

## **Easy-to-Read Version**

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## 1 Timothy

This letter to Timothy is one of only four letters we have that the apostle Paul wrote to individuals. But this letter is not really for Timothy. He writes to Timothy to help the church in Ephesus. Paul had started the church in Ephesus and spent almost three years there. He had recently left Timothy in Ephesus to continue his unfinished work.

Paul is concerned in this letter about some false teachers. They were troubling the church in Ephesus. Paul warns Timothy about these people. They were always arguing about things that were of no use to anyone. And this was keeping the church from doing the work that God wanted done. In this letter, Paul wants to promote love. This was a key point that these false teachers were missing.

Paul gives advice to Timothy about how to help the church live as the people of God. He says, "I write so that you will know how people should live in the family of God" (3:15). Paul tells Timothy things the believers should do and things they should not do. Perhaps Paul mentions some of these things because he saw them as problems, especially in a sinful city like Ephesus.

Ephesus was one of the most successful cities in the ancient world. One reason for its great wealth was its important seaport. Also, Ephesus was famous as a centre of religion. The worship of the Greek goddess Artemis was especially popular. It brought people from all over the world to Ephesus, making it another

source of wealth for the city. Religion was big business for the makers of idols and for religious teachers of all kinds.

Like other big cities in the ancient world, Ephesus had many prostitutes. In fact, sex was another big business there. It was considered normal for the men to go to prostitutes. And the women loved to show off with their clothes, jewellery and hairstyles.

These are some of the issues Paul is asking Timothy to deal with. The believers need help to live in this kind of culture in a way that pleases God. They should pray for everyone because God wants all people to know him. The men are to keep themselves pure. The women are to be more concerned about the way they live than the way they look. Paul asks Timothy to be a good example for the church. And he wants the believers to set a good example for unbelievers. This is especially true for the leaders in the church that Paul tells Timothy to choose. They will be the ones responsible for taking care of God's family in the future.

In this first letter to Timothy, Paul...  
Greets Timothy (1:1-2)

Talks about issues that threaten the  
Ephesian church (1:3-20)

Tells Timothy how to correct some  
problems in the church (2:1 – 4:5)

Gives Timothy personal encourage-  
ment and instruction (4:6-16)

Tells Timothy how to serve different  
groups of people in the church (5:1 –  
6:2)

Talks about false teachers, true riches  
and being faithful to God (6:3-21)

**1** Greetings from Paul, an apostle for Christ Jesus.\* I am an apostle by the command of God our Saviour and Christ Jesus, who gives us hope.

<sup>2</sup>I write to you, Timothy. You are like a true son to me because of our faith.

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

### Warnings Against False Teachings

<sup>3</sup>When I went to Macedonia, I asked you to stay in Ephesus. Some people there were teaching things that are not true, and I wanted you to warn them to stop. <sup>4</sup>Tell them not to give their time to meaningless stories and to long lists of ancestors to prove their ideas. Such things only cause arguments. They don't help us complete the work God has for us, which we must be faithful to do. <sup>5</sup>My purpose in telling you this is to promote love—the kind of love shown by those whose thoughts are pure, who do what they know is right and whose faith in God is real. <sup>6</sup>But some have missed this key point in their teaching and have gone off in another direction. Now they talk about things that help no one. <sup>7</sup>They want to be teachers of the law,<sup>†</sup> but they don't know what they are talking about. They don't even understand the things they say they are sure of.

<sup>8</sup>We know that the law is good if someone uses it in the right way. <sup>9</sup>We also know that the law is not made for those who do what is right. It is made for those who are against the law and refuse to follow it. The law is for sinners who are against God and all that is pleasing to him. It is for those who have no

interest in spiritual things and for those who kill their fathers or mothers or anyone else. <sup>10</sup>It is for people who commit sexual sins, for men who have sex with other men or boys, for those who kidnap people to sell as slaves, for those who tell lies or who don't tell the truth under oath, and for those who are against the true teaching of God. <sup>11</sup>That teaching is part of the Good News that our blessed God gave me to tell. In it we see his glory.

### Thanks for God's Mercy

<sup>12</sup>I thank Christ Jesus our Lord because he trusted me and gave me this work of serving him. And he has given me the strength to do it. <sup>13</sup>In the past I insulted him. As a proud and violent man, I persecuted his people. But God gave me mercy because I did not know what I was doing. I did that before I became a believer. <sup>14</sup>But our Lord gave me a full measure of his grace. And with that grace came the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

<sup>15</sup>Here is a true statement that should be accepted without question: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and I am the worst of them. <sup>16</sup>But I was given mercy so that in me Christ Jesus could show that he has patience without limit. Christ showed his patience with me, the worst of all sinners. He wanted me to be an example for those who would believe in him and have eternal life. <sup>17</sup>Honour and glory to the King who rules forever. He cannot be destroyed and cannot be seen. Honour and glory for ever and ever to the only God. Amen.

\***1:1 Christ Jesus** Or “King Jesus”. The term “Christ” is a Greek translation of the Hebrew word “Messiah”, a royal title. See Mark 15:32; Luke 23:2. See also Christ and Messiah in the Word List.

<sup>†</sup>**1:7 the law** Probably the law God gave to Moses for his people. See law in the Word List. Also in verse 8.

<sup>18</sup> Timothy, you are like a son to me. What I am telling you to do agrees with the prophecies<sup>‡</sup> that were told about you in the past. I want you to remember those prophecies and fight well in this battle for what is good. <sup>19</sup> Continue to trust in God and do what you know is right. Some people have not done this, and their faith is now in ruins. <sup>20</sup> Hymenaeus and Alexander are men like that. I have given them to Satan so that they will learn not to speak against God.

### God Wants Us to Pray for Everyone

**2** First of all, I ask that you pray for all people. Ask God to bless them and give them what they need. And give thanks. <sup>2</sup> You should pray for rulers and for all who have authority. Pray for these leaders so that we can live quiet and peaceful lives—lives full of honour and respect for God. <sup>3</sup> This is good and pleases God our Saviour.

<sup>4</sup> God wants everyone to be saved and to fully understand the truth. <sup>5</sup> There is only one God, and there is only one way that people can reach God. That way is through Christ Jesus, who as a man <sup>6</sup> gave himself to pay for everyone to be free. This is the message that God gave to us at the right time. <sup>7</sup> And I was chosen as an apostle to tell people that message. (I am telling the truth; I am not lying.) I was chosen to teach those who are not Jews to believe and understand the truth.

### Special Instructions for Men and Women

<sup>8</sup> I want the men everywhere to pray. They must be men who live to please God and will lift their hands in prayer without any anger or arguments.

<sup>9</sup> And I want the women to make themselves attractive in the right way. Their clothes should be sensible and appropriate. They should not draw attention to themselves with fancy hairstyles or gold jewellery or pearls or expensive clothes. <sup>10</sup> But they should make themselves attractive by the good things they do. That is more appropriate for women who say they are devoted to God.

<sup>11</sup> A woman should learn while listening quietly and being completely willing to obey. <sup>12</sup> I don't allow a woman to teach a man or tell him what to do. She must listen quietly, <sup>13</sup> because Adam was made first. Eve was made later. <sup>14</sup> Also, Adam was not the one who was tricked.<sup>†</sup> It was the woman who was tricked and became a sinner. <sup>15</sup> But women will be saved in their role of having children.<sup>§</sup> They will be saved if they continue to live in faith and love, with devotion to God and sensible behaviour.

### Leaders in the Church

**3** It is a true statement that anyone whose goal is to serve as an elder<sup>\*\*</sup> has his heart set on a good work. <sup>2</sup> An elder<sup>††</sup> must be such a good man that no one can rightly criticize him. He must

<sup>‡</sup>1:18 *prophecies* Things that prophets said about Timothy's life before those things happened.

<sup>†</sup>2:14 *Adam was not ... tricked* See Gen. 3:1-13.

<sup>§</sup>2:15 *But women ... children* Literally, "But she will be saved through the childbearing." "Childbearing" might be used here in a symbolic sense to mean "producing the good qualities" that are described in the following sentence.

<sup>\*\*</sup>3:1 *whose ... elder* Literally, "who aspires to supervision".

<sup>††</sup>3:2 *elder* Here, literally, "overseer". See elders in the Word List.

be faithful to his wife.<sup>‡‡</sup> He must have self-control and think carefully about the way he lives. He must be respected by others. He must be ready to help people by welcoming them into his home. He must be a good teacher. <sup>3</sup>He must not get drunk or like to fight. He must be gentle and peaceful. He must not be someone who loves money. <sup>4</sup>He must be a good leader of his own family. This means that his children obey him with full respect. <sup>5</sup>If a man does not know how to lead his own family, he will not be able to take care of God's church.

<sup>6</sup>An elder must not be a new believer. It might make him too proud of himself and lead to the punishment that the devil has for him. <sup>7</sup>An elder must also have the respect of people who are not part of the church. Then he will not be criticized by others and be caught in the devil's trap.

### Special Servants

<sup>8</sup>In the same way, the men who are chosen to be special servants must be worthy of respect. They must not be men who say things they don't mean or who spend their time drinking too much. They must not be men who are willing to cheat people for money. <sup>9</sup>They must follow the true faith that God has now made known to us and always do what they know is right. <sup>10</sup>You should test them first. Then, if you find that they have done nothing wrong, they can be special servants.

<sup>11</sup>In the same way, the women<sup>¶¶</sup> must be worthy of respect. They must not be women who speak evil about other people. They must have self-control. They must be women who can be trusted in everything.

<sup>12</sup>The men who are special servants must be faithful in marriage. They must be good leaders of their own children and families. <sup>13</sup>Those who do well as special servants are making an honourable place for themselves. And they will feel very sure of their faith in Christ Jesus.

### The Secret of Our Life

<sup>14</sup>I hope I can come to you soon. But I am writing this to you now, <sup>15</sup>so that, even if I cannot come soon, you will know how everyone should behave in the family<sup>§§</sup> of God. That family is the church of the living God. And God's church is the support and foundation of the truth. <sup>16</sup>Yes, God has shown us the secret of lives that honour him. It is the truth we can all agree on:

Christ\* was made known to us in human form  
and shown by the Spirit† to be all he claimed.  
He was seen by angels,  
and the message about him was told to the nations.  
People in the world believed in him,  
and he was taken up to heaven in glory.

<sup>‡‡</sup>3:2 *faithful to his wife* Literally, "a man of one woman", which could also be translated, "the husband of one wife" or "married only once". Also in verse 12.

<sup>¶¶</sup>3:11 *women* Probably the women who serve as special servants. (See Rom. 16:1.) It could be translated, "their wives", meaning the wives of the special servants, although there is no word for "their" in the Greek text.

<sup>§§</sup>3:15 *family* Literally, "house". This could mean that God's people are like God's temple.

\*3:16 *Christ* Literally, "who". Some Greek copies have "God".

†3:16 *by the Spirit* Or "in his spiritual form".

### A Warning About False Teachers

**4** The Spirit clearly says that in the last times some will turn away from what we believe. They will obey spirits that tell lies. And they will follow the teachings of demons. <sup>2</sup>Those teachings come through people who tell lies and trick others. These evil people cannot see what is right and what is wrong. It is like their conscience has been destroyed with a hot iron. <sup>3</sup>They say that it is wrong to marry. And they say that there are some foods that people must not eat. But God made these foods, and those who believe and who understand the truth can eat them with thanks. <sup>4</sup>Everything that God made is good. Nothing he made should be refused if it is accepted with thanks to him. <sup>5</sup>Everything he created is made holy by what he has said and by prayer.

### Be a Good Servant of Christ Jesus

<sup>6</sup>Tell this to the brothers and sisters there. This will show that you are a good servant of Christ Jesus. You will show that you are made strong by the truths of our faith and good teaching you have followed. <sup>7</sup>Do not spend any time on all the silly stories that don't agree with God's truth. Instead, train yourself to live in a way that honours and pleases God. <sup>8</sup>Training your body helps you in some ways. But trying to please God helps you in every way. It brings you blessings in this life and in the future life too. <sup>9</sup>Here is a true statement that should be accepted without question: <sup>10</sup>We hope in the living God, the Saviour of all people. In particular, he is the Saviour of all those who believe in him. This is why we work and struggle.

<sup>11</sup>Command and teach these things. <sup>12</sup>You are young, but don't let anyone treat you as if you are not important. Be an example to show the believers how they should live. Show them by what you say, by the way you live, by your love, by your faith and by your pure life.

<sup>13</sup>Continue to read the Scriptures to the people, encourage them and teach them. Do this until I come. <sup>14</sup>Remember to use the gift you have, which was given to you through a prophecy<sup>‡</sup> when the group of elders blessed you by laying their hands on you. <sup>15</sup>Continue to do these things. Give your life to doing them. Then everyone can see how well you are doing. <sup>16</sup>Be careful in your life and in your teaching. Continue to live and teach rightly. Then you will save yourself and those who listen to your teaching.

**5** Don't speak angrily to an older man. But talk to him as if he were your father. Treat the younger men like brothers. <sup>2</sup>Treat the older women like mothers. And treat the younger women with respect like sisters.

### Taking Care of Widows

<sup>3</sup>Take care of widows who really need help. <sup>4</sup>But if a widow has children or grandchildren, the first thing they need to learn is to show special respect for their own family. They need to repay their parents and grandparents for all they have done. This is something that pleases God. <sup>5</sup>A widow who really needs help is one who has been left all alone. She trusts God to take care of her. She prays all the time, night and day and asks God for help. <sup>6</sup>But the widow who uses her life to please herself is really dead while she is still living. <sup>7</sup>Tell the believers there to take care of their fam-

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<sup>‡</sup>4:14 *prophecy* Something said about Timothy's life before that thing happened.

ily so that no one can say they are doing wrong. <sup>8</sup>Everyone should take care of all their own people. Most importantly, they should take care of their own family. If they do not do that, then they have rejected what we believe. They are worse than someone who does not even believe in God.

<sup>9</sup>To be added to your list of widows, a woman must be 60 years old or older. She must have been faithful to her husband.<sup>¶</sup> <sup>10</sup>She must be known for the good she has done: raising children, welcoming travellers into her home, serving the needs<sup>§</sup> of God's people, helping those in trouble and using her life to do all kinds of good.

<sup>11</sup>But don't put younger widows on that list. When their strong physical needs pull them away from their commitment to Christ, they will want to marry again. <sup>12</sup>Then they will be guilty of not doing what they first promised to do. <sup>13</sup>Also, these younger widows begin to waste their time going from house to house. They also begin to gossip and try to run other people's lives. They say things they should not say. <sup>14</sup>So I want the younger widows to marry, have children and take care of their homes. If they do this, our enemy will not have any reason to criticize us. <sup>15</sup>But some of the younger widows have already turned away to follow Satan.

<sup>16</sup>If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she\*\* should take care of them herself. Then the church will not have that burden and will be

able to care for the widows who have no one else to help them.

### More About Elders and Other Matters

<sup>17</sup>The elders who lead the church in a good way should receive double honour<sup>††</sup>—in particular, those who do the work of speaking and teaching. <sup>18</sup>As the Scriptures say, “When a work animal is being used to separate grain, don't keep it from eating the grain.”<sup>‡‡</sup> And the Scriptures also say, “A worker should be given his pay.”<sup>¶¶</sup>

<sup>19</sup>Don't listen to someone who accuses an elder. You should listen to them only if there are two or three who can say what the elder did wrong. <sup>20</sup>Tell the elders who sin that they are wrong. Do this in front of the whole church as a warning to the others.

<sup>21</sup>Before God and Christ Jesus and the chosen angels, I tell you to make these judgements without any prejudice. Treat every person the same.

<sup>22</sup>Think carefully before you lay your hands on anyone to make him an elder. You don't want to have any part in another person's sin. Keep yourself free from any wrong.

<sup>23</sup>Timothy, stop drinking only water and drink a little wine. This will help your stomach, and you will not be sick so often.

<sup>24</sup>The sins of some people are easy to see. Their sins show that they will be judged. But the sins of some others are seen only later. <sup>25</sup>It is the same with the good things people do. Some are easy to see. But even if they are not obvi-

<sup>¶</sup>5:9 *faithful to her husband* Literally, “a woman of one man”.

<sup>§</sup>5:10 *servicing the needs* Literally, “washing the feet”, a social custom of the first century, because people wore open sandals on very dusty roads.

<sup>\*\*</sup>5:16 *woman ... she* Some Greek copies have “man or woman ... he/she”.

<sup>††</sup>5:17 *double honour* Or “double pay”.

<sup>‡‡</sup>5:18 Quote from Deut. 25:4.

<sup>¶¶</sup>5:18 Quote from Luke 10:7.

ous now, none of them will stay hidden forever.

### Special Instructions for Slaves

**6** All those who are slaves should show full respect to their masters. Then God's name and our teaching will not be criticized. <sup>2</sup>Some slaves have masters who are believers, so they are brothers. Does this mean they should show their masters any less respect? No, they should serve them even better, because they are helping believers, people they should love.

These are the things you must teach and tell everyone to do.

### False Teaching and True Riches

<sup>3</sup>Some people teach what is false and do not agree with the true teaching that comes from our Lord Jesus Christ. They do not accept the teaching that leads us to honour and please God. <sup>4</sup>They are proud of what they know, but they understand nothing. They are sick with a love for arguing and fighting about words. And that brings jealousy, quarrels, insults and evil mistrust. <sup>5</sup>They are always making trouble, because they are people whose thinking has been confused. They have lost their understanding of the truth. They think that pretending to honour God is a way to get rich.

<sup>6</sup>Living in a way that honours God is, in fact, a way for people to be very rich, because it means being satisfied with what they have. <sup>7</sup>When we came into the world, we brought nothing. And when we die, we can take nothing out. <sup>8</sup>So, if we have food and clothes, we will be satisfied with that. <sup>9</sup>People who want to be rich bring temptations to themselves. They are caught in a trap. They begin to want many foolish things that will hurt them. These things ruin and destroy people. <sup>10</sup>The love of money

causes all kinds of evil. Some people have turned away from what we believe because they want to get more and more money. But they have caused themselves a lot of pain and sorrow.

### Some Things to Remember

<sup>11</sup>But you belong to God. So you should stay away from all those things. Always try to do what is right, to honour God and to have faith, love, patience and gentleness. <sup>12</sup>We have to fight to keep our faith. Try as hard as you can to win that worthy fight. Take hold of eternal life. It is the life you were chosen to have when you confessed your faith in Jesus—that wonderful truth you spoke so openly for all to hear. <sup>13</sup>Before God and Christ Jesus I give you a command. Jesus is the one who confessed that same wonderful truth when he stood before Pontius Pilate. And God is the one who gives life to everything. Now I tell you this: <sup>14</sup>do what you were commanded to do without fault or blame until the time when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. <sup>15</sup>God will make that happen at the right time. He is the most worthy and only Ruler. He is the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords. <sup>16</sup>God is the only one who never dies. He lives in light so bright that people cannot go near it. No one has ever seen him; no one is able to see him. All honour and power belong to him forever. Amen.

<sup>17</sup>Give this command to those who are rich with the things of this world. Tell them not to be proud. Tell them to hope in God, not their money. Money cannot be trusted, but God takes care of us richly. He gives us everything to enjoy. <sup>18</sup>Tell those who are rich to do good—to be rich in good works. And tell them they should be happy to give and ready to share. <sup>19</sup>By doing this, they will be saving up a treasure for themselves. And

that treasure will be a strong foundation on which their future life will be built. They will be able to have the life that is true life.

<sup>20</sup> Timothy, God has trusted you with many things. Keep these things safe. Stay away from people who talk about useless things that are not from God and who

argue against you with a “knowledge” that is not knowledge at all. <sup>21</sup> Some people who claim to have that “knowledge” have gone completely away from what we believe.

I pray that God’s grace will be with you all.