

1 Timothy 1:1-11 – The Aim is Love

1. Have you ever been part of a church where the leadership needed to deal with people teaching wrong or unhelpful things? How was it done and what was the outcome?

2. 1 Timothy is a letter from the apostle Paul to a younger minister, Timothy. Skim 1 Timothy, reading 1:1-3, 1:18-19, 3:14-4:1, 4:6, 4:11-16, 5:21-23, 6:10-14 & 6:20-21.
 - a. What was the relationship between Paul and Timothy?
 - b. What threats was Timothy facing?
 - c. What does Paul want Timothy to do?
 - d. What does 3:14-15 tell us about how applicable the letter is to us?

3. Now read 1:1-7. Timothy is told to deal with some false teachers.
 - a. What were the problems with the false teachers, their teaching and/or their impact?
 - b. What is the aim of Paul and Timothy's instruction? What exactly are the various things listed in verse 5?
 - c. What difference does it make that Paul was appointed by God as an apostle, and entrusted with the gospel? (v 1 & 11)

4. Read verses 8-11. According to this passage what are the legitimate and illegitimate uses of the law?

5. What is the right relationship between the gospel of God's grace and living a changed life (living according to the sound teaching based on the gospel)? (See also Titus 1:1, 2:1, 2:11-14, 3:3-11).

6. What might you expect to happen if a church or an individual Christian focuses on law, rather than the gospel?

7. What would be good to pray for in light of reading 1 Timothy 1:1-11? Pray together about these things.

1 Timothy 1:12-20 – The Power of Grace

1. Who would you think is the least likely person to be in the kingdom of God? (Name some names!)
2. **Read 1 Timothy 1:12-20.** Let's start at the end. According to verses 18-20
 - a. What is the main thing Paul is urging Timothy to do?
 - b. What else do we learn about Hymenaeus and Alexander in 2 Timothy 2:17 & 4:14?
 - c. In what different ways do these verses repeat things already said in verses 1-11?
 - d. How do you think Timothy would have been feeling as he received this "instruction"?
3. Now we can read verses 12-17 in their context.
 - a. What was Paul doing before God turned his life around? (If you are not familiar with Paul's conversion and call to preach the gospel, you might like to read Acts 9:1-25)
 - b. For what exactly does Paul give thanks? (v 12-14)
 - c. In what way is Paul's own life a prime example of what Jesus came to do? (v 15-16)
 - d. Why do you think Paul ends with the words of praise (the 'doxology') in verse 17?
 - e. Why do think Paul tells Timothy (and the whole church) this? (Why not simply go from verse 11 to 2:1?)
4. To what extent can you identify with Paul as one who has been shown great mercy? To what extent does this drive you to similar praise? If this is hard for you, why do you think that is?
5. What would you say from this passage to people who say
 - a. "I don't feel that I'm worthy to be one of God's people"?
 - b. "I don't think he/she could ever be one of God's people"?
6. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. What implication does knowing this have for our own mission in life?
7. Pray together – confess your sin, thank God for his work in your life and praise him for who he is. Pray that Christian leaders, and the whole church, will strongly engage in battle for the truth of the gospel of God's grace and the lifestyle based upon it.

1 Timothy 2:1-7 – The Priority of Prayer

1. What would you say were the main indicators of the spiritual health of a church? What are the signs that something is wrong?

In 1 Timothy 1 Paul urges Timothy to silence false teachers in the church (1:3-11). As Paul himself testifies, the gospel of grace is God's powerful message that transforms lives (1:12-17). Timothy is to 'fight the good fight' while having faith and a good conscience (1:18-19). In chapter 2 we see more specific instructions on how people are to conduct themselves in God's household (3:15). The first instruction concerns prayer.

2. **Read 1 Timothy 2:1-7.** What do you find surprising in these verses? What questions are raised for you?
 - a. Who is the church called to pray for?
 - b. What is the hoped for outcome of including prayer for kings and all those who are in authority? Is this a self centred prayer for our comfort, or does it have a wider purpose? (ie. What will result if Christians and those around them can live tranquil and quiet lives in all godliness and dignity?)
 - c. Who are the "kings and all those who are in authority" in our world today?
 - d. To what extent is this instruction reflected in our prayer lives? Does anything need to change? If so how might you/we do this?
3. There is not a lot of difference between the different words for prayer in verse 1. "Petitions" are simply requests, "prayers" are requests made to God, "intercessions" has the sense of praying for others, and "thanksgivings" are self explanatory. From verses 1-2:
 - a. Who is the church called to pray for?
 - b. What is the hoped for outcome of including prayer for kings and all those who are in authority? Is this a self centred prayer for our comfort, or does it have a wider purpose? (ie. What will result if Christians and those around them can live tranquil and quiet lives in all godliness and dignity?)
 - c. Who are the "kings and all those who are in authority" in our world today?
 - d. To what extent is this instruction reflected in our prayer lives? Does anything need to change? If so how might you/we do this?
4. Verse 3-7 describe why prayer for everyone should be first priority for the church. What different reasons are given? (Notice the repetition of all/every/humanity). How do each of these reasons encourage us to pray?
5. If we really believe each of these reasons, according to this passage, what would be the evidence?
6. The "then" (or therefore) in verse 1 links this section back to chapter 1. How does the call to prayer and the reasons given follow logically from chapter 1? Why do you think Paul included it "first of all"?
7. Spend some time praying for people beyond our church - for the gospel of grace to transform their lives. Pray also for our leaders, and for peace and good order in society (ours and others).

1 Timothy 2:8-15 Men and Women in Church

1 Timothy 2 has been at the centre of much controversy in our generation. In a letter where Paul writes so that Timothy will know “how people ought to act in God’s household” (3:15), he includes an instruction that a woman is not to “teach or have authority over a man” (2:12). What does this mean? How should we apply this in our church today?

Read 1 Timothy 2:8-15

1. As we come to read any passage of Scripture, and this one in particular, what attitudes do you think are important for us to have?
2. In verse 8 we find an instruction directed to men. In what way are men to pray? Why do you think this might be particularly directed to men?
3. In verses 9-10 the focus shifts to women. In what way are women to dress? Why do you think this might be particularly directed to women? How might a woman dress herself with good works?
4. From verses 11-12, what should and shouldn’t a woman do in the church community? (Note: The word “silent” is also used earlier in verse 2, translated as “quiet”. Rather than ‘saying nothing at all’, it refers to an attitude that respects and honours the leadership of the men God has called to oversee the church). Although you may have many questions...
 - a. What do you think is the main principle here?
 - b. What two reasons does Paul give for this instruction (v 13-14)?
5. A common objection to applying these verses today is to claim that they only applied to a specific situation or to first century culture. Does the passage itself indicate this, or does it indicate that it is for a ‘word for all seasons’?
6. What do you think “saved through childbearing” means in verse 15? How does verse 15 as a whole encourage women to put verses 11 & 12 into practice?
7. How then do you think verses 11 & 12 should apply to our church life? What particular roles and activities seem to you to involve teaching and having authority over men?
8. Why do you think this teaching causes such controversy in our generation? How might we help each other to understand, accept and apply these teachings?
9. What would be good to pray in response to reading this part of God’s word?

1 Timothy 3:1-13 The Nobility of Leadership

1. Do you think most people in our world today would describe being a leader in the church as a “noble task”? Why or why not?

2. Read 1 Timothy 3:1-13.

One of our challenges for reading this passage is that we tend to have impressions in our minds of various offices in different denominations. It might help to understand the actual words used here in 1 Timothy 3.

- **Overseer** (v2) = Greek *episkopos* - often translated “bishop”, but is sometimes also used interchangeably with *presbuteros* = “elder” (See 1 Timothy 5:17 & Titus 1:5 & 7). However, a *presbuteros* can also refer simply to an older man (eg. 5:1). The word “pastor” comes from the role of an “elder” as a shepherd in 1 Peter 5:1-5)
- **Deacon** (v 8,10,12) = Greek *diakonos* - The same word is often translated “servant” (eg. 4:6). Confusingly our word “minister” also means servant. The emphasis is on serving, not on a position of power.
- **Wives** (v 11) = Greek *gunaikas* - This is the normal word for “woman” or “wife”. However, some see it as an office in the church and translate it “deaconess” (cf. Romans 16:1).

3. In 1 Timothy 3 the focus is on the tasks (overseeing/managing and serving) rather than on offices or positions held in the church. Remember the church is God’s household (3:15), and ancient households were extended families and included servants, some of whom were entrusted to manage the household. Fill in this chart to list the qualifications for each role.

Overseer	Servant (Deacon)	Women (who serve)

- What qualities are common to more than one person/role? What are the main differences?
- Are there any qualities that aren’t necessary for every Christian?
- Do we learn anything here about what each person is to do?

4. Some people say “a person’s private life has nothing to do with their suitability for a public office”. How would you respond from 1 Timothy 3?

5. Why do you think Christian character is so important for leadership in the church?

6. Why is church oversight and service a “noble” task? (See also 3:13, 3:15 & 4:16)

7. Do you have the qualities listed to be an overseer or a servant? Which ones would be good for you to work on?

8. Pray together for the leaders of our church, and for those responsible for appointing them.

1 Timothy 3:14-4:10 The Mystery of Godliness

1. What would people today suggest is the way to help Christians live more “godly” lives?
2. **Read 1 Timothy 3:14-16.** These are the centre and key verses of the letter.
 - a. Why is Paul so concerned for how people act in the church? How might the descriptions of the church in verse 15 motivate Timothy and us to strive for this right living?
 - b. Verse 16 indicates that the mystery (or ‘secret’) of godliness is the truth (now revealed) about Jesus (ie. the gospel). (“Godliness” here seems to be life/attitudes/behaviour that is shaped by knowing God’s goodness.) What do you understand each line in verse 16 to be talking about, and why will knowing and believing these things lead to godliness?
 - c. Paul sees that the truth of the gospel and godly living are closely related. Where else in the letter so far have we already seen these two things in focus?
3. The context of teaching the truth to promote godly lives is challenging. **Read 1 Timothy 4:1-5.**
 - a. What do verses 1-2 indicate we should expect in the “later times”? Why do you think Paul speaks so strongly about this?
 - b. In verse 3 we learn something of the teachings in Ephesus. Abstinence from marriage/sex and certain foods may be considered by some to be a path to godliness. What does Paul say about this?
 - c. In what ways might we be susceptible to similar false teaching today?
4. **Now read 1 Timothy 4:6-10.** Timothy is reminded how to be “a good servant of Christ Jesus”.
 - a. According to verses 6 & 7 what does he need to do and not do?
 - b. Why is training for godliness far more valuable than physical training of the body?
 - c. How does someone train themselves to be godly? (Don’t forget 3:16!)
 - d. What reason is given in verse 14 for us to labour and strive for the trustworthy saying of verse 8? What is the logic here?
5. What implications might flow for you and for our church from seeing the importance of the truth of the gospel of God’s goodness and grace in Christ, the importance of godly living and the relationship between the two? Pray together about these things.

1 Timothy 4:11-5:2 How to serve Christ Jesus

1. If you had to give instructions to a new minister starting out in a church, what would you include?

The passage we're reading in this study is short, but profound and very practical. It is part of what it means for Timothy (and anyone in Christian leadership) to be a "good servant of Christ Jesus" (4:6). The instructions here also apply to anyone who leads a family, small group, children/youth ministry or even a fellow individual Christian. **Read 1 Timothy 4:11-5:2.**

2. What do you think "these things" in verse 11 refers to? What do you make of the twin instruction "command and teach"?
3. In verses 12-16 Paul gives his instructions to Timothy as a young minister in the church. Interestingly they are concerned with both life (v12) and teaching (v 13) and the need for both (v 16).
 - a. Which do you think are the most challenging instructions? (We'll come to verse 14 in Q4)
 - b. Why do you think Timothy must give attention to both his life and teaching?
 - c. Does a minister have to be perfect?
 - d. What encouragements/incentives are here for Timothy?
 - e. In what ways do you think church expectations on minister's today might make it hard for them to focus on these priorities?
4. What do you think Paul might be referring to as the "gift that is in you" in verse 15? Could it be his God given abilities; his office/role; or perhaps the Holy Spirit? (See also 1:18, 5:22, 2 Timothy 1:6-7 & Acts 13:1-3).
5. What important realities must Timothy take account of in 5:1-2? How might we feel extra pressure in 2019 to dismiss these instructions? What problems/difficulties emerge when these are ignored? What benefits might flow when they are followed?
6. If you are involved in any kind of Christian leadership, which of the instructions here most needs attention in your life? What can you do to make progress in this?
7. To what extent do you think the paid ministers in our church are fulfilling these instructions? Can you see their progress? How might you encourage them? What would be good to pray for them?

1 Timothy 5:3-16 Honour Genuine Widows

1. In our church there are many widows. Who do you know?

As we have seen in 1 Timothy, godliness shapes what a good servant of Christ will teach about how Christians ought to act in God's household (3:14-16, 4:6). This will involve relating differently to different groups of people (eg.5:1). Our passage today concerns how the church ought to honour (HCSB – "support") widows. However, even within the general category of widows, individuals will have different needs and priorities for support.

2. God has a particular concern for widows (Deuteronomy 24:19, Psalm 68:5, Acts 6:1-7 & James 1:27). Imagine the situation of an ancient widow. What would make them in need of particular care by God and his people?
3. **Read 1 Timothy 5:3-16.** Although the passage clearly urges the church to honour widows (presumably by financial/practical support), some have a higher priority than others. What different kinds of widows does the apostle envisage? And **why** should these be included or excluded from the list of widows that the church helps?

v 3, 5 & 9-10

v 4 & 16

v 6-7

v 11-15

4. If we were writing the Bible today, do you think we would include a long section on how to honour widows? Why or why not? What attitudes or practices of ours does this challenge or commend?
5. Who ought to care for widows in God's household? (v 4 & 8, v 9, v 16).
6. What challenges can you envisage arising in putting these instructions into practice? (Think about practical matters and the impact of a sinful hearts).
7. (As time permits!) What are the good works which mark the widow to be supported? (See also 1 Timothy 2:9-10 & Titus 2:3-5?) How might Christian men help/encourage the women in their lives to value & practice these things?
8. What do you think it might look like for us to support widows (or others who can't support themselves) in our church today? How has having a state welfare system make a difference? Have you personally been challenged to be/do/change something?
9. What would be good to pray about in response to this passage?

1 Timothy 5:17-6:2 Honour Elders & Masters

1. The word “elder” is often used to refer to a particular office in a church. It can also simply refer to an older man (eg. 1 Tim 5:1). It is also used interchangeably with the word overseer and shepherd (eg. Titus 1:5-9, Acts 20:17 & 28-30, 1 Peter 5:1-4). In this study we will use the word to refer to those who function as leaders by teaching the Word, providing a model of Christian living and managing the church’s affairs. Who do you see as the “elders” in our church?
2. **Read 1 Timothy 5:17-25.** The previous section of the letter was about honouring widows (5:3), now Paul turns to the importance of honouring elders.
 - a. In what two ways is a church called to honour its elders? (v 17-19)
 - b. What attitudes or practices do these verses counter?
3. Verses 20-22 deal with how to manage a situation where an elder persists in sinning.
 - a. What are the different instructions given in these verses? Why is each required?
 - b. Why do you think this is so important (as indicated by the ‘charge’ in verse 21)?
 - c. What challenges might we face in applying these instructions? What do we need to pray for?
4. Why do you think Paul tells Timothy to drink a little wine in verse 23? Does it have any connection with the surrounding verses?
5. What point is Paul making in verses 24 & 25? How does it fit in the flow of the passage? (See also 1 Corinthians 4:4-5)
6. How do the elders in our church receive the honour that they are due (assuming that they are ‘good leaders’ – v 17)? How well are you giving them honour?
7. The section on honouring different people is concluded with a call for slaves to honour their masters. **Read 1 Timothy 6:1-2.**
 - a. Why should slaves honour their masters? (See also Titus 2:9-10) What will happen if Christian slaves (or workers!) don’t do this?
 - b. In what ways does verse 2 challenge our attitudes and behaviour in the workplace, or in doing business with Christian people?
8. Pray together in response to what God has revealed to us in this part of his word.

1 Timothy 6:3-21 Godliness with Contentment

As we come to the final section of 1 Timothy, Paul introduces the theme of money. It comes in the context of the call which we have seen from the beginning (1:3-4, 1:18-20, 4:1-5) for Timothy to counter false teachers by teaching the truth of the Gospel and the implications that flow from it for God's household. In this study we will focus on the teaching about money.

Read 1 Timothy 6:3-21.

1. How do you think people today might be tempted to see "godliness" (religion/right relating to God) as a means to material gain (v 5)? How might this particularly afflict church leaders?
2. In verses 6-8 there is a great "gain" in godliness when it is combined with contentment.
 - a. What do you think this gain is? (see 6:19 & 4:8)?
 - b. What do we need to see/know/realize in order to cultivate "godliness with contentment"?
3. The alternative to contentment is addressed in verses 9-10.
 - a. According to these verses, what are the dangers of craving more money (ie. not being content)?
 - b. How have you seen these things played out in your own experience, or in others?
 - c. In what ways do you think you are currently most susceptible to this?
4. From verses 11 & 12 how is Timothy to avoid the dangers of pursuing money? What might it look like for us to apply these instructions to ourselves? How might the charge of verses 13-16 motivate Timothy and us in this?
5. In verses 17-19 Paul returns to some specific instructions for those who have been blessed by God with riches in this present age.
 - a. What are we not to do when God gives us wealth? Why not?
 - b. What are we to do instead? Why?
6. If you are aware that someone's craving for, or trust in, is damaging their faith, what could you pray for them? What could you say to them?
7. From this study, what is one key perspective or instruction that has particularly encouraged or challenged your attitudes and use of money and possessions? What do you need to think or do differently as a result? Pray for each other about these things.