

1 Timothy

A Commentary by David Green

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Timothy is thought to have been a native of Lystra in Lycaonia, Acts 16:¹. His mother, Eunice, was a Jewess, Acts 16:¹; a believer, 2Timothy 1:⁵. His father a Greek, Acts 16:¹, but possibly a proselyte to the Jewish religion. They gave Timothy his name, signifying their desire that their son should fear and honour God, and be reminded of his duty by his name, which means, honour of God; valued of God. They raised him up in the knowledge of the Scriptures from a child. When he first became a disciple to Paul is not apparent; but it appears from 2Timothy 3:¹¹ that he was with Paul at Antioch and Iconium, before Paul came to Lystra, Acts 16:¹, where Paul circumcised him. After this Paul made him his companion, and sent him with instructions to many places. Timothy had a weak stomach, 1Timothy 5:²³, but was strong in the faith and in spiritual gifts, 2Timothy 1:⁵; 3:¹⁵; 1Corinthians 4:¹⁷. After this he was publically acknowledged by Paul and the church, 2Timothy 1:⁶. He became very close to Paul for his faithfulness, Philippians 2:¹⁹⁻²¹; so Paul calls him his beloved son, and faithful, 1Corinthians 4:¹⁷, his son in the faith, 1Timothy 1:², his dearly beloved son, his fellow worker, and fellow labourer. Paul left Timothy for a while at Thessalonica and Berea, Acts 17:^{13, 14}; and then sent for him to Athens, Acts 17:¹⁵. Timothy came to Paul at Corinth, Acts 18:⁵. Then Paul sent him into Macedonia, Acts 19:²². From there Timothy came to Corinth, and goes with Paul into Asia, Acts 20:⁴; where Paul desires Timothy to stay some time at Ephesus, as an evangelist and teacher, to settle the churches there, 2Timothy 4:⁵. From there Paul sends for him to come to join him in Rome, 2Timothy 4:⁹, and sends Tychicus to Ephesus to replace him and continue the work, 2Timothy 4:¹².

Paul having left Timothy, a young man, with this great responsibility, being himself absent, writes this Epistle to him, to encourage him, and to direct him in the management of his affairs and of the church at Ephesus.

The scope of the Epistle is to direct Timothy in the first place, and then all ministers of the gospel, how to behave themselves in the church of God in matters relating to preaching, praying, government, opposing gainsayers and matters arising that could affect the peaceful life of the saints, and how to face opposition. The Apostle Paul had always in mind the continuing testimony and the growth of the Church.

The time when Paul wrote this Epistle is uncertain, but supposed to be about 21 years after Christ's death, about nineteen years after Paul's conversion; it is established it was when he was in Macedonia, and before he returned to Ephesus, Acts 19:¹.

That this epistle was written at Rome when the apostle was imprisoned there is the unanimous opinion of all who have written on the epistle, and indeed is apparent on the face of it.

It does not appear from the Acts of the Apostles that Timothy was with Paul during his two years' imprisonment at Caesarea, nor during his voyage to Rome. It is certain, however, that Timothy was at Rome with the Apostle Paul when he wrote the epistles to the Philippians, to the Colossians, and to Philemon, Philippians 1:¹; Colossians 1:¹; Philemon 1:¹. From Hebrews

13:²³, it appears that Timothy had been with the apostle there, but that when the epistle was written, he was absent and that Paul was expecting his speedy return.

Between the first and second imprisonment of Paul at Rome, no mention is made of Timothy, nor is it known where he was, or whether he accompanied the Apostle Paul in his travels or not. When Paul was imprisoned there the second time, he wrote the second letter to Timothy, in which he desires him to come to Rome, and bring with him several things which he had left at Troas, 2Timothy 4:^{9-13, 21}.

Chapter 1

1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, *which is our hope*; Paul does not style himself an Apostle without the full sanction of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was sent by the Lord to testify to Him, to take the Gospel to the Gentiles, to teach the truth and build up the saints in the faith which he had espoused. He would see many Churches established, and feel responsible to the Lord Jesus for the ongoing testimony of the saints, the believers who gathered together in the places the Apostle visited and wherever he preached the Gospel and a church was planted.

As there was no punctuation in the original text the translators have given us their interpretation of the emphases they felt most accurate. The translators who gave us the King James Version puts some words in italics and added the punctuation to show us where they felt the sense would be better expressed by so doing. In some cases the meaning is changed by the added words, sometimes the doctrine is altered and there can be confusion. If possible we should consult the best text available so we can be sure the doctrine we believe and teach is consistent with the whole Word of God. Remembering also that no scripture is of any private interpretation; is not to be interpreted on the basis of the particular verse we are considering, alone. I suggest a more accurate reading of this first verse would place the punctuation differently and omit the italicised words.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God; an apostle of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, our hope. Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ the true Messiah, by the express commandment of God was appointed to this office. Jesus Christ who is our Saviour, God having in His eternal mind designed the glorious plan of our redemption; and of our Lord Jesus Christ, one with the Father in glory and authority; and who is empathically our hope, all our expectations in time and eternity resting upon His finished work for our salvation; unto Timothy my own son in the faith, begotten by me in the gospel, is this epistle sent.

The Apostles were sent personally by the Lord Jesus Christ as was the Apostle Paul, though he was sent at a later date by the risen Lord.

Our hope is not as the people of the world in various places and situations, as they hope for deliverance or some good fortune. Our hope is the certainty of deliverance from this evil world and reception into the presence of our Lord and Saviour. **Our hope** is fixed on the Word of God and the promises contained therein relating to the Church of God and the Children of God. The hope of a Christian is as sure as Christ is alive from among the dead, as sure as the risen Lord Jesus promised; **I will come again and receive you unto myself.** Our hope is confidence in the Word of God and bolstered by the knowledge that God will not go back on His Word; His Word will not return unto Him without having accomplished the purpose to which it was sent.

2. Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. My own son in the faith, converted to the Christian faith after listening to and believing what the Apostle Paul preached concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, and regarded by Paul with the love of a father to his own son in the flesh. Paul had no children of his own, and he adopted Timothy as a son, and regarded and treated him as such with paternal love and spiritual wisdom. Paul had the same feeling towards Titus, Titus 1:⁴. This is a good example for us in how to maintain a relationship with the younger saints in our local church. We are a spiritual family, often with stronger ties than those of the flesh, ties which can never be broken, often severely strained, never severed.

Paul wishes grace and peace in his epistles to the churches; to Timothy he adds mercy. As individuals we have a need to know and live with the mercy of God; were it not for His mercy we would all be consumed.

Grace, mercy, and peace, Grace here is the favour and approval of God. Mercy arising from that grace, brings with it pardon, cleansing, and power to live with the Lord and for the Lord. Peace is realised as mercy is experienced, peace of conscience, the provision associated with peace with God; producing personal quietness, contentment, happiness and assurance; a mind at rest.

All the troubles in the world, conflicts, wars, financial turmoil, and terrorism do trouble the body and mind; the Lord Jesus purchased for us peace with God and that peace transcends all the troubles of the world, international, national, local and personal when we trust in the Lord Jesus, who of His own self purchased freedom for us. Peace with God is a blessing each believer can enjoy even in the most trying circumstances. The Apostle Paul calls for this blessing to be with Timothy. Grace, mercy, and peace, be with you, from God our Father, in whose love we have a common interest; and Jesus Christ our Lord, who bought us with His own blood, called us to the obedience of the faith, and as His servants trusts us and has commissioned us with the gospel of the Grace of God. Experience of this grace prepares a man to be a minister to the truth of the Gospel message.

3. As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine. Paul tells Timothy why he was to stay at Ephesus in the role appointed. I besought thee to abide at Ephesus; Timothy desired to accompany Paul, did not want Paul to leave him behind to cope with the problems that might arise. Timothy had to submit to the authority of Paul; he had to learn to put the needs of the Church and the saints before his own. The Apostle Paul knew what was best for the church at that time, it was necessary for someone with apostolic authority to continue at that church and see the saints established in the truth. **I besought thee,** says Paul, though he had authority to command Timothy, he chose to beseech him as his son. Timothy was given the duty to charge the responsible brethren in the local church that they teach no other doctrine than what they had received, that they do not add or alter the truth to suit the various people or preferences. The Truth of the Gospel does not change with the culture of the people to whom it is preached.

Ministers of the Gospel must not only be charged to preach the true doctrine of the gospel, but charged to preach no other doctrine. Various methods are used in this modern society to increase the size of the congregation; numbers are not the gauge of truth or spirituality. The Apostle Paul teaches the church in Galatia: **If an angel from heaven preaches any other doctrine, let him be anathema,** Galatians 1:⁸.

The prayer meeting of the local church is where the spirituality of the saints may be gauged; where the overall spiritual state of the local church may be seen. But this is only the result of individuals making the most of their time in private prayer.

4. Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. By fables Paul probably means the Jewish fables, and commandments of men, mentioned Titus 1:¹⁴; or more generally, all vain and idol speculations where generally the scriptures are wrested out of their context.

The believers should not speculate on fables, or regard such stories as important. The fables here referred to were probably the idle, immature and trivial superstitions and conceits of the Jewish Rabbinic teachings. The word translated fable means speech, fictional or mystic discourse based on supposition or folklore. Such stories abounded among the Greeks as well as the Jews, but it is more likely the Jews were the basis for the warning to Timothy. These fables were made up of inconsequential and unfounded stories, which they regarded as important, and which some desired to include with the teachings of Christianity. Paul, who had been brought up with these superstitions, saw how they would tend to draw the saints away from the truth, and would corrupt the truth.

One of the most successful devices of the adversary has been to mingle fable with truth; and when Satan cannot destroy the faith of the believers by direct opposition, he would neutralize it by mingling with it false doctrine and human reasoning.

Endless genealogies, a reference to Jewish teachings; doctrines and discussions the Apostle Paul left behind when he was converted. The Hebrews kept careful genealogical records, this was necessary in order that the distinction of their tribes might be kept up; in particular the priesthood. In the course of time these records would become very numerous, complicated, and with little exaggeration, be called **endless**. The Jews attached great importance to their records, and insisted on their being carefully preserved, even to this generation 2000 years on.

As the Messiah had now come, as the Jews particular form of religious government was to cease; as the separation between Jews and Gentiles was no longer necessary, and the distinction of tribes was of no import, there was no need that these differences should be regarded by Christians. The whole system of the Old Testament was contrary to Christianity, for it divided the peoples of the earth; national pride, and heritage caused a division the Lord Jesus came to remove. The blessing brought to man through the Gospel is readily available to all; in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond slave nor free, barbarian nor intellectual, for in Christ we are one. The religion given to the Jews was centred on priestly activity; Law keeping, ceremonies, rituals and sacrifices; all now done away with since the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and His sacrifice of Himself.

One sacrifice for sin for ever; God is fully satisfied with the sacrifice of His Son. The only birthright that is now valid is the 'new birth', being born again of the Spirit.

These inquiries, discussions and debates about genealogies do nothing to promote true saving faith. They settle no principles of truth; they determine nothing that will bring about the salvation of those disputing the points in question. A lifetime of discussion will not lead one soul to the Saviour. The questions may be resolved yet no one is any better off spiritually, no one is redeemed. No point of controversy is worth arguing about if when settled one way or the other does not lead to the sinner being converted, the soul being saved.

So do; these words are supplied by the translators, but they are necessary to give the correct sense. The meaning is that Timothy was to remain at Ephesus, and faithfully perform the duties he had been left there to discharge. This is the encouragement the Apostle Paul is urging upon his son in the faith.

5. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: Whereas the end of the commandment, the design of the whole Christian faith is love; this was particularly the end of the commandment which Timothy was to encourage live with and teach at Ephesus. The foundation is faith; the end, love. But this can only be in a heart purified by faith in Christ Jesus, and is always accompanied with a good conscience. In these words the Apostle Paul clearly refers to the Judaizing teachers, who were zealous for ceremonial law, they mingled works with faith supposing they were justified by so doing. The apostle tells them that the end of the law, the fulfilling of the Law and of the gospel too, is love. The end, the aim, the scope, the design, the perfection and completion which the law of God and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ commands and directs, is designed to perfect our love both to God and man. The purpose of all Christ's doctrine is love, bringing men, you and I, to love God and our neighbours.

This is not a new idea of the Apostle Paul; he espoused it to the Galatians some 12 years earlier, **for all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.** Galatians 5: ¹⁴. And to the saints in Rome 4 years later, **Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.** Romans 13: ⁸⁻¹⁰.

The apostle describes the nature and quality of that love as springing from a pure heart, a heart purified by the Spirit of Christ; rising from a good conscience, a conscience purified by the blood of Christ; from a genuine faith, a faith settled in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Implying that love either to God or man is not sincere unless it proceeds from a heart purified, a heart where sin does not reign.

Love out of a pure heart leaves aside all the emotions gendered by the flesh; this love is a deliberate commitment and is focussed in the person of our Saviour and Lord. The example of active, unselfish love we have to follow is as the Lord Jesus Christ displayed in His walk on earth. Christian love to God and men can only proceed from a clean, and holy, and sincere heart within a person redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. True Christian love in the heart is the great preservative from all disputes and diversions and divisions in the fellowship of the saints.

Out of a pure heart, genuine love can only proceed from a holy heart, a heart that has accepted the truth of the Lord Jesus being the Saviour and the Holy Spirit teaching all sin is abhorrent to God. The commandment, *love one another with a pure heart, fervently,* was not designed to merely be an overt expression of love, but that which had its seat in the innermost being. When we truly love God we will truly love man.

And of a good conscience, a conscience free from guilt; in Christ the Christian is no longer classed as a sinner, the conscience is cleansed as is the soul. There can be no genuine love to God where the conscience is constantly violated by the acts and thoughts of a person

continuing in sin, where a man knows that he is doing wrong. Evidence of genuine love to God is a holy life, obedience to the Word of God, a good conscience. All pretence of love, going to the right places, doing the right things and saying the right words, where a man knows he is not right with God, is mere hypocrisy. A hypocrite knows he is not right with God, he will try to hide it from his peers; **but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.** Hebrews 4:¹³.

Love either to God or man is not sincere, unless it proceeds from a pure heart, and is accompanied with a holy life, a life seen as innocent by God, and has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the root and principle from which the love flows. The power and motivation for Christian love is the Holy Spirit indwelling the believer and the Word of God guiding the thoughts and activities.

6. From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;

7. Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. Some, the apostle tells Timothy, have turned away from the truth taught in the word of God, they have embraced strange doctrines seeking personal benefit. He states these Judaizing and false teachers have swerved from love, purity, and faith, and are caught up with the voices of the world, and worldly wisdom, **vain janglings;** and though they purport to be learned teachers, and expounders of the law, they betray their ignorance, for it is evident to a Christian they neither understanding what they say, or what they claim to be the truth. Without the Spirit of God one cannot know the mind of God or teach the Word of God.

Having swerved from does not mean they ever possessed the true doctrine, they missed the truth in pursuing their own agenda.

An affectation of extensive knowledge, in this age accompanied with university degrees, and academic accreditation will sometimes place a man a long way from faith. Intellectual understanding is very helpful but it will never replace faith. Many in this world today are fallen into the trap, supposing knowledge can take the place of a close walk with the Lord Jesus Christ; through adherence to the Word He has preserved for us. No amount of worldly wisdom furthers the cause of the Lord or builds up the saints or adds to the Church. Walking the straight and narrow path with the Lord, studying the Word of God and fellowship with the saints will preserve us from being led astray with bad example or false teaching. Education is good and knowledge of Greek and Hebrew can be an asset to the individual and the individual then a blessing in the fellowship of the saints.

We who would walk with the Lord Jesus must subject our own desires to the word and will of God. Teaching others what we have learned as we walk with the Lord. We certainly are not all teachers but we are all an example to those closest to us. A life modelled on the Word of God and the example of godly elders in the Church testifies to the Truth as it is in the Lord Jesus Christ and in His word, the Bible.

Desiring to be teachers of the law; setting themselves up as authorities, with great wisdom as interpreters of the Law, and zealous in urging Gentile believers to embrace the Law as necessary to salvation; these have not the sanction of the Lord Jesus or of the Apostle Paul. They do not understanding **what they say, or what they affirm,** they are strangers to the spiritual nature, use and design of the Truth of the Gospel.

Love, the love of God shed abroad in the heart, is the great preservative from all disputes and arguments dividing the saints. It is a sad when unsaved and therefore ignorant men intrude

into the ministry, men who are strangers to the oracles of God, and unacquainted with the truths in which they purport to instruct others.

Understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm; neither understanding the Law of God, nor the questions they have been asked regarding salvation and the Church, yet these teachers desired acceptance among the flock of God as teachers of the law. This vain desire for reputation, for recognition as persons of spiritual acumen, was the cause of their ineffectual sermons; their ignorance is aggravated and inexcusable, for they with presumption asserted things of which they were without personal experience.

8. But, however abused it may be, **we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully,** and apply it to the purposes for which God gave it. The Law will reveal the sinfulness of sin and convince the conscience all sin is against God, is contrary to His will. The Law is a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ; though the Law is no longer a covenant of works applicable to the Christian, for we are saved by grace, yet it continues to be a standard of Christian duty. God will use the Law as the standard for judgment at the last day. For the Christian the Lord Jesus Christ has kept the Law perfectly on our behalf and we would keep the Law because we love the Lord and do not want to offend Him. The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

The law of God, considered in its entirety is good and excellent; it is good in regard of its author, it has the authority of God stamped upon it; good in regard of the truth contained in it; good in regard to the use and application of it, to lead us to Christ. Yet Christ is the end of the law to everyone that believes; Romans 10:⁴.

To the ungodly, the Law works to restrain them from sin, to convince them sin is contrary to the plan and will of God, to condemn them for refusing to live to the standard set and required.

To the godly, the Law defines sin more clearly, and more fully so they will abhor it and determine to walk closer to the Lord. The Law will show to the believer that he is not justified by works, that his righteousness and justification is not earned by anything in himself, or done by himself. The believer knows he is totally dependent upon the grace of God and the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ. **The law is good,** it serves the purpose it was designed and given for, to bring a sinner back to his creator.

Obedience to the law as a rule of holy living, and good works, is necessary and good, though the Law was never the plan of God for our justification in His sight. He has provided a perfect and spotless righteousness for us in the person and work of His Son. That provision covers all the needs of sinful man and God is fully satisfied with us when recognise and believe Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. When we have a correct understanding of the Law and use it as God intended, God is well pleased.

9. 10. Knowing this that the law is not made for a righteous man, nor does the damning sentence of it lie against any faithful soul, one whose righteousness is in Christ Jesus. It was not made for a righteous man; it was not made as a burden to a man who lives honestly before God. Such a one has a love of the Law, a delight in it, and voluntarily conforms himself to the keeping of the Law. The law was not made for a righteous man, the righteous man is not constrained by the power of the Law; he is not under the curse of the Law, though all are under Law relative to the holiness of God. The law was never made to terrify, and frighten, and condemn one who followed the precepts of it. The Law was designed given for restraining and

condemning all lawless persons, men without hope, sinners without the prospect of salvation, The Law, as given to Moses, is in general a rule of holy living, and the gospel of the Grace of God in Christ is the power to live as God requires. Any who will not be yoked together with the Lord Jesus Christ, can certainly expect no benefit from following the precepts of man, however good and moral they may appear. The Apostle Paul tells Timothy what and who the law was made for, it was given to restrain persons from all impurity and profanity, from disobedience and stubbornly pursuing a life style apart from God. It was given to reveal the sinfulness man had succumbed to in living apart from a holy God. The Law was given to curb and restrain wicked men from the practice of everything which is contrary to the pure and holy nature of God.

Says the Apostle Paul, **but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, who with disregard and wilful obstinacy transgress it. For murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, fornicators, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men-stealers, kidnappers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.** All of which, and every other crime, the law condemns and the judgment pronounced by the law is **according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust**, writes the Apostle Paul to Timothy.

There is perfect agreement between the Law and the Gospel, this we become aware of when we come to the realisation that the Lord Jesus Christ did all the Law required on our behalf. The Law condemns all ungodliness, unrighteousness, sinfulness; and the Gospel teaches us to live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present evil world; and the gift of the Holy Spirit empowers us to do as the Lord Jesus Christ desires for the people He has redeemed. We all find we fall short of the standard the Law sets, and if our particular lapse is not listed above we are not excused, all ungodliness and unrighteousness brings the same condemnation. But, and this is most important, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who His own self bore the penalty for our sins in His own body on the tree.

The Gospel is a solemn and glorious trust; and while we bless God for the wonder of His love in saving us we need to be diligent in observing the precepts and living by the Word of God lest we should be found unfaithful. We are able to live before the Lord as we have the Holy Spirit dwelling within and He teaches us the relevance of the Word of God and the correct application of it to our thinking and living.

These sins are condemned by the divine revelation we have in our possession; by that which we teach, according to the tenor of the glorious gospel of our blessed God, with which Paul was and now we are entrusted. This instruction guards against the smallest deviation from the strictest rule of righteousness, decency and integrity; and the secrets of the heart, as well as scandalous activity and speech. Any out of supposed zeal for the Law either in ignorance or deliberately, are in fact malicious opponents of the Truth as it is in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are saved by grace through faith, not by keeping the Law; we keep the Law because we do not wish to offend our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We try to maintain a right relationship, with the Lord Jesus, the Bible and the people of God, and with the society we live in providing there is no conflict with the truth.

11. according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. It is called the **glorious gospel of the blessed God** partly, because the glorious attributes

of God are clearly seen in the gospel, more than in the Law. The Law required an obedient response from man to stay in favour with God; whereas the Gospel informs us of the grace of God in bringing man into His favour through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Also the gospel brings more honour and glory to God than all the works of creation put together. Man can make a reasoned argument; the rest of creation lacks that ability, man chooses to believe and trust; accepting the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, content to rest in His redeeming sacrifice. The **glorious gospel** tells us what God has done through His Son and tells us how we are accepted in His beloved one.

The Gospel establishes the Law; without the Law there is no need for the Gospel; the Law teaches us the holiness of God; the Law tells us how far short we fell of the standard of righteousness God required. The Law revealed the weakness and inability of man to live as he should. The Gospel tells us how we can be reckoned holy, acceptable to God. By faith in the Lord Jesus Christ we are reckoned by God to have reached that standard.

This message the Apostle Paul was commissioned to preach and teach was given to the Apostle Paul as a trust and his responsibility was to preach that message and pass it on to others so they could do likewise. **The glorious Gospel** is the sound doctrine mentioned earlier, which is here called *the Gospel of the glory of the blessed, or happy, God*, the current dispensation which displays the glory of all His attributes, revealed first in the Lord Jesus Christ and now in the redeemed of the Lord. Sin has dishonoured God, and robbed Him of His glory; the Gospel provides for the total destruction of sin in the lives of believers in this world right now and the final end of sin in the future. This same Gospel message when believed, and applied, brings back to God His glory, gives to God His rightful place.

12. 13. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. Paul returns humble thanksgiving to Christ Jesus for the high honour, for the special favour, in calling him to preach this glorious gospel; for calling him to it, for enabling him in it, and for the success of the Gospel in his own life and in those who heard and responded to the message he preached.

The loyalty, ability, and courage, which the Apostle Paul employed in the course of his ministry, is attributed and ascribed to Christ, and not to the Apostle. The faithfulness of the Apostle Paul was not the cause or motive, but the effect of the grace of God in calling him to the ministry, 1Corinthians 7:²⁵; Paul obtained mercy to be faithful.

The Lord Jesus called Paul when he was a blasphemer and a persecutor. The Lord Jesus constrained him to leave his career in Judaism, as a Pharisee, of persecuting Christians. His blasphemy was speaking ill of the Lord Jesus Christ. His conversion was also the constraint to consecrate him to the defence and the propagation of the gospel.

If there is anything for which we should be thankful, it is that we are directed by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God into the ministry of the Gospel, a successful ministry as we live for and display the Lord Jesus in our lives. It is a demanding work of self-denial, and sacrifices of personal ease and comfort. It may require a man to give up his prospects of worldly distinction, of wealth and comfort. The work of the Lord is often associated with want and persecution. It is an honourable and admirable work accompanied with spiritual comfort here and now, and of great benefit in the world around us. The Gospel has such promises of

blessedness and happiness in the world to come, that no matter what a man is required to give up, he should be thankful to Christ for the salvation of his soul. If then a person is called to minister the Gospel in difficult places or times it is still the grounds for thanksgiving.

Who was before a blasphemer, this does not mean that Paul before his conversion was what would now be regarded as an open blasphemer, that he abused and reviled sacred things, or one who was in the habit uncontrolled speech, swearing. His character appears to have been the reverse of this, for he regarded as sacred the traditions of the Jews, as a Pharisee he treated the Law of Moses with the utmost respect, Philippians 3:⁴⁻⁶. Paul had reviled the name of Christ, and opposed Him and his cause by not believing that Jesus was the Messiah. In this way he had been guilty of blasphemy, he persecuted the saints trying to stop the spread of the Gospel. The true Messiah he had in fact treated with contempt and reproach, he now looked back upon that fact with the deepest mortification, shame and humiliation. Paul was amazed that the one whom he had so shamefully abused should have been willing to forgive him and use him in the spread of the Gospel.

The Apostle Paul was a blasphemer of the Lord Jesus Christ in his anti Christian behaviour, he persecuted the saints, His Church; and he **was injurious** in his attitude and activity towards believers. He entered houses purposing to imprison men and women; he threatened slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, Acts 9:¹; he persecuted Christians even to death, Acts 22:^{4, 5}, Paul reviled the doctrines and people of the Lord. He was injurious to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and to the Church as a whole and to individual believers. Paul was, before the Lord called him, a most impious blasphemer of His holy name, and a vicious persecutor of the Lord's people, and an injurious oppressor of them, in contempt of all rights, human and divine. **But I obtained that mercy**, because though I acted in an unrestrained and vicious even criminal manner, yet I did not go against my conscience, but did so **ignorantly in unbelief**. If I had knowingly opposed what I understood is truth I would rightly have been left to perish with a mind blinded and a heart hardened.

In much of the world today many thousands or millions claim to follow the Lord, under the title Christian. Following a religious order with the title 'Christian' is not the same as having ones sins forgiven, being redeemed by the blood of the Lamb; knowing Jesus Christ as one's personal Saviour. A Christian is not one nominally; there is first an acknowledgement of sin, followed by repentance and then belief in the effectual sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ as the sin bearer. A Christian is in a right relationship with God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ brought about by the Holy Spirit convincing of sin and directing the sinner to the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on the Cross

Not having considered the nature and evidences of Christianity, and not having believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the Apostle Paul, then Saul, acted wholly under the prejudices that influenced his countrymen in the religion in which he was raised. God therefore showed Saul mercy, because he acted under this influence, subject to the Law of Moses as interpreted and taught by the Rabbinate, not knowing any better. This mercy, does not excuse the conduct of Saul of Tarsus, for he says himself that he was determined to destroy these Christians, this sect. The ignorant and unbelievers need the message of salvation just as much as do religious persons. Sincerity in ones beliefs is not the way of faith and salvation; one may be sincere and wrong even as Saul was. Sincerity and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, in what the Lord has done, is the way of salvation.

Ignorance of the truth is no excuse for the creation declares the glory of God and the firmament shows forth His handiwork. In this current generation we also have the Word of God preserved, in our native tongue made readily available. As I browse through second hand bookshops I am amazed at the number and variety of bibles there are on display. Some may be from diseased estates, but it shows the disregard many have for the Word of God today. Ignorance in some cases will extenuate, lessen or to try to lessen the seriousness or extent of a problem by making excuses or portioning blame elsewhere, a crime against God is sin, though there may be valid reasons for the sin in the sight of men. The reasons or excuses do not lessen the seriousness of sin in the eyes of the Lord; neither does the excuse however good it may be, remove the penalty of sin.

14. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Where sin did abound, grace did much more abound. This was evident in Saul's conversion under these circumstances, and in the aid and guidance which was given to the Apostle Paul in his work. As an Apostle, Preacher, Teacher, Pastor, Itinerant Minister, Church Planter, Mentor and Guide the Apostle Paul needed the abundant grace of the Lord. This great mercy of God had a lasting effect in him, of faith and love, both towards God and the redeemed of the Lord.

Note how the Apostle Paul after his conversion abounded and excelled in those areas which were opposite to the sins committed in his unregenerate state. He abounds in faith, in opposition to his former unbelief; and in love, as opposed to his former anger and malice and heartless brutality against the people of the Lord.

A Christian's growth in grace and holiness after his conversion ought to bear some proportion to his fruitlessness in his unholy and sinful state, before conversion. **The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love;** the Apostle Paul now desires and works towards showing all who will listen to and observe him that God is gracious and is able to save to the uttermost all that will come to Him in faith. The grace of our Lord has super abounded writes Paul, it is revealed to me by the extraordinary mercy I now realise He has shown toward me.

With faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. I put my faith and trust in Christ; received Him as the Son of God, and my Lord and Saviour. Now I love Him whom I at one time thought was contrary to the design of God for His people. My plan was to do much against this new sect and discredit the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul speaks of faith and love, the deliberate choice of man and the free gift of God. Faith in the doctrine of the gospel, contrasted with his earlier ignorance and infidelity; and love to Christ Jesus and believers as opposed to his former rage and cruelty against them. And this grace gift was from Christ, the fruit of His merit, and the gift given by the Holy Spirit.

15. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. The Apostle Paul had said that he, the chief of sinners had obtained mercy. This led him to think of the purpose for which Christ came into the world, it was to save sinners from eternal damnation. The Apostle Paul is aware of this great truth evident in his own salvation, how his being made right with God shows that it is worthy of close and immediate attention of all. **Faithful saying,** doctrine, position, or declaration is emphasised by the writer. The word faithful means assuredly true it may be depended on, it is a

reliable assertion. The doctrine that Christ Jesus came to save sinners is basic to the message of the Gospel and is reliable and certainly true.

All are sinners; and as sinners are condemned, justly condemned, to eternal death, separated from spiritual life now and eternal life hereafter. Christ Jesus became incarnate, suffered, and died to redeem sinners; and by His grace and the Holy Spirit, saves all who call upon Him from the penalty their sins incurred and is demanded by God. This saying or doctrine Paul first calls a faithful or true saying; it is a doctrine that may be approved and accepted without the slightest doubt or hesitation. God himself has spoken it; and the death of Christ proclaims it, the Holy Spirit sent into the world sealing the souls of all who believe confirms the truth of it.

The Gospel **is worthy of all acceptation**; as all need it, it is worthy of being received by all. It is designed for the whole human race, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The true light, Christ that lightens every man that comes into the world and all the eternally saving effects, the blessings that come with the Lord, were designed for every man. Accepting the truth as it is in the Lord Jesus Christ brings one into favour with God and eternal life is granted to the believer.

No sinner is too bad and no person so good as to be outside the plan and grace of God.

I mention this, says Paul as a most faithful, infallible saying, and worthy of all acceptance, worthy of being universally received and accepted and believed by everyone who hears it or reads it. It should be taken to heart and the understanding that Christ Jesus, the eternal Son of God, though originally with the Father in glory and possessing that glory, came with infinite condescension into the world in which we dwell, that he might save us miserable sinners from total condemnation and ruin. The Apostle Paul humbly confesses the depth to which he sank, the chief of sinners. The Apostle Paul confesses this, he is assured no one is exempt from salvation, for there never was a richer display of sovereign grace than that which brought him back from eternal damnation, saved and transformed him.

16. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. This unique display of the pardoning mercy and grace of God, granted in so special a manner, at the early preaching of the Gospel, is as a pattern for the encouragement of all penitent sinners through to the end of the Gospel age. Since there is no respect of persons with God, the Lord Jesus Christ who saved Saul of Tarsus when he was the chief of sinners, is convincing proof that no sinner needs to continue in despair.

The Apostle Paul was one of the first great sinners converted to Christianity. He was converted, and obtained mercy, and is a pattern to all following of the transcendent mercy of God. The Lord Jesus Christ shows great long-suffering and patience in the conversion of recalcitrant sinners. Those who obtain mercy believe on the Lord Jesus, by faith believe; for without faith it is impossible to please God, Hebrews 11:⁶. Paul expressed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, was forgiven and found favour with God. All who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ believe on Him to the saving of their soul, Hebrews 10:³⁹, they find favour with God and receive from God life everlasting.

Understand the verse in this way: *But it was an experience full of wonder that for this cause I obtained the mercy of which I was so unworthy, that in me, the chief of sinners, Jesus Christ might display, and exhibit to the view of the whole world, an example of all*

longsuffering, as a pattern for the encouragement of those who should afterwards believe on Him, even to the hundreds or thousands of years into the future, in order to obtain this wonderful gift of God, eternal life.

17. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, is honour and glory forever and ever. Amen. We must give to God the glory for the effectual work he has done in us. That grace in which we have the comfort of God He alone should receive the praise and glory for. All saints have an obligation to render to God the glory due unto Him for the mercy and grace He has shown in redeeming us. God's gracious dealings with us should fill us with the wonder of His glorious attributes. He is eternal, without beginning of days, or end of life, or change of time. The Apostle Paul leads the way in ascribing praise to Him, as the King eternal, immortal, invisible. When we have found God good, gracious and merciful we must also offer this ascription of praise in view of the mercy which He has shown to us.

There are continuing discussions as to whether the Apostle Paul is referring to the Father or to the Son in this verse. I suggest such conjecture is time wasting, useless and distracting for we cannot attribute divinity to other than God, the Triune God, what is true of the Father is equally true of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Paul was aware of his sin and iniquity and so are you and I when we are faced with the perfection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the great sacrifice He made. Therefore it is the outbreak of grateful emotion which brings forth from the Apostle Paul and us, such a paean of praise. This interrupts the train of Paul's remarks, but his heart was so full that it demanded utterance. It is just an instance of the joy and gratitude which fills the soul of a Christian when he is led along in a train of reflections, recollections of his former sin and peril, and the fact that he has obtained mercy and has the hope of heaven even while enjoying eternal life now. The Apostle Paul often interposes an expression of praise in the midst of his arguments and exhortations. We may also burst forth in praise to God when some sight, or word, or person, or action causes us to exclaim God is good.

God is called King here, as He so often is in the Scriptures, to denote that He rules over the universe. It could be written; *To the King of ages, who is immortal*; informing us that He, the Eternal one is the King who rules throughout all ages. This infers His dominion extends over all ages or generations, of creation, time space and matter as well as intelligent beings. The rule of earthly monarchs does not extend beyond their lifespan; His dominion has no limitation for His days have no end. The reign of earthly kings is temporary; His is enduring, and continues as one generation after another passes on, therefore His kingdom surpasses them all. He is the Ancient of days, Daniel 7:⁹. He only is immortal, has immortality, 1Timothy 6:¹⁶, for He cannot die. He is invisible, for He cannot be seen with mortal eyes, He dwells in the light which no man can approach unto, no man has seen Him nor can see Him, 1Timothy 6:¹⁶. He is the only wise God, Jude 1:²⁵; He only is infinitely wise, and the fountain, the source of all wisdom.

We see in this the infinite wisdom of God in sending **His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.** Romans 8:³.

18. This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; The charge to stay at Ephesus for the benefit of the church there. To charge the saints to reject false teachers, not to give heed to fables, and to keep the doctrine committed to him and the saints at Ephesus by the Apostle Paul, as a faithful minister and soldier of Jesus Christ, against all opposition. The

gospel is a charge committed to the saints, and more especially to the elders in a fellowship; it is committed to their trust, they are to see it is applied according to the intent and truth of it, the plan and design of its Instigator and Source. It seems there had been prophecies about Timothy, or predictions may be from his mother or grandmother, concerning Timothy that he should be taken and used by the Lord in this ministry; Paul was encouraged on hearing this, to commit this special charge to his son in the faith.

The ministry is warfare; it is a good and intense and hard warfare against sin and Satan; and under the banner of the Lord Jesus, who is the Captain of our salvation, Hebrews 2:¹⁰, we make our stand and fight. In His cause, against His enemies we preach the Gospel of our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ and we are in a particular manner according to our gift, engaged.

The foregoing prophecies may refer to revelations which the apostle himself had received concerning Timothy. It could also be applied to the advice, direction, and exhortation, which the apostle had previously delivered to Timothy. We know that prophecy signifies to speak to men to edification, to exhortation, and to comfort, 1Corinthians 14:³, and the ministry of the Apostle Paul never lacked in these areas.

The prophecies which went before concerning Timothy are here mentioned as a motive to stir this young man up to an energetic and conscientious discharge of his duty in the Church at Ephesus. The expectation others entertain concerning us should motivate us to our duties in the church and in the society; an added incentive to be diligent as a Christian in displaying and preaching the truth. Paul was committing to Timothy an important trust, one that required wisdom and commitment; and in doing it Paul was responding to the hopes which he and others had respecting Timothy, and with anticipation about his influence in the church at Ephesus. From Timothy's early life the hope of his mother and grandmother was that he would be a trustworthy man in the church; and it had been predicted that he would be distinguished as a reliable Christian. These hopes were expected, for Timothy was raised with this in view, 2Timothy 2:²; 3:¹⁵, and probably from the early indications of piety which he manifested.

It seems, from this that such hopes had assumed the form of predictions. It is not absolutely necessary to suppose that these predictions referred to by the word prophecies were inspired, for the word may be used as it is now. We speak now of predicting or foretelling the future usefulness of a serious, studious, and pious young man or woman. We argue from what they are to what they will be if they continue in the same diligent and spiritual way.

As there were prophets in the Christian church, it is possible that in some cases they were inspired to foretell future events. It may be supposed that some of the mature saints had foretold the future usefulness of this young man taught from his early years the importance of depending on the Word of God. When a young man enters on the active duties of a Christian life, it is not inappropriate to remind him of the hopes which his parents cherished of him, to remind him of the aspirations which are held of his future usefulness in the Church.

A sincere Christian young man will not willingly disappoint the cherished hopes of his family and friends. He is likely to be made more diligent by the remembrance of all their loving care and prayers on his behalf, anticipating his future success in his life with the Lord and in the community.

That thou by them, by those prophecies, being stimulated and motivated by those predictions and hopes, you might be led to fidelity, dependability and usefulness in the Church. The Apostle Paul desires for Timothy that he **Might war a good warfare** according to the

predictions. The Christian life is often compared to a warfare or struggle for victory, and the Apostle in writing to the saints at Ephesus and Corinth makes it clear there is need for diligence in combat against the foes of the Cross, Ephesians 6:¹⁰⁻¹⁷; 1Corinthians 9:⁷; 2Corinthians 10:⁴. The work of the Christian, in a leadership role or otherwise is likened to that of a soldier, 2Timothy 2:³; 4:⁷. The Apostle Paul would have Timothy contending earnestly for the faith and in his role as a leader in the Church there was a great responsibility to fight legitimately and solemnly as a Christian ministering to the saints; and fighting for victory. Timothy was exhorted to **war a good warfare** for he was engaged in a righteous cause.

We who are faithful to our Commander, obeying His orders without question; aware of the enemy and his devices and distractions, not sleeping or diverted from the path, will receive from the Captain of our salvation the praise; **Well done thou good and faithful servant**. The weapons we use in the fight are not relating to somebody's physical needs or appetites, especially as contrasted with spiritual qualities, they are not weapons that will damage the body or property. The weapons we use are mighty to the **pulling down of strongholds**; they are faith, prayer, the Word of God, personal holiness, consistent testimony adding up to an unswerving walk with the Lord Jesus and in harmony and sweet fellowship with His redeemed people.

There is only one Leader, one Commander; there is one book of tactics, one manual. There are two enemies we fight against, the flesh and the devil, and one outcome predicted for that enemy of our souls. One of old said **the battle is the Lord's**, we who are the soldiers are, as one in the world put it, mere cannon fodder. The enemy of souls will attack us, will try to raise armour to ward off the sword of the Spirit; we have this assurance, **the battle is the Lord's** and no weapon forged against Him can prosper.

19. Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:

20. Of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme?

In carrying on this warfare Timothy is to hold fast to the true faith, and at the same time be sure to have a good conscience, void of offence. He is to use no human methods in spreading the gospel, not try to embellish the message or use enticements to attract the unsaved. Some teachers have corrupted their faith, no longer have a good conscience, having adopted worldly methods and motives, with respect to the **faith have made shipwreck**. They have corrupted the gospel, and so marred their conscience, destroyed their testimony and their lives are on the rocks, battered by the waves. The victorious Christian is faithful, lives by faith, rejoices in faith, has faith in the promises of God, and is waiting patiently for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is holding fast to the faith, depending on the Word of God, teaching and preaching the Word of God, living with the Word of God as the standard, the accounts of various ones examples to follow. **Holding faith**, commitment to the cause in which we are enlisted as a good soldier is expected and is our duty. This does not only mean that Timothy should hold to the doctrines revealed in the gospel, but that he should have that faith which a good soldier ought to have in his Commander. He should not betray the trust committed to him. He should adhere to the cause of his Master steadfastly. This of course would include belief in the Word of God, dependence on the truth, and obedience to the revealed will of God.

And a good conscience; as well as fidelity, is necessary, indeed is essential in the service of the Lord. A good conscience is correctly informed in regard to what is right, and the conscience paired with a life consistent with the faith as taught in the Word of God will for Timothy and we who express faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, free us from self condemnation.

By a **good conscience** is understood what the Scripture elsewhere calls a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men, Acts 24:¹⁶, opposed to the evil conscience, mentioned in Hebrews 10:²². A good conscience means a pure conscience, which necessarily implies a holy life; a life in which our own conscience does not condemn us for our actions, our attitudes, our speech or our relationships when we consult the Word of God; using the directives in the Word of God as the standard. A conscience cleansed by the Lord Jesus Christ; when one has expressed faith in His sacrifice and so is reckoned to be without sin in the sight of God is a good conscience. A good conscience allows a person freedom to commune with God on His terms. **And a good conscience** is for the believer so holding the truth as to live according to the dictates of God's Word, that a conscience void of offence may be preserved. The apostle has spoken of the Christian's warfare, now he refers to the Christian's armour, especially to the shield of faith and the breastplate of righteousness, Ephesians 6:¹⁴, 6:¹⁶ for with this protection a believer is shielded from the fiery darts of the devil. Remember Timothy was left at Ephesus to establish the saints in the word and work of the Lord. As it was with Paul and Timothy so it is today, there was opposition to the Gospel then and there is opposition now. Just why there is so much antagonism and hostility to the Gospel can only be attributed to man's rebellion and Satan's dominance in the world.

Concerning faith have made shipwreck; suffered loss of peace with God and communion with Him, moved away from the truth of the gospel. Error rarely, if ever accompanies a holy life for a child of God. The truth of the gospel has such an influence upon one that a holy lifestyle is proportionate to the soundness in the faith, and not unusually the love of someone or something other than believing the truth of God's word and living according to the truth revealed in the Word of God, brings a person into error with false judgments and opinions and alliances.

Which some having put away; which some who have heard the Word take no thought to live a holy life, so do not keep a good conscience. Concerning faith they are as ships wrecked on the rocks; no longer useful for the purpose they were designed. Concerning faith they have forsaken the truth of the Gospel. Error, wrong understanding and thinking seldom accompany a holy life. The truth of the gospel has such an influence upon the Christian's conversation, that his holiness is directly proportionate to his soundness in the faith. Usually the love of some self indulgence is what betrays men into erroneous judgments and opinions. A good conscience goes away unwillingly, for surely we feel guilty the first time we disobey the Word of God.

The guilty feeling lessens if one continues in sin, as the conscience is seared, finally giving way to the desires of the flesh.

They who retain a good conscience do not make shipwreck of their faith.

None can make shipwreck of faith if they never had saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Some having put away a good conscience not having followed the teaching of the Apostle, they make shipwreck of their lives. They follow sinful pleasures and pathways; they follow where their passions lead them. This has become the major problem in the Christian world today where the criteria is stated by many that if it doesn't hurt anyone it is okay, with no regard to

the Word of God, disregard of the feelings of others in the community, and no concern for those in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ and His redeemed.

Concerning faith, in respect to the whole subject of faith in Christ they are unfaithful to God, they reject the Gospel of the Grace of God; they are as ships being broken up on the rocks.

Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander who appeared to the Apostle Paul to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ but later denied the truth as it is in Christ. Of Hymenaeus we read, 2Timothy 2:^{17, 18}; he taught the resurrection was past, and overthrew the faith of many. Of Alexander we read, 2Timothy 4:¹⁴; he was a great enemy to Paul, maybe the same person mentioned in Acts 19:³³, at one time a friend to Paul, but afterwards one who did him much harm. Hymenaeus and Alexander are delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. The primary design of reprimand in the early church, and now, should be to prevent further sin, the spread of sin and the restoration of the sinner. Discipline in the Church has the primary objective of restoring the sinner to fellowship with the Lord and the saints, to reclaim the sinner. In this case these two were put out of the Church fellowship, it was for the **destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus**, 1Corinthians 5:⁵. The works of the flesh have no place in the Church. Attributing the works of the flesh to the Lord Jesus Christ, or to the Holy Spirit, or to infer God led me is blasphemous.

Satan is the ruler of this world; excluded from the Kingdom of God, he has limited powers. We who have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ should be extra vigilant to make sure we are not duped by doctrines and practices that detract from genuine holiness, the enjoyment of the presence of God and the blessing of communion with our Lord and Saviour and the saints. It is a downward path for a Christian from the heavenly realms, spirituality, to the earthly pleasures and distractions, carnality. The fleshly desires, no matter how good they appear or how they are dressed with Christian words or actions are still the works of the flesh and it is blasphemy to ascribe those works to the Lord Jesus. He builds the Church, any other activity or words that give credit to man is blasphemy. The Apostle Paul says to Timothy, I have in accordance with my apostolic power which God has trusted to me for the building of the Church and establishing the saints in the truth, solemnly delivered **Hymenaeus and Alexander** over unto Satan. I have done this that they may learn, by what they now suffer in their being excluded from fellowship with the saints, not to blaspheme the truths of Christ, or to revile His faithful servants by suggesting or teaching there is another way of salvation and holiness.

It needs to be stated at this juncture, there is a difference between taking the name of the Lord in vain and blasphemy. Taking the name of the Lord in vain is when someone names himself as a Christian and lives according to the flesh, never having been to the Lord Jesus and confessed guilt and repented. An unsaved person takes the name of the Lord in vain, often unwittingly, for the heritage of many in so called Christian countries are taught to do so. There is no such thing as a Christian country; a Christian is an individual, who has personally confessed to the Lord Jesus Christ, repented and believed in His saving work on the Cross. The Christian church is a company of individual believers meeting together in a chosen place, the size of the gatherings or the locations are not important. A Christian is an individual indwelt by the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit reveals the Lord Jesus Christ to that person, making one aware of how far short they are of the standard God has set. They agree with God and then endeavour to walk according to the directions contained in the Bible. The case with so many in the

western world where there is a Christian heritage, where the laws of the land were promulgated with reference to the Word of God initially, is that there has been no repentance, no faith resting in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. In such countries and communities among the general population they are nominally Christians. They do in that way take the name of the Lord in vain, in most cases without knowing any better. They are raised with the bias of their parents and the general opinion of those they associate with, without reference to the Word of God.

From this error we have added problems such as 'going to church', 'infant baptism', 'the clergy', 'cathedrals', 'temples', 'popes', and many other distractions Satan has put in the way of the people. These distractions are very successful in keeping people away from the truth as revealed in the Word of God, taught by the apostles and prophets, and by the faithful in past generations and in the present. These distractions have led many to seek after strange gods, to follow exotic, bizarre and mysterious religions, and to practise various rituals, all with a vain hope of appeasing their choice of a god that is unreal, that cannot help in any way.

Chapter 2.

1. I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; because God wills that all should be saved. Timothy was left at Ephesus to manage the affairs of the church there in the absence of Paul, who in this letter directs Timothy in church affairs.

First Paul exhorts Timothy to see that prayers should be offered to God for all men. This instruction is in regard to public prayers. The various categories of the saints' communication with God are to be specific in nature and direct to the point. We should note that if our prayers are not specific they have no direction and there is no answer specific answer to them. It is all very well to say God knows my heart, but in public prayer the saints do not have that ability and if they say amen that is also empty words. There is real blessing to know *'I prayed for this and this is the answer to my prayer'*.

Supplications, relates to imploring divine help in time of need; seeking the intervention of God in current affairs, addressing the specific needs of the moment, and preserving one from evil. Supplications for the averting of evil in whatever form it comes, and from any direction. Paul experienced trouble from within the church and from without; the Lord Jesus directs us to pray for our enemies also, knowing there would be hassles arising among the saints.

Prayers, prayer is communion with God arising from a calm, undisturbed soul, listening to and agreeing with the Holy Spirit. Communion with God encompasses many different aspects, all of the facets of prayer arising from the person in harmony with the mind and will of God. Note in particular the words of the psalmist; **if I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me.** Psalm 66:¹⁸.

Intercessions may be prayers for others, for guidance through difficult situations, or for averting evils from oneself or others. Intercession may be seeking good things for those we love or those we are trying to reach with the Gospel message. We speak on behalf of others when we see they are not getting the best available to them; generally in the context of walking with the Lord, though not confined to that.

Giving of thanks is our response for the blessings of God, for good things bestowed upon ourselves or others. The Apostle Paul elsewhere instructs us to give thanks for all things,

meaning all that is good and all that appears bad at the time. He says in everything give thanks; in the good times and the bad; during good relationships and in trying, troublesome times.

These features of prayer Paul instructs should be made for all men. This instruction to pray is not confined to praying for the saints; the next verse plainly shows that we have a Christian duty to pray for all men, for there were never kings, ruling monarchs set over a congregation of the saints, in the church. All who are saved lose whatever social rank they have, humbly joining with all other believers in the church, agreeing they are nothing and worth nothing in themselves, together they all are one in Christ Jesus. Paul here establishes prayer as a public ministry in the church of God. We each have a duty, a burden for others, which becomes a delightful exercise as we spend time in communion with God in prayer.

The Apostle Paul puts this first, he exhorts, that first of all; not in respect of time but rather as a principle. The apostle would have communion with God in prayer for all ranks of men and women, maybe excepting that man of whom John speaks in the first letter, 1John 5:¹⁶, who had sinned that particular sin, for which he would not say Christians should pray.

2. for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. Pray for kings though the kings may be heathen as they were when Timothy received this letter, possibly enemies to Christianity, and persecuting Christians, yet Timothy must pray for them. It is for the greater blessing that there should be a civil government, with the principles given in the Word of God as the basis for the laws promulgated. Also to have reliable persons trusted with ministering the law for the benefit of the whole community. We ought to pray for the ruling powers even though we may suffer under their authority. All men, all in our circle and those associated with the organising of social affairs, should be the subjects of prayer. Those who are leaders in the ordering of our society should be particularly remembered before the throne of grace. The reason is that as so much depends on their character and their plans that the security of life, liberty, and property, depends on them, on their character and the legislation they embrace and enforce. God has power to influence their hearts, so we should pray that they will be guided by honesty and fidelity even though they are not believers. The salvation of a monarch or a ruler of the people is of itself no more important than the salvation of any other person; but the welfare of many hundreds may depend on the salvation of that one in authority for whom we pray.

All those who are in authority or hold an eminent place, in the government or running of the affairs of the economy, locally or in the wider sphere, are to be the subject of our prayers. This does not necessarily mean only those who hold civil office, but refers to any of elevated rank. The peace and contentment of all in their jurisdiction depends greatly on them, and so we should pray for them that they may be inclined to do that which is right in the eyes of God.

The enemies of the Cross are not always our enemies in the flesh. We must pray for the enemies of the Cross and our personal enemies; desiring to win them by showing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is relevant through all the changing scenes of life.

For all men, because Christ came into the world to save all; because it is the desire of God, as well as the purpose of the Cross of Christ, that all men should be saved, and because such prayers are good and acceptable in the sight of God.

Godliness and honesty are inseparably linked in the life of a believer. The word godliness here denotes piety, or the duty which we owe to God; the word honesty refers to our duties to our fellow-men. Godliness sees us without fault in the presence of God, whereas honesty sees

us without fault in the eyes of men. Godliness in our thoughts will inevitably result in honesty in our lives. Honesty is often found in those who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour; they are indeed blessed in this life. No authority can take our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ from us, if we are determined to continue in the faith, yet they may well disturb us in the peaceful enjoyment of our faith.

The Apostle Paul uses the word Godliness seven times in this letter to Timothy, connecting it to various aspects of a Christians' life:

2:², Godliness and Honesty, so that all around may see there is a difference in a child of God.

2:¹¹, Godliness is linked with good works, the exceptional demeanour of a woman walking with the Lord.

3:¹⁶, Godliness is the display of Christ likeness, the mind of Christ in us and Christian activity displayed by us.

4:⁷⁻⁸, Godliness will be seen in the rejection of fables, as one embraces the truth of the Word of God. Also in the diligent exercise of Christian responsibility in the church and in regard to one's personal discipline in diet and health.

6:³, Godliness sees the believer accept the Word of God as truth and the basis for belief and life.

6:⁵⁻⁶, Godliness is here related to worldly wealth, and the deceitfulness of material riches. Being content in Christ with whatever He has trusted us with is godliness enjoyed now, happiness in a Christian sense.

6:¹¹, Godliness is mention by the Apostle Paul as a characteristic we should work towards with all the aspects of Christ likeness that make the testimony of a believer credible.

3. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; it is not only all sorts of men that God and Christ desire should be saved, but the Lord Jesus Christ worked toward and willed, together with his Father, the salvation of all men. The sacrifice of Christ was for all, if they repent and believe, and the offer of a full and free salvation is open to all on condition of acceptance of God's way. The ministers of the Gospel of the Grace of God, the word of reconciliation, is what Christ offers to all, what He purchased for all; but He offers to all eternal life upon condition of acceptance, in this way He is willing that all men should be saved.

The means and method by which God would have all men to be saved, is by their coming to the knowledge of the truth as it is in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is evidently false that a man may be saved in any religion; there is only one way back to God for sinful man. Man cannot come to salvation but by the knowledge of the truth; without the knowledge of God, without faith in Christ, and without obedience to the Gospel, there is no possibility of salvation.

4. God would have all men to be saved, by coming to the knowledge of the truth. The truth, the Gospel of Christ, should be proclaimed to all; and it is the duty of all who know it, all Christians to spread it far and wide. When it is proclaimed then it is the obligation of those who hear it to acknowledge and receive it. That they may receive the message of the Gospel as the truth is the desire of the Lord Jesus and of the Apostle. And that they who hear and receive the truth make it the rule of their faith and the standard of their conversation and the background of their testimony to the Grace of God. Knowledge of the truth is not salvation. James tells us that demons know, believe and tremble; clearly they are not saved. Believing what the bible teaches

about the Lord Jesus Christ and how He satisfied His Father when He bore the penalty for sin and knowing it was a personal transaction, relating to me as an individual sinner, is the only way of salvation. This is what the Apostle Paul is telling Timothy. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and made it possible by receiving at the hand of God the punishment we deserved. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all who will believe, understanding is not the criteria; faith is the basis for salvation, not how did it come about or who did what and when. The simple truth is "**Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners**".

5. for there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6. Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. This is the reason for a prayerful concern for all men, for the declaration of the previous verse tells us that God desires that all men should be saved. This reason is based in the fact that God is the Father of all mankind, and that He must have the same desire for the welfare of all His children. God wills not the death of any sinner, but that all should come to repentance and knowledge of salvation. He has made all mankind of one blood, Acts 17:²⁶; and He has the same interest in the wellbeing and happiness of all his creation.

There is **one Mediator between God and men**; this also is given as a reason why prayer should be offered for all, and a proof that God desires the salvation of all. The argument is that there is the same means of salvation, the one and only Mediator between God and all men, all nationalities, and all divisions made by various ethnic classifications and geographic distances. Christ Jesus is not the Mediator between God and a part of the human race, but between **God and men**, implying that He desires the salvation of the whole human race. Whatever love there was in giving the Mediator was love for all mankind, a love wanting only the best for all. We can argue from that and prove the interest which God has in man, His interest in the human race as a whole. It is right and proper to pray for all, hence the instruction of the Apostle Paul to Timothy.

I, as an individual confined to a locality in one very small place in the overall scheme of things, cannot pray intelligently for people I have never heard of. But I can pray for missionaries who go to those places, pray with understanding when I receive communication from the one sent with the Gospel to those places. The missionary, as do all who request prayer, need to communicate with detailed information so those who are expected to intercede do so with sensible and prudent requests at the throne of grace. Blanket prayers will put the fire out.

There is but one Mediator, for kings and all in authority, the same Mediator for slaves and tradesmen, workers and bosses, for keepers at home and office workers, for business men and women, and boys and girls. Not one salvation and Saviour for the rich and another for the poor; one for the master and another for the slave or servant. All men and women are on the same level we all have the same need; from the fall of Adam to the present all have sinned, all have a desperate need of salvation.

The doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church that the people they have chosen as saints, or those they claim have wrought a miracle, or that the Virgin Mary may act as mediators to procure blessings for us is false, is blasphemy. There is but **one Mediator**; and only one is necessary. In the context of the Christian faith only the Lord Jesus Christ has the title Mediator. The millions led astray by the false doctrines of Catholicism, and Islamists' and all religions devised by man need the light of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ equally with the heathen in this land and every other clime and country. The Lord Jesus Christ is the one and only

Mediator on the basis He alone could and did give satisfaction to His Father when He died bearing the penalty for sin. 1John 2:² **He (the man Christ Jesus) is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.** The great variety of gods' man has invented, whether of flesh or of materials are all equally useless; incapable of changing a sinner into a child of God. No person or idol set up by man, however ingenious is able to intercede for us or to satisfy the one true God.

Jesus was truly and properly a man, with a perfect human body and soul, and is often called a man in the New Testament. Jesus was the Man sent from God with the specific work of redemption; the work which only a perfect man could accomplish which He successfully completed. The Lord Jesus Christ cried with a loud voice, **it is finished**, the work His father sent Him to do was done successfully and completely.

The work the Lord Jesus did as a man does not prove that He was not also divine, any more than His being called God, John 1:¹; 20:²⁸; Romans 9:⁵; 1John 5:²⁰ Hebrews 1:⁸, proves that He was not also a man. The use of the word man here is designed to inform us that though He was God, it was in His human nature that we are to consider Him as the Saviour, the man who laid down His life to redeem us, **the man Christ Jesus.**

The only way of communication between God and fallen man, is by and through the Mediator appointed by God, the man Christ Jesus. God cannot look upon fallen men directly; fallen mankind is in rebellion, and as rebels are objects of His wrath. Nor can fallen man, without a Mediator, look up to God. Man without Christ as the Mediator is before God as judged and condemned and banished. God is as a provoked Majesty, an angry Judge, and as a consuming fire unless man approaches God on His terms, through the Lord Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the Cross.

Who gave himself a ransom for all, a ransom price such as was unknown and never will have an equal. The word signifies a price equal in value is given; as an eye for an eye, or life for life. This ransom price paid by the Lord Jesus Christ more than covered the cost for all men. The perfection and the dignity of the person redeeming, the man Christ Jesus, was more than the value of the lives of all mankind. The Lord Jesus had this exceeding value for He was without sin.

7. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not ;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. Ordained does not refer to the manner in which he was set apart, or to any act of others in setting the Apostle Paul apart to this work, but merely to the fact that he had been appointed to this work, set apart for it; chosen by God for this work. The Apostle Paul is referring to the fact that the Lord Jesus had set him apart to this work. As an Apostle he is sent by the risen Lord, as a preacher he has the message of the risen Lord.

Paul makes a solemn declaration similar to this in regard to his call to the apostleship, in Galatians 1:²⁰. It is probable that there were those in Ephesus who denied that he could be an apostle, and hence his solemn declaration affirming it. Paul was ordained a minister, chosen to declare the Gospel to the Gentiles, to declare there is one Mediator between God and men, who gave Himself a ransom for all. This is the basic substance of the message which all ministers of the Gospel are commissioned to preach. The message is the same till the Lord Jesus Christ returns; and Paul declares he is the apostle of the Gentiles, Romans 11:¹³, with this commission.

Ministers are obliged to preach the truth, not according to their understanding but strictly according to the Word of God. The ministry of the Gospel does not set one man above others; it teaches we are all in dire need of the salvation the Lord Jesus offers. Embracing the doctrines of the group, religion, sect, order, faith or any other without reference to the Word of God can lead one into error and finally to eternal damnation. They who preach the Gospel must believe it themselves; only then can they preach in faith and verity. They must also be faithful and trustworthy; they are answerable to the Lord at the judgement seat of Christ where we will all be judged together. It is there at the judgement set of Christ where we will receive the reward due to us.

8. I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. Paul gave directions to all sorts of persons for the regular performance of their Christian duty. Concerning the duty of prayer he taught, I **will**, that is God by me declares His will is that all men pray; that they **pray everywhere**, in public gatherings, in private homes, individually and with their families, personally and with others to share the amen. **Lifting up holy hands**, saying in effect, search me and see if there is any wicked thing in me; **Lifting up holy hands**, expecting to receive an answer from heaven to the prayer request. **Lifting up holy hands**, praying with faith and love; **without wrath and doubting**; a heart at peace with neighbours and family is as necessary in prayer as clean hands.

It is in vain to ask in prayer for the favour of God, with anger and vengeance in our hearts against man. To pray doubting is opposed to faithful prayer; to pray in wrath, is opposed to praying in love. The Apostle Paul is saying to Timothy and to us, pray in faith and love.

There must be faith in prayer; otherwise we cannot lift up holy hands without doubting. There must be love; otherwise we cannot lift up holy hands without wrath. Therefore, says the apostle, I will that men pray everywhere, **lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting**. We must, in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ be holy, only then can we serve God acceptably with godly fear. David recorded this prayer request hundreds of years ago; **Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.** Psalm 139:^{23, 24}. When the Lord was talking to Isaiah He made a point of saying He could not hear the prayers of His people if there was sin. Isaiah 1:¹⁵ **and when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.**

9. 10. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becomes women professing godliness) with good works. Maybe we could interpret these words this way; *In like manner also, I command that the women, before appearing in a public gathering of the saints to worship, dress in decent apparel, (the style and use of the garments will of course vary with the culture), with modesty and sobriety, sedateness, thoughtfulness, which are their chief ornaments, far superior to manmade additions; not with plaited hair, hair dressed to turn heads, or gold, or jewels, or decorated garments, or even 'make-up'; in order to attract men or that may create immoral desires in the men, or to draw attention to a part of the body or a vain admiration of their 'beauty'. Let their activity they undertake speak on behalf of the Saviour, the work they do in the home and outside be of moral and spiritual benefit.*

When either women or men spend overmuch time and money, and attention in enhancing their persons, it is tantamount to saying there is not much of a spiritual nature within. External ornamentation is often proof that there is little of value inside and that the person is endeavouring to disguise the spiritual lack with external distractions. Common Christian sense would say in all these things, be decent; be moderate, be modest, unpretentious and reserved. The attraction of a meek and quiet spirit cannot be bettered and is the basis of the good works the Apostle Paul is encouraging.

These four things, **braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array** are expressly forbidden by name to all women professing godliness, age is not a consideration. No arguments we devise can reconcile with the Christian profession the wilful violation of an express command. Nothing we say or teach will negate the express Word of God, a ban imposed on the women in the church gathering, the Assembly of God's people. In and of themselves these things matter not one iota. When a Christian uses them and the beauty of a meek and quiet spirit is hidden behind them then they are a distraction and are forbidden.

It is not appropriate for women who profess to be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ to seek recognition through external adornments. Godly Christian women will come to see the vanity of these things, and have the more substantial spiritual realities of a meek and quiet spirit. Professed followers of Him **who went about doing good** practise the performance of good works as an expression of their faith, showing where the heart and mind is focussed. Christian women who profess to have fixed their affections on things above where Christ sits at the right hand of God and to be living for heaven, do not chase after a place or prominence in this world. It is not becoming for Christian women to seek ornamentation or decorations that would indicate that the heart is concerned with worldly things, to draw attention to their person or to distract any other in their pursuit of holiness. Good works, or deeds of kindness, truly adorn a Christian female, and for that matter the man also. God seems to have formed the mind of the Christian woman to care for things appropriate to the home and family sphere, rather than in seeking external adorning or prominence in the local society.

Single women are not an exception to these rules of conduct; a godly Christian young man is more likely to be attracted to a godly Christian young woman than one taken up with this world's ways and goods. Following hard after the fashions of this world is a major problem with many in the Church, the cause of much angst among younger believers. They wonder if that is the right way to go, is that the path I should take. The question is asked by some, how can I reach them with the Gospel if I am so different? The answer is that the difference, Christ likeness, is what attracts an unbeliever. They see the evidence of peace with God and contentment with what God has given. The adornment of a meek and quiet spirit is a powerful testimony to the grace of God in one's life

11. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. This is close to the most controversial subject in the Christian world today. Misapplied throughout the ages to women in general, in the community worldwide and in the Church this teaching of the Apostle Paul has created much discussion and discord in Christendom.

If anything has been said in the assembly of the saints which they do not understand; or if they desire more information, let them ask their husbands in their own dwelling. There they may speak freely, their inquiries will not cause disorder, and they would not disrupt the order and solemnity of the gathering of the saints; the church meeting.

The place of the Christian woman demands modesty and humility; they should be free from the desire to present themselves as leaders of the congregation.

God has appointed men to instruct and govern in the church; it is improper that women should take that task upon themselves. This evidently and obviously refers to the church assembled for public worship, prayer, and ministry of the Word of God. The assembly is made up of males and females, of old and young, and in the assembly of the saints it is improper for the woman to take a leading role when men are present. This has nothing to do with intellect, ability, or any other consideration; equal rights do not mean equal roles. This is not a question of ability, authority, sex, age, heritage, or parentage; it is simply related to order in the Church.

But this cannot be interpreted as meaning that it is improper for women to speak or to pray in meetings where no men are present, where the women are meeting together for prayer or good works, or planning the welfare of children. Nor is it improper for female leaders in Sunday school to speak or to pray in public. These meetings are not in the Apostle's idea of a church. In such meetings, no rule of the Scriptures is violated in their speaking for the edification of each other, instructing children or adults in the Gospel or as they lead in prayer, in preaching the Gospel or in ministering the Word of God.

The Apostle Paul is laying a foundation for the fellowship of the saints when they meet together for whatever reason, a Church gathering. When the saints are called together that gathering is the Church; in that situation the women are to be silent. The comings together of the saints, classed as church meetings, are stated meetings where all the believers in that specific area come together for the various reasons given in the New Testament. Some may be absent for reasons beyond their control, those who are meeting together are still the Church in that locality.

The Rabbis' taught that a woman should know nothing other than how to raise and clothe the children and care for their man. They were specifically prohibited from asking questions in the synagogue, or even from reading aloud. They were not allowed to sit with the men, even their husbands, but had to be in a separate place.

To be silent in the Church is not an embargo on prayer, nowhere in the Bible is it suggested that prayer should always be vocal, or that others should hear, other than in the assembly of the saints, the Church. For how can we say 'amen' if we have not heard the prayer? Even in the Church meetings all or any member of the congregation may participate in prayer silently without disrupting the meeting.

There is a greater responsibility for the men folk, believers, to exercise their duties in the Church. Diligence in study of the Word of God, in prayer, in caring for the flock, is not the sole duty of the elders. Ideally each member of the local Church will feel a duty towards the overall spiritual and physical wellbeing of the saints in the Church, where they are reckoned among the members of the congregation. We may not have skills as a doctor, accountant, builder, lawyer, or some other expertise, but we all have access to the Throne of Grace. We may all be diligent in prayer.

12. but I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. To the Corinthian saints the Apostle Paul wrote; Let your women keep silence. This rule is positive, explicit and universal. There is no ambiguity in the expressions; and there can be no difference of opinion, one would suppose, in regard to their meaning of this statement. The sense evidently is that in all those things which the Apostle Paul had specified, the women

were to be silent; they were to take no vocal part. Paul had spoken of speaking foreign languages, and of prophecy; and evidently in regard to these the women were to keep silence, or were not to engage publicly in them. These duties were solely the responsibility of the men in the congregation. These duties comprised the obligation of public teaching, preaching, and prophecy; and in these the females of the congregation were to be silent. They were not to teach the people, nor were they to interrupt those who were speaking. In 1Corinthians 11:¹⁻³⁴ Paul had argued against their doing this without their veils, their heads covered, 1Corinthians 11:⁵; and he had shown that it was improper for them to assume the office of public teachers, and to lead the congregation. The force of the argument stated in 1Corinthians 11:¹⁻³⁴ would be a sufficient reason against the practice, even if there were no other.

The Apostle Paul here teaches Timothy there are no circumstances where it is allowable; he forbids it altogether; and shows that on every consideration it was to be regarded as improper for women even to ask a question during a meeting of the Church.

This ban does not refer only to those who claim to be inspired, but to all; it does not only refer to public preaching, but to all acts of speaking, or even asking questions, when the Church is assembled for whatever functions.

No rule in the New Testament is more positive than this, no rule more clearly stated. However plausible the reasons given for disregarding it and for allowing women to take vocal part in the gatherings of the saints, the authority of the apostle Paul is positive, and his meaning cannot be mistaken.

13. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. By this very act God designed that man should have the prior place. God fitted man by His choice and design to take a more aggressive role, to contend with difficulties, to be stronger, capable of greater feats of strength. There is no thought here of difference in intellect, it is purely a physical difference. The structure of woman's body plainly proves that she was never designed for those exertions required in the struggles of life where more than brain power is necessary. In the physical aspect of the woman only is there inferiority, weakness; though there are exceptions to the rule now these thousands of years later as sin has intruded into and disrupted the order God originally designed.

Adam was formed the first of the human species, from the dust of the earth, and under God, the acknowledged proprietor, administrator; then no suitable companion being found for him among all the creatures which had been created Eve was produced from a rib taken out of Adam's side, and presented to Adam as one whom God intended for a partner and helper to him. Eve was formed a suitable companion for Adam; bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.

Man was made as the lord of this lower creation, and placed in the Garden of Eden, and then the woman was made of a rib taken from his side, and given to him, not as a lesser person, but as a companion, a help meet, suitable for him. All the circumstances combine to show the subordinate nature of her rank, and to prove that she was not designed to exert authority over the man.

What we see today is the usurpation of authority, a rejection of the Bible as a text book for life by many who do not want to believe and live with the Word of God as the rule of life, a guide book. Unfortunately many who claim to have the Bible as the rule of life change the plain truth of the Word of God to suit their personal beliefs or to accommodate their errant ways. To them the plain sense of the Word of God is not acceptable.

14. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Adam was first in creation; Eve was first in the transgression. Adam was not deceived, he was deliberate in his choice to go with Eve; but the woman being deceived, was first in the transgression. When it is said that **Adam was not deceived**, it is not meant that when he actually ate of the fruit he was under no deception, but that he was not deceived by the Serpent; he was not first deceived, or first in the transgression. The teaching of the Word of God is clear in the statement, Romans 5:¹² **Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;** and Romans 5:¹⁹ **For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.** The woman should remember that sin began with her listening to the Serpent and going along with the Serpent in disobeying the instruction of the Lord. She should therefore be willing to occupy the place allotted to her by the Word of God when she comes to the knowledge of her sin. Sin came into the world when Adam made the choice to go along with Eve, deliberately going against the commandment of God. Adam chose to go with the flesh rather than go with God.

This teaching applies specifically to all who claim, who acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour, constituted as the Church. The Church does not lay down the law for the rest of the world though it is the best standard for every society, for all nations and peoples on the earth. Moving away from the Law of the Lord is always and only a downward path; leading to the degradation of the society; and the eternal damnation of the sinner.

Departure from the Word of God is walking a pathway leading to eternal destruction; whereas heeding and obeying the Word of God leads to eternal life. The woman was guilty of her own and her husband's transgression; not only by the law of her being taken out of Adam. As a punishment for her transgression, God has placed her in subjection, and given the man authority over her; which authority she usurps whenever she assumes a role designated by the Word of God to the man.

And Adam was not deceived, the serpent deceived Eve; Eve did not deceive Adam, but persuaded him. The Lord said, "**Thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife,**" Genesis 3:¹⁷. The preceding verse, 12, showed why a woman should not **usurp authority over the man**; this shows why she ought not to teach.

It does not appear that Satan tempted the man. The woman said; **the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.** Adam received the fruit from the hand of his wife; he knew he was transgressing, Adam was not deceived; however Eve led the way, and in consequence of this she was subjected to the authority of her husband. The Lord said, **Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee;** Genesis 3:¹⁶. The woman being deceived was made to suppose that the fruit would not injure her or harm her relationship with her husband, but would make her wise, and that God would not fulfil His threat of death. Sin, from the very entrance into the world, has been a process of delusion. Every man or woman who violates the law of God is deceived, expecting happiness and pleasure from the violation of God's law. No one is prepared to accept the consequences which inevitably follow.

15. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. The promise in this verse gives hope to the woman who is walking with the Lord Jesus. The remarks just made about the condition of the woman and the allusion to the distressing facts relate to the early history of man; the Garden of Eden. What the

Apostle has just said carries our thoughts back to the period in which the woman was deceived by the Serpent, the introduction of sin into the world, and by an association to the sentence which was passed on her; the consequence of her transgression. Even so it was by one man that sin entered into the world, Romans 5:¹².

The remark in this verse Paul shows it was not Paul's intention to burden the woman with what might be. He did not design to cause her more anguish by reminding the woman of a historical fact. It was necessary for Paul to state, and for the women in the Church to know that her place in the Church was subordinate, and he expected this truth to be remembered among Christians. The woman was not to be regarded as dishonoured and abandoned; she was to understand her role was different to that of a man. She was not to be overwhelmed by the reminder of what "**the mother of all living**" had done. There was a marvellous and tender care on the part of God in those profound sorrows which would come upon her as a consequence of her transgression. Instead of being broken-hearted on account of her condition, she should remember that God would sustain her in her pregnancy and through the pains of childbirth.

Paul would have her humbly occupy her place in the congregation of the saints; he would have the woman know that the Lord Jesus Christ was her Friend and Comforter.

Some hold, that by the expression "*she shall be saved in child-bearing,*" the apostle means that she should be saved through the faithful performance of her duties as a mother. Others relate the words "*child-bearing*" as synonymous with education, and suppose the meaning is that a woman, by the proper training of her children, can obtain salvation as well as her husband. They say her appropriate duty is not public teaching, but the training of her family. Other suggest the words mean "*she shall be saved from the ways of impostors, and the luxuries and vices of the present age, if she remains at home, cultivates modesty, is subject to her husband, and engages carefully in the training of her children.*"

Calvin supposes that the apostle designs to console the woman by the assurance that, if she bears the trials of her condition of sorrow with a proper spirit, abiding in faith and holiness, she will be saved. She is not to regard herself as cut off from the hope of heaven.

Others suppose that it refers to the promise in Genesis 3:¹⁵, and means that the woman shall be saved through, or by means of bearing a child, the Messiah; and that the apostle means to encourage the woman in her pains of child birth, and in her subordination and inferiority, by referring to the honour which has been put upon her by the fact that a woman gave birth to the Messiah. This argument supposes the Apostle Paul means to say that special honour is conferred on the mother over the father, inasmuch as the Messiah had no human father.

There is no hint or suggestion in the words or phrasing which requires that it should relate to the birth of the Messiah. The word is of a general character, and refers to child-bearing in general. It is not true that woman could or would be "*saved*" merely by having given birth to a child, even the Messiah. She will be saved, as man will be, as a consequence of the Lord Jesus having been born; but there is no evidence that the mere fact that woman gave birth to Him, and that He had no human father, did anything to save Mary herself, or anyone else of her sex. If the word refers to the birth of the Messiah, or to the fact that He was born, the connection with the salvation of the woman and of man is the same.

The apostle's design was to comfort the woman, or to alleviate the sadness of the picture which he had drawn respecting her condition. He had referred the subordinate character of her place in the home, relating it to the Eve being deceived. This naturally suggested the sentence

which was passed on her, and the condition of sorrow to which she was doomed, particularly in child-birth was related to the entrance of sin into the world.

Paul assures her that though she must suffer in giving birth, yet she ought not to regard herself in that state because of her own sin, or the displeasure of god, or as one without hope of eternal life. The way of salvation was open to her as well as to men, and was to be discovered in the same manner. If she had faith even in her condition of sorrow and pain through pregnancy and giving birth, brought on by the sin of the first couple, she had as much hope for eternal life as man and would receive the salvation of the Lord in the same way as man.

The general sentiments of the Jews in regard to the salvation of the female sex, and their exclusion from the religious privileges which men enjoy; the view of the Mohammedans in reference to the inferiority of the sex; and the feelings rife in the heathen world, degrading the female sex, and making their condition, in regard to salvation, far inferior to that of man, show the appropriateness of what the Apostle Paul is saying. The apostle does not mean to teach that a Christian female would be certainly saved from death in child-birth for this would not be true. Faith in Christ is not designed to make any immediate and direct change in the laws governing our physical being. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ does not guard us from the pestilence, epidemic or plague; it does not halt the progress of diseases; it does not deliver us from physical death.

As a matter of fact even the most pious of women have had great difficulty and many have died in giving birth. The apostle means to show that in all her travail and sorrow; amidst all the ungodly activities and beliefs, that though she was "*first*" in the transgression; she may look up to God as her Friend and Strength and find Salvation. The Apostle Paul is teaching the woman may have hope and salvation, the same as any man through saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 3

The object of this chapter is to give clear guidance to Timothy regarding the qualifications and duties of those who would be leaders in the local Christian church. Timothy was to be discreet and careful in the appointment of suitable men for the leadership of the church at Ephesus. As these were to be permanent in the church, it was important that a full statement should be put on record, under the influence and by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, respecting their qualifications and duties.

The work of an Elder, Bishop, Presbyter, Overseer is designed and planned by the Lord Jesus. He is a foreman in the building project of which the Lord Jesus is the architect and employer; he performs a labour of love. The list of the qualifications is given, preceded by a general statement that the office, work, he would be engaged in was an honourable one, and that he who aspired to do this work sought an employment that was in itself a desirable work for the individual so occupied.

The Elder must be a man of good private character; possessing and illustrating the Christian virtues, an upright man, with good standing in the community. He must be a man who ruled his own house well, showing that he was qualified to rule in the House of God.

He must be a man of suitable age and experience, one who would not easily fall into the temptations that are so enticing for the young men, especially so in this 21st century, where attacks come from within and without the Church of God. He must have a fair reputation

among those who are not Christians as it is intended that his ministry shall reach them, and as it is nigh on impossible to witness a true confession if one has a bad testimony or is thought of as a hypocrite. Ideally the life of a Christian will show forth the work of God in the life; it will be a testimony to the change that has been wrought in him by the Holy Spirit. The change that is due to the knowledge and belief the Lord Jesus Christ has redeemed one and freed one from the penalty of sin. One purchased for God by the Lord Jesus Christ has a planned life of holiness, a testimony to His power over sin and death and hell; they are saved to show forth the power of God, the love of God, the grace of God.

1. This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desires a good work.

This next subject is worthy of credence; it is not to be doubted; a faithful saying, which none in the Church of God can dispute, and about which none ought to have reservations.

The office of a bishop, the episcopacy, overseer, or superintendent is a desirable work. A demanding work not suited to all, nevertheless a work that brings great satisfaction as one sees the Church grow in numbers and the saints grow in the Lord. The Holy Spirit in control of the lives of those redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ is what the elder looks for.

Bishop is not a title given; it is a work performed. There may be, should be, more than one in each fellowship; in the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom.

The word translated desire, signifies earnest desire. It is remarkable that the work of a bishop in those times should have been a desirable work to any man; when it was a dangerous work and on occasions led to severe hardship, want, persecution, and death, without any practical compensation or remuneration. This makes me think the Spirit of God designed these words more for this current generation than for those whom Timothy and the earlier ministers in the Church worked with and taught.

A good work, a good work it then was and still is; hard, incessant, and demanding, serious, challenging and often painful, sometimes physically, often emotionally and always spiritually demanding. There were no ministers in the Church in those days who were silent, neither did they take up and preach or speak about current affairs or politics, nor should they do so now. A bishop in the Church of God is appointed by God, kept by God and should rely totally on God. The ministry of an elder was to build up the saints, to keep them walking in the right direction, always aiming for spiritual growth, encouraging the pursuit of holiness. The worker is worthy of his hire and as God is 'hiring' His employees He will see they are paid in full for the labour they engage in and the work they do in His service.

The Greek word translated bishop indicates in general an oversight of others. In this letter to Timothy the context limits it to overseeing persons and affairs in the local church. The apostle by this phrase designates the work of a spiritual leader in the church a desirable work, and says of it, that he who desires it desires a good work, a noble employment. It is a work; the occupation of the bishop in the church is and ought to be a work, not a title or a rank. The names we give to they who preach the gospel and minister to the saints; care for the believers in the local church are not mere titles of honour; of all the works or employments, the ministry of the Gospel and the care of the saints is the most noble and dignified employment. We are, says the apostle, stewards of the mysteries of God, ministers of Christ, 1Corinthians 4:¹; ambassadors for Christ, in Christ's stead, 2Corinthians 5:²⁰; God's angels or messengers to churches, Revelation 2:¹. It being so good, so great, a work, not all men are fit for it; only such as are meeting the requirements listed in these next few verses of this letter to Timothy.

2. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4 One that rules well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

Though these instructions are for a man who will be an example to the saints he is to have the same standard of behaviour in the world. Therefore a bishop ought to be free from blame; the husband of one wife, at a time; attentive to and diligent in his duty and to the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made him overseer. He should be prudent in his conduct; well behaved; hospitable to strangers; fit and apt to teach, by having good knowledge of the Scriptures, clear in speech and manner of expressing his thoughts, with an earnest desire to instruct the saints in the way of the Lord.

The leaders in the assembly of the saints, the bishops and deacons and those aspiring to lead the saints, **must be blameless**. The word here used does not mean that as a necessary qualification for the position, a bishop should be perfect, for then no one would ever be in the position to lead the flock of God. It means that he should be a man against whom no charge of immorality, or of holding false doctrine, is alleged or suspected from the date of conversion. His conduct should be good and irreproachable. This means that if any charge could be brought against an elder implying moral laxity, or dishonesty in speech or conduct, he is not fit for the position of responsibility in the church. He should be a man of irreproachable character for truth, honesty, physical relationships, and general uprightness. He should be an honest businessman, a trustworthy employee, one who in any occupation brings glory and honour to the Lord Jesus Christ; living before men as a good example of a Christian man in the community.

The husband of one wife is the instruction of the Apostle Paul. For if the elder should have more than one wife at a time he destroys the type given in the epistles of Christ and the Church. Divorce and remarriage is not permitted; a former wife living and another woman taken to wife during her lifetime is according to the Gospels, adultery; it is an irregularity not to be tolerated, accepted, or given approval to. The ban for an elder applies to all the saints; there are no distinctions of holiness separating the saints and the works they perform in the Church.

There was a special appropriateness for this prohibition, if we understand it as prohibiting polygamy. It was extensively practised, and was not regarded as unlawful in those times and among the peoples where the Gospel was first preached. One design of the Gospel was to restore the marriage relationship to its first condition; and though it would require every new convert who came into the church to make hard or harsh decisions if he had more than one wife, in order to establish a code of conduct fitting for a believer, it was considered desirable to teach that one who had spiritual responsibility in the Church should have but one wife. The practice of polygamy would gradually come to be regarded as dishonourable, improper, and un-Christian and the example and influence of the elders would tend to bring about the change required in the minds and lives of the saints.

Vigilant, this word means sober-minded, watchful, and circumspect. An Elder should have a watchful care over his own conduct. He should be on his guard against sin in any form in himself and in the flock.

Sober, a man of a sound mind; one who follows sound reasoning, and who is not controlled by other influences, passions, drugs, or even the first place in the Assembly of God's

people. The idea is that he should have his desires and passions under control. Prudent would be close to the meaning of the word in the Greek text.

Of good behaviour, modest, or in modern language, he should be a gentleman, polite, well mannered, and considerate. He should not be slovenly in his appearance, or coarse and uncouth in his manners. He should speak clearly and intelligently, and be able to converse in with the people he meets in the normal course of a day. A minister of the gospel should understand he is representing the Lord Jesus Christ, and there is no excuse for him to be less than the best possible testimony. He should be an example and a pattern of one who communes with God personally.

Given to hospitality, addicted; this is desirable for all Christians; it is a duty of the elders in a local church. It was a special duty of the overseers in the assembly as they were to be examples to all the saints and to the community of every Christian virtue.

Apt to teach, capable of instructing, or spiritually qualified for the work of teaching the Word of God. As the first priority of a preacher of the gospel is to communicate the knowledge of the truth, the necessity of this qualification is obvious. No one should be allowed to have the place of ministry to the congregation who is not qualified, not taught by the Holy Spirit, to impart instruction to others on the doctrines and duties incumbent upon a believer. And no one should feel that he ought to minister to the saints, who has not been in the presence of the Lord Jesus and been taught by the Holy Spirit. The teaching here referred to is directly related to the Word of God and the life of the believer. Self-denial, loving to study the Word of God, constantly endeavouring to grow in grace and increase in knowledge, that he may be qualified to teach others is what Timothy is told to look for and encourage in them who will be an example after he has departed. A man who would teach others must himself keep ahead of them on the subjects which he would instruct them in.

The spirituality of the elders takes precedence over academic qualifications, they may help but they are secondary to the teacher's closeness to the Saviour, and his love for the Word of God, the basis and subject of his ministry.

Not given to wine, the minister God chooses to represent Him has relinquished self sufficiency and relies on the Holy Spirit to instruct him from the Word of God. Though the Word of God teaches moderation in all things it is wise for an elder to refrain totally from anything that might cause a weaker brother or sister to stumble and fall. The word used here, **given**, is addicted, meaning a person who has an uncontrolled desire for a stimulant, specifically alcohol in this instance. In the world today there are many other 'drugs' that cause believers to stumble; tobacco being just one of them. Others are prescribed by doctors of medicine inadvertently causing addiction in the patient. The Apostle Paul does say to Timothy take **a little wine for thy stomach's sake**, clearly as a medicine, not as a stimulant or as a social exercise, not to go along with the world or to keep in with one's peer group.

No striker is the next thing the Apostle Paul mentions; the elder is not one to get into fights, not one who thinks might is right, not aggressive. Generally the use of force is an uncontrolled response; sometimes planned retaliation, in either case it is forbidden to an elder, a bishop. Turn the other cheek is the instruction the Lord Jesus Christ gives, now the Apostle tells Timothy an elder is never to initiate aggressive physical actions or retaliate with force. There is surprising strength in humbly allowing the aggressor to have his way; providing the

antagonist is not attacking the truth or seeking to make the believer deny his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not greedy of filthy lucre; this strikes at the heart of the world we are in, the doctrines we are inculcated with from the start of our understanding, from when we desired a certain gift at Christmas, for a birthday present, coming of age, and so many more occasions. We live in a nation where possessions are counted too highly, where money in the bank is the goal, where we desire to impress with the ostentatious display of wealth, with houses and cars, boats and caravans. This all works towards a desire for more, a subtle yet obvious form of greed, ignored because the majority are chasing the same goals. The Word of God teaches we should be content with such things as we have.

There is no prohibition to receiving the just reward for our labour. Some are paid for physical labour and some are paid for mental ability, some command a higher wage because of the skill they have and use and others for their command over the personnel in their charge.

What the Apostle Paul is teaching Timothy is that the desire for and pursuit of wealth as the primary aim is contrary to the way the Lord Jesus would have us live in this world. The Word of God does teach us clearly '**the love of money is the root of all evil**'. Not as some quote, *money is the root of all evil*. Honourable gain is not in question. What is it that makes money, riches, filthy lucre? It is not the grime of the earth or the handling of it. It is surely the association of riches with the evil action and intent of its use; the means used to acquire it, the people harmed in the process of amassing it. The Apostle Paul tells Timothy **they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.** 1Timothy 6:⁹.

But patient; in the midst of negatives is this one positive. The Apostle Paul would have us know it is important to wait patiently on the Lord for whatever He will give us; the reward for our labour, inheritance, or any remuneration due. Payment is not always hard currency. The reward will come for our work in the world or our work in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. We generally expect the reward as promised, look forward to the pay day, often eagerly anticipating it. The Lord says be patient, the Psalmist says wait patiently for the Lord and He will bring it to pass. And as it was for Abraham after he had patiently endured he received the promise.

Not a brawler, no fights with hand or tongue, one who does not instigate a quarrel, or join in an affray. The growth of the Christian character sees the person developing Christ like characteristics, a peaceful disposition. The Christian must not be a noisy abusive, quarrelsome talker or disposed to aggressive behaviour or speech. With the mind at rest, at peace, the body can also be at rest and the Christian can take pleasure in the knowledge the Lord Jesus is in control of the situation.

Not covetous, A man should not be in the ministry, not a guide or leader of the saints who is characteristically a lover of money. Such a one, no matter what his talents may be, has no valid qualification for this position of trust, and will do more harm than good if he has a desire for personal wealth. The elder must not be covetous; not a lover of money; not desiring the prestige of the position for the sake of monetary gain or advantage. He who loves money, is covetous, will seek it by all means known and available. Truth and honesty are buried in the love of money, covetousness. **Covetous** is not limited to wealth, as is made evident by the tenth Commandment. An inordinate desire for anything or person or position is classed as

covetousness and is sin. As with all sin, whatever form it takes, the elder is to present himself to the saints in his care as one who is delivered from these problems by the Grace of God and diligent adherence to the Word of God.

The bishop is to be **one that rules well his own house**; the private life of the elder is open for all to see. As a leader of the flock of God he is in the sight of all the saints over which the Lord has made him an overseer. **Having his children in subjection with all gravity** is essential for one who is in charge; for how can he teach what is true and right to others and not be subject to the same rules of conduct for his own family. The qualification of a bishop is that he rules well his own house; a man that presides over and governs his own family, putting the Lord first. The command of his house is not by sternness, and tyranny, but with soberness of mind and love. No family can be at peace and prosper that is not subject to the head of the family; in the home and in the church there is one standard for the believers. The husband is both by nature and the appointment of God, the head of his own house; so the elders are the heads of the local church as appointed by God in the locality of the specific gathering of the saints on earth.

The church is a large family, the bishop's family is smaller, and the church requires greater skill in governing it than the home of an elder, though the demands are probably equal. If a man cannot rule in his home how can he possibly manage a greater number and diversity of people, the church? If he cannot maintain his authority in his own family, how is such a person fit to be trusted with the care of the church of God? A bishop is not nominated by the people; he is recognised as one who is doing the work of the Lord according to the Scriptures. Seeing this the congregation defers to the elder as one who has the spiritual welfare of the saints at heart and one who is equipped to carry out the task, caring and concerned for the spiritual wellbeing of the flock.

Having his children in subjection with all gravity does not mean that his children should be solemn and grave, it refers to the father, he should be a serious man in his family; a man free from light-heartedness and silliness, but not without humour, in his manner of life with his children. It does not mean that he should be severe, but that he should be a serious and sober-minded man. He should maintain proper dignity, he should maintain self-respect, and his demeanour and behaviour should inspire others, specially his children, with respect for him.

5. (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) For if the man is not capable of governing a society as small as his own family, but lets his children run wild, be disobedient and uncontrolled, how shall he govern in a proper manner that greater and more important society, the church of God? This is a pertinent and striking argument. A church resembles a family. It is larger and there is a greater variety of temperaments in it than a family. The authority of an elder, a bishop, in a church is also less authoritative than that of a father, but still there is a striking resemblance. The church is made up of a gathering of brothers and sisters. They are together for the same purposes, and have a common objective. They have common feelings and common wants; they have sympathies and aims like a family, concerned for each other in their difficulties and problems faced at work and in the community. The government of the church is designed to be paternal the elder as a father figure. It should be known by the saint that the elders who preside over the gathering, have the feelings of a father; that they love all the members of the family equally; that they have no prejudices, no partialities, no selfish aims. If a man cannot govern his own family well; if he is

severe, partial, neglectful, or tyrannical at home, how can he be expected to take charge of the larger **household of faith** with proper views and feelings?

6. Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Not a novice, a newcomer to the faith. This Greek word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, it means that which is just planted. It means a plant that is not strong, not rooted or not able to bear the stormy weather or a cold blast. The word comes to mean a new convert; one who has not had his own faith tested, or has given evidence to others in the church that he would be faithful to the trust committed to him. The word does not refer to one who is young in years, the reference is to one young in the faith. Timothy himself was young compared to Paul; not a novice in the Christian faith. The Apostle Paul teaches Timothy to recognise spiritual maturity; not appoint one that is without experience in the mysteries of the gospel. A novice undertaking to teach others before he has learnt himself will be a disaster to the believers locally. The reason for this injunction is significant; **Lest being puffed up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil;** implying, that young, inexperienced believers, when placed into a leading work in the church, are in great danger of falling into the sin of pride, the serpents sin in the Garden of Eden, and so exposing themselves to condemnation. There are none as proud and confident as the ignorant and unwise and ill-advised.

When the Apostle Paul says, **lest he fall into the condemnation of the devil**, it is as if he had said, *lest he be condemned for the same sin that the devil was condemned for*, which was pride. The devil will not condemn any believer for pride, the more proud a man is, gains the devil's approval of him. Satan will not condemn for sin, he will not hinder the sinner in any way but he will torment them whom God approves of.

7. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Them which are without, not in the church, those who are not Christians cannot be elders in the Church of God. Appointments made by religious men who are not believers, selecting various ones for their wealth or abilities, their pious behaviour or their altruistic ways are not recognised by God. This includes all classes of those who are not Christians; heathens, infidels, Jews, good moral men, and all others. The idea is that the bishop must be a believer and have a good reputation with all who know him for honesty, truthfulness, reliability of character. His life must be in their view upright and consistent with good morals and show what he teaches is what he practices; he must live by the same standards he proclaims. His manner of life must be such that they who observe him will regard it as consistent with his profession. He must be true to the Word of God, just and honest in his dealings with his fellow-men, and so live that they cannot say that he has done them wrong or deceived them. He must not give occasion for scandalous reports concerning his dealings with the other sex, but must be regarded as a morally pure man with a holy conversation.

It is the elders' Christian business to endeavour to do the best they can and to persuade others in the assembly to trust fully in the Lord Jesus Christ, to obey His word. The example of the bishops cannot be overemphasised in this regard. No minister of the gospel, no teacher in the church can possibly guide the saints if they do not regard him as an upright and honest man.

Even unbelievers, if they hate religion, if they have a total disregard for the things of the Lord themselves; they still insist that professors of the Christian faith should be governed by its principles. They will not be encouraged to believe the Truth and to embrace it when the example they see is a man they regard as hypocritical and impure. It is impossible for an elder,

a bishop, to over-estimate the importance of having a good character, seen in the area where they live and work as a person of good morals. No man should be recognised by the church as an elder who has not got a good reputation in the local church and in the local community.

Now the Apostle Paul directs Timothy to another important aspect of church life, the qualifications of deacons;

8. Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; They must be fair-minded men, serious, temperate, and candid. The deacon evidently refers to those who had charge of the temporal affairs of the church, as caring for the poor, sick, widows, and others who needed attention; today in the Church it amounts to distribution of the money collected, visiting the elderly and hospitalised, keeping an eye on the properties and practical interests of the saints' joint interests. No qualifications are mentioned implying that they were to be preachers of the gospel or teachers of the Word of God. In most respects, except in regard to preaching and teaching, their qualifications were to be the same as those of the bishops. This is not a ban on the deacons having also a spiritual ministry. When the church was small, the 'monies' or goods could be distributed by the apostles themselves without difficulty; but when the church grew and the giving of the saints increased and when the distribution might give rise to contention as to where it was to be sent or how it was to be spent, it was necessary that this matter should be trusted to others in the church, and that the ministry of the elders should be unhindered, freed from choices that could be questioned. All suspicions of dishonesty and unfairness in regard to financial matters had to be avoided. It is wise that the temporal affairs of the church should be trusted to more than one brother so all is done decently and in order.

The deacons were at first instituted for the service of the poor; the alms of the church were gathered, the deacons received them, and distributed them among the aged and impotent from house to house. The Apostle Paul advised, them because they were employed by the church to beware of those faults that are frequently committed in general conversation, saying one thing to one person, and something different to another. **Let the deacons be grave** men, serious and calm, modest men, not seeking prominence in the fellowship of the saints. **Not double-tongued**, not verbose persons, nor saying one thing to one person and something else to another, adjusting the conversation according to the place or company they are with.

Not given to much wine, not the liquid, but the excess is forbidden. Drinking wine for enjoyment, for dulling the senses, for the breakdown of inhibitions; these habits are contrary to the self control expected of an example to the flock, the pattern of a good Christian.

Not greedy of filthy lucre, seeking to get wealth by ways and means that are in any way disreputable or dishonest, or that could spoil the testimony of the church.

The position was not open to a wealthy person or to a pauper; nor was it for an intellectual or a simpleton, maturity in spiritual matters was the basic and only criteria for the elder, the one doing the work, ministering the Word, shepherding the saints.

9. Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10. and let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. The deacons appointed held the same doctrines as did the elders with a pure conscience. They were chosen servants in the church, proved, and who had shown that they were qualified to serve the church in matters allotted to them with a continual reliance on the Lord and the Word of God. They were men whose wives could contribute to the welfare of the saints, working with their spouse

to the same end. The deacons were proved by their continuance in the faith, by a well ordered household and unwavering faith in the written word and the doctrines taught by the Apostles.

11. Even so *must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.* Even so wives grave; when we remove the words in italics we come to the meaning intended by the apostle. He does not mean the wives either of the bishops or deacons in particular, but the Christian women in general. Simply let the women likewise be grave. Whatever is spoken here applies to all Christian women in general. In the very early church there were but two orders of ministers, bishops and deacons, the context of the Epistles is clear that they were men. The Apostle Paul now instructs Timothy as to the character of the wives of the men who are leading the flock. This does not imply there is no work for the wives to do; the Apostle Paul is setting a standard for the elders and the deacons, the same standards apply to all and any who would do the work of the Lord Jesus in the local church. There is a role for the men and a role for the women.

12. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. Men not living in polygamy, and who exercised exemplary family government, were to be the ones who were given authority in the local church.

The reason Paul gave these instructions to Timothy was that the saints should have a standard of behaviour setting them apart from the world. That the leaders in the church, spiritual and practical leaders, might know how they ought to behave themselves and be an example to the flock in the important position held by them in the church at Ephesus was the desire of the Apostle Paul. Paul hoped to be able to come to Timothy before long and to complete the work which he had commenced at Ephesus; but, in the meantime, he gave him these written counsels, that he might understand particularly the duty which was required of him and the spiritual and sensible and helpful guides in the church at Ephesus.

13. for they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. They who, having been tried and proved, have shown by their steadfastness, activity, and zeal, are said to have purchased to themselves a good degree. They are seen by the rest of the church as true guides in the faith, those with the spiritual and physical qualifications to do the work; the work that will show to the people who look at them that the Lord Jesus Christ is alive and working with them. A degree in the world today is attained from a university teaching the subject of choice after years of study, acceptance of the teaching and assurance of the application of the facts taught. **Boldness in the faith** comes with the acceptance of the truth and a life lived in the truth of the gospel; then we can speak confidently of the Lord Jesus Christ and the work He has done and the work He can do in the life of all who will believe.

The apostle adds the deacons earn the respect due to them, **and great boldness in the faith.** Liberty of speech in teaching the doctrines of Christianity and in lifestyle goes together in one who is concerned for the testimony and the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Deacons and bishops existed in the local Church, and duties may be considered of Divine origin. Modern practices are far removed from the example of the church of the first century. The hierarchies we see in Christianity today are not compatible with the scriptures or the teachings of the Apostles in the very early church. Move with the times we may but not contrary to the Word of God. When the ways of the church conform to the ways of the world then it is time to reject them and return to the Bible. The deacons and the bishops are servants,

to the saints; as good servants purchase to themselves a good degree; a spiritual standing. When they preach the Word they can expect to see signs following.

14. These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: 15. But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. I write only these things; because I hope to come unto you soon. Paul planned to return to Ephesus to give instructions personally, to finish himself the work which he had commenced in Ephesus, and which was interrupted by those hardened and opposed to the Gospel.

Those who are fitted to govern in the house of God must see to it that they behave themselves wisely. The House of God is sacred; the ministers therein have a duty to honour that worthy name by which they are called. The elders, indeed all who serve in the church ought to behave themselves well, to consider carefully their praying and preaching and teaching and example. Their duty in the church obliges them to their good behaviour, the truth does not allow for the thoughts and ways of man to intrude on the order of the Church. Timothy must know how to behave himself, not only in the particular church where he was currently residing, but as an evangelist, and representing the Apostle Paul, and as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ; he must learn how to behave himself in other places where he may have to visit. Each congregation of believers is called "the House of God".

The Church of the living God; the assembly in which God lives and works; where each member of that building is a living stone, all the believers properly united among themselves, grow up unto a holy temple in the Lord.

In the house of God does not mean in a place of public worship, nor does it refer to the building dedicated to the service of the Lord. It refers to the church as a body of believers, and to fellowship with them. The church is called the "**house of God,**" because it is the dwelling in which He resides. Before the Church age His peculiar residence was in the temple at Jerusalem; now that the temple is destroyed, it is among His people; and in each believer.

The ministers in the church have an important role, noble duty, as pillars to support, maintain, and uphold divine truth against all those that seek to corrupt the truth for their own profit.

15. But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. The chapter closes with a statement which seems to have been intended to impress the mind of Timothy with the importance of the duties in which he was to spend his time. But if I delay, writes the Apostle Paul, I give these instructions, that you may know how to live and converse in the House of God, in which you have the honour to be a guide, a pastor and teacher; a demanding task. Even in the house which is the Church of the living God you will not have a simple undertaking. But I will content myself with reminding you, says the Apostle Paul that the very pillar and ground of the whole system of gospel truth, upon which the support of the entire edifice depends, is the truth you will see in the statement which follows. This you must also teach and cause the saints to understand, and for them to make the same truth the basis of the message they proclaim.

I do not know how God will use me or lead me in the future, though I do hope to see you shortly, and therefore I write to direct you, in the mean time, how to arrange the affairs of the church, which I have committed to your care. The believers constitute the church of God, our

God is not like the heathen deities, or a dead man idolised and made a god, nor a being without life, like the images of the heathen, but one who has life in Himself and from Himself. The people in and amongst whom He dwells, and who they worship; and of whom He has a great care, and whom He loved, and sent his Son to die for, are the Church

The Church for which Christ died is the pillar and ground of the truth, the faith which we have is established upon the authority of the Word of God. The church of God has discovered and recommends the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus. This charge I commit to thee son, Timothy.

The universal church, of which the church in Ephesus, where Timothy had a charge, was a genuine part of the whole and was an upholder of the truth, a pillar, a support.

It has been said that the early church was marked by poverty, piety and power whereas today it is a case of wealth, worldliness and weakness. It has also been said that an assembly seldom, if ever, rises above the spiritual level of its elders.

16. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. If we take in the whole of the 14th, 15th, and 16th verses, we may make a consistent translation, and the paragraph will read: *Hoping to see you shortly; but should I tarry long, these things I now write unto you, that you may know how you ought to behave yourself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God. The mystery of godliness, which is the pillar and ground of the truth, is, without controversy, a great thing.*

Without controversy, undeniably, certainly; the object of the apostle is to say that the truth which he is about to state will brook no argument, no dispute is valid; this is basic to the faith we preach and in which we stand. The doctrine respecting the incarnation and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, which had for so long been kept hidden from the world, was a subject of the greatest importance.

This passage should not be used to prove that there is anything unintelligible in the Gospel message, or anything that the ordinary man cannot understand. The doctrine which Paul now states, and which had for so long been concealed from man, is of the utmost importance.

Godliness means, piety, reverence, based in the truth revealed in the Word of God. It is used here for the gospel as God has brought it to the attention of man. This *mystery* which had *been hidden from ages and from generations, and which was now manifest*, Colossians 1:26, is the doctrine on which the Christian faith depends. It is that which constitutes the fundamental truths of the Christian message. The mystery of godliness is Christ; and here are six things concerning Christ, which make up the mystery of godliness and at the same time, remove the doubts and reveal the basic truth.

God was manifest in the flesh, in the form of a servant, the fashion of a man, for and thirty three years. This proves that Jesus Christ is God, the eternal Word that was made flesh and was manifest in the flesh. When God was to be revealed to man He was pleased to make himself known and visible in the incarnation of His own Son. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, John 1:14. How the infinite nature of God could be inseparably united to the finite nature of man, so as to make one person, is a great mystery. The fact remains even with the mystery. This mystery is to be comprehended by faith; it is not worked out by reasoning. Our faith looks at the revelation of the truth, reason calls for visible, tangible evidence; faith accepts without question the Word of God as did Abraham, reason laughs at the same revelation as did Sarah. Abraham was justified by faith.

Justified in the Spirit that is the incarnate Spirit of God just referred to; the Redeemer regarded as fully God and fully man is not the Spirit referred to here. Evidently the reference is to the Holy Spirit; for it is not feasible to suggest the man, Christ Jesus, was justified by His own spirit.

The word justified is not used in the same sense as it is when applied to Christians, but in its more common usage. It is that Jesus was shown to be the Son of God by the Holy Spirit; He was by this revelation vindicated from the charges alleged against Him. The Holy Spirit furnished the evidence that Jesus was the Son of God; the Holy Spirit justified the claims made by the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus, visible in the form of a Dove at His baptism, Matthew 3:16; the Holy Spirit was sent to convince the world of sin, because the world did not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, John 16:8-9; the Lord Jesus Christ cast out demons by the Holy Spirit, Matthew 12:28; the Holy Spirit was given to Christ without measure, John 3:34; and the Holy Spirit was sent down, in accordance with the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ, to convert the hearts of men, Acts 2:33. This is evidence enough of the nature and work of the Spirit of God.

Seen of angels, they worshipped Him, Hebrews 1:6; they attended His incarnation, His temptation, His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, His death on the Cross, His resurrection, His ascension; this is to His honour as the Son of God manifest in flesh. This shows the great interest the world we cannot see had in the work God was doing through His Son. Angels ministered to Him, for He is Lord of all, including those parts of creation which man cannot see, including angels. For man to see an angel is wonderful, but for an angel to see God become man is more amazing; they sang at His birth, they ministered to Him after His testing in the wilderness, His victory over Satan. **Seen of angels**; they celebrated the birth of the Lord Jesus, and gave notice of his birth to the world, angels ministered to Him in the wilderness, supported and comforted Him in the garden, were present at His resurrection, accompanied him in his ascension.

More wonderful than all of this so long after the Lord Jesus Christ walked on this earth as a man, is that we in this 21st century, 2,000 years after the Lord Jesus walked in Judea, can see God in Jesus Christ, and know God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sinful man cannot look upon God. The wonderful miracle of salvation is that saved man can by faith, come into the presence of God with his Saviour and commune with God as one would with his earthly father.

Preached unto the Gentiles, This is listed among the great things which constitute the mystery of the Christian faith. It was a glorious truth that salvation would be proclaimed to all mankind, and this is part of the important truth made known in the gospel. The mystery of the gospel, the grand truth, which was not clearly revealed, not known until the coming of the Saviour; is revealed; Christ was to be the Saviour of all, Jew and Gentile. Before His coming, a wall of partition had divided between the Jew and Gentile worlds. The Jews regarded the rest of mankind as excluded from the covenant mercies of God, which was the principal stumbling block in their way. In regard to the gospel, they could not see the grace of God reaching to the Gentiles also. The Gospel proclaimed that all humankind was on the same level, that the middle wall of partition was broken down, and that salvation could now be made known to all men. The Jew had no peculiar advantage for salvation by being a Jew; the Gentile was not

excluded from the hope of salvation because not a descendant of Abraham. The plan of redemption was personalised to man, all mankind, without regard to his country, customs, and colour of skin or laws.

The blood of Jesus Christ was shed for all, and everywhere a human being is found, whatever country or religion they follow, salvation is freely offered. This is the message preached unto the Gentiles; not exclusively for it is the same message to the Jews. The Gospel preached is there is a way back to God, His way, via the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is a great privilege to be allowed to proclaim to all men that in one respect we are all on the same level; that we are all equally the objects of the Divine love; that Christ died for each one of us no matter what our heritage or prospects, poverty or wealth, health or illness or intellectual capacity. Sin is the only thing that can and does separate us from God. Sin will blind us to the truth and turn our minds away from the Lord; sin will make us deaf, unable to hear the Lord God speaking to us. The Gospel **preached unto the Gentiles** is for you and me, is for everyone, for the Lord Jesus Christ died for all sinners and all without exception have sinned.

Believed on in the world, so the Gospel was not preached in vain. Belief in the Lord Jesus Christ was minimal and restricted prior to the resurrection. Many of the Gentiles welcomed the gospel message which the majority of the Jews rejected. These hundreds of years later there are hundreds of Jews and countless thousands of Gentiles who believe that God sent His Son into the world to save sinners. There are also many who have departed to be with Christ, left this present evil world by natural death or persecution and are with the Lord now, which is far better. Who would have thought that many in the world, which lay in wickedness, would believe in the Son of God, would take Him by faith to be their Saviour; He who was crucified at Jerusalem? Despite their prejudices many of the Jews believed on Him; and a great company of the priests, they who crucified Him, believed.

Jesus was received by some as the promised Messiah, the Anointed of God, and the only Saviour of sinful man. This is a conspicuous and arresting part of the mystery of godliness, that one who was crucified as a malefactor, and whose kingdom is not of this world, and whose doctrines are opposed to all the sinful desires and choices of the human heart, wherever the Gospel is preached, be acknowledged as the only Saviour of sinners.

He **was received up into glory**, in His ascension. This was before He was believed on in the world; it is put last because it is the ultimate evidence of the divinity of the man Christ Jesus. This truth goes beyond the mere fact of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is crowned with glory and honour. It is not only the ascension of the man, Christ Jesus that is meant, but His sitting at the right hand of God, where He ever lives, making intercession for us who believe. He has all power, both in heaven and earth and we who so need salvation can have that particular blessing by faith in Him who was raised from among the dead and now sit at the right hand of His Father in heaven. The confidence of a Christian is in the fact of the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. The bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the confirmation to each believer that all the other promises in the Word of God will be fulfilled.

He who was manifest in flesh was God, without a doubt God, God by nature, for this makes it a mystery; that the eternal God should humble Himself to take on the form of a man. God was manifest in flesh, real flesh. **Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and**

blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same, Hebrews 2:¹⁴. And, what is more amazing; He was manifest in the flesh after all flesh was corrupted through sin; though He himself was holy from the womb, without sin throughout His earthly experience.

Godliness is a mystery from the beginning to the end, from the incarnation of the Son of God to His ascension.

Sin has so marred the mind of man that it is impossible for him to comprehend and appreciate what God has done. But the Holy Spirit takes the deep things of God and reveals them unto us; when we seek the Lord with our whole heart. Also the record we have of God and His Son is made relevant and applied to us personally by the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 4.

Timothy was to remind the saints at Ephesus of the great apostasy which was to occur, and to guard them against the false doctrines which would arise with the departure from the faith of some. There was to be, the Apostle Paul warns, in the latter days a great departure from the faith. Some of the characteristics of apostasy would be a giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons. False teachers would hypocritically speak things they knew to be false; having their own consciences seared so working hard to gain others to their way of thinking, always for personal gain. They would forbid to marry yet condone or turn a blind eye to all forms of illicit sexual perversities; and forbid certain foods, foods which God had appointed for mans' health.

Timothy was to warn the churches against spurious and superstitious views, which the apostle calls **old wives' fables**. Timothy was not to allow himself to be influenced by such fables, but immediately reject them. Bodily exercise which some of the proponents of such fables recommended was of no spiritual benefit therefore no emphasis ought to be laid on it; there is no spiritual advantage in physical exercise. That which is truly profitable, and which ought to be regarded as important, was godliness; for that has promise for the present life, and for the life to come in the presence of the Lord, when we are called to be with Him forever.

Timothy must expect to endure labour and to suffer reproach; nevertheless he was to faithfully convey these important truths to the saints he was guiding. As a pastor and elder in the Church his was a responsible position, a position of importance, a place of trust.

Timothy was so to live so no one would despise him or his ministry because he was a young man. He was to be constantly attentive to his duties, waiting the return of the Apostle Paul. He was to develop and foster the inherited abilities and natural talents which he had received from his parents; and he was to take special heed to the Apostle Paul's teaching. He was to meditate on these things, and to give himself wholly to the work, so that his profiting might would be seen by all who heard or observed him. The life and words of Timothy would show he was a Christian and lead others to follow the same path.

1. Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

2. Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

3. Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. In the close of the previous chapter, we had the mystery of godliness. A summary now, appropriately in the beginning of this chapter where we have the mystery of iniquity summed up.

The Spirit speaketh expressly, directs our attention to matters that will be of grave concern to the saints. Timothy must watch out for people numbered with the saints in the Assembly who for their own private purposes will teach things contrary to the truth, in doing so cause a division and dissention among the believers and in the fellowship. The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the scriptures; and me says the Apostle Paul.

So Paul says the Holy Spirit expressly testifies that in the last times, in times shortly to come, some who are living in the times when the gospel is freely available to all, and pretend to pursue its interests, will apostatize, turn aside from the purity of the original faith, giving heed to deceitful spirits. These seducing spirits in their own power or in men they influence with their pernicious doctrines shall endeavour to impose them on the saints though specious appearances, false teaching and practices that draw the saints away from following the Lord Jesus. It may be stated categorically that all teaching that deviates from the plain truth expressed in the Word of God is false doctrine, is as the Apostle Paul states doctrines of demons.

The **last times** are the times of Christ's kingdom, which began in the time of the Roman Empire; during which time this Epistle was written, where the Apostle speaking of times yet to come, the latter times must be the times in which we now live. Concerning these times, the Holy Spirit tells us that some among the saints will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits; evil spirits, the doctrines of demons, maybe false teachers, and false doctrines. We see that now in the proliferation of sects; all claiming inspiration and or biblical basis for their false teaching, and a great number follow the leaders of these cults and sects.

The Bible remains the sole source of the truth, the place where we can be sure of what God would have us know concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit; how we should conduct ourselves in the church and in the world.

In the true church of Christ, the light of the Gospel was never wholly extinguished, even in the darkest times of history, some only and not all would depart from the faith. The church goers described who would be lead this apostasy and are such as speak **lies in hypocrisy**, and have seared consciences. They have turned aside from the truth of God's word; they have chosen to walk pleasing to themselves and lead others astray with their lies. These lies, which some of the mainline religions propagate, are seen as miracles, fabulous deeds of so called saints and counterfeit writings given priority over the Word of God, the Scriptures.

The doctrines which these apostates teach, include the forbidding marriage to some, and abstaining from meats on certain days, are called doctrines of demons, they are wicked and devilish doctrines, followed slavishly by those deceived, having believed the lies.

Depart from the faith, they will apostatize from the faith, leave the truth of the Christian as it is taught in the Word of God; in effect renouncing the whole system by bringing in doctrines which render the basic, essential truths null and void. Or denying and renouncing such doctrines as are central and vital to Christianity as the way of salvation and peace with God. A man may hold the truth of Christianity, and yet make it useless by holding other doctrines which counteract the work of the Holy Spirit in their life. Or he may apostatize by denying some essential doctrine, though he introduces nothing heterodox, sacrilegious or profane.

Giving heed to seducing spirits, such as listening to and following false teachers; spirits of deceit is much more forceful. Pretenders to inspiration, and false teachers of every kind,

belong in this category. Those who would build up a reputation for themselves, a big following, or teach that material possessions are proof of the Lord Jesus working in the midst, come into this group.

Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; Hebrews 13:⁴ if honourable in all, then surely it is lawful for all. The Old Testament has no evidence of restrictions, the prophets, priests, and Levites, did marry. Marriage was designed for the blessing of man and is a big and important part of the establishment of an ordered and stable society. In this New Testament economy the ministers of the Gospel have freedom to marry; the Apostle Paul writes; **Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife?** 1Corinthians 9:⁵.

The Roman Catholic Church does not prohibit marriage altogether, it does forbid the marriage of their clergy, they commend celibacy and virginity. They regard such a state, for certain persons, as more holy than the married condition, and consider it as so holy that they would absolutely prohibit those who wished to be in the priesthood from entering into a legal and scriptural marriage contract. The tenth article of the decree of the Council of Trent is, "*Whosoever shall say that the married state is to be preferred to a state of virginity, or celibacy, and that it is not better and more blessed to remain in virginity, or celibacy, than to be joined in marriage; let him be accursed!*" Peter Dens' Moral Theology, pp. 497--500.

Commanding to abstain from meats; the word meat in the Scriptures, is applied to the flesh of fruit as well as animals; it stands for food of all kinds, Matthew 3:⁴; 6:²⁶; 10:¹⁰. This was the meaning of the word when the translation of the Bible was made. It is now used almost exclusively to denote the flesh of animals eaten as food. The word used here means whatever is eaten, and may refer to animal flesh, fish, fruit, or vegetables. It is often used in the New Testament, with regard to the flesh of animals, Hebrews 9:¹⁰; 13:⁹; Romans 14:^{15, 20}; 1Corinthians 8:^{8, 13}. It was the flesh of certain beasts which was forbidden under the Jewish law as interpreted by the Rabbis. To forbid the use of certain meats is here described as one of the characteristics of those who would presume to instruct the saints, leading them into slavish obedience to false doctrines.

Check out the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, the Jehovah Witnesses, the Seventh Day Adventists and others regarding their laws concerning the flesh of animals. They cause many weak brothers and sisters to stumble. And what is more damning is that they deny the way of salvation to many; claiming their way to eternal blessing is the right way. There is only one way back to God and that is by the Lord Jesus Christ; who said, **I am the way, the truth and the life.** Adding to the Word of God or subtracting from the Word of God makes the person guilty before God. The Apostle John recorded the Word of God for us, **For I testify unto every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.** Revelation 22:^{18, 19}.

The Catechism will show what the Roman Catholics believe and teach on this subject. Children are taught this and have to repeat these doctrines before they are allowed to take their first Communion; another addition to the number of false doctrines propagated by them.

Q. Are there any other commandments besides the Ten Commandments of God?

A. There are the commandments or precepts of the church, six in particular.

Q. What are we obliged to do by the second commandment of the church?

A. To give part of the year to fast and abstinence

Q. What do you mean by fast-days?

A. Certain days on which we are allowed but one meal, and forbidden flesh meat.

Q. What do you mean by days of abstinence?

A. Certain days on which we are forbidden to eat flesh meat; but are allowed the usual number of meals.

Q. Is it strictly forbidden by the church to eat flesh meat on days of abstinence?

A. Yes; and to eat flesh meat on any day on which it is forbidden, without necessity and leave of the church, is very sinful. The Roman Catholic Church has committed the cardinal sin of adding to the Word of God.

Those who believe and know the truth are apparently new believers and those who have been taught more in the faith. We are not familiar with the doctrines of the Christian Church, the Apostle's teachings when we first come to believe to the saving of our soul. The instruction to all the saints is to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Believing is the first rung of the ladder, and knowing is climbing higher and higher up the ladder.

4. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: Meats which God has created, all foods, flesh and vegetable which He has made, He has designed for the nourishment of man. The fact that God created them is proof that they are not to be considered as evil. Therefore it is not to be considered a Christian religious requirement to abstain from them. All that God has made is good in its place, and what is intended to be food for man is not to be refused or forbidden on religious grounds. The Apostle Paul is no doubt referring to the times when man's ways and laws will intrude into the things of God and man will set his own rules above those of the Lord.

All creatures, all that God has created, as made by God, are good in the appropriate place, unadulterated by man. It does not mean that all that God has made is good in every application. It is good in its place, good for the purpose for which He made it. As God made it originally, and used in the way He purposed it might be used without injury. As God created all things, they are good. As man perverts them they are no longer good nor can they be spoken of as made by God. For instance tobacco that brings a slavish addiction, and drugs that change the character of a man or destroy any natural ability or sense, cause addiction or distort judgement.

This passage should not be used to vindicate the use of any substance that is harmful to the health of mind or body.

And nothing to be refused, nothing that God has made, for the purposes for which He designed it. The passage cannot mean that we are not to refuse poison if offered in our food, or that we are never to refuse food that we are allergic to or that is to us injurious or offensive. This verse is not a command to eat and drink all that is set before. As God made it, and for the purposes for which He designed it, it is not to be considered harmful or evil. What God has set before us is not prohibited; abstaining from various foods has no merit in any Christian sense. It is not a religious duty to abstain from foods which God has appointed for the health and wellbeing of man.

If it be received with thanksgiving is the one condition. Whether we have less or more, a feast or a fasting diet the stipulation is that it should be received with thanksgiving. The Child of God, each believer, is to thank God for the provision He deems is sufficient at that time.

5. For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. By the command of God; probably referring to Genesis 1:²⁹: **And God said, I have given you every herb-and every tree-to you it shall be for meat;** and Genesis 9:³: **Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things;** The Lord God said, I have given you every animal that is proper for food, as I have given you every herb and fruit proper for nourishment. All foods are sanctified, set apart, and appropriate to this specific use by this command. Generally when a Christian man is about to partake of this blessing, he gives thanks to God for the provision. This prayer sanctifies the food and beverage, sets it apart to the nourishment of the body and is acknowledging the provision of the sustenance is from God. The right food will do for us what it is designed for. We may partake of it in moderation with gratitude and thank God for the provision of it. All the strength derived from it may be used rightfully in the development and health of the body and the duties of the individual, where God has placed us in the society and in the local church.

Certain ones will have a wider ministry, even to other lands and cultures, still the truth remains what we eat and drink is **sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.**

6. If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. Remind the saints in your care of the things I have taught you and of the truths just stated. They are proper subjects to preach on and teach.

It is the duty of each minister of the Gospel, each believer with a position of care, to show to the brethren in their charge what is error and how it may be addressed and corrected. More mature Christians are given charge of newer believers and should caution and warn them, pointing out errors and the dangers associated with departure from the truth, and caution them to avoid departure from the faith in word or deed. This exercise will show to all you are a true minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Nourished up in the word of faith you will be **a good minister of Jesus Christ**, those you minister to will see you are trained by the right Spirit and hold the right doctrine. The Apostle Paul reminds Timothy of the manner in which he had been taught and the person who had instructed him, and tells him how to live in accordance with that instruction and example.

From each of us who are educated in the gospel of the Grace of God it is reasonable to expect that we would faithful ministers of the gospel.

Whereunto thou hast attained; the meaning here seems to be that Timothy had followed the doctrines in which the Apostle Paul trained him. Timothy had accurately seen and understood the meaning, and embraced the Christian religion, reaching a position where he was able to instruct others. His early training in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, 2Timothy 1:⁵; 3:¹⁵, he had followed by taking on and agreeing to and accepting the Lord Jesus as the Messiah, his Saviour. If he now followed the directions of the Apostle Paul he would be a minister of the Lord Jesus, evangelising and teaching, building up the saints individually and the local church.

No person should, by neglect, laziness, or foolishness, disappoint the reasonable expectations of their brothers and sisters in Christ, their friends and mentors.

While we teach others we confirm the doctrines in our own hearts and minds.

7. But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.

Refuse to pay attention to them, reject them; do not consider them of sufficient importance to occupy your thoughts. There is no call to argue with the teachers of falsehood; being steadfast in the truth and speaking the truth in love will always confound the heretic. This seems to refer particularly to the Jews, whose writings, commentaries on the Old Testament are filled with the most ridiculous and profane fables. This injunction may equally be applied to the fables from the Church of Rome, which the Catholics put forward. That church promotes the false doctrine of beatification, pronounced one a saint only after certain claims are ascertained concerning the person named, sometime after their disease. And many other heresies whereby some believers are stumbled and a great many unbelievers are duped into believing they can be saved from hell by good works or following pernicious doctrines. The Spirit of God no doubt had these very corruptions and this corrupt Church in view, and other sects, as these words were penned.

Exercise thyself rather unto godliness. To understand this expression we note the Apostle Paul is alluding to the exercises among the Greeks, which were intended as preparation for their contests at the public games in the arena. They did this in order to obtain a corruptible or fading crown, of laurel leaves, which was the reward of those who won the contest in those games. Timothy was to exercise himself unto godliness that he might be prepared for the kingdom of heaven. It is there that he and all believers may receive a crown that fades not away, that does not wither, an incorruptible crown, a crown of righteousness.

The direction for this young man, Timothy is to exercise in those things which will see him grow in faith and in obedience to the Lord and His word. Rather than attempt to understand those fables put forth by the sects, occupy your time and attention with exercises that cultivate piety, and seek to become more like the person the Lord Jesus Christ wants you to be.

8. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. The bodily exercise to which the apostle refers is of little advantage, compared with that piety which he recommended Timothy to cultivate. Any advantage derived from physical exercise would be of short duration, only on this earth and not even then long lasting. Bodily exercise refers to the regimen followed by the athletes, abstinence, exercise and penance, which some sects made an important part of their religion. The apostle does not say that bodily exercise is in itself improper or that no advantage can be derived from it in the preservation of health. He refers to bodily exercise solely as a means of religion; supposed to promote holiness of the mind and heart and therefore of the life.

In challenging this supposition, the Apostle Paul states a principle which experience shows to be universally correct, that subjecting the flesh to rigorous exercises does little to promote holiness, but it did in the times of the Apostle Paul promote superstitions. The exercises of a Christian are spiritual; they work on the soul, and accomplish more for the Child of God than mere subjugation of the flesh can.

Bodily exercise profits a little; it increases the health and strength of the body; so there is less distraction to the believer caused by ill health. There is undoubtedly a physical profit but there is no spiritual benefit. Spiritual benefit is what the Apostle Paul is looking for in his protégé and teaching Timothy to promote in the saints at Ephesus. Bodily discipline, abstaining from certain meats, keeping set fasts, or as some religions advocate, going barefoot, wearing coarse clothing, abstaining from wine or marriage, is of little or no advantage, the mind and

soul of man is not improved. The Apostle Paul does not altogether condemn these things, some of which may be helpful in moderation. These are not things in which the Christian's faith is to be put, and in themselves they are of no spiritual advantage to one so exercised.

But godliness is profitable unto all things, is profitable in every respect. There is no area in the interest of man, in reference to this life, or to the life to come, which would not profit from a close walk with the Lord Jesus. Holy living in accord to the Word of God is favourable to the healthy lifestyle of Christians by promoting a careful control of the desires and emotions and the appetites. Living the Christian life as the bible teaches us to will not destroy health; it will not damage the intellect; nor can it upset the conscience. **Godliness** does not pander to human passions and inordinate desires. **Godliness** enhances the honour of a good name; and at the end of life on this earth it is most comforting to know God is pleased with what the Lord Jesus Christ has done in the life of His child. **Godliness** promises no earthly possessions directly as its reward, is not immunity from sickness, or death, nor does **Godliness** promise the defeat of the earthly antagonists we will surely come up against.

There is nothing which man really needs in this life, which is not promised in God's Word; and if we search carefully we will find that all the promises made are ours in Christ Jesus our Lord. King David, near the end of his life bore testimony; "**I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread,**" Psalm 37:²⁵.

By **godliness** we are to understand all that faith in Christ either promises or stipulates; it is the life of God in the soul of man; the spirit of man revived, the man then walking in the truth and with the Word of God as guide. The glory of God is the aim and conclusion of a godly life. To have the life of God in us we must renounce our sins, take up the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ and follow Him through all the blessings and travails of life that will come our way.

Having promise, of the life that now is; the man that fears, loves, and serves God, has God's blessing all through his life. His Christian faith keeps him from all those excesses which the body and mind of man naturally craves. Desires which are debilitating and destructive of health and spirituality, working ill in both action and desires can be subjugated with the aid of the Holy Spirit and reliance on the Word of God. So **godliness** has the promise of, and secures the blessings of the world we now live in and the world we aspire to through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

9. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. The truth of this doctrine need not be doubted; and every man who hears and believes has it in his power to put this to the test to prove and experience the truth of it. This phrase, **a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance**, used here, was used before, 1Timothy 1:¹⁵, that Christ came into the world to save sinners. This is the proposition, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and this added word, that such sinners, ungodly, unregenerate, will be reconciled to God and become godly, and persevere in holiness, shall be happy in the life they now have I Christ, and in the life to come. These two propositions are faithful and remarkable sayings, worthy of the acceptance of all who consider the claims of Christ and choose to follow Him.

Belief of this proposition, that godliness has the promise of blessing in this life and the new and eternal life, will cause all Christians, as it did the Apostle Paul, to labour in the Gospel and ministering to the saints, to suffer reproach in the cause of God, and to do so without weariness and fainting.

10. For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. The title given to God the **Saviour of all men**; may be understood as He is the only one who can save; He is the Saviour of all who are saved. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour is also the preserver of all, especially of all who have called upon Him. The earthly, mortal preservation of Christians is for His glory and their good. And if believers are not preserved and suffer at the hands of the ungodly, those opposed to the gospel or those with a contrary agenda the Lord Jesus Christ is still the saviour and will receive those into glory when the time comes for them to leave this scene. This was the confidence of the Apostle Paul and may also be our confidence as we exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; faith in the present situation and in all the future holds for us.

We labour and suffer reproach, for we have hope in God. Through Him we look for salvation, for deliverance from the restrictions and confines of this present world. We believe that God has made this known to men, and believing this, we labour to make it known to others even though we suffer reproach when spreading the message of salvation. The response from us is, that believing God has revealed a plan of salvation for all men, and invites all men to be saved He will make His sons and daughters willing labourers to spread this truth, though it brings upon the carriers of the message reproach.

Labour for God is rewarding, is our honourable duty, not a burden. His service is perfect freedom and has the promise of this life's blessings coupled to godliness. These are not promises of physical rest and ease, but of inward peace and satisfaction, as God in His wisdom sees it for His glory and our good.

The publication of the Gospel proclaims, offers and presents, salvation to all men, although only believers are actually saved, because only they accept the offer and conditions of salvation.

Salvation is free, but it is also costly.

11. These things command and teach. Teach these things as important doctrines, as embracing all that the Lord Jesus Christ would have you know and teach to the believers.

It follows from this that a minister of the gospel is solemnly bound to teach that there is a sense in which God is the Saviour of all men. He is just as obliged to teach this, as he teaches only those will be saved who believe. It is a glorious truth the Gospel is for all and each Child of God should unceasingly give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for the privilege he has of bearing this message to others as ability and opportunity allows.

Preaching carries the Gospel message to the unsaved. Teaching builds up the believer in the Words and Ways of the Lord.

The things I have taught you are the correct sum and substance of your preaching and teaching, that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is profitable both for the saved and the unsaved. Teach that sin destroys the body and commits the soul to everlasting damnation; that Christ tasted death for every man; that He saves to the uttermost all them that believe; that He came and died to save the sinner from the penalty of sin, death, and a lost eternity.

The message entrusted to Timothy does not end with the Gospel being preached; the work continues as he and we, those of us who are able, are commissioned to build up the saints in their most holy faith. The instruction to Timothy is to command and teach; tell the saints what

to do and show them the best way to do as they are instructed. Knowledge is best imparted when accompanied with demonstration, saying and doing teaches effectually.

12. Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Let no one have reason to despise your reprimands, rebukes, or warnings on account of your youth. Be a pattern to the saints in the fellowship, faithful to the Lord, serious and solemn in speech, polite and modest in behaviour, loving God and man with a positive Christian mind, meek but firm in your dealings with the saints. Maintain a spirit of Christian love in the faith you proclaim and stay pure in your relationships with all, in the Church and in the world.

Youthful enthusiasm needs direction and standards, principles and values. So Timothy says the Apostle Paul let **the Word of God dwell in you richly**, then the example you set those believers who know you will see an example they can emulate. There is danger that light heartedness and levity indiscretions may mar the ministry and cause some of the saints to stumble; it might be regarded with contempt. It is possible that the deportment of an elder is so grave, so serious, that the saints lose sight of the love of God in the elder; that is also inappropriate. For then the ministry would be blamed, and the saints would be in two minds as to what is appropriate. The way in which Timothy was to live so that the ministry would not be blamed and he despised on account of his youth, the Apostle Paul now proceeds to specify.

Be thou an example of the believers. A minister, elder, ministering brother should so live, despite his age in years, that if the entire congregation should closely follow his example, their sanctification would be evident.

In word, in your every day speech, in ordinary daily conversation, not talking for the sake of talking or speaking vanities, or rudely, but seriously speaking of those things that are good and pertinent, for the purpose of edifying the saints. Those who teach by their doctrine must show by their life the good effect of that teaching. They must believe what they teach and practice what they believe.

In conversation, in every area of your conduct in all domestic and public relations, in the church and in the world behave as becomes one who teaches that Jesus Christ is Lord. Let your conduct, as a citizen continues as one who is conscious of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Conversation here rather than speech may be referred to our deportment, our demeanour as members of a community, in this case the local church, a member of the body of Christ. This instruction to Timothy includes our conduct in all areas of the Christians life, and refers to our manner in general; not merely as citizens of the country, but as members of the church, and in all other relationships. Our manner of speech, our plans, our dealings with others, our conduct in the church, our walk in the world should all set forth the Gospel. This word is to be applied to every area of our conduct and converse.

In charity, in love to God and man show that this is the principle and motive of all your conduct. Show kindness, compassion, goodwill and exercise Christian love towards all mankind, according to your ability and at every opportunity. We have a good testimony when unbelievers recognise us a Christians and say so because they see how we live and observe our dealings with others outside the Church.

In spirit, in the manner and temperament in which we do all things. Duty motivated by love is a right spirit. So often a charitable work is done in an uncharitable way, reluctantly; not in a Christian spirit. Such work is unfruitful; it will turn people away from the Lord Jesus.

In faith, this word is probably used here for fidelity, commonly so used in the New Testament. It cannot mean doctrine, for that has already been referred to. Be faithful to the Lord Jesus and His teaching, to the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseer, to your home and family, to the public as you converse with them, but most important be faithful to God and His Word. Fidelity consists in honestly keeping, preserving, and confirming when required, whatever is trusted to our care. In this case the Gospel of the Grace of God. Lose nothing that God gives by neglect, do not cease to be diligent, work at growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In purity, separation from the lusts of the body and a mind controlled. Maybe this is more relevant for the younger person but we all must take heed lest we fall. There should be nothing in our dealings with the other sex that would give rise to scandal, in truth or false accusation.

When believers are accused of sin by those that know them, whether true or false, the name of the Lord Jesus is brought into disrepute.

13. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Till I return, that is my intention, apply yourself to reading the scriptures publicly when the saints are together. Read the Word of God in private for your own benefit. It was customary to read the law and the prophets in the synagogue, and doubtless in the assemblies of the Christians. The public reading there generally included an exhortation founded upon the subject of the prophecy. This is why the Apostle Paul says give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Timothy was to be diligent in reading the sacred writings at home, that he should be taught by the Holy Spirit and equipped and qualified to read and expound them in the assembly of the Christians. So versed in the Word of God Timothy would be able to speak with authority and power to saints and sinners.

Also exhort those who err, bring to their attention the warnings and the promises of God, and stir up the saints to do their duty. It is clear that there were certain persons who were recognised as engaging in this specific ministry, and who were known as exhorters, as distinguished from prophets and teachers. It cannot be questioned that it is still be expedient, in each gathering of the saints to have persons designated and capable to this special and essential work. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit in some, and the person so gifted is vital in the fellowship of the saints. His work will be seen as the saints are drawn together in holy friendship, a company sharing the same interests and goals.

In most 'churches' this duty now falls to those who are selected and ordained to the ministry, with the other offices the paid pastor or minister undertakes. Sad to say the visible church is an organisation designed by man and named after the person or persons who were the foundation members of the organisation. They are not all 'bad' but it is never right when the Word of God is disregarded or set at nought by the dictates, decrees, standards and principles of man.

There were not many other books at that time that could be of use to a Christian ministering to the believers in a place where travel to that place was so time consuming. In those days the work of the preacher, teacher, was to bring to the congregation and expound the wonderful facts of the Christian faith, to prove these, and to show that all had happened according to the scriptures, the writings of the prophets. From these writings, and the exposition of them Timothy would draw the believers into a closer walk with the Lord Jesus. The work of God in the heart, and the evidence of that work is a holy life; this is a primary

work, building up the saints in their most holy faith, the Lord Jesus Christ has trusted to His ministering servants.

We must bear in mind that there are many ministries that are not vocal; the important issue is that we perform the ministry the Lord Jesus has given to us diligently and with the glory of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ as the goal.

What we read will influence what we say and what we believe and what we do.

At present the truth of God is not only to be proclaimed, but defended; not so much what we read in other books, the bible being the one true source of information we have at present. The Bible is the final word for us; what does not measure up to the Word of God is not relevant or acceptable. Many customs and forms of speech, many words used in the past are obsolete, these words or phrases may be explained from the writings of those who lived about the same times, or nearest to them, and in the same countries or with a close association with them and their language. This will require for us who can, knowledge of those languages in which the bible was written, Hebrew and Greek, the languages in which the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were penned and preserved for us.

Doctrine, the teaching and dogma of the faith Timothy is encourage to remain steadfast in; and to instruct the saints in the same.

14. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. An important question arises here, what does the word gift refer to? Is it natural ability, spiritual gift, position in the church, or to some supposed virtue conferred by the Apostle Paul, some influence which made Timothy holy as a minister of the faith? Was this an activity to continue, to be passed on to further generations of the saints in all places?

The word used here is translated gift in every place in which it occurs in the New Testament. It is found in the following places, and with the following significations; deliverance from peril, 2Corinthians 1:11; a gift or quality of the mind, 1Corinthians 7:7; gifts of Christian knowledge or consolation, Romans 1:11; 1Corinthian 1:7; redemption or salvation through Christ, Romans 5:15,16; Romans 6:23; 11:29; the miraculous endowments conferred by the Holy Spirit, Romans 12:6; 1Corinthians 12:4,9,28,30,31; and the special gift or endowment for the work of the ministry, 1Timothy 4:14; 2Timothy 1:6; 1Peter 4:10.

The gift in this instance was that by which Timothy was qualified for the work of the ministry. It relates to his qualifications, to everything that made him fit for the Master's service. It does not refer exclusively to any virtue received at the time of Pauls recognition of Timothy in the work or any new grace endowed upon him by the laying on of hands, making him either officially or personally more holy or more fitted than other men than he was previously. This was regarded as a gift, a benefit, or favour, and Timothy was not to neglect or disregard the responsibilities and advantages he had because of this spiritual ability.

It was the gift of God, 2Timothy 1:6. The Lord Jesus, by the Holy Spirit was to be recognised as the source; and it was not therefore conferred by human hands. The call to the ministry, the qualifications for the position in the church, and the whole arrangement by which one is equipped for the work, are primarily to be traced to the Lord as the source. The gift was given to Timothy in accordance with certain predictions which existed in regard to him. The expectations of those who had observed his qualifications for such a work in the church, and

who had expressed the hope that he would one day be permitted to serve the Lord in the church were realised.

It was endorsed by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. The call of God to the work was in this way recognised by the church, and the approval of the Presbytery expressed by setting him apart to the work, should be regarded by Timothy as a part of the **gift** or benefit which was conferred on him, and which he was not to neglect.

An additional circumstance which might serve to impress the mind of Timothy with the value of this special service, and the responsibility, was that Paul himself had been concerned in the setting apart of Timothy, 2Timothy 1:6.

We are not to suppose there was any mysterious influence conveyed by the act of the Presbytery, or that act imparted any additional degree of holiness.

Which was given thee by prophecy, the prophetic declarations and the hopes of godly parents and Christian friends in regard to your future usefulness, have encouraged you, do encourage you to continue in the Faith. This should be a reason why you should strive to develop your gifts, grow in grace and perform faithfully the duties falling to you as a faithful minister of the Gospel.

With the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, the responsible believers concurring in the desire to see you continuing in the faith and in ministering to the saints expressed by this gesture. It was common to communicate by touch, putting hands on the person, to impart a blessing as the Lord did, Matthew 19:15; Mark 6:5; Luke 4:40; 13:13; or in setting one apart for a special service or identifying with the sacrifice as in Leviticus 8:14; Numbers 27:23; or displaying the power of God, Acts 28:8; 6:6; 8:17; 13:3.

The reference here is act by which Timothy was set apart to the ministry the Apostle Paul saw Timothy was able and equipped to perform. The word rendered presbytery occurs only in two other places in the New Testament Luke 22:66, where it is translated elders and Acts 22:5, where it is recorded *estate of the elders*. It correctly means an assembly of older, wiser men; council of elders. In Luke 22:66; Acts 22:5, it refers to the Sanhedrim. It cannot refer to that body for they did not ordain men to the Christian ministry; it has to refer to some other association, or council, or body of elders of the Christian church.

It is clear from the passage that there was more than one person engaged in this service, and taking part in it when Timothy was ordained, and therefore it could not have been by a bishop or other dignitary of an organisation outside the body of believers meeting in that place.

That the power conferred, whatever it was, was conferred by the whole body constituting the Presbytery, since the apostle says that the gift was imparted, or evidenced, not in virtue of any particular power or eminence in any one individual, but by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, the agreement of the responsible brethren as to the suitability of the man to the work of the Lord in the local church. Sometimes also in sending forth one with the gospel.

There is not a single instance of ordination to an office mentioned in the New Testament which was performed by one man alone.

The words used for Elder, Greek *presbuteros*, and bishop, Greek *episcopus*, both mean overseers as they are used in the New Testament. The words designate the same person and the same work; elder referring to the person and bishop to the work, Titus 1:7; Acts 20:17 and 20:28. The Eldership, the Oversight in the apostolic churches was usually plural; there is no instance recorded in the New Testament of a single Elder or Bishop in a local Church. The functions of

the elders are to rule; 1Timothy 3:⁴ 1Timothy 3:⁵; 5:¹⁷, to guard the body of revealed truth from perversion and error Titus 1:⁹ to oversee the church as a shepherd caring for his flock; Acts 20:²⁸; John 21:¹⁶; Hebrews 13:¹⁷; 1 Peter 5:².

Elders, not a reference to age but rather to spiritual maturity, are prepared for and set in the church by the Holy Spirit, Acts 20:²⁸. The emphasis is upon their appointment by the Holy Spirit; Acts 14:²³; Titus 1:⁵. At first they were ordained, elected, by an apostle, as in Acts 14:²³ but in Titus and First Timothy the qualifications of an elder become part of the Scriptures for the guidance of the churches in such appointments and recognition by the assembly of the saints, 1Timothy 3:¹⁻⁷.

15. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Meditate upon these things, upon the train of events by which you have been led into the ministry you now exercise in the church at Ephesus, and upon the responsibilities and duties of the position of trust you are in. Let your mind be wholly occupied with the things of the Lord Jesus and the Church He is building; make them the subject of serious thought and meditation. Do not let other considerations, material, personal, financial or health take precedence let the Lord rule for then the saints you care for will see your blessing stems from a close walk with the Lord Jesus Christ. Timothy, your spiritual health will be judged by your evident devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word. Meditate upon these things when you are doing a tedious and repetitious job, when you are out walking, when you are a passenger in a vehicle, when pursuing a hobby; don't let idle thoughts dominate your mind and time.

This is the example we in the 21st century have and the exhortation we need. The things of the world, money and the pursuit of wealth and the abundance of possessions cloud the testimony. Money in the bank and display of wealth does not constitute a testimony of the work of the Lord in the life of a believer. Verse eight informed us; **Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.**

Give thyself wholly to them. The meaning is plain; Timothy was to devote his life wholly to this work, ministering to the saints. He was to have no other aim, his time, studies, talents, were to be directed to the building up of the saints and the Church. He was not to put the work of the Lord second to his other interests nor was he to allow any other objective to interfere with the duties of that work. He was not to pursue money, or pleasure; not to devote his time to sports or education for their own sakes. Whatever was done in any of these departments was to be wholly consistent with the appropriate duties of an elder in the Church, one entrusted with the care of the saints.

16. The Apostle Paul instructs Timothy: Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee. **Take heed unto thyself** may be understood as relating to all personal matters that would qualify Timothy for this work. It may be applied to his spiritual relationship with the Lord, to health, to living standards, and to his dealings with others in the fellowship. In relation to one's personal walk with the Lord Timothy was to grow in grace and knowledge; and love for the Lord Jesus. In relation to morals, he was to be honest and transparent and refrain from all appearance of evil. With others and in his personal life style, he should be correct, consistent, and polite, and refrain from any form of vulgarity, so as to offend to no one in the Church or outside.

There is no Christ likeness in a filthy person; in bad manners; in strange and controversial dress; in bad grammar or language, or in slovenly habits. Following the Lord Jesus and His teaching refines the manners and makes one courteous and kind.

And unto the doctrine, the kind of teaching which you give, in your ministering to the saints, Timothy should hold and teach only the truth, he was to **take heed** to the whole subject of instruction of the saints in what they were taught and in how that teaching should affect their lives and testimony.

Continue in them that is in these things which you have heard and learned of me; those things now specified. Timothy was to be found persevering in the performance of these duties always bearing in mind the benefit of the saints and the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, by holding the truth, by the faithful performance of your duties, you will be assured of the salvation of the soul, the life and witness will work together and agree with your verbal testimony. We are not to suppose that the work Timothy engaged in would be the reason he was saved, but that his faithful labours would be seen as evidence of his desire to be conformed to the image of his Lord and Saviour.

And them that hear thee, you will be the means of their salvation if they follow the same path of faith you have taken. When the 'walk' agrees with the 'talk' the witness is believable.

It is of the utmost importance that our testimony points clearly to the Lord Jesus Christ and Him only.

Chapter 5.

In this chapter we are given rules to be observed when there is need to reprove the older and younger members in the church, and directions concerning widows.

We are told of our duties respecting the treatment of elders that rule well, and how to proceed against elders when they are accused of an impropriety.

Paul continues his teaching giving directions concerning the laying on of hands, and then turns his attention to Timothy's health.

He then gives reasons why no person should be hastily appointed to a ministry in the church. We in this 21st century say, *time will tell*, but that does not mean a person is appointed to a position in the church and we wait to see if he is suitable. The choice and suitability is dependent on the individual relying on the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit guiding the elders of the local church.

1. Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; elder here is not used to indicate a presbyter, an overseer but in its usual sense, to denote an older man. This is evident because the apostle immediately mentions the younger men. The command to treat the elder brother as a father presents the same thought. By the instruction not to rebuke, it is not intended that the authority in the church is not to admonish the older person, or that he is not to point out their error when they take a wrong path, but that he is to do this as he would to a father, his own father. Timothy is not to assume a harsh, or dictatorial manner, he is to show the love of God working in his heart even as he expects the love of God to work in the heart of all the saints, young and old. The Christian faith always conforms to the good manners, decency, and proprieties of life in the community, and never allows us to transgress them. When our aim is the furtherance of the Gospel it will always be accomplished by bearing

in mind the social position and the respect due to others on account of their relationship, their place in society and their age.

The younger men as brethren; discretion and caution must also be used when dealing with younger men, elders in rebuking them should remember that they are brethren, in the family of God, and treat them accordingly, not arrogantly or bossily.

2. The elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity. Treat all of the other sex both with just regard and due respect for their age. The younger believers must not be treated with disdain or condescension but with gentleness. Treat both the younger men as brethren, as brothers in Christ, the younger women as sisters in the same family, dealing with both without pride and superciliousness, with all purity, shunning flippancy and immorality, and turning away from all that savours of immodesty in speech, or behaviour; or that might turn the thoughts to things that are not becoming for a child of God.

The motive behind the activity and speech of the elder in the assembly is to bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ; to advance the Kingdom of God, and the welfare of the saints in the fellowship over which the Holy Spirit has made him an overseer.

The elder women treat with the same care and discretion as you would your own mother, they are now in your spiritual family. The younger women consider as your sisters; bearing in mind the new relationship and equality in the Lord Jesus Christ.

With all purity; considering their sex an important added caution is to be used, that there be no occasion to lust, or unclean actions, or anything else that may be the subject of gossip. The strictest good behaviour in your converse with younger people of the other sex is to be observed. Remember how many eyes are upon you, and how devastating it would be to the testimony if any accusation against you were substantiated. Any accusation of bad behaviour is a blemish upon your character and would not be to the honour and success of your ministry; the church would be brought into disrepute and the saints dishonoured, and the name of the Lord blasphemed among the heathen.

Fathers and sons, mothers and daughters are considered by the Apostle Paul and their place and demeanour, their behaviour and character in the church is set out. The home life of believers is reflected in the attitudes of the believers in their church life. Mutual respect, consideration for one another and submission to authority in the church and the home leads to a peaceful life in the home and the church, and the blessing of the saints and what is also important, the furtherance of the Gospel and the growth of the Church.

3. Honour widows that are widows indeed. The particular attention Timothy has to pay and the respect which are intended here, refer to the widows who were supported by the church, and who were trusted with the performance of certain duties towards the other female members, verse 9. It is to be remembered that the interaction of the sexes was much more restricted in those countries and in those times than it is among us. Access to the female members of the church was more limited then than now, and as a result there was a special correctness and decency in trusting the older women the duty of watching over the younger women in the Church. This duty was naturally trusted to those who had no family of their own to care for; having been childless or the children matured and married, now living independently and caring for their own families. It was also natural to commend those women who had not the care of their own family, if they were qualified, if they had no other means of support, to render this valuable service in the community of the saints.

It would seem there was a group of this description, widows, who were trusted with these duties. In regard to those who were to be trusted with this spiritual responsibility their qualifications had to be recognised by Timothy and the elders before their work in the assembly of the saints was begun.

The change of customs in society has made this class of person in the assembly of the saints less necessary. Probably the arrangement was never designed to be permanent, but it certainly is an arrangement which would be wise and welcomed in many churches today.

The welfare state has diminished the work of the elders by default and in some cases by choice, leaving the work to the state and the arrangement of the work to the government of the day. Rarely does the law of the land choose the path of righteousness, choose to honour God in the laws it passes, or to stay with the Bible in respect to the life and liberty of the saints.

The phrase 'widows indeed' is used in verses 3, 5 and 16 and relates to older women who have lost their husbands, maybe through age, illness or war. We associate the word widow, not only with the idea of the loss of a husband, but also with other things that are common with widows, a dependent condition; sadness and sorrow. This is implied by the Apostle Paul in using the word which means one who is bereaved, and conveys the idea of one in troubled circumstances, causing anxiety. What Paul regarded as true widowhood, he specifies in verses 4, 5, 9 and 10, and connects with it the idea that she had no close family member caring for her. The widow Paul envisions was desolate in the worldly sense, and showed her trust in God. She was so aged it was clear she would not marry again; and her life now was evidence of possessing a heart for the people of God and the glory of His name.

4. But if any widow has children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. At the time of writing this epistle the word nephew meant grandchildren, direct descendants male or female. Now it commonly means the son of a brother or sister. The Greek word here denotes those sprung from the mother or born of descendants, sons, daughters, or grandchildren. It includes only those in a direct line. **My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother,** Proverbs 1:⁸ and Proverbs 6:²⁰.

Requite now means to retaliate, take reprisals for, but in the context of this letter to Timothy it means to stand up for, speak on behalf of, live to honour them; to be sure nothing one does brings dishonour to the father or mother. The children will learn to do this as they observe their parents respecting and honouring each other. The children will follow the example set by their parents in most cases.

Let them learn first to show piety at home, or kindness. Let the children and grandchildren learn to do this. Let them have the opportunity of performing their duty towards their aged parent or grandparent. The scriptures teach we are each required to care for our own older family members, especially those who have lost the 'breadwinner'. Do not receive a widow among the poor and dependent females of the church, to be maintained at the expense of the saints; let her own children support her when that is possible. The children will have an opportunity of displaying Christian kindness, and of repaying their mother for the care she has shown during their formative years. The apostle calls this showing piety, filial piety; piety towards a parent by providing for the needs of that parent when the circumstances require one to do so.

The word piety is commonly used to denote holiness towards God, but it is also used denoting reverence and respect for an older parent. Worship is piety, respect, honour or reverence paid to another in consideration of his or her excellence and superiority. The use of this word, generally used to express godliness, tells us that religion and godliness is a mere pretence to any that have of this world's goods, and relieve not those of their immediate family, from whom they are descended, if they are in need, and the child is able to alleviate that need. This responsibility should not be regarded as a duty; it should be a delightful response in the child to the mother; more so in a Christian child.

Requite their parents; let them learn to return benefit for the blessing of a good upbringing. Your parents supported and nourished you when you were young and helpless; you ought therefore to support them when they are older, especially if they are destitute. This is called showing piety; and there is surely an allusion to the fifth commandment; **Honour thy father and thy mother.** Aid them through their latter days, months or years; provide for them in their old age and assist them as they become frail as and when necessary, with financial aid and practical assistance. This becomes more urgent when the mother or grandmother is ill or incapacitated in any way. Believers who are able and have the means should relieve their own relations before they show kindness to strangers, or before the church accepts the burden for them. Let the saints exercise Christian charity and godliness towards their own family, implying that charity, practical love, to our immediate family is first priority.

If we see a family member in need and are able to but unwilling to relieve them we are sinning.

5. Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. A widow indeed is one who has no near relatives or children to provide for her; and is wholly devoted to God. Desolate, having neither children, nor grandchildren to ease the burden, to take it off her. She is not a widow indeed that lives in pleasure or who lives extravagantly, living for the pleasures of the flesh. A fun-loving widow is not a widow indeed; she should not expect the church to meet her economic or social needs.

6. But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth is no living member of the church, but is a dead body giving off a bad, obnoxious smell, causing others to turn away in disgust. This kind of behaviour and attitude gives to the Church a bad name.

Applied more generally; those who live in pleasure are dead while they live, they are spiritually dead, dead in trespasses and sins; they have no spiritual life, no prospect of blessing with the Lord Jesus.

Is dead while she lives; to all the correct and appropriate purposes of life as a child of God she is as if she were dead. There is strong emphasis in these words, conveying forcibly the idea that true happiness, peace and contentment is not to be found in sensual pleasures. There is nothing in the deeds or the desires of the flesh that answer the true purpose of life. Satisfying the desires of the flesh are not the objectives for which a Christian has new life. All who live for the flesh might as well be dead, and are indeed dead spiritually, even while they are here on this earth. This widow is not to be maintained at the expense of the saints. Yet if the aid given is for the furtherance of the Gospel, is given prayerfully and graciously there are occasions when these widows may repent of their ways and turn to the Lord Jesus.

7. And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless. Declare these things, to all in the fellowship, to all in the local Church, particularly respecting the duty of children to their widowed mothers, and the proper lifestyle and duty of those who are widows.

Charge all the members of the Church to attend to these things that they may be blameless in the eyes of onlookers and correct in the sight of the Lord. That when any one from the outside looks on they will only see people who want to and do follow the Lord Jesus Christ. That all who look upon the saints from outside will see they do as they preach. This instruction is not given to the widows only, but to the Church and the elders in the Church. It cannot be restricted to the widows, for the adjective word used is both the masculine and feminine gender.

8. But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. By **his own** the Apostle Paul means his relations, all of a man's family; by his own household, he seems to mean those who live in the same house and those who work with him or for him, be they servants or family. The apostle says that he who is careless of providing for his family, so far as he is able, but especially for all those that may depend on him, has denied the Christian faith, the practice of it, though in words he professes to follow the faith. If any provide not, food and raiment, shelter and a secure environment while raising the children; by his actions he has denied the faith. Of course there are those trying times when we have no control; then it is we trust the Lord and do the best we can with the resources we have.

It is most unnatural, certainly contrary to the Christian faith to be hardened against those who are our close relatives. Even nature teaches the unsaved much better than to deny parents the respect and provision needed.

Unfortunately this world we live in now has set over the families, over Christian parents, authorities that will not follow righteousness, that develop systems of government planned to keep the Word of God and the Law of God away from the ordering and welfare of the people. In the civilised world, where Christianity is the basis of the law of the land, even there Christian standards are not respected, the family is no longer a safe environment to raise children, the education system is in the main run by those who would remove all thoughts and teaching about the truth of the Gospel away from the curriculum. This creates a dire need for believing parents to ensure their children are raised in the Faith, with Christian standards.

Infidel is an old insult for someone without religious beliefs. A word used by the Apostle Paul describing someone who has no religious beliefs, or one who has religious beliefs that are different to his. Islamists apply the word to all others of any religion apart from theirs; and even among them there is no consistency of doctrine.

9. Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, the number of those cared for by the local church. The elders in the assembly, in caring for the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers, will see, pray about, and then do what is appropriate in the present circumstance; and for as long as is necessary.

From Wikipedia we note the average life expectancy at the start of the Roman Empire was 28 years of age. According to tradition, Jesus died at the age of 33. However, due to a very high infant mortality rate, it is more accurate to look at the life expectancy of someone of that era who has made it to the age of 15. That person would have probably survived another 25

years, or to about the age of 40. I believe Caesar Augustus lived to about the age of 72. It wasn't until about 100 years ago that human life expectancy began to greatly increase with the decline of religion, and the rise of scientific knowledge and its application to medicine.

*Pretty sad when you understand that humans have been around for 200,000 years. For the first 190,000 years we lived just like all the great apes do today. Only in the last 150 years has medical science had a significant impact on human health. We really are just slightly smarter apes who only in the last 3500 years developed written language, and the ability to pass along data to future generations which has given us the illusion of being vastly more intelligent than the other great apes. We are just very, very, very slighter smarter. **This encyclopaedia entry totally ignores the Biblical account of man's beginning and the advent of sin.***

The nation of Israel, living to the standards given to Moses by God and honouring God and His Word had a much longer life expectancy than other nations in the world. With the laws of hygiene and diet and morality the life span of the Jews was far greater than other nationalities. The Apostle Paul instructs Timothy concerning widows who are 60 plus. Luke the historian tells us Anna the prophetess was over 80, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher: she was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, serving God with fasting and prayer night and day, Luke 2: ^{36, 37}.

The Christian has a duty of care towards family members, a duty not diminished for any reason. The church may take over that duty when there is no other person, family member, responsible and able to do what the aged saint needs. This care must include practical and financial aid, and the emotional needs of the aged person.

10. Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work. The standard of those who were to be supported by the Church was to be based on their obvious activity in the wider community. Hers was a display of selflessness in the care of those with special, though mundane, needs that could be addressed by the widow. Her children had left home and were in the position of caring for and tending to the affairs of their own families. The widow the Church is instructed to care for has brought up children well, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

In her own home with her husband she cared for strangers when occasion arose; when Christians have come from other places, either driven from them, or travelling, and could not find suitable accommodation at an inn, her house was open to them. But not only Christians, strangers are all those unknown at first, travellers through the district and too late to find an inn, or some that may have been sent by another who has experienced the care and generosity of the saints in the area. The testimony of Believers must reach out into the wider community; the Gospel message is for all; there are no places or groups of people where the message of the Gospel is not relevant and applicable.

If she has washed the saints' feet; if the widow has been ready to do the meanest task for the servants of the Lord Jesus. This washing of feet was an act common in those hot countries, where they did not wear shoes; the act would cool, refresh, and cleanse them. When they sat down to rest or to a meal the dirt of the journey was left behind. The lowliest task of the lowest servant was washing the feet, the same task the Lord Jesus Christ undertook prior to the Last Supper. Washing the feet implies the continuing hospitality of a meal and a bed for the night;

the day's journey was over when the feet were washed. Great care must be taken that the widow is not accused of any impropriety, she must not entertain single men lest her name is tarnished, she must take great care to present a clean and pious image to her neighbours; her reputation and the testimony of the Christians is noted by those outside the fellowship of the saints. They are ready with false accusations; the unbeliever is generally seeking a reason to continue in unbelief.

If she has relieved the afflicted, another clause, her character is that she was ready to relieve to those who were distressed. The particular affliction is not specified so there is no restriction as to the person who has a need. The affliction may be from outside or within, by others, or in health, physical or mental. The Christian duty of us all is to do the best we can in all situations where we are able to improve the state of the afflicted one.

If she has diligently followed every good work this widow is worthy of the support of the saints in the Church immediately the elders perceive any level or area of hardship. Though it may be the widow has not the ability, or opportunity, to do all the good works she could, yet she has diligently done what she could, let her be listed as one who is worthy of the relief the church can give.

11. But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;

12. Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

13. And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.

But the younger widows refuse to support them without checking on their moral and social and family position. Do not receive them into the same position as the aged widows earlier referred to. Paul does not mean that Timothy was to refuse them as members in the Church, or that he was to treat them with less respect and kindness than others members in the Church.

For when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ does not imply wantonness in the sense of lasciviousness or lewdness as is the common idea given to the word, it is by no means essential to the translation of the writings of the day when the Apostle Paul penned it. The word wanton then meant wandering around frivolously or showing off; moving away from in some measure, from moral decency. The word is derived from a Greek word meaning rudeness, insolence, pride. The verb means to live strenuously, to live hard, or without restraint; or as in the Revelation given to the Apostle John, chapter 18, to live luxuriously. Today term is 'to live life to the full'. The sense conveyed here is, that these younger widows would not be subject to the restraints of that situation; they would become dissatisfied, and would marry again. The idea is not that of wantonness but it is suggestive of one who is not free from the desires of youth; a younger woman who would be impatient under the restraints of the condition the Apostle Paul speaks of. The younger widows could not be depended on with certainty; they might, without sinning, enter into another marriage. **They will marry.** The apostle did not contemplate any vows which would prevent their remarrying; nor does the Apostle Paul say that it would be wrong for them to marry again. The likelihood was that they would marry an unbeliever.

They have rejected their allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ, their faith in the Lord as the one who would meet all their needs. They may have deserted their trust in God, and acted

contrary to the promise made to be wholly devoted to His service. By their first faith, the Apostle Paul means their initial profession of Christianity. Moving away from their first confession of faith exposed them to the judgment and censure of Christians who continued in the faith, not to eternal damnation. Condemnation is the better translation of the word. The Christians in the community, the local church was as a lone rose among weeds. The Christians were few in number. It is not improbable that some younger widows desired to marry again, and that the choice of a partner would be from among the unbelievers in the community. This could cause them to leave their first love, to turn aside from the Christian faith. For this reason the Apostle Paul teaches that none under sixty years of age should receive the benevolence of the church. This seems the more probable from 1 Timothy 5:¹⁵, where the apostle adds, for some are already turned aside after Satan.

When we first believe, trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God points out the most excellent way as we read and obey the Word of God. That 'way' is never less than wholly following the Word of God, in communion with the saints and in obedience to the teaching contained therein.

They have cast off their first faith; by pledging their allegiance to a second husband they have cast off their loyalty to Christ, as a married life and their total commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ were in those times incompatible. This is not a hard and fast rule; the Lord Jesus may well have a better plan for the life of a young widow. Some translate, but the younger widows reject as members of the fellowship, for when they cannot endure the restrictions they will marry again; incurring condemnation, because they have put away their first loyalty and devotion to their Saviour and Lord. There is no inhibition to remarriage in the Word of God, any taboos are the results of mans' interference with the truth.

They learn to be idle if supported by the church, and likely without the values which are expected in those older and more experienced. It may be they will give themselves up to what they consider an easy carefree life. There is security in the age and conventional habits of those more mature believers than there would be in the young widows, new to the faith or not having a Christian partner to call on. The apostle does not suggest the younger widows are naturally disposed to be idle, but that there would be the possibility of it because the duties of home and children are no longer a priority.

They learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; they being young, and having no home duties to occupy them, nor a husband to guide and direct them, are prone to wandering from house to house. They may well become **tattlers also**; and be gossiping idly and disrespectfully, about their own, and others' concerns. **Busybodies**, interesting themselves in other persons and families and affairs out of idle curiosity; **speaking things which they ought not**, airing others private matters.

Such behaviour is damaging to the testimony and destructive of the harmony for the assembly. The saints can lose the experience of unity of purpose, the blessedness of the congregation being one in Christ.

14. I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

15. For some are already turned aside after Satan. As the earlier verses relate to the younger widows, and this is inferred from it; it is evident that by younger women the Apostle Paul means the young widows. These he considers not in genuine need of the largesse of the

church, therefore prefers they should marry, raise a family in the Lord, educate the children, and control the domestic affairs of the family. The Apostle Paul does not forbid second marriages; he positively promotes it or at least recommends the younger widows enter a positive relationship with a permanent partner. It is no sin for a widow to marry again, bear children, and take care of a family; but it is a sin, and a bad testimony to be idle, a gossip, a busybody delving into the affairs of others.

The adversary is any person, whether Jew or Gentile, who might be watching for an occasion to criticize or accuse a Christian for some real or supposed misdemeanour, or misconduct. The arch enemy is of course Satan and he will keep Christians from considering the effects of turning away from the Lord to follow the flesh. **For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you**, writes Paul to the Romans 2:²⁴. As it was then it is also now with the adversary looking for occasions to attack the saints, to spoil the testimony, to bring to nought the work of the Lord.

The relationships between men and woman have ever been the cause of dissention and sin in the community and in the Church. Marriage is God's way, fidelity in marriage is expected and taught by the Word of God and all who hold the Word of God sacrosanct. Marriage is the agreed union between a man and a woman, a commitment for as long as both live. The evils proposed and being legislated for today, same sex marriages are in total disregard of the Word of God and the morally good people of the land.

Second marriages are not improper or unlawful when the man or woman is bereft of their partner; in some circumstances the second marriage may be preferable to widowhood. That marriage itself is honourable is stated clearly in the epistle to the Hebrews. How different are the views of the inspired Apostle Paul about marriage; how vastly different to the teachings and practices of many Christian denominations in this godless society many called enlightened. The Lord Jesus Christ states clearly it is adultery to marry another while the first partner is living.

The writer does not disallow divorce in certain situations, but firmly believes remarriage while the first partner is living is contrary to the Word of God.

Bear children, guide the house is to exercise and occupy themselves in the duties of a wife and house keeper. It is better by far for a man or a woman to be employed in the duties and cares of a family, than to lead a life of celibacy if the Lord Jesus so directs a person. For some it is allowable to live a celibate life; the Apostle Paul is a good example of one committed to the Lord Jesus and His service without the distractions of a wife and family.

Give none occasion to the adversary; the enemies of Christianity, heathen, unbelievers, sects or other religions, to speak evil of the Christian doctrine or life. In the performance of domestic duties, when fully employed, all wives would avoid the evils specified in this passage of scripture. Everyone who professes to belong to the Lord Jesus Christ should so live as to give no occasion to an infidel, another religious person or a so called man of the world, to speak reproachfully of the Christian way or the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

16. If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed. If any Christian man or woman have widows, their relatives, let the immediate family members relieve them, provide them with the necessary things of life, food, clothing and shelter. Their maintenance is first and foremost a family duty, not a burden for the Church. The funds collected by the saints may be used for the support of those widows who are serving the saints,

maybe teaching children, visiting the sick, or doing other good deeds; at the same time relying on the Lord for their daily needs.

Widows indeed were poor widows, who were without the means to support themselves, who relied on the Lord Jesus for their daily needs. They were not merely supported, they were usefully employed in the service of the church, not as employees, overseeing the conduct, and imparting instruction to the youth and to the female members of the congregation. They were as Dorcas, Acts 9:³⁶ **now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called: this woman was full of good works and alms deeds which she did.**

The widows supported by the church were to be of such age and character that there would be security for them. These widows continued constant and correct; were such widows who would not be tempted to leave the situation, or to bring reproach on the church. This arrangement grew out of the peculiar customs between the sexes in the Apostolic and post apostolic era and would undoubtedly be appropriate and suitable now in similar circumstances. The passage outlines the general principle that the poor widows of the church are to be assisted, when they have no family members on whom they can naturally depend.

17. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

18. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, the labourer is worthy of his reward. The work of ministers, the elders in the church consists principally in two things; ruling well and labouring in the word and doctrine. This was the main business of elders or presbyters in the days of the apostles and is the same today, doing without the interference of man arranging the order of things to suit their own situation. The guidance of the Holy Spirit is still effective for and in all who rely on Him.

The honour due to those who were not idle, but laboured in this work made them worthy of double honour, respect, and maintenance. Paul quotes a scripture to confirm this command concerning the practical daily needs of those of ministering to the saints. The law given to Moses takes on a present significance; particularly this, **Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn**, Deuteronomy 25:⁴. The beasts that were employed in treading out the corn were allowed to feed while they did the work; in fact they could choose the choice morsels for themselves. The more work they did the more food there was for them. Therefore, says the Apostle Paul let the elders that labour in the word and doctrine be well provided for; **for the labourer is worthy of his reward**, Matthew 10:¹⁰, and there is no reason why it should be withheld. God, both under the law, and now in this generation takes care of those He sends out with His message; both at home and abroad. God is more concerned for the salvation of man and glory of His name through the building of the Church than the wellbeing of cattle.

The ox only treads out the corn of which man makes the bread that perishes; but they who minister the Word of God distribute the bread of life which endures forever.

The congregation of the saints in a locality are responsible for sufficient support of the elders who are giving their time and energy exclusively for the church. It is appointed by God that those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel, 1Corinthians 9:¹⁴. If that is the way the Lord Jesus has led His minister; it is their due, it is the reward of the labourer.

The maintenance of every man working in the vineyard, the Church, should be in proportion to his labour, and the necessities of those members of his family and the church who are dependent on him. He that does not work should have no wages. In the Church there never

cannot be a job or position that provides a regular income, but requires little or no work. They who minister at the altar should live by the altar; the ox that treadeth out the corn should not be muzzled; the labourer is worthy of his hire.

That rule well, with due regard to the individual needs, be they spiritual or physical. The Elder's work though primarily spiritual takes into consideration all aspects of life; focussing on that which will bring honour and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Elders are the teachers, shepherds, the guides and comforters appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ. Their rule is not authoritarian; they let the love of God rule in their hearts and govern the assembly by the same rule and standards. Today we have the Bible, the Word of God sets the standard; it does not change with the culture or the whim of the reader.

19. Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

20. Them that sin rebuke before all, so that others also may fear. Here is the scriptural method of proceeding against an elder, when one is accused of any crime, real or imagined. There must be a definite accusation of a certain charge clearly stated, leaving no room for doubt or misunderstanding. The elder, according to the advice of Paul, must be accused and the church made aware of the accusation; there is no case of a closed court comprising selected church members. The accusation is not to be received by others on the oversight unless supported by two or three credible witnesses; and the accusation must be received with the accused in their presence. The reputation of an elder must remain unblemished for him to have spiritual authority in the church.

If by elder is meant an older person in the church the same rules apply. Wisdom comes with years; years reading the Word of God and obeying the teaching of the Bible, in harmony with the saints. Should an older person be accused then the accuser is expected to be specific and prepared for and open to the scrutiny of the leaders in the church, before they accept or act upon the accusation. This accusation must also be with witnesses' corroborating the accusations.

Church matters should not be open to the general public, nor given to them for judgement. In all spiritual matters the elders are responsible to the Lord, the Word of God is the written guide book they are required to follow. The indwelling Holy Spirit will open the Bible and give understanding of the passage relevant to the judgement that has to be made.

Receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses; that is, do not progress to any judicial inquiry, within the church, upon an unsubstantiated accusation, Deuteronomy 17:⁶. This was a law concerning all in the nation of Israel; especially in capital causes. The Apostle desires and teaches this standard be observed in the local church, not only in Ephesus where Timothy was an elder. The Mosaic Law allowed a person to be accused, though not condemned, on the testimony of one witness. The Apostle Paul forbids the acceptance of an accusation against an elder on the word of only one, the reputation of the elder is very important, maybe more so than that of others in the fellowship; he is a leader and the flock look to him for guidance, he is an example to the flock.

We should not receive an accusation against anyone in the church unless it is proved by two or three credible witnesses. It is in the interest of the church and the congregation that the reputation of the elders be upheld; that they do and are seen to do as the Word of God teaches. Prejudiced persons will be ready to accuse without reason, false religions have their advocates; they are numerous and opposed to the Gospel. Conscientious elders shall never lack someone

to accuse them of some misdemeanour. Generally false accusers can find others that are willing to believe them; therefore against an elder great care should be exercised and prayerful consideration to establish the veracity of the accuser before hearing the accusation. Only then and with the presence of witnesses should the accusation be heard.

The enemy within is more dangerous than the enemy without, more disruptive; he is heard and too often believed without the testimony of witnesses to support the accusation made.

Refusal to abide by the Word of God is a major failing in the Church in this 21st century. Accusations are received and acted upon before the truth is established; leading to divisions and sects and cults each with their own advocates. In every such case the Word of God is ignored, distorted or given a meaning contrary to the passage containing that verse. The instructions of the Apostle Paul are not accepted as they are written, as the infallible Word of God; each man interpreting the Word to suit his case and doing that which is right in his own eyes.

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, Ephesians 4:³ is no longer taught as the Word of God; to be obeyed and believed. Various cults and sects have chosen a different interpretation of a word or passage of scripture to suit their particular diversion from the truth. The unity the Holy Spirit teaches is in accord to the Truth without the interpretations of man intruding. We have no right to take a text out of its context to build an argument to suit our doctrine. It has been said, *a text taken out of its context becomes a pretext*. Great care must be taken by all who hold a position of authority in the church as they teach the Word, to remain true to the whole of the Bible; it is always relevant.

Them that sin before all rebuke before all, this applies to each member in the church. The elder and the newest member of the flock are governed by the same Law; the same standards apply to all in the Church. Sinners must be rebuked publicly even as their sin has been public. The extent of the publicity in accord with the extent of the knowledge of the misdemeanour; where the sin is committed before many so the reproof must be public; and before all those who witnessed or heard of the transgression. The rebuke sets the record straight, identifying the sin and the sinner.

Public rebuke is designed that others may fear, as well as for the good of the individual rebuked. The public in this case is limited to the local church; certainly does not include any outside the fellowship of the saints in the area. The public are those that gather together to remember the Lord, to worship and to praise.

Rebuke before all, before all the church or congregation. The word rebuke means to reprimand or reprehend, to criticize or reprove somebody. It means here that there should be a statement made in the church stating the nature of the offence, and the condemnation the offence demands. It applies only to matters related to the saints in the local church. There is no power given to the elders of inflicting any physical punishment, fines or imprisonment. The power vested in the oversight of the church is only to express its strong and positive disapproval of the wrong done, and if the case demands it, of disowning the offending member by restricting their fellowship or putting them out of the fellowship until they repent.

21. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. I charge you as in the presence of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the elect angels, that you observe these rules concerning the admonition of the old and the young, and

the maintenance of widows and elders, and the censure of sinners, without being prejudiced against any person; and doing nothing as a favour, or for a favourite.

The Apostle Paul would have Timothy to consider that all he did should be done as in the sight of God, the Father of all; in the sight of Christ Jesus, the Saviour of sinners, who purchased the Church with his own blood; and in the sight of the choice, eminent angels, whose office it is to minister to the heirs of salvation.

The word elect, applied to the angels here, is supposed to distinguish those who stood, when others fell from their first estate. The former were elect, or approved; the latter reprobate, or disapproved. Perhaps there is nothing else meant than the angels that are chosen out from among the saints by the Lord himself, to be ministering servants to the Church; as recorded in the Revelation to the Apostle John, chapters two and three; the angels to the seven Churches.

Without preferring one before another, without prejudice; not promoting one man's cause above another for that is contrary to the way of the Lord Jesus who treats all equally. Draw no conclusions, or make up your mind on any case, till you have weighed all the evidence presented from both sides, heard both parties, with their respective witnesses; and then act impartially. Do not treat any man, in matters related to the Church according to the position he holds in the community, or regarding any personal relationship you may have with him or his kin. Every man should be dealt with in the Church as the Bible teaches he will be dealt with at the judgment seat of Christ; impartially and justly. The standards set in the Word of God are immutable; they do not change with time or place. The Oversight, the Elders who, in the exercise of discipline in the Church, have a duty to remain true to the Word of God; not be swayed by popular opinions and turned from the truth by secular, worldly, material or personal considerations.

22. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins. Do not hastily appoint any person to a ministry in the Church. Let the person be well proved, results following the work undertaken, before offering the right and of fellowship or commending that brother or sister to a work in another place.

It is sinful for any person to thrust himself into prominence before or among the saints; and anyone who promotes him is equally sinful. Psalm 75:^{6,7} **For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south, but God is the judge: he puts down one, and sets up another.** 'Laying on of hands' is not some specified ceremony as acted out in many denominations. The 'laying on of hands' was limited to the local church and was the single sign all the elders in that church were in agreement concerning the person planning to do the work Lord Jesus Christ sent him or her out to do. 'Laying on of hands' was a promise from the church to uphold the brother or sister in prayer, to support practically where possible, and an assurance of the cooperation and care of the commending church. The act was confirmation to those who would work with and those who would benefit from the spread of the Word of God, the gospel message going forth with them.

Lay hands suddenly on no man, is to be understood; set no man apart to any ministry of the Church, within or without on an impulse; without positive spiritual guidance. Laying on of hands was but an external demonstration used in blessing, Genesis 48:^{14, 15}, and in conferring power upon persons, Numbers 27:¹⁸; Deuteronomy 34:9. In the New Testament we find the laying on of hands was done in prayer upon healing the sick, Mark 16:¹⁸; Acts 28:⁸; in blessing,

Mark 10:¹⁶; in bestowing the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Acts 19:⁶; in setting individuals apart to some work of or in the Church, 1Timothy 4:¹⁴; Acts 6:⁶. This specific action the Apostle Paul forbids Timothy to do suddenly, that is without first proving the person's fitness for the work, 1Timothy 3:¹⁰, both with respect to his knowledge, and holiness of life.

Neither be partaker of other men's sins: this participation of other men's sin we ought to consider in the context of what is already written. It seems to be especially forbidden with reference to what has been spoken of, setting men apart for a ministry or employment in the Church. The elders who send a brother or sister out into the 'world' or to another Christian ministry before proving genuine intentions of that person are equally guilty of any harm caused to the testimony; they are guilty of bringing the name of the Lord Jesus into disrepute.

Other ways, by which we share the guilt of others, is by not stopping a damaging work when having power to do so. The elders, who have the responsibility to promote a work, or have power to refuse association with the ministry in question, will answer to God. God in His word declares what the character of Christian workers ought to be, and commands Timothy through the Apostle Paul to first prove such persons, **to lay hands suddenly on no man**. Clearly the man or woman who would be commended by the local church to a work at home or abroad will have proved by the results of the work being seen locally, that the Lord is in the work and has vested in him or her or them such power and ability needed for that work in the appointed place.

Keep thyself pure is next mentioned, reminding Timothy he can be charged with the sin of others if he associates with the sinner without rebuking the wrongdoer. **Abstain from all appearance of evil.** 1Thessalonians 5:²². What others think of us is important, if it reflects negatively on the testimony we have a harder job to convince the sinner to seek the righteousness that is in Christ Jesus. Appoint no one to any work in the Church hastily; take note of his character and qualifications, his demeanour and his manner with others in and without the Church. Do not appoint unworthy persons to any Christian work, doing so would make us partakers of their sins. In that sense we are exhorted to be blameless in all our activities and conduct. **Keep thyself pure.**

23. Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. As Timothy's life was of significant importance to the Church of God at Ephesus, it was the direct instruction from the Holy Spirit to give this instruction to Timothy through the Apostle Paul; solemn and important advice concerning his health and alcohol. It was necessary that the work should be done in the Church at Ephesus which the apostle had left Timothy there to do. There was no other person at Ephesus equipped to do this work. Timothy, it appears had a weak constitution; could not continue to do the work if he followed his present life of total abstinence from alcohol. It was therefore necessary that he should receive guidance from the Apostle Paul; Divine authority relative to his health and continued usefulness in the Church at Ephesus. There was no other person who had the influence with Timothy to instruct him in this matter.

This is not a licence to take alcohol, per se; for in those days what little alcohol taken by responsible people was diluted with water and used as medicine. Taverns, inns, public houses, hotels and all other venues which dispense alcoholic drinks simply to satisfy their customers' desires are to be avoided by all who would testify to the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul's teaching is simply, **and be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be**

filled with the Spirit; Ephesians 5:¹⁸. The addictive nature of alcoholic drinks, and all other addictions, suppresses the moral integrity and destroys the basic instinct of correct behaviour in the addict.

For thy stomach's sake; not for the pleasure derived from the use of wine, or because it would remove inhibitions, or excite, but solely because it was necessary for the health; as a medicine is this word written to Timothy.

And thine often infirmities, weaknesses or sicknesses; this seems to refer to some attacks of sickness to which Timothy was liable, or to some weakness in his health; but beyond this we have no information in regard to the nature of his maladies.

The use of wine, and of all intoxicating drinks, was solemnly forbidden to the priests under the Mosaic Law, when engaged in their official capacity, Leviticus 10:^{9, 10}. The natural conclusion is that a Christian, 'a priest', should not be less holy than a Jew ministering in the temple. The Law is unchanged; **that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and clean and unclean.**

It is evident from this passage that Timothy usually drank water only; he was a tee-total. The exhortation of the Apostle Paul extended only to a very moderate, limited use of wine. It was not as a common drink, but the exhortation or command extends only to its use as a medicine. All we can deduce from this Word is that it is proper, it may be beneficial, to use a small quantity of wine for medicinal purposes. There is no freedom from the restraints of moderation in all things; neither is there freedom to drink alcoholic beverages for pleasure or to dull the pain of harmful experiences. There is a lawful use of wine to support nature, not to suppress it; to cure infirmities, not to cause them.

24. Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. The apostle has given Timothy a charge, 1Timothy 5:²² respecting the character of those whom he should set before the saints as ministers of the Gospel. Paul writes in reference to the character of some men, whose lifestyle was manifest, subtly opposed to the truth. It was evident to all spiritual men what manner of person the sinner was, and there could be no danger of a mistake. Their conduct declared clearly the lack of devotion to the Lord Jesus and their concern for the testimony. About such men Timothy ought not to hesitate, no matter what their abilities, or academic achievements, or position in the society, he should not allow them freedom to minister to the saints. They are reserved for judgement. **Behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.** Numbers 32:²³.

Going before to judgment, by judgment here is meant the judgement of the church, as to persons fit to be trusted with any part in the ministry of the church or among the saints. Some men the apostle says are open, clearly not walking with the Lord, they are obviously sinning. These have no place or part in the ministry to or among the saints. Others are not detected until the error of their principles, their teaching and life is manifest; for they have hidden the truth of their nature that they may have others follow their pernicious ways. These people are presentable, easy to converse with so extra care, and prayer is called for in recognising and dealing with them. They must be judged with the Word of God as the standard, condemned, found guilty and put out of the congregation of the saints.

Discipline in the church is always with a view to recovering the sinner, bringing the recalcitrant one back into fellowship. If the person causing disharmony in the church is not a believer no amount of discipline or correction, or even the authority of the Bible will have the

desired effect. The character of many wicked men is now clearly known; the media is full of the misdeeds of many who know not the Lord Jesus. No one has any doubt about the nature of those people; the prisons cannot contain those caught and condemned. There is another court, their deeds have gone before them, are manifest, recorded, cannot be hidden, any more than can be hidden the good works of others. They are even now judged without the formality of a court appearance, and their condemnation is just.

The character of many wicked men is concealed. They hide their plans; develop a variety of ploys to disguise their motives. They practice iniquity in private; hiding from the world their intentions. Much of the real depravity in the world is concealed from human view; or disguised with the appearance of doing well for others of the community or even the world at large. If all or just some the secret wickedness of any community were revealed, no one would have any doubt about the sinful nature of man.

25. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid. The good works performed are readily seen by all, and create an aura around those that perform them. Truly good people we call saints, and the work they do is seen, acknowledged by all, as is the work of the Salvation Army, World Vision, UNICEF, and many more charitable organisations; which renders them moral, upright, worthy and respected in all eyes. Those good works which are not so obvious, concealed by humility, motivated by a love for the Lord Jesus Christ and in obedience to the Lord, cannot be entirely hidden. They will appear, be revealed as a work of the Lord Jesus, and may be the reason for the worker given more trust and respect in a larger field of service.

Let it be said that good works are not the means of salvation or even favour with God. Salvation is by faith alone, but, all who are saved will continue in good works. Good works in the Christian sense are those works that promote the holiness of God as He deals with man; they set forth Jesus as the Spirit of God and the Saviour of man. Isaiah 64:⁶ tells us; **but we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses (good works) are as filthy rags.** Self motivation may see us recognised by man, rewarded in this life and be praised by our peers. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and obedience to the Word of God will see us rewarded in this life and in the life to come.

Chapter 6

Paul now considers the treatment and duty of servants, emphasising the Christian response. He instructs us, as to how we relate to false teachers, how to view them in the light of the truth of the Gospel. Timothy is instructed to note godliness is not accompanied with a desire for earthly wealth; having the Truth, salvation, is the greatest wealth. Timothy was to flee from all that opposed spirituality and to follow after those things that promoted godliness. He is given a solemn charge, a serious charge in this regard. The rich in the worlds' goods have specific instructions given, to remember that there is a responsibility that comes with these riches. The Apostle Paul closes the letter with a charge to Timothy, faithfulness to the Word of God and the fellowship of the saints; protecting them from the intrusion of heresies and practices opposed to the truth as it is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

2. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

Servants under the yoke are those who by choice or circumstance are employed by another, paid employment or as payment for a debt incurred or possibly a duty. Whatever the reason that brought one into servitude the Christian servant is to serve his master as if serving the Lord Jesus. The servant may be in that position as payment for a debt, bonded to service by other parties, by choice, for a salary or as a loving service; whatever the reason the obligation of the Christian servant remains the same, to serve their master as the person the Lord Jesus has placed in charge. The duty of the servant remains the same for a believing master or an unbelieving master, in either case the Child of God represents the Lord Jesus Christ.

Nothing has changed these hundreds of years later; the duty of an employee is to do his work as unto the Lord and the duty of the boss is to treat the worker with respect and equality. A Christian, an employee has a duty to serve his employer as if the boss were the Lord Jesus Himself. The agreed payment for the service rendered is settled for the 'master' and 'servant'; the terms of employment are to be kept by both parties. A master, an employer has a duty to treat all his employees equally, according to their ability and the agreement entered into when first employed.

Trade unions and organisations that seek to change the agreed arrangements work contrary to the peaceful working conditions already decided and in many cases contracted. Servants are here said to be under the yoke, which implies both subjection and labour; they are yoked to work in a certain area and manner, not to be idle, or to be disturbed by others teaching the worker has rights other than those agreed. When a person is 'saved' while under the yoke, the yoke is not removed; the Gospel does not cancel any obligations or duties already contracted under law or by mutual consent. Employees must respect their masters; count them worthy of all honour because they are their masters, the employer is worthy of respect, compliance, and obedience. As there are standards justly expected from servants to their masters there are also rules that the masters are expected to comply with.

If Christians misbehave the name of God and His teaching are in danger of being blasphemed. The enemy ever seeks occasion to speak evil of the worthy name by which we are called. Those that have believing masters let them not despise their master, they are brethren; and the believing servant has no right to expect preferential treatment. This brotherhood in Christ relates only to spiritual freedom, not to any advantage over others doing the same work; rather do them just and equal service because they are faithful and beloved brethren in the Lord. Christians should not expect preferential treatment from their Christian employer; they have a duty to the Lord Jesus to act and be the same to all who work for them.

A common mix up, confusion, is the failure to distinguish between blasphemy and taking the Lord's name in vain. Taking the name of the Lord in vain is singularly applied to those who call themselves Christians and have no relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. They have not confessed to being a sinner and are not aware of the grace of God in salvation; not experiencing freedom from the penalty of sin. Blasphemy is attributing to the Lord that which is of man, not of God, possibly even initiated by the enemy of souls.

Civil rights are never abolished by the Word of God or by any supposed communication from God's Spirit. The civil state in which a man was before his conversion is not altered by

that conversion to Christianity. The grace of God does not absolve the Christian from any claims, or legitimate duties which either the state, employers or neighbours may have on him.

3. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

4. He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

5. Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

If any man teaches otherwise, teach doctrines or attitudes, rebellion or disrespect for bosses, or even passive resistance they are in direct opposition to the Word of God, the words and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. If any teach otherwise than strict practical holiness in all areas of life they are departing from the truth. All facets of the doctrines of the Lord Jesus Christ lead to a holy life, godliness. We are not required to agree with any words as wholesome words which come from any other source. To the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bible, the Word of God, we must give our full assent; demonstrated by a life of conformity to the doctrines which are according to godliness. **The words of our Lord Jesus Christ** teach doctrines promoting godliness; these words have a direct impact in the lives of His followers and promote Christ likeness in all who believe, and encourage them to live according to the Word.

To teach any contrary doctrine supposes the teacher has a position greater than the Son of God. That person is **proud, knowing nothing**. This is not an attack on the intellect of the false teacher; it is a clear and unequivocal statement that he who teaches otherwise than the received Word of God knows nothing of the Grace of God and the salvation of the Lord and is not indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. **God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble**, as the letters of James 4:⁶ and 1Peter 5:⁵ tell us.

The words of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are required to consent to as wholesome words. To those words we must give our sincere, honest agreement and consent. The doctrine which is according to godliness leads us closer to the Lord Jesus Christ and aids us in walking with Him in all honesty and truth. The doctrine of our Lord Jesus is a doctrine of godliness; it teaches holiness and has the direct tendency to make the followers of the Lord Jesus more holy.

He is proud; doting about questions; he is puffed up, inflated with a vain opinion of his own knowledge; whereas his knowledge is foolishness, for he knows nothing of the Grace of God in salvation and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in understanding the Word of God. His sickness is aggravated by self-interest and questions relative to the Law of Moses and the traditions of the elders. It is evident the Apostle Paul has Judaizing teachers in view, who were ever *straining out a gnat, and swallowing a camel*, Matthew 23:²⁴.

Strifes of words; verbal contentions; splitting hairs; relative to the words and ways of the Lord Jesus should be understood and followed. In this sort of nonsense the works of the Jewish writers abounded and the Christian community has copied; leading to the variety of cults and sects and divisions in the Church.

Whereof cometh envy, strife, no good has ever come out of religious disputes; the cause of truth, the growth of the Church has been harmed and hindered by the arguments of men pursuing their own interests at the expense of the truth. Most controversies succeed in destroying accord between believers and antagonising unbelievers; and in irritating both

opponents and proponents. Truth is rarely the object of their pursuit; they labour to endorse their own party by abusing and defaming others. All Christians should know that the wrath of man, the reasoning of man, the intellect of man does not work towards setting forth the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour.

He is puffed up; proud, which is the cause of his not consenting to the doctrine which is true to the Lord Jesus, the doctrine which is the basic teaching relative to Christian living. This person knows nothing as he ought to know, void of the knowledge that comes from the Word of God and fellowship with the Lord Jesus in prayer.

The false teacher is full of questions, devoted to disputes; especially where practical Christianity is way down on their list, or forgotten. These false teachers '*strain at a gnat and swallow a camel*', they contend earnestly for a word or a phrase, to make a point supporting their own view. They maintain that everything else like the preaching of Christ and the Apostles, is all legalism and brings the Christian into bondage. Their reasoning is entirely self motivated, carnal. This erroneous understanding and way of life takes hold in a pernicious way and blinds the minds of the advocates of such heresies.

The words written by the Apostle Paul in this and his other epistles, are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, words agreeing to His mind and will, penned with His glory in view, promoting His honour, and instructive to His people and informative for their life while here on earth.

The Apostle charges the false teachers with pride, ignorance, envy, strife, railing, evil surmising, and with supposing that worldly wealth was godliness. Paul's advice to Timothy was to withdraw from these men, hold no communion with them; do not dispute with them, for they are opponents of the truth.

Whoever they were, Paul's admonition to Timothy is to withdraw from such as would teach false doctrines and practices. This teaches us that all those that hold and teach heresy, seducers, are to be avoided; we are not to dispute with them, for they are not suitable companions for Christian conversation. Nevertheless we are obliged to preach the gospel to all, for Christ died for all; that is not permission to compromise our faith or practice.

Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, controversies that cannot be settled, because their supporters will not listen to the truth; they will not listen to the truth because their minds are corrupt. Both under the law and now under the Gospel true religion is; **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength; and thy neighbour as thyself.** Luke 10:²⁷. Where the love of God does not prevail, there is failure among the believers in the practice of Christianity. Corrupt disputers argue from a false premise, they are destitute of the truth. **Supposing that gain is godliness** they argue that their wealth proves God is blessing them. They profess belief in the Lord Jesus Christ only for the sake of secular profit; defending their own cause for the earnings and advantage they gain; and having no respect, no thought for the Kingdom of God.

Supposing that gain is godliness; thinking the best part of their religion is the getting wealth and prestige; a common case in the world today where the argument is; see how the Lord has blessed me!

From such withdraw thyself, professors that teach gain is a sign of the blessing of the Lord. The instruction is to have no communion or fellowship with them. Do not recognize them as Christian teachers; do not tolerate or approve of their views. Timothy was to show that

he regarded them as opponents of the Gospel; he was not to go along with them or side with them in any way. From such men as claim to be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, but do so evidently seeking gain for themselves, all Christians are told to leave them well alone.

Those who are slaves, and who have been converted to Christianity, should not be indolent or disorderly. If their masters are Christians, they should treat them with respect, and all the more because they are fellow-heirs of the grace of life.

Ministers of the Gospel, believing bosses, should labour to produce a spirit of contentment among all in their employ, at the same time nothing in the New Testament, forbids an employee to go to the employer and to show him any evil there may be in the current situation, and to encourage a change in the system to benefit the worker and the employer. Every human, be it the worker or employer, has a right to hear the Gospel, no one has any right to withhold the truth from another whether employer or employed.

The passage teaches that it is possible for a man who is an employer to become a Christian. But it does not teach that it is proper for him to continue as a slave owner after he becomes a believer. This passage does not teach that slavery is a good thing, or a just thing, a desirable relation in life, or an institution that God desires to be perpetuated in the Church. The injunctions to slaves to be patient, meek, industrious, and respectful, are the commands to Christian employees anywhere and everywhere. To exhort a slave to manifest a Christian spirit under his oppressions and wrongs does not justify the system, nor does it prohibit us from showing to masters, employers, that the system may be contrary to the gospel, and that it would benefit by change.

Men who are doing wrong and are converted to the Lord Jesus Christ turn from the error of their ways; the course of life they continue in from that time will show the Grace of God in them and to those who note the change in their attitude and conversation.

It is not in the true spirit of Christianity to support the wronged, or to support those who do the wrong. The primary message is to seek the Lord Jesus Christ and follow in His footsteps. We are duty bound to speak out against evil and to avoid association with evil doers; the standard by which we make a judgement is the Word of God.

Every human being, whether in bondage or not, has a right to be made familiar with all the provisions and truths of the Gospel. No one has the right to withhold the Gospel message from another; the Word of God teaches us to be in season with the Message at all times and in all places and to all we speak with. No Christian denomination can be right which contemplates that the Gospel be withheld from any person or class of people, or any ethnic group.

This passage does not teach that slavery is a good thing, or a just thing, a desirable institution, or a custom that God desires to be continued in any culture on the earth. This passage does not support slavery. Men or women who are doing wrong are converted in order to turn them from that course of life, not to justify them in it.

The ministers of Christianity should not labour to produce a spirit of discontent among slaves, employees or workers, or excite them to rise up against their masters. Every human being, whether held in bondage or not, has a right to be acquainted with all the provisions and truths of the Gospel, nor has any man in any station of life a right to withhold such knowledge from another. The passage teaches that it is possible that a man who is a slaveholder, an employer may become a Christian. But it does not teach that a slaveholder when he is converted to Christianity is right to continue to keep his workers in slavery.

This passage does not support slavery. Nor does the fact that a man might be converted who was a slaveholder, and is spoken of as a believer, prove that it would be right and desirable that he should continue to keep slaves.

Men who are doing wrong and are converted are changed in their attitude and relationship with the Lord Jesus, and to mankind in general, and their peer group and employees; in order to turn them from a course of life leading to eternal loss, not to justify them in it.

6. But godliness with contentment is great gain.

7. For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

8. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

Real religion, true Christianity should be regarded as the greatest and most valuable possession. The Apostle Paul deliberately dismisses the choices the world makes, passing over money and personal wealth, investments and savings accounts, emphatically stating that godliness is great gain, but in a far different manner, because it brings true satisfaction. From our youth we are encouraged to make a name for ourselves; to make a mark in the world, and our training and upbringing are geared to that end. That course is at fault when the Lord Jesus is given second place to our personal ambitions. **Godliness**, devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ, conformity to the doctrines of holiness and righteousness, peace with God and in one's own soul is the **great gain** the Apostle Paul is teaching us in this generation to seek after.

With contentment this word, as now used, refers to a state of mind; a calm and satisfied feeling; not striving for more or better; freedom from murmuring and complaining; pleased and happy with one's lot. True religion, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, bringing with it peace of mind is by the Apostle regarded as genuine riches. The object of the Apostle Paul in writing this to Timothy seems to be, to rebuke those who supposed that substantial acquisitions constituted all that was worth living for; and demonstrated spiritual worth and wisdom. Paul tells Timothy that the true gain, the real riches which we ought to seek, and the truth he is to speak about and preach is a contented mind; peace brought about by a right relationship with God.

Contentment with our lot in this world is how we as believers promote personal happiness; how we teach that wealth can never bring inner peace, and that peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ is to be regarded as the great object, pursuit of life, true wealth.

Some embrace Christianity with a view to secular advancement, a lucrative business, a profitable profession. In their false apprehension and exercise of their wrong beliefs it is undoubtedly true; Christianity is a very profitable business for some who do not know the Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Those that make a business of it, merely to serve their selfish ends in this world, will finally be disappointed; but those that embrace the Faith as their calling, and make it their business to seek the will of God and do the work God calls them to will find it a rewarding calling, for it has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. Presently rewarding with peace and eternally rewarding in the presence of the Lord Jesus with blessings for evermore.

It is apparent to all we bring no possessions with us into the world; no clothing, no property, no valuables, no relationships; and it is equally obvious that we can take nothing with us when we are put into the coffin and interred. Our coming into the world brings no additional property to that which our parents possessed, and our departure takes nothing material from those we leave behind in the world. This is said by the Apostle Paul as an obvious reason why

we should be content if our daily needs are supplied; for this surely is really all that we require; further accumulation of wealth does not make one more satisfied; does not bring joy or peace with God. The opposite is true; the more we have the more we seek for and strive after. We can carry nothing out of this world with us. Psalm 49:¹⁷ tells us; **for when he** (the rich man) **dies, he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him.**

Raiment implies covering in general; and here means house or dwelling place, as well as clothing. The Apostle Paul uses the phrase to denote all that is really necessary for us. We cannot suppose the Apostle would forbid a comfortable dwelling, or the sources of Christian knowledge or of a convenient place for the saints to meet and join in worshipping God. Having those things which meet the actual necessities of life in our culture, and save us from concern and worry, we should not strive after uncertain riches, or make wealth the primary object of our pursuit. He teaches us even as the Lord Jesus taught, be anxious for nothing.

Personal wealth is not a sign of the Lord's blessing, anymore than poverty is a sign of the Lord chastening one of His subjects; when wealth is acquired lawfully it may be used with the blessing of the Lord, for the extension of the Church and the glory of the Lord. *The widow's mite had more value than the rich man's bag of money.*

9. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

The very desire for wealth financially or materially banishes contentment, and exposes the covetous one to a life of discontent. **They that will be rich** are those who set their path to get wealth, legally or otherwise; the words are emphatic, and refer to persons who are determined to get riches. They make this their main objective in life. They live to increase their wealth; get all they can, save all they can, and keep all they get. Their spending is with the expectation of gaining interest in one way or another. Even if they seek to get rich honestly the problem is often that they have left the Lord Jesus out of their lives. They who seek to accumulate wealth by honest means are those the Apostle Paul is referring to. Dishonesty is condemned outright; it is likely that the apostle does not refer to those who wish to get rich by theft, deceit, or at the expense or detriment of others.

There is more emphasis to be placed on the word **will**; in the phrase **will be rich**, than might be supposed from our reading. It implies an actual purpose or design to become rich by whatever means are available, not necessarily illegal. In the world there are many ways of getting wealth, many legitimate ways of providing for the needs of those in our care. The reference is to those whose earnest desire is the increase of their 'bank balance' and who plan for it thoroughly not considering the effect that will have on their spiritual life, their testimony in the world or their personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

By the word **rich** it is likely the apostle refers to what he has said earlier; **having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.** He that has more than is required for the daily needs of the household and dependents is rich in the sense in which the Apostle Paul uses the term. A will and determination to be rich, is the incentive behind the misbehaviour to those that cherish the desire to accumulate wealth over and beyond the projected needs. A will to be rich, is to make riches our principal aim, our main motivation, it then becomes our overriding desire. When the mind is wholly intent upon gaining wealth, untiring hard work and diligence is

exercised in the pursuit of that aim. In that case the Lord Jesus is put into second place or third place if the family needs are considered more important. Or even fourth place if the person wants recognition in the wider community for whatever reason deems important.

This is to make a god of this world; for that which is a man's aim, design, and singular objective; those things which are our chief thoughts instigate the motivation for our activity and are our god.

For a little which a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked, Psalm 37:¹⁶. Paul wrote, godliness with contentment; godliness is itself great gain, it is profitable in all areas of life, all aspects. True godliness is the companion of contentment; those who are truly content with their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ are certainly the happiest people in this world. Theirs is a joy unassailable. Godliness with contentment, Christian contentment is great gain; it is the true wealth, riches worth striving for in this world.

The love of money is the root of all evil, a phrase often misquoted by the world; they leave out the clause, the love of. Money is inanimate, is neither good nor bad. The Apostle Paul is referring to the desire of many who have their spiritual life in subjection to the craving for more, financially and or materially. It is the **love of money**, the inordinate yearning for a larger bank balance, more goods, a better car, a bigger house that the Apostle Paul is speaking against. Perhaps it would be better to translate the phrase *all these evils*; the evils enumerated by the Apostle Paul. It is not true that the love of money is the root of all evil, it certainly was not the root bearing the transgression of Adam; but it is the root influence impacting all the evils mentioned by the Apostle in the preceding verse.

Fall into temptation; they that will be rich are tempted to do 'wicked' things in order to accomplish their purposes. It is extremely difficult to harbour the desire to be rich, as the leading purpose of one's life, and to be a completely honest man. This is why the phrase 'grey areas' was coined, but even they are made either 'black or white' when the Word of God tells us '**what is not of faith is sin**', and '**seek ye first the Kingdom of God**'.

They who have this desire, become so tangled up in the ways of the world, that they cannot easily escape from the obligations placed on them. They become involved in the morass of worldliness and what the world sees as legitimate; though sinful behaviour. Their thoughts and activities are so governed by the cares of this world, and immoderate, undue desires, and by contrived wants, that they are no longer free to walk honestly with the Lord Jesus. They become so involved in these things that they cannot easily break away from them, even if they would. Proverbs 28:²⁰ **a faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that makes haste to be rich shall not be innocent.**

Desires such as the love of wealth creates is the cause of many succumbing to **foolish and hurtful lusts**. They are foolish for they are not the ways a believer should follow; not the course an intelligent redeemed person should pursue; and they are hurtful, injurious to morals, to health, to the Christian community and to the spiritual wellbeing of the individual with that bent. Among those desires are the flamboyant, ostentatious display of wealth, a dwelling far larger than needed, transport and servants more than adequate, a bigger bank credit balance, things which cater to the flesh and add nothing to the health of the soul.

Things **which drown men in destruction and perdition**; which cause men to sink in carnal desires, become submerged as a ship that flounders in turbulent waters, is the idea the Apostle Paul would convey. By **perdition** is meant the state of being punished after you die,

not particularly for the bad things that you have done, but because you did not accept the salvation freely offered.

The Roman Catholic Church has developed the erroneous doctrine of Purgatory from this, suggesting our eternal destiny is a matter of our own personal life; not related to the work the Son of God did when he bore the penalty of our sin on the Cross.

Believers are eternally secure and assured of a place with the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. They will surely lose the blessings now if they continue in sin, and will have a lesser reward in the afterlife; determined at the Judgement seat of Christ. Eternal life is given by God to all who have as saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The gift of life is irrevocable; the experience of that life is determined by our submission to the will of God revealed in His Word. The overruling desire to be rich leads one on a course of errors which ruins all aspects of life here and may well lead to everlasting loss. There is a total ruin of happiness, of virtue, of reputation, and the Christian testimony when the believer succumbs to the desires of the flesh, **hurtful lusts**.

11. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

12. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

But thou, **O man of God**, whatever the world around is doing, avoid association with anything that opposes godliness. A man of God in the Old Testament was a prophet, a messenger of God, or a man devoted to God; a man with his heart and desires in another world, a spiritual dimension. He was also cognisant with all that was happening around him, and prepared with the Word of God to teach, encourage or reprimand as the occasion demanded. Here the Apostle Paul tells Timothy to look for and follow, adopt for his own use, those attributes consistent with a Christian walk and witness. Follow after spiritual riches, righteousness and godliness, faith and love, patience and meekness. Search out that peaceful mind which gives contentment with food and clothing. Choose faith in Christ and His word which assure us of a better and enduring future. Work at that righteousness and justice which will govern our conversation and activities, and that love which makes us willing to share our possessions and faith. Be patient, willing to submit to a low condition, and meek, suppressing wrath against those who intend to harm us and our testimony.

These virtues and graces in a minister of God, in all Christians, are certainly indicative of one who is free from covetousness, not proud, and desiring the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His preserving power to be acknowledged.

But thou, Timothy as a man of God, should run away from these things, these allurements of wealth, and the sad consequences which the love of money produces. It ill becomes any man, but especially a servant of God in the assembly of the saints, to set his heart upon the things of this world. All who minister in the church should have as a priority the things and ways of God, not be seeking a place or prominence for themselves.

Fight the good fight of faith; the noble conflict in the cause of Christ and the Church He has purchased with His own blood. Paul makes a reference to the contests at the Grecian games; the contestants were well prepared and trained. **Lay hold on eternal life** as the laurel crown of victory that is held out to you as the victor in the conquest. Our victory is in the Lord Jesus Christ and is assured to us by faith in Him and His victory over sin and death and hell.

Seize this as eagerly as the winners at the Grecian games grasped the prize and displayed it to the crowds watching. **Fight the good fight of faith**, not only with words, also using the armour and weapons supplied by the Holy Spirit.

Whereunto thou art also called Timothy, by the Spirit of God, and evidenced by the very nature of your walk and witness. God does not 'call' his people that they may become rich; He does not bless them with salvation so they may devote themselves to making money, even becoming rich legally. We are not called to feather our own nests or to be praised by our peers for whatever achievements we succeed in. Believers, Christians are 'called' to a higher and nobler work, employment in the building of the Church. Sad it is that many professing Christians seem to live as if God had 'called' them to the singular business of making money, and who devote themselves to that end with zeal and diligence praise worthy in the world of finance. If this was the grand plan God had in view then Christ had died in vain; the conversion of sinners was not in His plan, building the church was an afterthought.

Timothy has **professed a good profession before many witnesses**. As a child and in his youth and in his ministry with the Apostle Paul Timothy has maintained a good testimony. In early times a profession of Christianity was never hidden, generally it was made openly; the local Church and the world knew of the change wrought in the converts to Christianity.

One of the best ways of encouraging ourselves and others to the faithful presentation of our faith is to remember the early days and to remind each other of the first joy we experienced when we trusted the Lord Jesus Christ. An effectual method of reclaiming a slacking Christian is to bring to his remembrance that solemn time when he publicly testified to the saving power of God, when he rejoiced in knowing his sin was covered by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Timothy's faith was undoubtedly tried by severe persecution. In Hebrews 13:²³ it is recorded, **Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty**. It appears Timothy was imprisoned for the testimony of Christ, and perhaps it was then that he made the good confession mentioned here by his mentor. Timothy risked his life for the Gospel; he was a victor, he conquered; his was a true confession backed up by personal experience. The many witnesses, from within the Church and outside the Church could only testify to the faithfulness of Timothy's testimony to the truth he preached and lived.

13. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

14. That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: The whole epistle is a charge, and here at the close of this letter Paul renews the charge very solemnly. The Grace of God, who quickeneth all things, **who gives life to all**; the apostle refers to this attribute of God making obligatory the charge which he gives to his son in the faith Timothy. Paul is saying that God is the source of life, and that as He had given life to Timothy, both natural and spiritual; He has the right to require that life should be employed in His service. In obedience to this charge given by the Apostle Paul and in the performance of his duties, Timothy may be required to lay down his life; he should remember that God had power to raise him up again even as He brought out of the tomb the Lord Jesus Christ, with life after the Crucifixion.

All life comes from God, all human life, animal life, vegetable life, and spiritual life comes from God. Death was introduced because man rebelled against God, man sinned. Adam's sin brought death into the world, death as the result of rebellion against God. One man's sin

brought death into the world and death is universal; all that has life is subject to death because of the sin of Adam. You and I are surely going to die; our physical life has a terminal point. Sin is so effective; it works in all of us bringing physical weakness and finally death. I will die because Adam sinned in disobeying God. My sin proves the sin nature initiated by the serpent and developed in Adam is passed on to all that are born. The destructive nature of sin is evident in all that has life; we see all that has life growing old and dying. Fortunately one was born without sin; born of a virgin; declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from among the dead. Death could not hold Him for there was no sin in Him.

The Lord Jesus Christ; **who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession** is the example put before us. The same Greek word is translated profession, in reference to the Lord Jesus, when standing as the accused before Pilate; Pilate who claimed to have power over the life of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus Christ did not hesitate in proclaiming the ultimate power and authority belonged to God. John 18:^{36, 37}. **My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered; Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth hears my voice.**

No worldly thoughts or inventions can preserve our minds and lives in the faith, and enable us to maintain our sanity and confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ than to remember His example and read the Word preserved for us. We should consider Him as He stood accused before Pilate, threatened with excruciating agony and death in a most horrendous, atrocious form. Ridiculed for the principles which He maintained; now friendless and alone, He stated the simple truth about Himself. We have the best assurance possible that we can also maintain our profession, in that the Lord Jesus Christ has assured us of the same power working in us with the gift of the Holy Spirit. A clear view of the example of Christ our Saviour, in those dire circumstances, and a conviction that He can see and has experienced what we are going through, will do more than all abstract precepts to make us faithful to our Christian calling.

The confession made by Christ before Pontius Pilate is, that he was Messiah the King; but that his kingdom was not of this world; and that hereafter he should be seen coming in the clouds of heaven to judge the quick and dead.

The Lord Jesus Christ will appear, and it will be a glorious appearing, not like His first appearing in the days of His humiliation. We, His blood bought children look with anticipation for the appearing of our Lord. We are to keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable expecting the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the call to be with Him. The appearing of Christ is certain, but it is not for us to know the time and season of it, which the Father has kept in his own power. In time he will show it, in the time that He thinks appropriate.

15. Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

16. Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

Which, appearing; **in His own times**, God will demonstrate the power, the knowledge, and the revelation of His Son in all the divine aspects which remain hidden in the heart of His

eternal mind and purpose. We are called to echo the praises of the one who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. We are given a revelation by the Spirit of God in the Word of God concerning the Son of God. Of Him and on Him is the true testimony to the love of God based; in Him are salvation and security, sanctity, peace and satisfaction.

Concerning Christ and God the Father the apostle tells us of great and wonderful things. That God is the only Potentate; the powers of earthly princes are all derived from Him, and depend upon Him. **The powers that exist are ordained of God**, Romans 13:1. God is the only Potentate that is absolute and sovereign, and perfectly, totally independent. He is the blessed and the only Potentate, (Monarch, Ruler, Royal leader, Emperor, Sovereign,) infinitely blessed, and nothing can in any way detract from Him, He is King of kings, and Lord of lords. All the kings of the earth derive their power from Him; He allowed them a crown for a season, they wear the crown under Him, and He has a sovereign dominion over all authorities and powers. Christ's title as recorded in the revelation to the Apostle John; Revelation 19:¹⁶, **upon His vesture and His thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords**; He has a name higher than the kings of the earth.

He only has immortality, He only is immortal, and has immortality as he is the fountain of life, no beginning and no end is specifically and only true of God. Angels and spirits came into being at the express command of God; they may have no ending so may be termed immortal, but in this context the term does not apply to them in the same way.

He dwells in inaccessible light, light which no man can approach unto. No man can get to Heaven without the protection provided by the Lord Jesus Christ and then only as the blood of the ultimate sacrifice is applied.

Whom no man has seen nor can see, He is invisible to man. God has purer eyes than to behold iniquity; man has eyes so clouded by sin they cannot look upon the holiness of God. It is impossible that mortal eyes should bear the brightness of the divine glory. **No man can see God and live.**

What a wonderful presentation the Apostle Paul gives us of some of the attributes of our great God. Paul tells us our God is the life giver, He quickens all things, all things that have had life, do have life or shall have life; the blessed and only Potentate bestowed that life. All power is in Him, every life force is from the blessed and only Potentate. Derived from Him who only has immortality, that is original, independent, essential immortality. Only God is essentially and necessarily of Himself immortal; dwelling in the light which is inaccessible to any created being; none can approach Him; no man has seen Him nor can see Him.

God is invisible; the nature and essence, the spirit of God never was seen, nor shall be seen. But we are by the revelation of God in Christ Jesus to understand more clearly and fully the manifestation of God unto us in the person of His Son.

This testimony the Apostle Paul bears to our Lord Jesus Christ when here on earth, saying that before Pontius Pilate Jesus witnessed a good confession. The Lord Jesus did not deny the truth to save His life, but gave all His redeemed people an example of faith, courage and consistency in owning the truth, even sealing the testimony with His blood.

17. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18. That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

19. Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Charge them that are rich; notice the duty Timothy is trusted with. Not merely to exhort and teach, but to charge and command. The ministers of Christ are servants to the people in the Church, to their souls, not to their choices or desires. There is an authority with the position an elder is placed in by the Holy Spirit; which empowers them to command as well as to entreat on behalf of God.

The subject of this Charge is to them that are rich in this world. They are to be humble, owning that the source of their wealth is not from within them but is indeed of the Grace of God. No man is forbidden to be rich, or to use lawful means to gather wealth. But prosperous men need a charge; they are to be encouraged to consider the Word of God and apply the truth of it to their life and wealth for the benefit of the saints and the glory of God. The rich in this world find they are praised for their ability and tend to leave God out of their reckoning. Timothy is told to bring the rich down to earth again and for the rich to consider it is only by the Grace of God they have more than they need.

That they be not high-minded; that they do not value themselves on account of their wealth, for possessions in money or property add nothing to intellectual or moral worth or significance. The accumulation of things or wealth adds nothing to our standing before the Lord. All we have is entrusted to us by the Lord and is ours to use for the glory of His name. The Lord Jesus has given to us all we have to enjoy; and we will enjoy it to the full as we understand what we have is gifted to us.

When God in His grace prospers us we are prone to lift ourselves up with pride, Nebuchadnezzar is an example of that sin; detailed in Daniel chapter three. There is a malignity in riches when they are subject to the corrupt minds of men to make them think they are masters of their own destiny. The riches of this world cannot bring one nearer to heaven, make one wiser, or holier, or change their destiny. Yet the wealthy still think they can buy the good will of God. They may well gain the acclaim of man, but that is limited to this life; it has no eternal value. The way of salvation from the penalty of sin is the same for the rich and poor. Wealth does not make it easier to gain access to God nor does poverty restrict one from entering into the presence of God.

When God in grace allows the rich to prosper by his providence, they will often forsake the Lord by lifting themselves with pride. There is a secret potential to cause harm or death in riches when they meet with men's corrupt minds, to cause them to think by their own power and might they have achieved their wealth. Though neither wiser, holier, or nearer heaven, the rich often think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. They think high thoughts, look big in their own eyes, talk with disdain of others without the same wealth, generally forgetting that God gives; He sets up one and brings down another as He chooses.

That they trust not **in uncertain riches;** Paul continues to instruct Timothy in the subjects he should bring to the saints at Ephesus, suggesting that creature-confidence, or making an idol of wealth, is commonly the dreadful curse and ruin of rich men. Their actions say to the gold, my trust is in you, and to the bank where the wealth is kept, you are my confidence. But the Christian notes the Apostle Paul calling them **uncertain riches;** uncertain for their value is continually changing, uncertain as to whether they will remain in the care of the current owner. We expect more than ever we have in our savings, more value than there is in our possessions

for the tendency is to view what we have in the light of the current day; forgetting values change of a daily basis and not noting the permanency of what is available in the Lord Jesus Christ; certain riches ready for present enjoyment and for permanent promise.

In passing note, a penny was a day's wage when the Gospels were written; in Australia today, April 2014, using the same coinage, a minimum day's wage is more than 15,000 times that amount. The currencies of the world are continually decreasing in value whereas the all that is of God is of constant and eternal value; true riches.

Uncertain riches, the uncertainty of riches; things which are never constant, are ever changing, and seldom continue with the same value for long. What was valued at a penny some years ago is now worth more than a week's wages. In the time when the Apostle Paul was writing to Timothy a penny was a day's wages, now 2,000 years later a day's wage, in Australia, may well exceed 250,000 times that amount. Therefore as well as for many other reasons, riches are not to be trusted. Riches cannot give happiness, because they are not of a fixed and permanent value; neither can they add spiritual worth or meet spiritual needs. We are to trust in the living God, who alone is the consistent source of excellence, of true and unchanging worth.

Property really makes no distinction in the things that relate to Christian character and salvation. Possessions do not necessarily make one wise, or learned, or great, or good, or spiritual. In all these things the man who has no wealth, or comparatively little, may be vastly superior in the sight of God to him who has much. For the unimportant distinction gold can award in eternal values, no man should be proud. Let each one of us be reminded that our property is the gift of God; that we are made rich because God has chosen that pathway for us. It is not primarily owing to any skill or wisdom on our part; acumen and property only increases the responsibility. We will find what we have now, what we strive for of this world's goods will all be left behind when we are called to stand before the Lord Jesus. Death is the finally leveller, all that will count in that day is how we answered the question; **what think ye of Christ?**

God, **who giveth us richly all things to enjoy**, dispenses it liberally for the supply of all His creation; man and beast and all growing things and even those things which are beyond the grasp of man. He does not give merely what is necessary, but He gives what makes life comfortable. Man in avarice and materialism wants far more than God has given. The comforts of life come from God, He not only gives us a basic subsistence, but He gives us enjoyment in those things which He gives. Were it not for the oppression and covetousness of the unredeemed, every condition and state in life we Christians find ourselves would be comfortable. It has been said, *God gives liberally; man divides it badly.*

There are five points the Apostle Paul charges Timothy to carefully consider and obey; He must caution the Ephesians to take heed of pride. Charge them that they are not high-minded, or think of they are above what is appropriate activity for a Christian, or be puffed up with their wealth.

He must caution them against vain confidence in their wealth. **Riches make themselves wings, and fly away as an eagle**, Proverbs 23:⁵.

Timothy must teach the saints to trust in God, the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. He must charge them to do good things with what they have; that they be rich in good works. What we are in Christ and what we do as Christians is of more value than the

money in the bank. Those are truly rich who are rich in good works and richer still if those works are motivated by the Holy Spirit.

18. That they do good, that they relieve the wants of their fellow creatures, according to the abundance which God has given them. The teaching to Timothy is that we are enriched, given the means to do good to our fellows within and without the Church. That the benefits we enjoy may be shared with a view to the growth of the Kingdom of God. The peace and contentment that comes from doing God's will in distributing what He has entrusted to us is not equalled in any secular activity.

Rich in good works means one is storing up treasure in heaven; the good works are recorded and will be rewarded. **Ready to distribute**, giving nothing through partiality or favour, but guided in their distribution by the Holy Spirit laying on their conscience the specific necessities of the people and problems presented to them. We should not confine our good deeds or the distribution of our wealth to the home front; in thought is to scatter the seed abroad.

Willing to communicate, by word and deed, bringing to the attention of all persons we have dealings with the blessing of being in communion with God. Communicating the message of the Grace of God being readily, freely available to all. What the Lord Jesus does through us now is put to our account in glory; in this way we lay up treasure in heaven.

19. Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Timothy must charge the saints to think of the world they are approaching, and prepare for that which is to come by doing good works. Philanthropy as the world understands it does not have eternal value; the Christian doing good works, motivated by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God builds a treasure house, he stores up treasure in heaven. The Lord Jesus Christ called the work motivated by the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers, laying up treasures in heaven. Timothy is to exhort the saints to lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come, that they may take hold on eternal life. We are in possession of eternal life now; enjoying eternal life comes with living in the presence of God; in communion with God, in fellowship with the people of God, in finding our delight in the Word of God. When writing to the saints in Rome the Apostle Paul penned; **to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: Romans 2:7.**

The Lord, when speaking as recorded in the Gospel by Luke spoke to the publicans and those who had property, to so use their property and wealth to secure happiness and comfort when the situation changed. We are to use what we have; what the Lord has blessed us with; be it little or much to secure a future blessing. This may be done by using our wealth as we should; by not letting riches snare us in cares and concerns dangerous to our spiritual wellbeing. We should guard against wealth stealing our time and affections, by employing our finances in good works, charitable activities, advancing of the gospel, caring for the saints, and other deeds that are promoted by a concern for the glory of God. This is what the Apostle Paul calls godliness; it is in fact displaying something of the Grace of God working in us.

To many people wealth is a snare; stealing the time and the affection, and not contributing at all to the eternal welfare of the possessor of this world's goods. Everything may be dedicated use contribute to our eternal welfare in heaven. Health, wealth, talents, and influence may be so employed; and this is what the Lord Jesus Christ teaches here.

The founder of our faith is the Lord Jesus Christ. The foundation of our faith is based on the work the Lord Jesus Christ did in satisfying the righteous claims of God. **A good foundation** for the future blessing of we who believe is continuing in the faith, strengthened in the inner man; believing what is written in the Word of God and proving we believe the Word by living out what the Lord Jesus and his Apostles and disciples teach us. Truth confirmed by the record in the Bible. The foundation of the Church is laid; the foundation of our faith is permanently set. **For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.** Here the Apostle Paul teaches the truth in this verse, 1Corinthians 3:¹¹, is basic to the Christian testimony.

20. O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

21. Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

Every minister of the Gospel is a trustee, the message they preach is a treasure committed to their trust, which they should diligently guard and keep. The truths of God, the commands of God, the teachings of the Word of God, we are to keep, avoiding profane and vain babblings. There is no need for human eloquence, which the Apostle Paul calls vain babbling, or the teachings of man, which often oppose the truths of God. Keep close to the written word, the Bible, the Word of God and what it teaches, that is committed to our trust.

Some who are very proud of their learning, their particular science, which is **falsely so called**, have forsaken their first love, have corrupted their principles and been drawn away from the faith of Christ. They have left and lost their first love. That bad example is a powerful reason why we should keep to the plain Truth of the Gospel message, and determine to preach none other; to live and die with the truth of the Gospel.

Timothy, **keep that which is committed to thy trust.** Keep all that has been committed to you, and which is recorded in this letter. The honour of the Gospel, and the interests of the Church, the gathering of the saints at Ephesians, had been specially committed to Timothy; he was to guard this holy trust, not deviating from the truth committed to him, and not allowing it to be taken from him or for him to embrace any perversion of the truth coming from others claiming superior knowledge. The saints at Ephesus are at risk of departing from the truth if the leaders of the congregation embrace a false doctrine, if they depart from the truth as it is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Keep the truth, guard the truth, preach the truth, live the truth, teach the truth; in so doing the Church at Ephesus will grow and be established.

This is true for all elders and deacons and any other person in a responsible position in the local church. We all have a duty of care, a duty to adhere to the Word of God and be a good example to those in our family and other we may meet during the day.

Avoiding profane and vain babblings, profane, empty words; refers to such controversies and doctrines which produced strife among the saints. Teachings that promoted arguments among the believers did not, could not support the edification of the church. It is evident in this 21st century how devastating to the unity of the saints and the work of God has been the profane and vain babblings of unbelievers. We see this in the proliferation of false religions and sects and cults all claiming to be Christian. A test question when confronted is: What think ye of Christ? If the answer falls short of the Biblical revelation, or detracts in any point from the

person and work of redemption the Lord Jesus Christ revealed and accomplished, then it is not of God.

And oppositions of science falsely so called; the Christian religion has nothing to fear from true science, and the minister of the gospel is not exhorted to be unduly concerned by scientific facts. Unproven theories, however well presented are no challenge to faith. Real science, in all its advances, contributes to the support of Christian teachings, the Christian religion. The Bible is not a scientific treatise; true science can only be found to reinforce the Bible, and to confirm the claims of the Christian faith to mankind. It is only false or pretended science that Christianity has to fear, and which the followers of Christ are to avoid. Timothy was to avoid everything which falsely laid claim to being knowledge or science, where such claims were contrary to the teaching of the Word of God. Theories are not true science; when they are made up to contradict the Word of God they are to be rejected by all who express faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Believers cannot expect unbelievers to accept the Word of God for Satan has blinded the minds of them that believe not. There can never be accord between the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ and those refuse to accept the Word of God as authoritative; what accord has Christ with Belial, how could it be possible for the two to have fellowship. Most of the ancient heretics were great pretenders to knowledge; that has not changed over the last 2,000 years; or since the foundation of the Church. Various sciences and many religions deny the existence of the Absolute God, the one who created and sustains the Universe. They are without Christ and without hope in this world and have no hope and future glory awaiting them. The Gospel they reject will be their condemnation.

Which some, unbelievers, **professing** to have superior knowledge **have erred**, erred because they trusted in knowledge or scientific theories developed in the minds of men, they did not know God or Christ Jesus. Not only the false teaching they listened to or the theories they developed to account for the false theories they mistakenly believe, but also in life and witness because they believed the lie. Their behaviour was such that even when they held their peace vocally some would believe their pernicious teachings and practices. They erred concerning the faith putting their trust in the theories of man.

Those who put their trust in science or knowledge are in great danger of erring concerning the Faith. Putting reason before faith, giving human reasoning precedence places those who do so in danger of leaving the Christian faith, apostasy.

The scientist who leaves God out of his reckoning will surely err in the promulgation of the theories he propounds. The fount of knowledge gives forth one truth, no variables, no half truths, and no maybes' for God has not left anything undone or half done. The work of creation is finished and the work of salvation is a completed work. When God saw all He had made He was satisfied and said it was '**very good**'. When the Lord Jesus Christ had done all God required for the salvation of man He in triumph said, '**it is finished**'.

Many are yet to find rest in the Lord Jesus Christ; rest from the struggles of life and conscience. Man delving into physical, religious and spiritual spheres without the Word of God and the Holy Spirit guiding will inevitably err in judgement and end up teaching error as truth.

Timothy is warned by the Apostle Paul, and we are warned at the same time to hold fast to the truth. The standard is set and the power to continue in the faith is granted to us. So the Apostle ends this letter with the encouragement we all need; **the grace of the Lord Jesus**

Christ be with you. Amen. This is a short, yet comprehensive prayer for our fellow believers, for grace embraces in it all that is good, and grace is an earnest, a promise of glory; for wherever God gives grace, He will give glory, and will not withhold any good thing from him who walks uprightly.

We could say; may the favour of God and Christ influence you, and preserve you from these errors and all other influences that could draw you away from the Truth in doctrine and practice, what you think and what you do.