

Building God's Family by Leading Faithful Households (1 Timothy 1)

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Dominant Thought: Faithful households build up God's household.

Objectives:

I want my listeners to understand the household themes of 1 Timothy.

I want my listeners to feel motivated to build faithful families in a difficult context.

I want my listeners to focus on one action of faithful families described in [1 Timothy 1](#).

If you've been to our house, hanging on our chimney you will find a sign hanging that says, "Family Rules." I'm not sure where we even found this sign. But, over the years, we talk about those rules to help keep us centered. Those rules include: choose to be happy, sing, laugh, dance, offer to help...

Your family has rules whether they are hanging on a wall, printed on a paper, spoken or unspoken. Every family has rules.

As we come to a study through Paul's first letter to his young apprentice Timothy, Paul is giving Timothy some house rules for the families in his church and the family that is the church. In the middle of the 1 Timothy. In [1 Timothy 3.15](#), Paul writes to Timothy.

1 Timothy 3:15 NIV

If I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

One of the reasons, Paul writes this letter to, so people know how to conduct themselves in God's household. Throughout this letter, we will encounter several images of the house or the family. At least 10 times in the six chapters of 1 Timothy, we'll meet a form of the word house ([1 Timothy 1.4](#); [3.4](#), [5](#), [12](#), [15](#); [5.4](#), [8](#), [13](#), [14](#); [6.16](#)). In addition to the word house, we'll encounter families members

like: son, father, husbands, wives, children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters mothers, older, younger... When we come to [1 Timothy 5](#), we'll encounter the longest section of teaching on caring for widows.

As we pursue our mission to make more and better followers of Jesus, we want to focus on Believing in Jesus, Becoming Spirit-filled, Building God's family, and Blessing the World. This series will focus on building God's family. Here's my sermon in a sentence today, ***Faithful households build up God's household.*** One of the goals for this series is for our families to become closer to God's plan. When our families become stronger, God's family, the church becomes stronger.

Are you ready? Let's read [1 Timothy 1.1-2](#). The Apostle Paul introduces himself "by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope." We will see the word command a few times in this letter. Usually if someone commands you to do something you better do it, especially if the command is coming from someone with authority. Paul says he's commanded by God our Savior, another repeated theme in this letter. He's also commanded by Jesus our hope. My friends we have hope in Jesus.

Then, in [1 Timothy 1.2](#), he addresses the recipient of the letter, "To Timothy my true son in the faith." Paul has such a deep relationship with Timothy, he calls him his true son in the faith. Timothy's name means, "one who honors God." We meet Timothy in [Acts 16.1](#). Timothy is introduced to us as "a disciple whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek." We are introduced to Timothy by his faith in Jesus and his parents. His mother is a believer. His father appears not to be following Jesus. Then, we read in [Acts 16.2](#), "All the believers...spoke well of him [Timothy]." Paul wants to take Timothy along on the journey. Timothy signs on to the mission. Paul had Timothy circumcise because the Jews in the area who knew his father was a Greek ([Acts 16.3](#)).

Timothy joins Paul on many of his missionary journeys. He joins Paul on the third missionary journey in Ephesus ([Acts 19.22](#)) which eventually becomes Timothy's home for ministry. Timothy is mentioned in many of Paul's letters to the churches.

Then, Paul greets Timothy in the letter with a common greeting, "Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord." Again, we see another family image, "God the Father." We've made it through two verses and have seen two family images: son and Father.

Now, we move into the introductory section of the letter. In most Pauline letters, Paul will lay out his main ideas in the opening verses.

As we study [1 Timothy 1](#), we will find four descriptions of faithful households or faithful families.

First, faithful households are all in when others are divided ([1 Timothy 1.1-3, 18-20](#)). Paul wanted Timothy to remain in Ephesus. Ephesus was an important city in the Roman empire in what is now modern-day Turkey in Asia. We learn about Ephesus from [Acts 19](#). Ephesus was home to a temple to the Roman goddess Diana or Artemis of the Ephesians. The gospel of Jesus transformed the city when many repented of worshipping the silver idols and burned their magic scrolls. A great riot broke out. That's how we meet Ephesus in the New Testament. Later in [Acts 20](#), Paul has this intimate moment with the elders from Ephesus who come and meet with him. Paul warned the elders in [Acts 20.27-31](#).

Acts 20:27–31 NIV

For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.

Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

Paul's warning comes true when we read his letter to Timothy. He wants Timothy to remain in Ephesus to command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer.

The teachers are not teaching the truth of God's word. They are devoting themselves to myths and endless genealogies. They are focusing on things that do not matter. Could any of that be said of us today? Do we live in a world that teaches lies as truth? Do people focus on speculation and feeling instead of truth? Then, 1 Timothy has something for us today.

Paul reminds Timothy “faithful households are all in when others are divided.”

Second, faithful households stay focused on God when others are distracted ([1 Timothy 1.4-7](#)).

Paul tells Timothy that these false teachers are promoting controversial speculation rather than “advancing God’s work—which is by faith” ([1 Timothy 1.4](#)). This phrase seems to be one of the key themes Paul’s is developing in this letter. The phrase “advancing God’s work” is one of those household words. The English Standard Version translates the phrase as “the stewardship from God.” The New American Standard Bible reads, “administration of God.” The New Revised Standard Version reads, “diving training.” The New King James Version reads, “godly edification.” All of these translations are doing their best to get at the idea of leading God’s house or ruling God’s house. We have a responsibility for our homes and the way we lead our homes toward Jesus has a direct impact on God’s family, the church.

Paul shares that the goal of this command is love which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience ([1 Timothy 1.5](#)). Paul has pure and loving motives. We talked a few months back with our students, “Truth is love.”

Paul then tells Timothy, ‘Some have departed from these and have turned aside to meaningless talk’ ([1 Timothy 1.6](#)). He even says they want to be teachers, but they don’t know what they are talking about. The warnings Paul gave those Ephesians elders on the seashore of Miletus from [Acts 20](#) has come true.

Paul reminds Timothy “faithful households stay focused on God when others are distracted.” Some will wander from the truth. Some will teach things that are not true.

Near the end of the [1 Timothy 1](#), Paul addresses Timothy again by name in [1 Timothy 1.18](#), “Timothy, my son.” Paul reiterates the reason he’s giving Timothy this command. He reminds Timothy of the prophecies once made about him. We don’t know exactly what Paul had in mind. It may be connected to the spiritual gift Timothy received when the elders laid their hands on Timothy in [1 Timothy 4.14](#).

He gives Timothy some soldier talk, “fight the battle well” ([1 Timothy 1.18](#)). You fight the battle well by “holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected” ([1 Timothy 1.19](#)). Two men are called out by name: Hymenaeus and Alexander have suffered shipwreck to their faith. Paul says, “I have handed them over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme” ([1 Timothy 1.20](#)). Sounds like

harsh words. Paul may be giving them what they want with the hope that they will realize the consequences of their choices before it is too late.

To walk away from Jesus is like a shipwreck.

Stockton Rush, CEO of Ocean Gate and the leader of Titan, a submarine vessel designed to explore the shipwreck of the RMS Titanic, described the process for building his underwater vessel, "And I've broken some rules to make this. I think I've broken them with logic and good engineering behind me"

(<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/titanic-submarine-implosion-oceangate-ceo-stockton-rush-2021-hes-broken-some-rules-in-design/>). On June 18, 2023, A crew of five people including Stockton Rush descended toward the Titanic site. However, the submarine imploded killing all five people inside.

When you go against the truth it will shipwreck your faith and can kill you.

When I was studying Psalms a few years ago with J.K. Jones at Lincoln Christian Seminary, he encouraged us to read the Psalms to keep us from shipwrecking our faith. Specifically, the Psalms of lament where the composers appear to be shaking a fist at God with one hand and with the other open for some help from God. That posture can help us stay connected to Christ when others are distracted.

Third, faithful households trust healthy teaching when others are destructive (1 Timothy 1.8-11). In these verses, Paul affirms the value of God's law if used well. In fact, Christ affirm the Old Testament and fulfills the Old Testament. All of God's Word is good if one uses it well. The chapel sermon from Ozark Christian College focused on the value, "The word of Christ taught in the Spirit of Christ." We need both the word of Christ or the truth of Christ taught in the Spirit of Christ. We cannot use Scripture to manipulate or abuse people. That's not the Spirit of Christ. It the message and the method that must honor Jesus.

Then Paul says the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers. He goes on to list about 15 examples of breaking God's law. As I read the list one doesn't have to go very far to find themselves described in this list. Here's some questions we could ask ourselves as we look over this list of sins:

- Are we honoring God: lawbreakers, rebels, ungodly, sinful, unholy, irreligious?
- Are we honoring life: those who kill fathers, mothers, murderers?

- Are we honoring family: sexually immoral, practicing homosexuality, slave traders/kidnappers?
- Are we honoring truth: liars and perjurers?

Some see this list of sinners as those who have broken the ten commandments. You could lay those ten commandments beside this list and draw lines to most of them.

If you were to watch or read the news this week, I'm confident you'd find stories on each of these broken situations. One comment on the phrase "those practicing homosexuality." I think it is helpful to distinguish between homosexual attraction versus homosexual practice. The attraction is not the sin. It is the behavior. What you do with the attraction. Paul covers all sexual sins with the two words that are translated in our Bibles: "for the sexually immoral and for those practicing homosexuality" ([1 Timothy 1.10](#)). With those two words in the original language, Paul covers all sexual sin that is outside of one man and one woman in the safety and security of a marriage relationship.

Paul concludes "and for whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine" ([1 Timothy 1.10](#)). Sound doctrine is healthy teaching. Sound doctrine contrasts false doctrines. Paul will continue to encourage Timothy to healthy teaching. That's why we have as our first core value, "We value the Bible as God's Word." We will build our families on the endearing truth of God's Word.

Faithful households trust healthy teaching when others are destructive.

Jared Alcantara, preaching professor at Baylor University, shares Pseudo-Gospels or false gospels in his book, *The Practices of Christian Preaching* (p. 34). He highlights five. I'll share three from his list: 1) The Gospel of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, 2) The Gospel of Discipleship without Grace, 3) The Gospel of Grace without Discipleship.

The Gospel of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism consists of three main beliefs: being a good person makes us right with God (moralistic); God's main job is to make us happy and to help us feel good about ourselves (therapeutic); and there is a God up there somewhere whom we can go to in crisis (deism), as opposed to the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who calls us into discipleship (Alcantara, p. 23).

The Gospel of Discipleship without Grace focuses on disciplines and works and holy habits. All good things. However, the love of God, the mercy of God, the

grace of God is absent. This gospel leaves people feeling that God is always angry with them. They simply never measure up to God's desire. Another result is Christians who are mean to other people who do not measure up to the standards they have set for them (Alcantara, p. 30).

The Gospel of Grace without Discipleship focuses on the love and grace of God but doesn't challenge people to grow in maturity. It's all about love, but no life challenge or change. The process of the Holy Spirit working in our lives is absent. The challenge to surrender your lives and habits to Jesus as King is missing. This gospel uses the language of deliverance without repentance (Femi B. Adeleye, Nigerian preacher, *Preachers of a Different Gospel*, p. 8). He also says a "strange gospel" produces "strange Christians".

Those are some of the false gospels we must combat and discern. Thankfully, Paul describes what the true gospel is like in [1 Timothy 1.12-16](#).

Fourth, faithful households respond to God's grace to show others a better way (1 Timothy 1.12-16). Paul cracks the door open on his life and his story in [1 Timothy 1.12-16](#). He thanks Christ Jesus our Lord. Jesus is the one who gives him strength and considered him faithful and appoint Paul to His service.

Even though I was once...a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man ([1 Timothy 1.13](#)). How would you finish that sentence? "Even though I was once..." From what has Jesus rescued you? Did you have a temper? Paul did. Did you have a foul mouth? Paul spoke some harsh words against Jesus. Paul met the Master on the road to Damascus. Jesus blinded him to get his attention. Later Paul was baptized and went from murderer to missionary...from persecutor to preacher.

Paul says he was shown mercy because he acted in ignorance and unbelief. Paul greeted Timothy with mercy in [1 Timothy 1.2](#). Paul continued by saying, "the grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus" ([1 Timothy 1.14](#)). When Paul wrote the letter to the church in Ephesus, he shared, "For it is by grace you have been saved through faith" ([Ephesians 2.8](#)).

Then Paul gives Timothy his first of five faithful sayings in these letters to Timothy and Titus. You can trust this word. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. Paul written about half of the New Testament and suffered more persecution than probably all of us in this room combined. He calls himself, "the worst of all sinners."

God showed mercy to Paul so that in him the worst of all sinners, Christ might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

Bryan Chappell writes in *Christ-Centered Preaching*, "People cannot do or be what God requires without the past, present, and future work of Christ" (p. 294).

Faithful households respond to God's grace to show others a better way.

We have good news. This is the gospel. Jesus came into the world. That's Christmas. To save sinners. That's Easter.

We don't even make it out of [1 Timothy 1](#) and the apostle Paul breaks out in a prayer or praise chorus [1 Timothy 1.17](#).

1 Timothy 1:17 NIV

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

As we look back over these four descriptions of faithful households, I'd like you to choose one to focus your attention on this week.

Faithful households...

1-Are all in when others are divided.

2-Stay focused on God when others are distracted.

3-Trust healthy teaching when others are destructive.

4-Respond to God's grace to show others a better way.

Faithful households build up God's household.