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Wednesday, April 24, 2024

Timothy  
Titus  
Philemon

## LESSON NOTES

### TIMOTHY & TITUS: PAUL'S FAVORITE ELDERS

#### OVERVIEW

Truth is a paradox. Fragile, yet everlasting. Clear, yet elusive. Worshiped, yet blasphemed. Ignored yet trumpeted from on high. Truth is fragile when inconvenient. Elusive when filtered by useful demi-truths. And, blasphemed when considered merely a product of human intellect.

Truth is everlasting when viewed from the Truth. Clear when seen in action. Many are blind. Truth is worshiped when it is the only focus.<sup>1</sup> Many love bokeh more. Truth is never ignored — if we listen to the trumpet. Many are deaf. Truth is pure when unfiltered. Many add culture to their drink. Worship Truth, and you worship Him. Many blaspheme.

Paul was obsessed with Truth. As he attempted to educate two of his favorite elders, Timothy and Titus, he knew the road to truth was beset with side roads, “useful” roads, broad roads leading to destinies in which we humans love to dabble. The theological Las Vegas of those days<sup>2</sup> was found at these roads’ finale, roads characterized by —



1. teaching false doctrines (1 Timothy 1:3; 6:3);
2. teaching Jewish myths (Titus 1:14);
3. wanting to be teachers of the Law (1 Timothy 1:7);
4. building up endless, far-fetched, fictitious stories based on obscure genealogical points (1 Timothy 1:4; 4:7; Titus 3:9);
5. being conceited (1 Timothy 1:7; 6:4);
6. being argumentative (1 Timothy 1:4; 6:4; 2 Timothy 2:23; Titus 3:9);
7. using talk that was meaningless (1 Timothy 1:6) and foolish (2 Timothy 2:23; Titus 3:9);



<sup>1</sup>The first rule for a quality image, still or video, is focus. Without correct focus there is no crisp image, of truth or Truth.

<sup>2</sup>Paul deploys a variety of warning signs about the roads. In 1 Timothy 1 along with 4:1-8; 6:3-5,20-21, Paul warns against heretical teachers in the Ephesian church.

8. not knowing what they were talking about (1 Timothy 1:7; 6:4);
9. teaching ascetic practices (see 1 Timothy 4:3, food restrictions); and
10. using their positions of religious leadership for personal financial gain (1 Timothy 6:5).



As you study these dead end roads, look for the signs Paul provides Timothy and Titus. Nothing is more profoundly pragmatic than effective warning signs.

#### A NOTE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

The success of all Bible study is entirely dependent upon three entities: you, your teacher and Holy Spirit. Therefore, He exhorts you to study—do your homework; encourage your teacher by prayer and active participation; most importantly, continually pray to Father God for Holy Spirit to guide us as we learn what He taught the writers of Scripture thousands of years ago.

### SOME TEXTUAL BACKGROUND ISSUES FOR 1 TIMOTHY

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1. A key purpose of *1 Timothy* was to assist Timothy in caring for the church at Ephesus. In so doing, he is attempting to combat false teaching (e.g., see 1:3-7; 4:1-8; 6:3-5,20-21), build an infrastructure for the church there (see 2:1-15), and appointing qualified church leaders (see 3:1-13; 5:17-25).
2. A key problem of the church at Ephesus was comprised of three dimensions—
  - a. early forms of and foundations for gnosticism,<sup>3</sup>
  - b. decadent Judaism (1:3-7), and
  - c. asceticism (4:1-5)
3. *1 Timothy* was written after the events of Acts 28 when Paul lived in Rome for two years, at least 8 years after Paul's three year stay in Ephesus. (See Acts 19:8,10; 20:31)
4. Timothy was not an official "apostle." More like Barnabas who was also called an apostle (see Acts 14:14), Timothy was given instructions about selecting overseers (3:1-7; 5:17-22). Thus, it may be inconsistent, if not wrong, to call Timothy one of Paul's favorite "elders." It may be best to regard him as an apostolic representative, delegated to carry out special work (see Titus 1:5).

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<sup>3</sup>Intentionally not capitalized. While Gnosticism is a major movement in Christianity throughout its history and contemporary thinkers, the tendency to create Gnostic versions of almost all major religions is rampant. We humans love to claim extra gnosis (γνῶσις, knowledge) that the "unwashed" don't have, and love to claim spiritual insight and closeness to some spiritual being that others don't, and can't have, especially without "our" knowledge, "our" spiritual superiority, and/or "our" faithfulness to the orthodoxy and orthopraxy of said religion.

1 Timothy 1-14. *A Foundation of Tough Love*. Saul, also known as Paul, opens his letter to Timothy by saying:

As a messenger of Christ Yeshua, by the authority of Father God and Christ Yeshua the basis of our trusting, confident expectation, I write to Timothy, my true child [τεκνο, gender neutral] in the faith. I do so with the gift, mercy, and reconciliation from Father God and Christ Yeshua, our Sovereign.

Remember when I was in Macedonia and I urged you to stay in Ephesus so you could warn (as in “order” or “command”) certain knuckleheads who are teaching unorthodox doctrines to just stop it. They’re devoted to myths and endless genealogies; they love promoting controversies rather than being God’s steward [οικονομίαν, management, administration, [3622](#)], stewardship which must be done by faith.

Here’s the goal of this command—love, love which comes from a pure heart, a truthful [ἀγαθῆς] conscience, and a unfeigned, hypocrisy-free, sincere faith.

Some have forsaken this love, and turned to meaningless jibber-jabber. They want to be professors, but do not know about what they are talking, or even what they’re so confident about.

We know the law is good, if used properly. After all, the law is not for the righteous, but for—

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|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Lawbreakers.         | 5. Father & mother killers. | 9. Slave traders. |
| 2. Rebels.              | 6. Murderers.               | 10. Liars.        |
| 3. Ungodly, sinful.     | 7. Adulterers.              | 11. Perjurers.    |
| 4. Unholy, irreligious. | 8. Perverts.                |                   |

Yes, whatever is contrary to the sound doctrine, doctrine that conforms to the glorious good news of the praiseworthy God; i.e., the doctrine with which He entrusted me.

I thank Christ Jesus for the strength He’s given me, and His confidence in me as evidence by His appointment to His service. I once was God-cursing, a persecutor of innocent people, not to say

### 1 TIMOTHY 1:1-14

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

<sup>2</sup>To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

<sup>3</sup>As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer <sup>4</sup>nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God’s work—which is by faith. <sup>5</sup>The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. <sup>6</sup>Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. <sup>7</sup>They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

<sup>8</sup>We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. <sup>9</sup>We also know that [the] law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, <sup>10</sup>for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine <sup>11</sup>that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

<sup>12</sup>I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service.

<sup>13</sup>Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. <sup>14</sup>The grace [χαρις, “karis,” gift, [5485](#)] of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

nothing of my violent nature. Nonetheless, I was shown mercy because I was ignorant and did not believe. The gift of our Lord anointed me generously, as well as the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

- Q What gives one the authority to speak on behalf of a sovereign? ["apostle" = ἀπόστολος; messenger, envoy, delegate, [652](#)]
- Q What does Paul's mention of some people's obsession with "endless genealogies" tell you about the knuckleheads in Ephesus?
- Q What is the source of love according to Paul's declaration here? [pure *raison d'être*, truth-filled conscience, and a faith free of hypocrisy, filled with sincerity] What makes love impure, hypocritical, and/or insincere?
- Q What are some examples of God's law being used improperly?
- Q Which example of bad behavior surprised you?
- Q Why do we have difficulty showing mercy to the ignorant and those who don't believe, especially those who have simply "got it wrong?"
- Q Would Paul's ministry have been more powerful if he had not been such a violent blasphemer, a persecuting of the Lord Our God?

1 Timothy 1:15-19. The Mortar of Love.

When you consider principles, here is a principal principle on which you can fully accept and trust—

CHRIST JESUS CAME

INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS.

Now I am the worst; but it was for that very reason I, the worst of sinners, was shown mercy. Why? So? That Christ Yeshua can be shown to have unlimited patience, as an example for those who would believe on Him, and receive eternal life with Him. It is to Him, the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only Deity, may honor and glory be given for ever, and ever. Truly, so be it, let it be, make it so.

So Timothy, my son, I give these instructions in coordination with the predictions and prophecies made about you. So? That by following them, you may fight the good fight, holding on to trust and righteous conscience. Of course, some have wrecked their trust by rejecting trust and a good conscience. Among them are Hymenaeus the Roman and Alexander the Greek—I've handed them both over to Satan so they can learn not to disrespect the Lord God we honor and serve.

Q Why did Jesus the Christ come into the world?

–How would you compare 1 Timothy 1:16 to Romans 3:23-27?<sup>4</sup>

Q Why would Paul need to assert “CHRIST JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS?”

Q What does “Amen” actually mean in Scripture? (e.g., verse 17)

Q Why do you suppose Timothy had such a good reputation?

Q What lesson does Satan teach about blaspheming the Lord Our God?

## 1 TIMOTHY 1:15-19

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. <sup>16</sup>But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. <sup>17</sup>Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

<sup>18</sup>Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight,

<sup>19</sup>holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith.

<sup>20</sup>Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

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<sup>4</sup>“...for all have sinned and **fall** short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup>and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. <sup>25</sup>God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—<sup>26</sup>**he did it to demonstrate his justice** at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.”