

1 Timothy 1: An apostle speaks the truth and warns against error

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

²To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

³As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer ⁴or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith. ⁵The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. ⁶Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. ⁷They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

⁸We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. ⁹We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine ¹¹that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

¹²I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. ¹³Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁴The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. ¹⁷Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

¹⁸Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well, ¹⁹holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith. ²⁰Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

Look

Verse 2 Timothy was Paul's spiritual son in the sense that he had received spiritual training from Paul. (See Acts 16:1-3.)

Verse 18 "The prophecies once made"—The prophecies about Timothy were apparently words of encouragement that people spoke at his commissioning. (See 1 Timothy 4:14.)

Questions

1. What is the goal of opposing false teachers or teachers who introduce teachings that have little connection with God's Word?
2. What purpose of the law does the apostle mention in verses 8-10?
3. A psychologist analyzing Paul's words ("I am the worst of sinners") might conclude that Paul suffered from poor self-esteem. Why would that be an inaccurate assessment?
4. What struggles does Paul refer to in verses 18-20? Why can we speak of the church in this world as the "church militant"?

Application

5. Some say that a pastor should refrain from polemical sermons. How does this chapter address that subject?
6. Paul says he handed Hymenaeus and Alexander over to Satan. What does he mean by that? What are the loving purposes of church discipline?