

1 Timothy

1. **Who was the author? What was the occasion for writing?** God is the Author; the apostle Paul is the writer. Paul was writing to Timothy for a couple of specified reasons. The first is mentioned in chapter 1, verses 3-7. Paul was reminding Timothy to remain on at Ephesus so that he could give instruction to certain men who were trying to teach strange doctrines. These strange doctrines give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering God's purpose. Paul reminded Timothy of the proper goal of our instruction: love from 1) a pure heart, 2) a good conscience, and 3) a sincere faith. The second reason for this letter from Paul is stated in chapter 3:14-15. Paul was hoping to see Timothy soon, but in case he wasn't able to come, he wanted to make sure that Timothy had what he needed to help the church there at Ephesus. Timothy was a leader there in the congregation (we know he was an evangelist because of Paul's second letter to Timothy), so it was essential that he know what was expected in order to lead others to be doers of the word.

2. **Who was the recipient? What connection did the author and recipient have?** The recipient was Timothy as clearly stated in chapter 1, verse 2. The first recorded interaction between Paul and Timothy is in Acts 16:1-3. Timothy apparently was a young man with an outstanding reputation. His mom was a Jew, but his dad was a Greek. Paul took Timothy and circumcised him so that there would be no interference with their inroads to the Jews. From the beginning, Paul and Timothy were constant companions. Timothy was a sort of errand boy for Paul for the remainder of his second missionary journey, and also ministered to him on his third missionary journey. Timothy was a humble man who was willing to do whatever was necessary for the work of the Lord. He is mentioned throughout Paul's letters as a faithful coworker of the great apostle.
 1. In Romans, Timothy is called Paul's fellow worker -- 16:21
 2. Timothy is called Paul's beloved and faithful child in 1 Corinthians -- 4:17
 3. He is called brother in 2 Corinthians -- 1:1
 4. Timothy is spoken of as a bond-servant of Christ in Philippians -- 1:1
 5. He is again called brother in Colossians -- 1:1
 6. In 1 Thessalonians, Timothy is mentioned as brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel -- 3:2
 7. The letter of 2 Thessalonians also mentions Timothy as a partner with Paul and Silas in sending that letter -- 1:1
 8. Paul says that Timothy is his true child in the faith in 1 Timothy -- 1:2
 9. Paul calls him his beloved son in 2 Timothy -- 1:2
 10. He is again called brother in Philemon -- 1:1
 11. The writer of Hebrews also mentions Timothy, calling him brother -- 13:23

3. **Assuming that the author and recipient had a history, why the elaborate introduction?** In other words, if Paul and Timothy were so close that Paul calls Timothy his true child in the faith, why doesn't Paul just say "Paul, to Timothy my

true child" in verse 1? It seems that Paul doesn't just want this letter to be from him as a dear friend, but wants Timothy to recognize the serious nature of this letter. It is true that Paul is Timothy's good friend and even his father in the faith, but Paul is more than that. This letter Paul is writing as an apostle is under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Timothy should take the information within it as the very word of God.

4. **When was it written?** This letter was written around AD 63 in the last years of Paul's life shortly after his release from his first imprisonment in Rome. After his release from prison, Paul left Timothy at Ephesus to lead the congregation there. He hoped to rejoin Timothy, but wrote in case he was delayed (by the way, he was delayed -- Paul was again put in prison, from which he wrote the next letter to Timothy).
5. **What appears to be the purpose of the letter?** This question was mostly answered under question #1. As mentioned previously, the purpose was for Timothy to keep the church at Ephesus on the right path. As evidenced by Paul's discussion with the Ephesian elders in Acts chapter 20, there were some wolves who were infiltrating the congregation at Ephesus. Timothy had the responsibility of shutting them down, as well as demonstrating true Godly leadership. In general, Timothy was to know and show "how one ought to conduct himself in the church of the living God."
6. **What are the major topics within that purpose?** The major topics include:
 - a) Refuting false doctrine -- 1:3-7
 - b) Teaching Christians to pray -- 2:1-4
 - c) Instructing women how to faithfully conduct themselves -- 2:9-12
 - d) Listing qualities of elders and deacons -- 3:1-13
 - e) Warning of the apostasy -- 4:1-3
 - f) The example of an evangelist -- 4:6-16
 - g) Proper care of widows -- 5:1-16
 - h) Mutual accountability with elders -- 5:17-22
 - i) Instruction of Christians concerning work and money -- 6:1-10, 17-19
 - j) Further example of an evangelist -- 6:11-14
 - k) Guard what has been given -- 6:20-21
7. **What do we learn about the work of an evangelist from this letter?**
 - a) An evangelist must refute false doctrine -- 1:3
 - b) He must keep the commands given to him -- 1:18, 6:14
 - c) An evangelist must fight the good fight of faith -- 1:18, 6:12
 - d) He needs to discipline himself for the purpose of Godliness -- 4:7
 - e) An evangelist is to prescribe and teach righteousness -- 4:11
 - f) In all areas of his life, he is to be an example of those who believe -- 4:12
 - g) An evangelist should dedicate himself to the word and to personal development so that his growth is evident to all -- 4:15-16
 - h) He should carefully appoint and work with elders, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality -- 5:17-22

- i) An evangelist is to flee from earthly desires and pursue eternal virtues -- 6:11
- j) He is to instruct the rich to use their resources for good works -- 6:18
- k) He is to guard what has been entrusted to him, avoiding the snare of falling for worldly wisdom -- 6:20

- 8. What do we see is the training ground for future elders?** Apparently the primary training ground for the prospective elder is the family. An elder's responsibility is to shepherd the flock of God. God gives each earthly father a small flock to shepherd -- that is his family. Chapter 3, verse 4 of this letter says that the elder "must be one who manages his own household well..." The next verse clearly makes the point that a man who can't lead his own family in the ways of righteousness certainly won't be able to take care of God's church. There obviously are other areas of life that God also uses to prepare a man to be a pastor in His church. The career field can help a man develop and strengthen his work ethic, his integrity, and his immunity to the love of money, as well as contributing to his good reputation with those outside the church. The elder must also be personally involved in discipleship, seeing as how his primary purpose is to equip the saints to be able to do this important work. It is in these personal Bible studies that the elder hones his teaching skills, and develops the fortitude to stand on sound doctrine even in adversity. All of these areas contribute to building up the future elder for the fine work that he will do for the Lord as a leader in the church.
- 9. What else can church leadership learn from this letter?** Through all of the details describing church leadership in this letter, one thing comes through really clear. True leadership takes place first and foremost by example. Leaders in the Lord's church should serve the most, work the hardest, and live righteous lives filled with love. When this Godly behavior is exhibited in church leadership, most Christians will joyfully follow.
- 10. What may the modern Christian apply?** Everything in this letter is applicable to the modern Christian. Everyone of us should commit to righteous behavior in our example to the lost and to other Christians. We each should be good citizens of God's household, with conduct becoming that of a son or daughter of God.