

1 Timothy 1

Read 1 Timothy 3:14-15

- What is Paul's reason for writing to Timothy?
 - *Paul wants to instruct Timothy on how the "household" of God should be conducted.*
- What does it mean that the Church is the pillar and foundation of truth?
 - *We, the Church, are called to be representatives for God, and being His representatives, we set the course of the world around us. If we live in truth, then we are a solid foundation for those around us. If we do not live in truth, we can witness the world crumble around us. In this letter, we will see that these specific churches were not rooted in truth.*
- What do you think Paul means by "God's household?"
 - *God's people are meant to be family, but also, a household has structure to it, and so should churches. Throughout this letter, you will notice that Paul addresses, not just how individuals should conduct themselves, but how the structure of the church should instruct themselves.*

The first letter to Timothy is about Paul instructing Timothy on how a church household should conduct themselves. And Paul is not just talking about "the Church," as in ALL believers everywhere. He is specifically talking about local churches, a structured group of believers gathered in one place and how they should conduct themselves. This letter is not just theological, but also very practical towards these churches.

Read 1 Timothy 1:1-11

- According to verses 3-7, what problems are the churches in Ephesus having?
 - *Answer: People teaching false doctrines, focusing on myths and genealogies, departing from a pure heart, good conscience, and sincere faith, and turning to meaningless talk.*
- Paul mentions that people in the Ephesian churches devoted themselves to "myths and genealogies" and that these discussions stir arguments rather than advance God's work. What discussions have you seen that are more harmful than productive?
- How do we know when something is worth dividing over?
- What would you consider "meaningless talk?"
- How should we deal with people that focus on "meaningless talk?"
- What is "God's work," mentioned in verse 4? If applicable, what have you prioritized over God's work?
- Verse 8 translates to "We know that the law is good if one uses it [lawfully]." With that in mind, what do you think verses 8-10 mean?
- Read Jeremiah 31:33 and Ezekiel 11:19-20. What relation do you see between those verses and 1 Timothy 1:8-11?

The law, speaking of the Old Testament Law specifically, is good for those who use it “lawfully.” However, Paul is not recommending that people go back to following that Law. He is simply making a point that, technically, if someone were to follow everything in the Law, they would live a good life. However, the purpose of the law is to deal with those who do evil. “The good man does not need any law to control his actions or to threaten him with punishments; and in a world of good men there would be no need for laws at all” (William Barclay). Jeremiah 31:33 and Ezekiel 11:19-20 state that God promised to give mankind a new heart where the law would be written on their hearts, and this was fulfilled by God giving all believers the Holy Spirit.

Read 1 Timothy 1:12-20

- Why do you think Paul’s testimony here would be comforting to Timothy’s situation?
 - *Answer: If God could transform a blasphemer like Paul, then God also has mercy for the blasphemers in the churches in Ephesus that Timothy is ministering to.*

Concluding Questions

- When is a time that God has shown great mercy to you, and how can others be encouraged by that?
- Have you participated in meaningless discussions? Explain.
- What obstacles have kept you from doing “God’s work” in the past or present?

Further Optional Study

- What does Paul mean by “handing people over to Satan?”
 - Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-5. Based on that example, what does Paul mean when he uses the language of handing someone over to Satan?
 - *Answer: If a once-a-believer actively speaks against Christ, Paul is saying “They are removed from the fellowship of the Church. They do not belong to Christ and, therefore, do not have the protection of Christ. We can only hope that Satan deals with them so severely that they do come back to Christ.”*

Application:

- Take a moment to reflect on obstacles that prevent God’s will in your life. Maybe you have taught/made allowance for false beliefs like the Ephesians. Maybe you have focused on minor issues, and in doing so, have created division in the Body of Christ like the Ephesians. Reflect and potentially bring repentance.