

# 1 Timothy

## *A Call to Faithful Service*

### Lesson 8

To Timothy,  
my true child  
in the faith...



In the previous verses Paul has written to Timothy describing the church as a pillar and buttress of the truth and warned about teachers who will arise binding rules upon Christians contrary to the teachings of Christ.

### A Good Servant of Christ Jesus (4:6-16)

Paul begins verse 6 with “if” indicating that the outcome he hopes to see is conditional on the actions of Timothy. To be a good and faithful servant<sup>1</sup> of Christ, Timothy was charged with the responsibility to pass on Paul’s teaching to the church. “Put these things before” the brothers literally means literally “to place under.” Paul’s teachings in the previous verses are like stepping stones to help Christians walk over treacherous ground.”<sup>2</sup>



### **1. Do Christians face treacherous ground in churches today? Discuss why you have come to this conclusion.**

In verse 6, “the words of the faith” are equivalent to the teachings of Scripture and Timothy was to be trained in them. He was to read, meditate upon, and thoroughly incorporate the Scripture into his life, his thinking, and his teaching. Similarly, the “good doctrine” is the teachings that come to man from God through the Holy Spirit in Scripture.

Timothy has “followed” this doctrine. The word translated as followed means “to follow, accompany; to know all about; to investigate.”<sup>3</sup> Timothy’s faith stood on solid ground and could stand up to all scrutiny. He had exhaustively studied and learned the Scripture.

### **2. How should we respond to those who say doctrine is unimportant or divisive and that we only need to love Jesus?**

<sup>1</sup> Timothy is called a “servant” or “minister.” Only the elders are called pastors in the New Testament.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, James E. *Exhortation Epistles*. Lulu, 2011, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.teknia.com/greek-dictionary/parakoloutheo>

In verse 7 Paul instructs Timothy to stay away from “irreverent, silly myths.” Many English translations render this as “old wives tales” or “fables” which is literally correct and was a common sarcastic phrase in that day used to “disparage an opponent’s position.”<sup>4</sup> Timothy, the young evangelist was not to get caught up in these tales.

These falsehoods seem to be in a different and less serious category than those of the men earlier in the chapter who were teaching what they have learned from deceitful spirits and demons, but they were still wrong and unproductive. The word translated as myth (*mythos*) means “a tale, a fable, a figment.”<sup>5</sup> Timothy was to refuse all involvement in these irreverent and silly myths.

**3. Why is Timothy urged to involve himself in combating false doctrine in some instances (1:3-4) while staying uninvolved in others (2:7)?**

**4. In what was Timothy to train and how does this training take place?**

**5. How does Paul contrast physical and spiritual training?**



Paul again makes the statement (like he did in 1:15) that this teaching was “faithful” and “deserving of full acceptance.” In other words this is something that is true and which everyone needs to hear and heed. Everyone should accept the challenge to toil and strive in spiritual training so that they might become more godly. As a well trained athlete expends every ounce of energy in an effort to win a sporting event, Christians should make every effort possible to excel in spiritual disciplines since only those things one does for God have value both in this life and the life to come.



An athlete has his eyes set the finish line while the Christian has his eyes set on his hope in the living God. Here God is described as “the Savior of all people,” and “especially of those who believe.” God can be called the Savior of all since he is the one who gives life, and breath, and every good gift to all people. To Christians he also gives salvation and hope in this life as well as in the life to come.

**6. In verse 11, Paul instructs Timothy to “command and teach these things.” What is the difference between commanding and teaching and what is the role of each?**

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<sup>4</sup> Smith, *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.teknia.com/greek-dictionary/mythos>

Some might look down on Timothy because of his age. The word translated as youth can be used to describe anyone up to the age of forty.

## **7. Describe what it means for a Christian leader to be an example.**

## **8. In what five ways was Timothy to set an example for the believers?**

Paul expected to travel to be with Timothy, but in the meantime he provides instructions on how to minister within the church. Timothy was to 1) devote himself to the public reading of Scripture; 2) devote himself to exhorting others; and 3) devote himself to the teaching of Scripture.

The public reading of Scripture was to take place within the church. The Word of God has the power to bring faith and change lives. Romans 10:17 instructs “faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”



## **9. How can reading the Scripture aloud within the church meetings help create faith and develop godliness amongst the members?**

The exhortation that Timothy was to provide would most likely come from the Scripture which he had publicly read. The word exhort means to come beside to assist another. The preacher helps Christian grow as he takes the Scripture, explains it, and uses it to challenge, assist, and equip.

To teach is similar to exhort, but may require more explanation and expansion so the members of the church may better understand and incorporate the great teachings found within God’s Word.

Timothy was further charged not to neglect his gift. This was a special gift from the Holy Spirit which probably came through the laying on of the hands of the Apostle Paul. We don’t know what Timothy’s gift was, but even though it was from the Holy Spirit it could be neglected and shrink or be practiced and increase.<sup>6</sup>

The prophecy through which Timothy’s gift came was referenced previously in 1:18. We can only speculate about this prophecy since we are not given the details, but quite possibly the Spirit told Paul what gift from the Holy Spirit Timothy would receive through the laying on of the apostle’s hand. Paul mentions this is 2 Timothy 1:6.

The elders laid their hands on Timothy to set him apart (or ordain him) to this ministry. Setting Timothy apart in this way shows the seriousness of his service, their support of his efforts, and the spiritual nature of his ministry.

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<sup>6</sup> See also 2 Timothy 1:6 where Timothy is instructed to fan into flame this gift of God which was given to him.

**10. According to 4:15 what was Timothy to do with his gift and what would be the result?**



“Keep a close watch” indicates the need for Timothy to carefully give attention to both his lifestyle and his teaching. Over and over again Paul has instructed in various ways the absolute necessity for Timothy to make every possible effort to do his best for Christ.

The minister’s lifestyle must be Christ-like in order to please God and to have influence with his hearers. He must always teach that which is in accordance with the truth.

**11. What will be the outcome of a persistent effort to live and teach what is right in the eyes of God?**

**Practical Application**

1. Paul knew Timothy, his dedication, his lifestyle, and his faithfulness to correct doctrine yet he spends a great deal of time urging him to continue to develop his faith and service. If Timothy needed this admonition, certainly Christian leaders today need to consistently involve themselves in spiritual training so that they might live righteous lives filled with faithful service.
2. Church leaders must set an example for all the believers in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. Leaders cannot show the way to live if they are not practicing what they teach and preach.
3. Christians spiritual lives can be exercised and developed or neglected and allowed to atrophy.
4. The end result of spiritual training for the servant of Christ is the salvation of self and those who hear the message.