



Introduction

Maturity. It's part of the natural process of being human. We grow, we grow up and we assume God-given responsibilities in life and mission. Yet in our day maturity has fallen on hard times. Sociologists today are writing about the phenomenon of the kidult, the ban (boy-man) and perpetual peter pans. There seems to be a desire in our day to delay responsibility, delay maturity and life being elongated seasons of goofing around. Yet the Scriptures bring us another view. In the Word of God we find a world where God desires the older to invest in the younger in order to help them assume a passionate mantle of leadership in the mission and Kingdom of Jesus.

In the ancient world one of the most influential leaders of the Christian Church invested his love, time and heart into a young leader in order to establish firm foundations for the gospel in and through local communities. The Apostle Paul's words to Timothy unfolded over time with his first canonical letter addressing important topics related to theology, family, mission, finances and our responsibilities as followers of Jesus together as his church. His concern was solid teaching leading to a life that honors the Lord that would bring health and flourishing to the community.

In our time we desire the courage and love to live for God's glory as servants of others, holding forth the good news of Jesus that saves. We desire to be *disciples*, who make *disciples* of Jesus, maturing in our faith and giving our lives together in the mission of our King.

The Pastoral Epistles

The New Testament can be thought of as a small library of writings made up of various types of literature. It begins with the gospel narratives of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. It continues with the second part of Luke's writing, the book of Acts. This book lays out the early missionary efforts of Jesus' followers as they took the gospel of Jesus throughout the known world of their time. Much of the rest of the New Testament is comprised of instructional letters to various churches and Christians written by apostles and early church leaders who recorded the apostolic testimony. The most looming author of these letters is a man now known to us as the Apostle Paul.



Born Saul of Tarsus, this man was a prominent Jewish leader at the time of Jesus' resurrection. He was raised a devout Jew, as a citizen of Rome in a city rife with Greek culture and learning. His life was a confluence of cultural worlds and viewpoints. At the outset of the book of Acts we find this man a fervent persecutor of Jesus' followers seeking to put down what he felt was a heretic aberration on the Jewish faith. Then something happened; Jesus dropped some knowledge on Saul. Jesus radically changes Saul's life direction by encountering him on a road to Damascus, telling him that he would now serve Jesus and on a mission to bring good news (*gospel*) to the whole world. The Old Testament promises of God's salvation for the Gentiles would be fulfilled through Jesus' ministry through Saul (see Isaiah 42:1-9; Acts 13:47). This man would be known from that day forward as Paul the *apostle*, Jesus' *messenger* to the Gentile world. From the early days of the Christian movement, Paul worked as a missionary taking the good news of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection to people throughout the world. He would teach and preach the message of Jesus' Kingdom and sacrifice for sinners in various places, crossing vast geographies and cultures to do so.

Most of Paul's letters were written to instruct new churches or groups of new churches in certain areas of the ancient world. The letters usually dealt with theological and practical matters which emerged as people became followers of the new way in a city. The letters of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus are slightly different nature in than most of Paul's letters in that they come to us as personal correspondence from

Paul to his younger ministry delegates.¹ Paul's missionary work would move forward through community as their mission work was conducted in teams. In other words, Paul always had a crew with him as he worked in the mission of Jesus. Two of the most mentioned colleagues of Paul were the young brothers Timothy and Titus to whom the letters of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus are addressed.

Up until the 18th century these letters were simply numbered among the Pauline corpus of literature and it was not until the works D.N. Berdot and P. Anton of Halle that they became known as "the Pastoral Epistles."² The question of the authorship of these letters has become an interesting field of scholarship in the last few centuries so we will spend a bit of time with this topic as we continue.



Authorship of the Letters to Timothy and Titus

The letters now classified as the *Pastoral Epistles* were well known in the very earliest days of the Christian movement and were never questioned as to their inclusion in the canon of the New Testament. They find themselves listed fully in the Muratorian fragment as among the epistles of Paul.³ Sections of these writings were mentioned as early as Polycarp (c.117)⁴ and were in use by many of the early church fathers in the 2nd century including Irenaeus of Lyon (c.180) and Clement of Alexandria (150-215).⁵ Though less certain and disputed, it is quite possible that *1 Clement* and the writings of Ignatius of Antioch make reference to the pastorals in the late first century AD.⁶ A few things are certain. First, the pastoral epistles were always thought to be the works of Paul written to his younger ministry apprentices. Second, this conviction was the long standing and unbroken tradition in the churches for over 1700 years.

¹ Ben Witherington, *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1-2 Timothy and 1-3 John, Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians* (Nottingham, England, Downers Grove, Ill.: Apollos ; IVP Academic, 2006), 379.

² Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles : An Introduction and Commentary*, 2nd ed., *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; Eerdmans, 1990), 17.

³ The Muratorian Fragment or Canon is a description of the books accepted as authoritative Scripture around the close of the 2nd century AD. The relevant section to the pastorals reads "Moreover [Paul writes] one [letter] to Philemon, one to Titus and two to Timothy in love and affection; but they have been hallowed for the honour of the catholic [means universal] church in the regulation of ecclesiastical discipline. For a discussion of the Muratorian Canon see the excellent F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 158-69.

⁴ Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown : An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville, Tenn.: B & H Academic, 2009), 638.

⁵ Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Cambridge, U.K. ; Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2006), 4.

⁶ D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1992).

Questions Arising in the Modern Era

In the 1800s several schools of biblical criticism arose through scholars on the European continent. Working under enlightenment assumptions, many began to question the teachings of the Bible and the teachings of Christianity. One of the past times of this flavor of scholarship has been to doubt the authorship of almost every New Testament book. Beginning with the works of German theologians F.C. Baur and Friedrich Schleiermacher, modernistic scholars did just this with the Pastoral Epistles. Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus were now imagined to be works of fiction authored by some unknown pen in the 2nd century. True story; men of Germany, living close to 1800 years after the fact, sought to figure it all out for us and set the record straight regarding the Pastoral Epistles. Since that time, a growing consensus of doubt has been arrayed against the long held tradition that the author of these works was "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope," (1 Timothy 1:1). Though there is an impressive list of scholars who question this skeptical position,⁷ it remains the critical view in our time.

The Doubting of Paul

John Stott, in a popular level commentary, summarizes the critical/skeptical position along historical, linguistic, theological and ethical lines.⁸ First, the details of the pastorals are difficult to reconcile with the details we have of Paul's travels and imprisonments in the Book of Acts. Second, the vocabulary and style of these letters is divergent from other letters accepted as authentically Pauline. Third, the theology of these letters seems to be much more developed than the issues Paul is concerned with in earlier letters. Particularly of interest is the more developed view of the local church and church leadership. Finally, the letters seem to encourage ethical conformity and keeping a good image in the broader culture. Some have even gone as far to say that the pastorals present a *bourgeois Christianity*, seeking only a good face and comfort in the world rather than Christ centered mission.⁹

⁷ Alfred Plummer, B. Weiss, Adolf Von Schlatter, Wilhelm Michaelis, Joachim Jermias, Ceslas Spicq, Gordon D. Fee, Donald Guthrie, Luke Timothy Johnson, J.N.D. Kelly, George W. Knight, William D. Mounce, Thomas C. Oden and Philip H. Towner and Ben Witherington III are among those who hold that Paul or one of his contemporaries serving as a scribe authored the Pastorals. List in Witherington, *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1-2 Timothy and 1-3 John*, 51. I have concatenated Witherington's name to his own list.

⁸ John R. W. Stott, *Guard the Truth : The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus : Includes Study Guide for Groups or Individuals, The Bible Speaks Today* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 23.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 23-28.

There are many theories of authorship circling in New Testament studies today. First, there are those who still hold that the letters are outright forgeries and fictions. Others hold that fragments and traditions of Paul's teachings made it into these compositions. These Pauline ideas were then compiled by an editor who used the common practice of attaching someone's name, in this case Paul, to give the documents credibility in the churches.¹⁰ This practice, known as *pseudonymity*, was employed by someone other than Paul in order to make the letters have more standing as they appeared in his name. Much more can be said here, but for our purposes we find these views to be highly problematic. What follows is a brief sketch of why we maintain that the apostle Paul is the originator of the Pastoral Epistles.

Reasons for Pauline Authorship

There are several reasons why those with a high view of the Scriptures maintain that the author of the Pastoral Epistles is the apostle Paul. The following is only representational of the arguments involved.



The Text of the Pastorals

The actual text of the pastorals is quite personal and makes several open claims which must be counted as spurious if we reject Pauline authorship. First of all, here are the opening greetings of each letter.

- 1 Timothy - ¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, ²To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.
- 2 Timothy - ¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus, ²To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Titus - 1:1 ¹Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, ²in hope of eternal life,

¹⁰ For more on the modern objections to Pauline authorship see Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 15-26. And for even more detailed discussion see the introduction in William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 2000), lxxxiii-cxxix.

which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began ³and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior; ⁴ To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Furthermore, extensive personal details and commands relating to context are involved in these letters. First, Titus is addressed with instructions about what his mission is to be ministering on the island of Crete. Second, Paul says on two occasions in 1 Timothy that he intends to visit him soon (1 Timothy 3:14, 4:13). Additionally, Paul speaks to Timothy about a myriad of personal issues including his calling into ministry, his age, his stomach problems and his family lineage. 2 Timothy is a deeply touching last letter from a mentor to a young leader that is full of references to persons by name.¹¹ To insinuate, as some have done¹², that these personal notes are all elaborate forgeries to carry on a deception a fiction does unnecessary violence to the heart of these letters. Those who understand the inspiration of the Scriptures as the Word of God find no reason to embrace such vain speculation.

Early Church Univocal and Acceptance Never in Question

Those closest to the persons and events of these letters were of one voice in their recognition of them being the work of the Apostle Paul. Passing down the teaching of Jesus and the apostles was of utmost importance to the early Christians. We see this in all the New Testament documents and we see this in the writings of church leaders. There was never any doubt to the church that the Pastorals were the work of Paul and that they were inspired Scripture revealing to us the Word of God. Furthermore, it was not until the 19th century that German scholars, working under dubious assumptions and modernist epistemologies, began to question the authorship of these letters.

Problems with the Pseudonymous View

Much can be said about the practice known as *pseudonymity* in the ancient world. While it may have been practiced in the ancient world, the more relevant question relates to its acceptance by the early

¹¹ Stott, *Guard the Truth : The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus : Includes Study Guide for Groups or Individuals*, 22.

¹² See Lewis R. Donelson, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1986).

Christian churches. Far from accepting this practice, the early church vociferously rejected it. Consider the following line of argument as laid out by Ben Witherington III.¹³

First, when ancient writings were *pseudonymous*, they were almost always written in the name of an ancient figure far disconnected from the writing. In the case of the Pastorals we have documents that were written in the first century, just after the time of the death of Paul. Second, the letters are not generic teachings but are specific instructions of a personal nature to men living in certain contexts, namely Timothy in Ephesus and Titus in Crete. Witherington, quoting New Testament scholar I. Howard Marshall makes this point clearly.

As I. Howard Marshall has rightly stressed, it is one thing to write a book called 1 Enoch and use the name “Enoch,” but quite another to write a personal letter full of personalia and historical references and claim that it was written by someone in the recent past.¹⁴

Furthermore, we see that Paul himself rejected such pseudonymous practices (See 2 Thessalonians 2:2) and leaders in the early church rejected letters outright as well. The muratorian fragment, mentioned above, reflects this sentiment as it reads:

There is said to be another letter in Paul’s name to the Laodiceans, and another to the Alexandrines, [both] forged in accordance with Marcion’s heresy, and many others which cannot be received in to the catholic (universal) church, since it is not fitting that poison should be mixed with honey.¹⁵

So though pseudonymity may have been practiced by some authors in the ancient world it was never accepted to be anything but a farce and forgery by the early church.¹⁶ The Pastoral Epistles were never thought to be anything but the work of Paul and the arguments for abandoning this view are far from conclusive.

No Compelling Reason to Reject Pauline Authorship

¹³ Witherington, *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1-2 Timothy and 1-3 John*, 62-64.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 63. For those who are needing some context for the quote, *1 Enoch* is a writing that is named after an Old Testament character in Genesis five and is a compilation of works dated between 300-100 BC. It is not considered inspired, canonical Scripture by the Jews or by the majority of Christians (The Ethiopian Orthodox Church is the only exception)

¹⁵ Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, 160.

¹⁶ Köstenberger, Kellum, and Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown : An Introduction to the New Testament*, 640. An interesting story recounted by Tertullian (160-225) records a presbyter (elder) of a church in Asia being removed from office for trying to pass of a forged letter in Paul’s name.

Above we saw that the reasons to reject Paul as the author followed historical, theological/ethical and linguistic lines. None of these are insoluble when come to these writings.



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First, it is quite possible to harmonize the historical details in these works with that of what we know from Paul's other writings in the Book of Acts.¹⁷ Most would argue that the time frame of the pastorals requires Paul to be released from house arrest in Acts 28, travel perhaps briefly to Spain¹⁸, then back through Crete and Macedonia where 1 Timothy and Titus were likely written in around AD 64-65. Finally, he would have been arrested and brought back to Rome as a prisoner under the persecution of Nero where he wrote his last letter 2 Timothy around AD 65-66. Tradition holds he was executed just after this, around AD 66-67, under the reign of Nero who died in AD 68.

Second, differences in theological focus make complete sense where the context demands it. Timothy and Titus were charged with establishing churches as the era of the apostles was closing. The mission of Jesus was continuing to move forward and the mission would need both sound teaching and leadership after the apostles died. What we see during this time frame is just that. Letters were written to churches instructing them in the faith. The teachings and gospel narratives about Jesus were written down by the evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The Pastoral Epistles provided clear instructions for selecting and empowering elder/overseers to pastor God's churches and deacons to serve the needs of new communities. Elders and deacons were already mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Philippian church in as early as AD 62 so it is no surprise to see these offices given further form in Paul's letters to young church leaders just a few years later. It makes sense that the task of ordering the early churches would have included some basic details about leadership, life as a community of faith and our relationship to the world. This is precisely what we find in the letters to Timothy and Titus.

Third, differences in style and language can be understood in several ways. The influence of occasion and genre greatly affects both style and vocabulary.¹⁹ What person today would use the same vocabulary

¹⁷ Witherington, *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1-2 Timothy and 1-3 John*, 65-68.

¹⁸ Paul states his desire to go to Spain in Romans 15 and a westward trip is referenced, but in no way historically certain, in the late first century letter of 1 Clement. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 11.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

and style to structure a logical theology treatise (like the Book of Romans) and a letter to a dear friend while writing from death row? Furthermore, there is a great deal of language that is common to the pastorals which is found in Paul's other letters so the case is slanted in one direction by those arguing against the authorship of the apostle. When looking at the language and style of the pastorals one can see that the historical setting and subject matter demands different vocabulary to treat subjects relevant in the letters themselves.²⁰ Finally, in terms of the problem of style concerning the Greek of the pastorals, William D. Mounce makes a good observation:

*If the Greek speaking church showed no sign of concern about how the PE [Pastoral Epistles] were written, one wonders why today the issue of style and vocabulary looms so large on the scholarly horizon.*²¹

A final note about vocabulary is warranted. It is well known from Paul's letters that he sometimes used a scribe, or an *amanuensis*, to write his letters and ideas down for him as he requested or dictated to them.²² It is possible that the Pastoral Epistles were composed in this fashion. An interesting argument has been made by several scholars that Paul's traveling companion Luke, who was called the beloved doctor, was the *amanuensis* employed with the pastorals.²³

While some scholars today question the authenticity of Paul as the author of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus, we find good explanations for their objections. The historical, theological/ethical and linguistic issues are not insurmountable and we remain convinced, with the long line of teachers and scholars in church history, that the author of 1 Timothy was indeed "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope," With that in mind, let us briefly comment on a few specific details regarding the book of 1 Timothy and what has come to be known as "The Timothy Correspondence."

Background on 1 Timothy

Timothy and the Church in Ephesus

²⁰ See excellent discussion of the literary issues involved with the pastorals in Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, xcix - cxviii.

²¹ *Ibid.*, cxvi.

²² For example we see the book of Romans openly name the scribe in the following verse - I Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord - Romans 16:22.

²³ See Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, cxxvii - cxxix and Witherington, *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1-2 Timothy and 1-3 John*, 57-62.

One of the very first things we find in 1 Timothy is something about the young man and his relationship with Paul. He is called Paul's "dear son." There is an endearing nature to the correspondence of Paul and Timothy which is a great model for the mentoring relationships that are always so needed in Kingdom life and mission. Though there is conjecture that Timothy may have heard the gospel through Paul during his first missionary journey²⁴, we first meet Timothy in the biblical narrative in Acts 16:1-5. It is here where we read of his joining Paul in his work with Silas to plant the gospel and establish churches.

¹Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. ²He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. ³Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. ⁴As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. ⁵So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.



What we learn of Timothy here is that his mother was Jewish and his father was a Greek gentile. This made him a man who straddled two religious and cultural worlds of his day. In light of this, he was raised on the teachings and stories of the Old Testament scriptures (see 2 Timothy 3:14-16) by faithful matriarchs who also had become followers of Jesus upon hearing the gospel (2 Timothy 1:3-5). His father's influence is evidenced by the fact that he was not circumcised as a baby in the Jewish way. This made part of his training for missionary service undergoing the knife as a young man for the sake of the gospel. Obviously, the apostle Paul did not think circumcision necessary for salvation for he says in Galatians 6:15 that circumcision or uncircumcision is not anything but what matters is that people are made new creations in Christ (see also 2 Corinthians 5:17). The apostle knew they were going to be preaching Jesus as the Messiah of the Jewish people and they did not want to see Timothy as standing apart from Israel. So he was circumcised in order to not hinder the reception of their message. I do wonder whether Paul put this on the job description beforehand or if he shared this news with him after the fact. Nonetheless we see Timothy as a faithful and sacrificial

²⁴ Walter L. Liefeld, *1 and 2 Timothy/Titus: The Niv Application Commentary from Biblical Text--to Contemporary Life, The Niv Application Commentary Series* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1999), 20.

young leader whom God had raised up to bring the good news of Messiah to his world.

Timothy's role was unique in that he served in a time of transition from the time of the apostles to the establishment of local churches for the continued mission of Jesus.

Setting and Date

As mentioned above, the first letter to Timothy was likely written by Paul around AD 64-65 from Macedonia to Timothy who had been left as an apostolic delegate in Ephesus. Timothy had been given the assignment to combat false teaching in the Ephesian church and root the people in good teaching and living as Christians in a non-Christian world. From the wording of the letter it seems that Timothy's role was to refute false teaching that had arisen from within the community and was leading people astray. Gordon Fee notes that this reflects the precise problem Paul had warned about in Acts 20:30. People would arise from within the church itself and lead people away from Jesus.²⁵ Furthermore, Paul encouraged Timothy to help the people live as a family, care for one another and live with wisdom in a Greco Roman world.

Character of Timothy

Timothy's name in Greek, Timo-theos is a name that is a concatenation of two words. One for honor, the other for God. His very name means "one who honors God."²⁶ His home town was a place called Lystra which received the gospel early in history from the apostle Paul's preaching. He was a young man, likely in his thirties, who perhaps was given to some timidity, fear and a somewhat sickly constitution.²⁷ He wasn't some bold preacher or daring Daniel standing with courage amidst a den of lions. Rather he was a young man, trying to faithfully serving his Lord under the tutelage of his fatherly mentor and friend. By this time in his life Timothy was a well-seasoned man in the ministry having served Paul in several different cities and ministry contexts.²⁸ Through many assignments Timothy had been prepared for a tough and challenging task from his mentor. He had to set into order a church that was in turmoil due to her own leader's false teaching and poor example. From the words Paul wrote to him in both 1 and 2 Timothy he needed much encouragement in the task before him.

²⁵ Quoted in Witherington, *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1-2 Timothy and 1-3 John*, 170.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 181.

²⁷ Stott, *Guard the Truth : The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus : Includes Study Guide for Groups or Individuals*, 37-38.

²⁸ Daniel L. Akin, David Platt, and Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus, Christ-Centered Exposition* (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Reference, 2013), 3.

Cultural Issues of the Day

There were many ways the gospel community differed from the world around them in Ephesus. Sexual morals of the Christian community were vastly different than the world of the Roman Empire. Jesus had taught and given a view of men and women that was profoundly unique challenging the view of households and religious assemblies of their time. Furthermore, the gospel had elevated the view of the weak, oppressed and the downcast such that the Christian community contained both slaves/servants and their masters as brothers and sisters in the Lord. In our own day similar cultural issues have come back around where societal views of sex and gender are once more in stark contrast with that of Jesus and his people. The inspired Scriptures once again challenge us to understand ourselves differently than the surrounding world and to care for one another and live together under the Lordship of Jesus in our time. This leads us to conclude with the major themes which we hope impacts our lives together in this season at Jacob's Well.

Main Themes for Jacob's Well

Though there are many themes and subjects we will travel in together as we traverse the first letter to Timothy, I want to highlight a few for our consideration as we being the journey. These are not exhaustive but rather to focus our hearts and expectations as we come to the inspired biblical text.

Maturing and Mentoring

Implicit in the responsibility Paul gave to Timothy was to teach the church to grow up in the Lord. To align their lives to the gospel and live with one another in a way that is congruent with the truth of Jesus. Furthermore, the letter itself is a letter of guidance from a teacher to a disciple. The practice of teaching, mentoring, training and encouraging another in life and ministry is essential to the church and the mission of Jesus. In the letter itself we find an example of encouragement and guidance we need to live our lives for Jesus.

Life and Doctrine

It seems that as people we tend to bifurcate what we believe and how we live. It is far too easy to have ideas or concepts you hold to but far more difficult to discipline ourselves and live out our convictions. One of the things we see in the life of Jesus and his apostles is that life and teaching, our living and beliefs are to be held in unity. We find Paul

teaching Timothy that BOTH his life and his doctrine/teaching matter immensely. Basing our lives on falsehood will destroy both soul and body. Not trusting God's Spirit to empower us to live in ways that Jesus calls us is a fool's errand that betrays unbelief. Though both life and doctrine are always a work in progress, we should keep watch over them, desiring to align ourselves to the truth in word and deed.

Gender and Glory

The Bible begins with God creating all things good and this included the crown of creation in the fashioning of human beings.



²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

Genesis 1:26

Upon the fall of our first parents, what God designed in unity has been fractured and broken. The battle of the sexes, oppression of women, denial of our uniqueness and a confusion in gender roles has long been present under the sun. Jesus challenged the gender paradigms of his day and the teaching of the Scriptures will both correct and expose error in each generation regarding our views of men and women.

Past generations had different struggles related to being men and being women and our generation has its own set of difficulties. The letter of 1 Timothy addresses a context where men and women were learning who they were as disciples and how to live well in families and the household of God. Paul exhorts Timothy to specifically address the ladies and the men. It's going to get interesting as we look at some of these exhortations together.

Leadership and Character

Elders and Deacons, Pastors and Servants are just Christians. There are no supermen or women in the church. Just humans. To serve, shepherd and lead Christ's church is a noble task and leadership is not tested on talents, gifts and being a rock star. Character comes first and is central to all who would care for and serve the church family. In the Scriptures you find churches made up of members of the body of Christ all gifted to do their part in the ministry of the gospel. Some will be called to specific roles of pastoring and serving in various capacities and 1 Timothy lays out the basic character aspects of such

men and women. In our membership classes at Jacob's Well we talk about elders who serve by leading and deacons who lead by serving. 1 Timothy will give us some clarity on elders and deacons who give themselves to love the body of Christ.

Family and Care

In the Christian community we are called to help one another in practical ways and in times of need. We are to relate to one another as family and to extend honor, courtesy and love to one another in practical and helpful ways. Furthermore, we are to care for our own families and lean on one another when we are in difficult circumstances and dire straits. 1 Timothy will show us that we are to both take care of our own business and be willing to share with others. We will see that it is a blessing to receive and give within the family of faith. Humility and generosity should be our path not letting the love of money turn ourselves away from loving our neighbors as ourselves.

Gospel Clarity and Mission

Finally, and most importantly, 1 Timothy will teach us about our God and Savior Jesus Christ. There is such resounding clarity in this book that teaches us who we are, who Jesus is and all that we receive in the gospel of grace. The most important truths we can know are on full display in this letter: the nature of God, the person and work of Jesus, our need and the great benefits of the gospel will be our north star as we mature and move forward as a church in central New Jersey.

We are going to take it slow through the first Letter to Timothy to soak in the gospel sun and feel the warmth of God's truth. We are going to examine false teaching to hold fast to the truth. We are going to look at our masculinity and femininity as great gifts from God. We will embrace our responsibilities and relationships with one another and fight the good fight of faith in our day. My hope is that as we head towards Easter 2016 we will be full of life and zeal to "guard the deposit entrusted" (1 Timothy 6:20) to us to hold forth the gospel in our time and generation. To do this we will need to be ever aware of our need for "Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. (1 Timothy 1:2)

As we prepare our hearts to be "Disciples" who mature in our faith along with Timothy let us be reminded by the great words of the classic benediction from 1 Timothy 1:17:

[17] To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Yours before his Throne,



Reid S. Monaghan



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Tentative Schedule

- 09/20/15, Disciple - Maturing in Faith with Timothy, 1 Timothy 1:1-2,
- 09/27/15, With Doctrine from Love, 1 Timothy 1:3-7
- 10/04/15, Pumpkin Day
- 10/11/15, The Law is Good, 1 Timothy 1:8-11
- 10/18/15, The Sinner Saving Savior, 1 Timothy 1:12-17
- 10/25/15, Charged and Entrusted, 1 Timothy 1:18-20
- 11/01/15, Prayers for All, 1 Timothy 2:1-4
- 11/08/15, Jesus is the Man, 1 Timothy 2:5-7
- 11/15/15, Adornment, 1 Timothy 2:8-10
- 11/22/15, Context, Creation and Salvation in Christ, 1 Timothy 2:11-15
- 11/29/15, Overseers - In the House, 1 Timothy 3:1-5
- 12/06/15, Overseers - Mature and Respected, Timothy 3:6,7
- 12/13/15, Bring on the Servants, 1 Timothy 3:8-13
- 12/20/15, Godliness and the Household of God, 1 Timothy 3:14-16
- 12/27/15, Late Departures, 1 Timothy 4:1-5
- 01/03/16, Hitting the Gym, 1 Timothy 4:6-10
- 01/10/16, Setting the Pace, 1 Timothy 4:11-15
- 01/17/16, Keeping Watch, 1 Timothy 4:16
- 01/24/16, Being Family, 1 Timothy 5:1-2
- 01/31/16, Caring for Family - Part 1, 1 Timothy 5:3-8
- 02/07/16, Caring for Family - Part 2, 1 Timothy 5:9-16
- 02/14/16, The Honor of Pastors, 1 Timothy 5:17-25
- 02/21/16, Servants and Family, 1 Timothy 6:1-2
- 02/28/16, False Teachers and their Fruits, 1 Timothy 6:3-5
- 03/06/16, MC Open Houses
- 03/13/16, The Love of Money, 1 Timothy 6:6-10
- 03/20/16, Fight and Flight, 1 Timothy 6:11-16
- 03/25/16, Good Friday, Divine Remembrance
- 03/27/16, Easter Sunday, Divine Forgetfulness, 1 Timothy 6:17-20



