Paul first and foremost classifies people as believers and unbelievers, not on position (master/slave) or possession (rich/poor). Nor does he find any other distinction by which one should be elevated above another, with the exception of faithfulness in ministry (double honor of verse 5:17). For a rich person to elevate himself above another is actually a denial of the truth that it is from God that the blessing of wealth actually came. In 1 Corinthians 4, Paul said this to the church –

“...that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. ⁷For who makes you differ *from another*? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive *it*, why do you boast as if you had not received *it*?”

-1 Timothy 4:6, 7

As they had received what they possess, they are not to be haughty about their possession. He then adds, “nor to trust in uncertain riches.” Again, a word found only here in Scripture is used. It signifies two things. First, the wealth is indefinite. Secondly, that such wealth will not be recognized in heaven. It thus lacks any true value in God's bar of judgment. And so, not only are they to not be haughty about their wealth, but they are not to trust in their wealth as well. All earthly wealth can and will end. The lesson of the book of Job shows us this, as does the great wealth of Solomon's empire, which was quickly frittered away. Such things are uncertain, and can be gone in a breath.

And so, instead of trusting in personal riches, they are commanded to trust “in the living God.” He is the Source of all things, and therefore when we trust in Him, we are trusting in that which can never be taken away. All true wealth is derived from Him, and it is He “who gives us richly all things to enjoy.” This is a different way of saying exactly what he said to the Corinthians. What we have came from Him; it was given to us to enjoy in this life, and as we received it, we are not to boast as if we did not.

The word translated as “enjoy” is found only here and in Hebrews 11:25. It speaks of the benefit received from what is possessed or experienced. Paul is making a contrast between being haughty about wealth, and rightly enjoying it as a blessing bestowed from God. In the next verse, he will describe how that enjoyment is truly realized.

Life application: At the beginning of the commentary, questions were asked about those Paul is speaking of. They are rich, and they are believers. Neither Paul, nor any other writer in the Bible, says that it is wrong to be rich. It is how a person treats their wealth which is either right or wrong. It is never even implied that a person should divest himself of wealth, but to be a proper steward of what he possesses. Don't let the envious tread on what you possess, but don't let the downtrodden be tread upon by you because of your possessions.

Lord God, You have granted some of Your people to be wealthy. For those who are, help them to understand that their wealth ultimately came from You, and that they are not to be haughty in their riches. At the same time, help those who are poor to not be envious of others who have more. May those who have little not tread upon the wealthy because of their possessions, but may the wealthy not tread upon the downtrodden because of their wealth. May we use what we have, be it little or be it much, to Your glory. Amen.

Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share

1 Timothy 6:18

The final words of the previous verse said that it is God “who gives us richly all things to enjoy.” Paul’s words now follow directly on that with. The obvious intent is that because it is God who has given all things for us to enjoy, we should find pleasure in sharing the good we have been blessed with. In fact, it should be the greatest joy for those who have been so blessed, to then be willing to share what they have received. Paul does not directly say this now, but it is implied in how he is structuring his words. Further, as will be seen in a moment, it is something Jesus explicitly taught.

First, Paul says, “Let them do good.” Numerous verses support this notion of doing good, but Galatians 6:10 is a sufficient verse to support the idea –

“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Galatians 6:10

There, Paul noted, “especially the household of faith.” By sharing one’s material blessings with other believers, a person will keep from being haughty, as he previously warned. He next explains what “doing good” means. First, he says “that they be rich in good works.” He uses the same word here that he used in verse 9 concerning “those who desire to be rich.” The contrast is obvious. One who is truly rich is one who is rich in good works. Instead of self-gratification, he is one who blesses others and stands approved before God.

Next he says, “ready to give.” This means that the person with wealth should have the ability to share his wealth at any time. He should be looking for opportunity to arise where he can suddenly reach out and assist. United with that is the next thought, “willing to share.” This is a similar, but stronger, word. It signifies that the person should actually receive enjoyment by sharing with others. In other words, he should rejoice at the chance to share, and in the opportunity to do so when it arises.

Life application: Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). It is not always natural for those who have wealth to share it, but as one gives, it becomes natural and even enjoyable. Having said this, there is always the need to share properly. Giving away money, time, or ability takes discernment. Some people are leeches; some people ask but don’t need; some people will use what they are given inappropriately. The one who gives must use discernment, but must also not use that as an excuse to not give. There are ample opportunities to give, and there are many great needs when one looks around.

Lord God, as all things we possess came from You, help us to be willing to share what we can with others. And yet, help us to be discerning about those we give assistance to. Let us not be used by those who aren’t willing to tend to themselves, or to give to those who will waste what they receive, or even to give when no true need exists. As the things we have come from You, we should certainly consider that we are responsible to You for what we do with that which we possess. Give us wisdom and discernment in this, O God. Amen.

...storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. 1 Timothy 6:19

This continues verse 18 which is dealing with “those are rich in this present age.” Taken together they read, “*Let them* do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share,¹⁹ storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

In doing those things prescribed in verse 18, the rich will then be “storing up for themselves a good foundation.” A foundation is the base of a structure. Jesus is called the foundation of the church in 1 Corinthians 3:11. Then in Ephesians the foundation is called “the apostles and prophets,” meaning the word which speaks of Jesus, and Jesus is the very cornerstone of the foundation. The importance of Christ to the church then is that He is the fundamental base of everything else. For the rich – when they do good,

are rich in good works, are ready to give, and are willing to share – they then lay “a good foundation for the time to come.”

This is speaking of the life ahead, not a needy time in this life which may arise. It is a foundation for their eternal existence which begins with the judgment seat of Christ where “each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10). Paul specifically describes the works of this age and how they will be viewed in 1 Corinthians 3:12-15. There he says –

“Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If anyone’s work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”

This is what Paul is referring to now in his letter to Timothy. The rich in this life have choices concerning what they will do with the money entrusted to them. Will it be used for this life, temporary and fleeting as it is, or will it be used for gaining true riches in heaven? Paul’s words implore the rich to think this through so that “they may lay hold on eternal life.”

The word “eternal” here is found in some manuscripts. In others it says “truly.” In other words, “lay hold on that which is truly life.” If “truly” is correct, the meaning is obvious. This life is only a preparation for what lies ahead. Thus, “worldly riches” would be contrasted with “true riches.” If “eternal” is correct, it doesn’t change the doctrine of salvation by grace apart from works, which is defined elsewhere. Rather, as John Gill states it, “not by way of merit, but as the free gift of God, which the riches of grace give a title to, and a fitness for; and which shall be laid hold upon, and enjoyed by all that seek the true riches.”

Life application: What are you storing up your riches for? The Bible asks you to stop and consider this now. Eternity is a really long time.

Lord God, help us to be good and kind to others as their needs arise. Though it is prudent to save our money in this life, and Your word even tells us to save for our children’s children, help us not to make this the only goal of our few years here. Rather, along the way, grant us opportunities to tend to others with our money, and then spur us on to do

so with an open hand of grace, expecting nothing in return. May we thus be pleasing people in Your sight. Amen.

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

What we probably have in this verse and the next, are words penned personally by Paul. Normally, a scribe was used to write as he spoke out his thoughts. Although mere speculation, the very personal nature of this verse probably indicates that Paul has picked up the pen in order to show his personal love and care for Timothy.

Whether this is correct or not, the feeling is transmitted either way by the use of the injection and name, “O Timothy!” From there, Paul will introduce six words into the Bible in this one verse, two of which are found only here. He begins the thought with, “Guard what was committed to your trust.” This speaks of the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

This was committed to him by the laying on of hands. He is being implored to protect this message, teach it properly, continue in sound doctrine, speak against false gospels, and so on. Everything which will ensure that the proper message of Jesus Christ – His Person and His work which is relayed – is to be guarded. It has been entrusted to Him, and so even more than someone would guard the greatest chest of treasures, so Timothy is instructed to guard this sacred possession.

Paul then says, “avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings.” The word “profane” is *bebélos*. It is an adjective which describes a threshold to enter a building. Thus it signifies either improper or unauthorized access. It is then equated to anyone who is unfit to access God because they approach Him in a manner which is improper. They lack faith, and they speak of Him in this capacity. Paul would have Timothy shut the door on such perverse people so that they would have no access into the congregation of the saints.

The word translated as “idle babblings” signifies that which is called out, but has no merit. If a cock crows, in the middle of the night, it isn’t doing anyone any good. Instead, it is simply an annoyance. He is of better use in a meal than he is as a herald of the day’s dawning. Paul implores Timothy to avoid people that would proclaim a vain gospel. They are to be silenced rather than listened to.

Next he says, “and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge.” The word “contradictions” is the Greek is the word *antithesis*. It has since carried on directly into our English language. It is a proposition advanced by one party against another. In this case, there is the true gospel which Timothy possesses, and there is that which is false, and which is proposed against the truth of Christianity. Paul describes this using two words, the first indicating “under a false name,” and the second which describes knowledge, doctrine, or wisdom.

In other words, it is speaking of anything which opposes the message of Christ, and which would contradict it. Christianity has nothing to fear from science. For example, God is the author of all scientific principles, and therefore, any supposed science which opposes the Bible will be found incorrect, and it should be avoided. Doctrines such as evolution, big bang cosmology, gnosticism, religious pluralism, and on and on, are opposed to what the word of God proclaims. It is not wrong to understand these things, and in fact, one cannot argue against them unless they understand them. But they are to be avoided in application into our belief system. What we apply to our walk with the Lord is to be based on what the Lord proclaims in His word.

Life application: If we claim to be followers of the Lord, we are to seek out only the truth in the world around us, and then apply that truth to our lives. If the Bible is the word of God, then nothing that we encounter will ever contradict its precepts. And so we are to stand on the truth of Scripture, even when the rest of the world says otherwise. Our faith in what God proclaims must be above all else. Having said that, we cannot insert our own improper interpretation of what the Bible states into our beliefs. The sun does not revolve around the earth, and the Bible never proclaims this. We must rationally evaluate the evidence of the world around us, knowing that it, and the Bible, will always come to harmony in what it proclaims.

Heavenly Father, Your word says certain things which many supposed specialists today claim are not correct. We are told You created man; they say we evolved. There is a conflict between the two. Are we to believe You, or are we to believe those who claim Your word is wrong? Where is our faith? Help us to accept Your word and to search out the world from a biblical perspective first and foremost. Amen.

...by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith.

Grace be with you. Amen. 1 Timothy 6:21

This is referring to the “idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge” of the previous verse. People are so very easily misdirected. Some things

which they are misdirected by will not cause them to stray from the faith, but they will put a wall up between other believers. And some things will cause them to completely stray from the faith of the pure gospel of Christ. The list of aberrant teachings that people hold to which have nothing to do with the gospel is long. And yet, these things are placed on an unhealthy level of importance. Most adherents of them have no idea why they even believe the doctrine. They were simply told it was true by an idle babbling, and they accepted it.

Others get caught up in strange doctrines which cause them to completely take their eyes off of Christ. This is especially so with people who watch too many YouTube videos on conspiracies. It becomes garbage in, garbage out. Instead of reading the Bible, they focus on that which is wholly unimportant, having nothing to do with a relationship with Christ, or adhering to the gospel. In effect, they have “strayed concerning the faith.”

This is Paul’s final warning before closing, and so it is an important point to remember. We are to hold to sound doctrine; not get caught up in aberrant teachings; and fix our eyes, our hearts, and our attention on Christ Jesus. Paul’s words would tell you to stand fast on the gospel, read your Bible constantly, and study to show yourself approved before God.

Paul then closes with, “Grace be with you. Amen.” Grace is unmerited favor. It cannot be earned. Paul would have Timothy, and indeed all who read this letter, understand that God is gracious and He indeed will bless His people with grace. In order for that to happen, they need to stand fast on that which is sound and reasonable. The entire letter has been given with this in mind. To depart from its precepts is to put up a wall between oneself and God. Allow God’s grace to be with you by adhering to His word. The word “Amen” means, “truth” or “so be it.” This is Paul’s petition for Timothy and for all of God’s people. May it be so.

Life application: It is so very easy to be misdirected by that which is unsound. May we focus our minds on God’s word, be reliable in pursuing it and applying it to our lives, and may we not allow people who have unhealthy agendas to sway us from a close and personal relationship with our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus.

Lord God, help us to be attentive to Your word, and to not get distracted by things which are unsound. There are so many odd teachings in this world which have nothing to do with godliness, sanctification, and a pursuit of Your word. These things will only misdirect us, cause divisions between ourselves and other believers, and result in our walk being unstable. They may even cause us to stray from the faith completely. Keep us from such

things, O God. Be with us and protect us as we live out our lives in a manner which is pleasing to You. Amen.