



LifeLight

*"In Him was life, and that life was the light of men." John 1:4*

# Timothy, Titus, Philemon



LEADERS GUIDE



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3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118-3968  
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Manufactured in the U.S.A.

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## Introduction

### Welcome to LifeLight

A special pleasure is in store for you. You will be instrumental in leading your brothers and sisters in Christ closer to Him who is our life and light (John 1:4). You will have the pleasure of seeing fellow Christians discover new insights and rediscover old ones as they open the Scriptures and dig deep into them, perhaps deeper than they have ever dug before. More than that, you will have the pleasure of sharing in this wonderful study.

### LifeLight—An In-depth Study

LifeLight is a series of in-depth Bible studies. The goal of LifeLight is that through a regular program of in-depth personal and group study of Scripture, more and more Christian adults may grow in their personal faith in Jesus Christ, enjoy fellowship with the members of His body, and reach out in love to others in witness and service.

*In-depth* means that this Bible study includes the following four components: individual daily home study; discussion in a small group; a lecture presentation on the Scripture portion under study; and an enhancement of the week's material (through reading the enrichment magazine).

### LifeLight Participants

LifeLight participants are adults who desire a deeper study of the Scriptures than is available in the typical Sunday morning adult Bible class. (Mid-to-older teens might also be LifeLight participants.) While LifeLight does not assume an existing knowledge of the Bible or special experience or skills in Bible study, it does assume a level of commitment that will bring participants to each of the nine weekly assemblies having read the assigned readings and attempted to answer the study questions. Daily reading and study will require from 15 to 30 minutes for the five days preceding the LifeLight assembly. The day following the assembly will be spent reviewing the previous week's study by going over the completed study leaflet and the enrichment magazine.

### LifeLight Leadership

While the in-depth process used by LifeLight begins with individual study and cannot achieve its aims without this individual effort, it cannot be completed by individual study alone. Therefore, trained leaders are necessary. You fill one or perhaps more of the important roles described below.

#### The Director

This person oversees the LifeLight program in a local center (which may be a congregation or a center operated by several neighboring congregations). The director

- serves as the parish LifeLight overall coordinator and leader;
- coordinates the scheduling of the LifeLight program;
- orders materials;
- convenes LifeLight leadership team meetings;
- develops publicity materials;
- recruits participants;
- maintains records and budgeting;
- assigns, with the leadership team, participants to small discussion groups;
- makes arrangements for facilities;
- communicates outreach opportunities to small-group leaders and to congregational boards;
- follows up on participants who leave the program.

#### The Assistant Director (*optional*)

This person may assist the director. Duties listed for the director may be assigned to the assistant director as mutually agreeable.

#### The Lecture Leader

This person prepares and delivers the lecture at the weekly assembly. (**Lesson material for the lecture leader begins on p. 9.**) The lecture leader

- prepares and presents the Bible study lecture to the large group;
- prepares worship activities (devotional thought, hymn, prayer), using resources in the study leaflet and leaders guide and possibly other, outside sources;
- helps the small-group discussion leaders to grow in understanding the content of the lessons;
- encourages prayer at weekly leadership-team and discussion-leaders meetings.

### **The Small-Group Coordinator (*optional; the director may fill this role*)**

This person supervises and coordinates the work of the small-group discussion leaders. The small-group coordinator

- recruits with the leadership team the small-group discussion leaders;
- trains or arranges for training of the discussion leaders;
- assists the director and discussion leaders in follow-up and outreach;
- encourages the discussion leaders to contact absent group members;
- participates in the weekly leadership-team and discussion-leaders equipping meetings;
- provides ongoing training and support as needed.

### **The Small-Group Discussion Leaders**

These people guide and facilitate discussion of LifeLight participants in the small groups. (**Lesson material for the small-group leaders begins on p. 46.**) There should be one discussion leader for every group of no more than 12 participants. The small-group discussion leaders are, perhaps, those individuals who are most important to the success of the program. They should, therefore, be chosen with special care and be equipped with skills needed to guide discussion and to foster a caring fellowship within the group. These discussion leaders

- prepare each week for the small-group discussion by using the study leaflet and small-group leaders guide section for that session (**see p. 46**);
- read the enrichment magazine as a study supplement;

- guide and facilitate discussion in their small group;
- encourage and assist the discussion group in prayer;
- foster fellowship and mutual care within the discussion group;
- attend weekly discussion-leaders training meetings.

### **Leadership Training**

LifeLight leaders will meet weekly to review the previous week's work and plan the coming week. At this session, leaders can address concerns and prepare for the coming session. LifeLight is a 1½-hour program with no possibility for it to be taught in the one hour typically available on Sunday mornings. Some congregations, however, may want to use the Sunday morning Bible study hour for LifeLight preparation and leadership training. In such a meeting, the lecture leader and/or small-group coordinator may lead the discussion leaders through the coming week's lesson, reserving 5 or 10 minutes for problem solving or other group concerns.

While it requires intense effort, LifeLight has proven to be of great benefit to LifeLight participants. The effort put into this program, both by leaders and by participants, will be rewarding and profitable.

### **The LifeLight Weekly Schedule**

Here is how LifeLight will work week by week:

1. Before session 1, each participant will receive the study leaflet for session 1 and the enrichment magazine for the course. The study leaflet contains worship resources (for use both in individual daily study and at the opening of the following week's assembly) and readings and study questions for five days. Challenge questions will lead those participants who have the time and desire a greater challenge into even deeper levels of study.
2. After the five days of individual study at home, participants will gather for a weekly assembly of all LifeLight participants. The assembly will begin with a brief period of worship (5 minutes). Participants will then join their assigned small discussion groups (of 12 or fewer, who will remain the same throughout the course), where they will go over the week's study questions together (55 minutes). Assembling together once again, participants will listen to a lecture presentation on the readings they have studied

in the previous week and discussed in their small groups (20 minutes). After the lecture presentation, the director or another leader will distribute the study leaflet for the following week. Closing announcements and other necessary business may take another five minutes before dismissal.

In some places some small groups will not join the weekly assembly because of scheduling or other reasons. Such groups may meet at another time and place (perhaps in the home of one of the small group's members). They will follow the same schedule, but they may use a cassette tape to listen to the week's lecture presentation. The discussion leader will obtain the tape and leaflets from the director. A congregation may record the lecture given by the lecture leader at the weekly assembly and duplicate it for use by other groups meeting later in the week.

3. On the day following the assembly, participants will review the preceding week's work by rereading the study leaflet they completed (and that they perhaps supplemented or corrected during the discussion in their small group) and by reading appropriate articles in the enrichment magazine.

Then the LifeLight weekly study process will begin all over again!

## Recommended Study and Worship Resources

*Concordia Self-Study Bible, New International Version.* St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986. Interpretive notes on each page form a running commentary on the text. The book includes cross-references, a 35,000-word concordance, full-color maps, charts, and time lines.

*The Holy Bible, English Standard Version: Concordia Edition.* St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House for Crossway Bibles, 2001, 2003. An accurate and precise word-for-word translation where each word and phrase is carefully weighed against the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek to ensure the fullest accuracy and clarity.

Lenski, R.C.H. *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus, and to Philemon.* Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961. This volume (originally published by Lutheran Book Concern, Columbus, Ohio, 1937) is a reliable commentary by a Lutheran theologian.

Roehrs, Walter R., and Martin H. Franzmann. *Concordia Self-Study Commentary.* St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979. This one-volume commentary on the Bible contains 950 pages and is tailored for lay use.

Schuetze, Armin W. *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus.* In the People's Bible Commentary Series. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993. Weaves the New International Version (NIV) of the texts with an in-depth commentary to enrich understanding.

*Every Voice a Song: Pipe Organ Accompaniment for 180 Hymns and Liturgical Songs.* St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House (order no. 99-1565). Use this music CD for worship hymn accompaniment.



# To a True Son in the Faith

## 1 Timothy 1

### *Preparing for the Session*

### Central Focus

Paul begins his Letter to Timothy by focusing on the vital importance of sound doctrine (that is, teaching) for the Christian church. The Gospel is essential to the church's life, for it gives the divine gift of faith even to blasphemers and persecutors and violent men (1 Timothy 1:13). Yet the Law is also good, and it must be used properly (1 Timothy 1:8). The church's faithful teaching of the pure Word of God—both Law and Gospel—must never become mixed with false teachings, because such falsehoods will only lead people away from the faith.

### Objectives

That the participant, as a child of God and with the Holy Spirit's help, will be led deeper into the divinely given realizations that

1. in its earliest days, the church already struggled with false teachers;
2. both God's Law and His Gospel remain essential to the individual Christian's faith and life;
3. when God's Word is no longer taken seriously in the church, but gets replaced by "vain discussion" (1 Timothy 1:6), Christians will inevitably make "shipwreck of their faith" (1 Timothy 1:19).

**Note for the small-group leaders:** Lesson notes and other materials you will need begin on page 46.

## For the Lecture Leader

### *Session Plan*

### Worship

Begin the session with the hymn printed in the study leaflet. Accompaniments are available in denominational hymnals, such as *Lutheran Worship* (*LW*, refer to hymnal index). (Note: Concordia Publishing House has available *Every Voice a Song*, a 9-CD set of organ accompaniments for 180 hymns and liturgy. All the initial worship hymns in the LifeLight courses are included in this resource. It's especially helpful for mission congregations and small parishes. See the list of study resources on page 7.) Follow with this prayer:

### Prayer

Blessed Lord, since You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn and take them to heart that by patience and comfort of Your holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen (*LW*, p. 156).

### Lecture Presentation

This is the first of two Letters that Paul wrote to Timothy, a young pastor in Ephesus. Timothy appears to have his hands full with false teachers, and Paul begins by reminding Timothy that one of his duties in Ephesus is to oppose such creators of division and controversy. Yet Timothy is not defenseless; he has the powerful Word of God. This Word created faith in even "the worst of sinners" (1 Timothy 1:16 NIV)! Certainly it will guard and protect God's chosen pastor and his congregation against those who wish to destroy the faith by their false teaching!

## 1 Opening Greeting (1:1–2)

Verse 1—Because ancient letters were customarily written on scrolls, the writer's name often appeared at the beginning, along with a self-description. That way, the

reader could see who wrote the letter without unrolling it entirely. Paul's self-description is important, even though Timothy already knew him well. Here Paul indicates the authority by which he speaks: he is an apostle (that is, a "sent one") by the command of the Father and the Son. This self-description is somewhat like church letterhead with the pastor's name in the heading.

By describing himself as an apostle, as he habitually does, Paul sets himself apart from the "certain persons" (1 Timothy 1:3) who have no call and no apostleship. Paul speaks because God commands him to speak; these others insinuate themselves into the congregation.

Verse 2—The Letter is addressed to Pastor Timothy, but it might also have been read aloud during worship. Paul describes Timothy as a son (Philippians 2:22), as he did Titus (Titus 1:4) and the slave Onesimus (Philemon 10). This description suggests Paul's great, fatherly love for his fellow workers, including Timothy whom he greets here with "grace, mercy and peace from God."

## 2 Oppose Those Who Teach Falsely! (1:3–7)

Verses 3–4—Paul's trip to Macedonia is not mentioned in Acts, which suggests that it took place after his three main missionary journeys. Paul urges Timothy to remain in Ephesus for the expressed purpose of opposing false teachers. The work might not be as glamorous as traveling the world, but it is necessary for the life and health of the church. Though young (1 Timothy 4:12), Timothy had received sufficient theological training and experience at Paul's own hand. He may now be entrusted with the pastoral task. Given pastoral authority to guard the Ephesian flock, Timothy must "charge" or give strict orders about what sort of teaching the congregation will be allowed to hear.

It is unclear what exactly Paul means by "myths and endless genealogies." What is clear is that these had begun to compete with the Word of God for authority in the church. Trouble results when such things are considered more important than the Scriptures. This happens even in today's church life whenever personal opinions, group decisions, church constitutions, and so forth attempt to compete for authority over God's Word.

Verse 5—Paul does not tell Timothy to be authoritative and to give commands because he wants Timothy to lord his position over the congregation. Rather, "the aim of our charge is love." Timothy will oppose the false

teachers because he loves the church and her members. Some of the people in his congregation will not like the things Timothy must say and do. But Timothy is a caring pastor, not a warlord. His conscience forces him to oppose false teaching and his divinely-given faith stirs him to action. Timothy's heart—cleansed by the Gospel of Christ—beats with love and devotion toward the very people he preaches against, as well as those whom they attempt to mislead.

Verses 6–7—The false teachers must be stopped because their falsehoods put Christian faith and salvation into jeopardy. Paul's words include a hint of ridicule: they don't even know what they are talking about! Some of today's so-called Bible experts sound equally ridiculous when they claim that God does not oppose homosexuality and abortion, say there is no resurrection, or believe that the Bible is not truly the inspired, inerrant, powerful Word of God.

## 3 The Law Is Good (1:8–11)

Verse 8—It might seem that Paul abruptly changes topics, first talking about the false teachers and then about the Law. Yet things will fit into place if we assume that the false teachers might have been teaching against God's Law, claiming that it no longer has value for the church.

Even today, some people in the church say that the Law of God is no longer applicable and that we live by the Gospel alone. But Paul insists that the Law is good, so long as it is used properly. The Law does not give salvation. Salvation is given when the Holy Spirit connects you to Christ's death and resurrection. Yet the Law is good because the Spirit uses it to do the good work of revealing your sin and creating sorrow over it. This makes you ready to hear the Good News of the Gospel, the Good News that God now forgives your every sin for the sake of Christ.

Verses 9–11—If everyone were righteous and holy, the Law would serve no purpose, because it does not attack righteousness. It attacks sin. Therefore, the Law is for sinners. And look at all the ways sin manifests itself! Yet when we honestly examine our own hearts in light of the Ten Commandments, who among us could ever claim that we are not sinful in every way? This is part of the good and proper work that the Law does—it shows us our sin.

The Law also attacks false teaching and "whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine [teaching], in accordance

with the glorious gospel." False teachers not only sin against the Ten Commandments—showing lovelessness both for God and neighbor—but they also rob the church of the Gospel. For this reason, Paul, Timothy, and pastors and Christians of all time must concern themselves with the Word of God's Law and His Gospel, insisting that both always be taught in truth, purity, and fullness.

## 4 The Gospel Works Miracles in Law-breakers (1:12–17)

Verses 12–13—Paul now offers himself as an example of what happens to sinners when they are crushed by God's Law and given faith through His Gospel. Don't be fooled by the wording here: it is not that Christ "judged" Paul faithful in the sense that He looked at Paul and said, "Wow! He is really faithful!" Rather, Christ *reckoned* Paul faithful or *counted* him as faithful. Compare this with Romans 4:3, which states that God "credited" (NIV) Abraham as righteous. In the same way, Christ Jesus credited Paul with faithfulness and appointed him to service, even though Paul was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor. Ever the Faithful One, the Lord also strengthens Paul for his task.

Verse 14—As a persecutor of the church, Paul ignorantly believed that he was acting faithfully. However, the Gospel Ananias proclaimed to him in Acts 9 changed all of that. "The grace of our Lord overflowed for" him, giving him the forgiveness, salvation, faith, and love that come only from Christ Jesus.

Verse 15—Paul is not unique either. Christ Jesus did not come into this world to save only him, but all sinners. The all-encompassing forgiveness that Christ earned with His death and resurrection is often called the Universal Atonement. That is, Christ shed His blood for ALL people of every time and place. There is no one for whom Christ did not die. As we will hear later in this Letter, God also wants everyone to be connected to this salvation (1 Timothy 2:4).

When Paul calls himself the worst of sinners, he is not literally suggesting that he has sinned more than all men. He is speaking about his perception of himself, created by the Holy Spirit through the Ten Commandments. He sees that he sins against every element of God's Law; he knows that he in no way deserves God's grace. Yet God is merciful even to Paul. All Christians ought to look at themselves in the same way: saved not by any personal merit or worthiness, but purely by God's grace shown to them in Christ.

Verse 16—Notice how Paul humbly explains the reason for his salvation! He does not say that he was saved because he was going to do great things for God. Rather, Paul was saved so "Jesus Christ might display His perfect patience." It is as if Paul says, "If Jesus is powerful enough to save *me* from sin and death, He can save anybody! If He was patient with the one who so aggressively blasphemed and persecuted His church, He will be patient with all! I am a good example of God's miraculous work, for He has raised me up from the dead to eternal life, given me the gift of faith by which I believe and am saved."

Verse 17—Praise and honor for the Gospel belongs only to God. Yet when the false teachers throw away the Law, they throw away the Gospel as well. This robs God of His honor and strips Him of His glory.

## 5 Remain Firm in the Faith (1:18–20)

Verses 18–19a—Before the New Testament was completed, God spoke to His people through prophetic utterances in addition to preaching from the Scriptures. Paul could be speaking about a prophetic utterance that was made concerning Timothy, or he might be referring to the sermon preached at Timothy's ordination. How can we know for sure? Either way, God clearly set Timothy apart to "fight the good fight" (NIV) in his pastoral work in Ephesus. The context of this Letter suggests that Timothy's fight includes both his own perseverance in the faith (similar to 2 Timothy 4:7) and his careful protection of God's people.

What does Timothy's good fight entail? Two things: Keeping the Christian faith whole and unadulterated, and keeping the good conscience that arises from the forgiveness of sins. A good conscience itself is a gift from God. It listens to the Word of God and desires to act accordingly. Like a sheep, the conscience follows the voice of the Good Shepherd in His Word and preaching. Pastor Timothy should prefer to face rejection by the false teachers and others rather than suffer a bad conscience.

Verses 19b–20—The false teachers have rejected both faith and conscience. They teach in a way that is contrary to the clear Word of God, and they also teach contrary to their own hearts, upon which the Law of God is written (Romans 2:15). Their own words will condemn them, for they have led themselves into a shipwrecked faith.

Paul has already dealt with two men in particular. The reference to handing them over to Satan refers to

church discipline, which is carried out in order to protect the congregation from similar sin and to call those who were disciplined back to repentance and faith. By denouncing their sin and separating them from the church (excommunication), Paul hopes that Hymenaeus and Alexander will realize the error of their “shipwreck” and call out to God again for His grace and mercy. Such gifts God is only too happy to provide!

## Conclusion

“At the end of chapter 1 we hear how Paul gives Timothy this command, that he wage good warfare by keeping a good conscience. He gave an example about those who rejected faith and a good conscience and suffered shipwreck. These he consigned to Satan. This example he wrote to strengthen us and to terrify the [false teachers], because it is a rule that whoever has started to neglect faith and conscience soon becomes a heretic . . . . Paul therefore finds that all heretics rise from this source, that they begin to weary of this general doctrine of faith, love, and the cross. Because they are unaffected by this doctrine, they find new doctrines every day. . . . The man who begins to hold a worthless conscience and faith is not in a little danger but in the greatest and most terrible peril, because he is not merely breaking a leg in this shipwreck but is drowned completely” (Luther’s Works, vol. 28, pp. 253–54).

Paul admonishes Timothy to “charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine” (v. 3) and “wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience” (vv. 18–19). He does not command legalism, but he calls Timothy to sincere love for the congregation entrusted to his care, in order that they may never wander away from the green pastures of Christ’s forgiveness and into a wasteland of unbelief. Careful teaching and sound doctrine do not oppose Christian love; they are the very expressions of the Christian love that God creates for us in Christ Jesus and enables us to show to our neighbor. This love and this doctrine must remain constant, whether or not our neighbor will respond to it. Love indeed covers many sins and wrongs, but sound doctrine (teaching) must not be attacked, overlooked, treated lightly, or taken for granted.

## Concluding Activities

Distribute the enrichment magazine and encourage participants to read it as part of their weekly study. Then distribute the study leaflet for the next session. Pray the following prayer:

O God, whose infinite love restores to the right way all those who err, gathers the scattered, and preserves those whom You have gathered, of Your tender mercy pour out on Your Christian people the grace of unity that, all schisms being healed, Your flock, gathered to the true Shepherd of Your church, may serve You in all faithfulness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen (*LW*, p. 126).

Join together in praying the Lord’s Prayer, and then depart with the salutation:

L: The Lord be with you!

C: And also with you!

## Living the Faith Together

### 1 Timothy 2–3

#### *Preparing for the Session*

#### Central Focus

1 Timothy 3:14 summarizes this section: “I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God.” First Paul warns Timothy about those who use the truth for their own gain (session 1). Then he outlines the way God’s household must order and conduct itself in its response to the Word of truth. The things Paul mentions here—intercessory prayer, the conduct of women, the characteristics of a pastor—flow from the life-giving Word of God. Paul recognizes that these things might not be self-evident to the church and that they might not measure up to human logic because “the mystery of godliness is great” (1 Timothy 3:16 NIV).

#### Objectives

That the participant, as a child of God and with the Holy Spirit’s help, will be led deeper into the divinely given realizations that

1. the church, the body of Christ, has a certain shape and order according to the Gospel of salvation;
2. the individual Christian’s place in the church has to do with divinely created love for God and love for neighbor, not personal gain;
3. “the mystery of godliness” (1 Timothy 3:16) requires that each Christian listen to God’s truth and hold it, not pass judgment on it or decide whether it personally applies.

**Note for the small-group leaders:** Lesson notes and other materials you will need begin on page 49.

### For the Lecture Leader

#### *Session Plan*

#### Worship

Begin the session with the Invocation and the hymn printed in the study leaflet. Accompaniments are available in denominational hymnals, such as *Lutheran Worship* (refer to hymnal index). (Note: Concordia Publishing House has available *Every Voice a Song*, a 9-CD set of organ accompaniments for 180 hymns and liturgy. All the initial worship hymns in the LifeLight courses are included in this resource. It’s especially helpful for mission congregations and small parishes. See the list of study resources on page 7.)

#### Prayer

Blessed Lord, since You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn and take them to heart that by patience and comfort of Your holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen (*LW*, p. 156).

### Lecture Presentation

#### **1** Intercessory Prayer (2:1–8)

Verses 1–2—The words “first of all” stress the importance of the church’s intercessory prayers for all people. Not only do Christians present their requests to God, but they pray with thanksgiving, knowing by faith that all things are in the heavenly Father’s good care. Paul singles out “kings and all who are in high positions.” This might have come as a surprise to Christians living under pagan kings like Nero, who was in power at the time. But then Paul gives his reason: “that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.” A good government provides quiet living to Christians and to all people because it curbs evil, allowing us to conduct our business and care for our families in relative peace—much greater peace than anarchy would allow. For this reason, the prayers of

the church often remember the nations, our government, and those serving in the military. Such petitions are good prayers during both wartime and peacetime, prayed by congregations in worship and by individuals in their daily devotions.

Verses 3–4—Prayers that please God are those prayed through faith and trust in Jesus. Such prayers also show the church’s concern for the salvation of the entire world, which God Himself desires. There is no one for whom Christ did not shed His blood and die, and there is no one whom God wishes to damn. People face His judgment because of their rejection of the ransom Christ earned for all—so we need to be witnessing to all!

Verses 5–6—In offering its requests and intercessions, the church essentially lives the life of Christ in the world. Jesus Himself continually pleads our case before the Father, pointing to the punishment He bore for us on the cross. In the same way, we also plead the case of others before Him, asking God to deal mercifully with them, give them the gift of faith, and include them among His people.

Notice how Paul emphasizes the human nature of Christ in this passage: “the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). This counters some of the false claims, already becoming popular in some parts of the church, which suggested that Jesus is only God who took the shape of a man, but did not truly become man. Ever careful to teach “sound doctrine” (1 Timothy 1:10), Paul faithfully opposes and corrects every falsehood that creeps into the church.

Verse 7—Paul’s own place in the church flows out of the life and faith that Christ Jesus created for him by becoming “a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:6). Paul assures the reader that he is speaking the truth, because it may sound strange that a former Pharisee and devoted enemy of the Gospel would become a herald (or “preacher”), an apostle (“one who is sent”), and a teacher of faith to the Gentiles.

Verse 8—In verse 4, where Paul states that God desires to save all men, the word used for “man” is *anthropos*, which means “human” or “person.” God wants all people to be saved, males and females. Here in verse 8, Paul uses the word *andros*, referring specifically to males. Men are to provide leadership for joint worship by a group of Christians that may include both males and females (1 Corinthians 11:5), and other texts indicate that women also prayed in the public worship services.

The phrase “lifting holy hands” does not necessarily prescribe a certain bodily position, but it speaks of the holiness created for us by our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of His rich, ongoing forgiveness, God looks at us as sinless and innocent, unstained by the shedding of innocent blood, by theft or rebellion. The pastor who leads God’s people in worship does not hold this position by divine right, but by the same forgiving grace and mercy that extends to all people, lifting up holy hands that have been purified by the blood of Christ.

## 2 The Conduct of Christian Women (2:9–15)

Verses 9–10—In a world and society in which fashion has become increasingly sensual, Paul’s words here come as a timely corrective. The way people dress speaks about the way they view themselves and the world around them. Rather than dressing in a way that makes the individual’s body the focus of the world’s attention, Christians dress “with modesty and self-control.” Their life in the church is not about their getting noticed, but it is about their gathering together with all God’s saints around God’s gifts of Word, Baptism, and Holy Communion. The things that get noticed are not the gold and the pearls with which the saints adorn themselves, but the good deeds that Jesus Himself commends to us: “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16).

Verses 11–12—Contrary to what many people claim today, Paul does not consider women to be second-class citizens by barring them from the pastoral ministry. Everyone has their own, God-given place in the body of Christ. Many men do not qualify for the pastoral office either! Yet because Americans are so used to thinking in terms of civil rights (an idea found in the U.S. Constitution but not in the Holy Bible), sometimes people struggle with what Paul is saying here. In the church, women must not exert authority over men. Would that all men took their divinely-given responsibility seriously, both in the church and in the home! If they did, the issue of women’s leadership in the church would not be nearly so critical as it now is.

Verses 13–14—The authority of a man is not Paul’s own idea, but it is the basic order of the Creator’s world, as his reference to Genesis suggests. Adam failed to exercise authority over Eve by not faithfully teaching her and requiring her to follow the Word. When Eve rejected Adam’s authority, she “was deceived and

became a transgressor.” The perfect balance that God had created suddenly fell apart when man and woman abandoned the place that God had given to each. In the church, the reestablishment of the original creation has begun, brought about by the sacrifice of Christ. For this reason, the people of God pattern themselves after the created order and not after the priorities and convictions of the fallen world.

Verse 15—Paul does not intend that men are saved by faith but women are saved by having babies! Christian women are delivered *through the midst of childbirth* by the graciousness of God. Recall the curse that resulted when Eve rejected Adam’s authority (Genesis 3:16). Even though the burden and penalty for Eve’s sin remains for all women, they are yet saved by the grace of God despite this suffering. As they struggle in their painful deliveries of children, they need not think that God has abandoned them or that they must shed their blood in this way to atone for sin. Christ has done that for them through the shedding of His blood for their sake. Salvation remains for all who “continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control,” even amidst the rigors of childbirth.

### 3 The Conduct and Characteristics of the Pastor (3:1–13)

Verse 1—The word used here for “overseer” is the same word from which we get the English word *Episcopal*. Sometimes translated as “bishop,” it refers to the Office of the Holy Ministry. The man who would aspire to seek (literally, “stretch oneself out toward”) this office certainly does desire a noble task. The task ought not to be taken lightly or without careful consideration. Not everyone who wants the “noble task” will be called upon to fulfill it, just as not everyone who wants to be the president of the United States will get elected. Here Paul provides Timothy with a way of examining the men in his congregation, in order to distinguish those who are qualified from those who simply desire the work. Noble desire is only the first step!

Verses 2–5—The characteristics described here could rightly be applied to all Christians. However, these things most especially apply to the one who takes the pastoral office, because he represents (1) Christ to the congregation and (2) the congregation to the community and world. The ambassador of the Lord reflects in his speech, his family life, and in his daily conduct those things that fit the proclamation of the Gospel. Temperate and balanced in all things, the pastor continu-

ally battles against the impulses of the flesh (as do, of course, all Christians). The faithful management of his family is not a secondary thought, but it is as essential as all the other characteristics, for “if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church?” Surely the pastor and his family experience the same temptations, struggles, and conflicts that are laid upon all Christian families. And surely we would never say that the pastor must never fail or need forgiveness. But he is an example to other pastors and to the Christians he is given to lead. He must remain their example in pious living and in wholehearted contrition and faith in Jesus alone for his salvation.

Verse 6—Paul warns that the candidate for the pastoral office must not be a recent convert, lest he become conceited in his work. A man uneducated in the Scriptures and inexperienced in the church will likely view his position in the way that earthly kings view their position, thinking that he is to be served rather than to serve.

Verse 7—The man who holds the pastoral office and preaches faithfully will undoubtedly give the world plenty of reason to despise and hate him. He need not add to their hatred by slovenly living. His life “above reproach” (v. 2) must also include “a good reputation with outsiders” (NIV). This way, his preaching will not be discredited by his lifestyle and lead to disgrace not only for himself, but also for the body of Christ, the church.

Verses 8–12—After describing the “overseer” or pastor (vv. 1–7), Paul now turns to those who would serve the church as deacons. The diaconate was an early church office that was devoted to assisting the pastoral office in attending to the day-to-day needs of the church. Deacons were not pastors but were pastoral assistants who enabled the pastor to focus his attention on “prayer and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4). The characteristics here described are parallel to those required of the overseer. Many congregations and church bodies today are reexamining the role of the diaconate in the life of the church, especially with regard to parishes no longer able to support a full-time pastor. This passage from 1 Timothy suggests that special care ought to be taken in these deliberations, that a diaconate not be established as a *replacement* for the pastoral office, but that it serve in *assistance* to the pastoral office.

Verse 13—The Scriptures have clearly established that no one—man, woman, pastor, or layperson—earns salvation. This gift comes solely by the grace of God and is

earned for us entirely by the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. We make no contribution at all.

Yet Paul here indicates that those who have served well gain great assurance in their faith. Because the Holy Spirit enables faith and creates love in your heart, you may look at your acts of love as expressions of God's work in you. You have not done these things, but God has done them through you! As such, you may then look upon these good fruits as assurances—in addition to the promises you regularly receive in His Word and His gifts—that you truly have God's gift of salvation and eternal life.

## 4 The Mystery of Godliness (3:14–16)

Verses 14–15—Paul's plans regularly change. He intends to visit Timothy in Ephesus, but he knows that his best plans may not work out. So he has sent this Letter as a way of continuing his preaching, even when he is absent.

Verse 16—By speaking of “the mystery of godliness,” Paul is not suggesting that the Christian faith is a secret organization in possession of secret knowledge that no one else can have. A “mystery” in the Scriptures is something that is unknowable, except by God's revelation. The knowledge of truly pious living and godliness does not simply spring up in the Christian heart and mind, but it comes through hearing God's Word. Faith produces fruit, and faith itself is produced by the Gospel. For this reason, Paul ends this section by the proclamation of our Lord's labors for us and for our salvation, quoting an ancient hymn that might even have already been familiar to the saints in Ephesus.

### Conclusion

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ forms the bookends for this section (2:3–6; 3:16). From this Gospel flows all things in the church, and everything receives its shape and form from it. Paul has not yet addressed every facet of congregational life that arises from the Gospel, but he has made a beginning here and will continue through the rest of this First Letter to Timothy.

### Closing Activities

Mention again the Enrichment Magazine and encourage participants to read it as part of their weekly study. Then distribute the study leaflet for the next session. Pray the following prayer:

Merciful God, we humbly implore You to cast the bright beams of Your light upon Your church that we, being instructed by the doctrine of the blessed apostles, may walk in the light of Your truth and at length attain to the light of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen (*LW*, p. 124).

Join together in praying the Lord's Prayer, and then depart with the salutation:

L: The Lord be with you!

C: And also with you!