

DAYBREAK



SERIES

Faith IN ACTION



ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER 1975

INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS



TELEPHONE (305) 443-7471 - CABLE "ADVENTIST" MIAMI • Office of the President

July 22, 1974

Dear Fellow Believers Around the World:

Inter-America has grown to be the second largest division in the world church. During the last ten years the membership has more than doubled--an increase of 129 percent--or a membership of about 430,000. The churches are literally bursting at the seams. An ever-increasing number of young people, comprising more than half the church membership, are knocking at the doors of our church schools, day and boarding academies and colleges. Administrators are straining every nerve and stretching every dollar, trying to open the way for this new generation and to prepare them for future responsibilities in the church. But because the financial resources of the church do not keep pace with the growth of the membership and the need for new facilities, Inter-America is looking forward to the generous offering of our faithful Sabbath school members around the world, to help meet its most pressing needs.

This Thirteenth Sabbath, Caribbean Union College, located near Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, which suffered from two fires in 1973, is at the top of the list to benefit from your liberal offering, along with Andrews Memorial Hospital in Kingston, Jamaica, the oldest hospital in Inter-America.

When Andrews Memorial Hospital was first built, the work was small, but over the years it has helped to create a favorable climate for the preaching of the gospel. Today, Seventh-day Adventists are well respected there for what they do as well as for what they believe. This institution has exerted a tremendous influence in Jamaica far in excess of its size, but the time has come to expand before it becomes outdated.

We are very grateful for your contributions in the past, and we are confident that our brothers and sisters around the world will respond sacrificially during this Thirteenth Sabbath in answer to our urgent call.

Yours for a liberal Thirteenth Sabbath Overflow,


B. L. Archbold
President
Inter-American Division

BLA:r

Daybreak  Series

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No. 321, July-September, 1975

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"As a means of intellectual training, the opportunities of the Sabbath are invaluable. Let the Sabbath-school lesson be learned, not by a hasty glance at the lesson scripture on Sabbath morning, but by careful study for the next week on Sabbath afternoon, with daily review or illustration during the week. Thus the lesson will become fixed in the memory, a treasure never to be wholly lost."

—"Education," pages 251, 252.

I pledge myself to the careful and prayerful study of some portion of my Sabbath School lesson each day of the week.

(signed)

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FAITH IN ACTION

Introduction

The letters known as First and Second Timothy and Titus are among the few examples in the New Testament which describe how one generation passes on the Christian witness to the next. Other New Testament writings, such as the letters to the Romans or to the Galatians, emphasize the content of Christian theology and its ethical applications. Rare, however, is the occasion in the Bible where the nature and problems of evangelical communication are elaborated.

Christianity is more than mental belief in unique theological doctrines; Christianity is a new way of life that has been made possible by the personal intervention of God Himself into the affairs of men and women.

But who would believe such an unthinkable thought? Only those who had personally met such a Person and discovered that everything He said about man's problems, his hopes and fears and weaknesses, was true. More than that, such people would also discover that His solutions to these fears and weaknesses really worked and that Jesus, in fact, had the truth and everything He said rang true. Wherever His words were relayed, from person to person, from country to country, the same human discoveries were made. Jesus spoke the truth about life, His solutions worked, lives were changed, the awareness of more than human help was evident.

But Jesus met relatively few people in Palestine during His short ministry, and fewer yet of this circle actually discovered that He was worth trusting and obeying. But those who made the discovery passed it on. They were concerned that the facts concerning Jesus, who He was, what He said, how He lived, be kept free from addition or subtraction. Though Jesus was no longer on earth, His story leaped from continent to continent. The credibility of the good news rested, not primarily in the strange message His followers proclaimed but in their own personal witness of what this message had done for them. A new life-style was born. Love as never before imagined now motivated whole communities of believers. The impact was unavoidable. It forced a response. As their Lord predicted, the life of love became a rebuke and a judgment to those who were settled into their self-indulging, self-justifying ways. Alienation, ridicule, and finally physical harm became the common lot of Christians. How could they survive such unfair treatment? Those who did had learned that their Lord was close by, always providing the strength needed to bear any hardship.

What we have just described is the life of faith doing what comes naturally for those who have learned the peace that comes from trusting and obeying their Lord Jesus. Such living, dynamic faith has never been needed more than it is today. The study of the letters to Timothy and Titus has never been more timely. We are living at a time when the work so nobly begun by Paul and his colleagues should be completed. The coming of their Lord to earth in great glory that they preached so convincingly is long overdue. The solution to the urgent problems of an unfinished task and of a delayed advent may be seen in the passionate concern for authentic evangelism which permeates these three letters which will be the source of our study during this quarter.

Before beginning the verse-by-verse study of each book it would greatly assist the student in understanding the book's message if he would read the whole book through once, or several times, at one sitting.

INTRODUCING TWO YOUNG MEN OF FAITH



"I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you." 2 Tim. 1:5, RSV.

"To Titus, mine own son after the common faith." Titus 1:4.

Since sin entered the human family, faith has not been a natural human trait. A sinner is self-centered and determined to make himself lord of his own life. Faith, however, is the opposite of sin and self-centeredness. When a man of faith makes Jesus Lord of his life, he gladly places his thoughts, feelings, and desires under the will of His Lord. He lets his Lord do for him what he could never do for himself. He listens carefully for daily in-

structions. He says Yes to whatever God wants him to do. He knows that his Lord desires only the best for him and in that knowledge he finds peace, inner strength to meet life's problems, and a restful look into the future.

Some may want to describe this relationship as trust or confidence. And they would be correct. Trust and faith are two equally acceptable English words for the Greek word **pistis**. A man of faith cheerfully obeys God because He trusts God. A man of faith is a man of action because faith always leads the believer to be concerned about living as Jesus would live.

In young Timothy and Titus we find a pattern of faith that all, young and old, can safely emulate today. It was not easy 2,000 years ago to call Jesus Lord when such commitment led not only to ridicule but also to physical danger. Nevertheless, in spite of peril on all sides, these two young men provided the human support that Paul, Christianity's greatest man of faith, needed as he planted the seeds of faith across two continents. Eventually Paul came to the place when he could die, confident that the flickering lamp of faith would continue to burn brightly in the lives of second generation Christians such as his two younger colleagues. They proved that genuine faith could bridge the generation gap and keep the meaning of Christianity alive though its pioneers would die.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Timothy Meets Paul, Acts 14:19, 20; 16:1a**
2. **Timothy's Family Life, Acts 16:1b; 2 Tim. 1:5**
3. **Timothy's Character, Acts 16:2**
4. **A Snapshot of Timothy, 1 Tim. 4:12**
5. **Paul's Co-worker, 2 Tim. 3:10,11**
6. **Titus, the Other Son, Titus 1:4**

Part 1
TIMOTHY
MEETS PAUL

Under what conditions did Timothy first meet Paul?

"But Jews came there [to Lystra] from Antioch and Iconium; and having persuaded the people, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city; and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe." Acts 14:19, 20, RSV.

"And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy." Acts 16:1a, RSV.

Timothy, a Lystran, probably saw Paul mercilessly stoned and dragged through the streets of Lystra during Paul's first missionary journey. Yet, young Timothy did not flinch before his neighbors while he took his position beside the bloody body of his spiritual hero. Paul's miraculous recovery coupled with his forgiving spirit gave authenticity to the amazing message that he had been proclaiming.

During the approximately three years between Paul's first and second visit to Lystra, the meaning of Christian faith became a matter of personal experience for Timothy. He had come to know the Lord that Paul had proclaimed. Paul left no New Testament book for Timothy to read, for none had been written. Timothy based his faith on the Old Testament and the personal witness of an itinerant preacher who taught that God had become man in Jesus Christ, *and* that this Jesus is alive forevermore to restore power and dignity to all men through His Holy Spirit.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the real basis for Christian faith? On what does Christian faith build today?

"Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven's chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience. We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked by our own individuality. These precious acknowledgements to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christlike life, have an irresistible power that works for the salvation of souls."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 347.

Timothy's faith was not the result of philosophical logic or scientific evidence; he heard the voice of God talking to him through Paul's witness of faith. Timothy responded to Paul and through Paul to Jesus, just as Paul himself had earlier responded to Jesus.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "The Lord's Vineyard," pages 296-299.

Part 2
TIMOTHY'S
FAMILY LIFE

What divisions seemed likely in Timothy's home?

"A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer; but his father was a Greek." Acts 16:1b, RSV.

"I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you." 2 Tim. 1:5, RSV.

Timothy grew up in a divided home. We do not know if his father ever became a Christian. We can surmise that family peace was not complete even under the best of conditions as long as Timothy's mother worshiped the crucified Jesus of the Jews and his father, through Greek eyes, saw the whole story as foolishness. "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness." 1 Cor. 1:22, 23.

Timothy's experience gives hope and courage to all who find themselves in a divided home—whether the Christian be a parent or a child. Much credit must be given to godly Lois and Eunice. They knew how to keep Jesus before Timothy as a child and later as a teen-ager so that He was loved and not resented.

What can young parents today learn from Timothy's home life? 2 Tim. 3:15.

THINK IT THROUGH **What relationship do you see between a Bible-centered home and a faithful teen-ager? Is there always a direct cause and effect? Why? Is the Bible enough?**

"From a child he had known the Scriptures. The piety that he saw in his home life was sound and sensible. The faith of his mother and his grandmother in the sacred oracles was to him a constant reminder of the blessing in doing God's will. The word of God was the rule by which these two godly women had guided Timothy. The spiritual power of the lessons that he had received from them kept him pure in speech and un-sullied by the evil influences with which he was surrounded. Thus his home instructors had co-operated with God in preparing him to bear burdens."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 203.

FURTHER STUDY

Child Guidance, pages 38-44.

Part 3
TIMOTHY'S
CHARACTER

What can be said about Timothy's reputation?

"He [Timothy] was well spoken of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium." Acts 16:2, RSV.

Paul's second missionary journey convinced him that the gospel was winning the hearts of men and women wherever it was preached. The need for trained workers who would nurture the growing groups that Paul would leave behind became one of the veteran apostle's chief concerns. Strong pastoral leadership was needed as well as more evangelistic teams.

On Paul's second visit to Lystra he was encouraged by the steadfastness of the young church and especially with the development of young Timothy.

"In Timothy Paul saw one who appreciated the sacredness of the work of a minister; who was not appalled at the prospect of suffering and persecution; and who was willing to be taught. Yet the apostle did not venture to take the responsibility of giving Timothy, an untried youth, a training in the gospel ministry, without first fully satisfying himself in regard to his character and his past life."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 203.

Paul did not want any more experiences such as he had with John Mark. See Acts 12:25; 13:13; 15:37-40. Youth were needed to carry the burden, but he wanted young men who were experienced in faith, men who had earned the respect of their peers as well as older members of the community. Such a young man he found in Timothy.

THINK IT THROUGH **In choosing leaders for the church, regardless of the level of responsibility, what qualifications are the most important?**

"As the lessons of the Bible are wrought into the daily life, they have a deep and lasting influence upon the character. These lessons Timothy learned and practiced. He had no specially brilliant talents, but his work was valuable because he used his God-given abilities in the Master's service. His knowledge of experimental piety distinguished him from other believers and gave him influence."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 205.

Nothing can compensate for genuine faith that is recognized alike by colleagues and by non-Christians. Platform skill, persuasive eloquence, mental brilliance—all such abilities may be useful and do permanent good only when used by the man of faith who truly witnesses to the converting power of the Lord Jesus.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 205-210.

Part 4
A SNAPSHOT
OF TIMOTHY

How did Paul emphasize the influence of youthful believers?

“Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.”
1 Tim. 4:12, RSV.

From one standpoint Timothy was an untried youth. He was “little more than a boy” when Paul took him as his understudy. See Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 918. Yet his character pattern had become well established; he had satisfied Paul’s investigation.

“In the history of Timothy are found precious lessons. He was a mere lad when chosen by God as a teacher; but so fixed were his principles by a correct education that he was fitted for this important position. He bore his responsibilities with Christlike meekness. He was faithful, steadfast, and true, and Paul selected him to be his companion in labor and travel. Let Timothy should meet with slights because of his youthfulness, Paul wrote to him, ‘Let no man despise thy youth.’ He could safely do this, because Timothy was not self-sufficient, but continually sought guidance.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 915.

Read 1 Tim. 5:23.

Here is a suggestion that Timothy may not have enjoyed robust health. But nevertheless Timothy plunged into the very demanding life that Paul’s schedule called for. Paul knew, however, that, unless Timothy placed a high priority on his physical strength and general health habits, he would soon become useless as a leader. Mental and moral alertness are largely dependent upon a healthy body.

Although some believe that Paul here advocates the moderate use of fermented wine for medicinal purposes, others contend that Paul refers to unfermented wine and was not likely to give advice inconsistent with Scriptural warnings against intoxicating beverages. The main point to consider is that Timothy needed to be reminded that optimal health was a major asset in his role as a church leader.

Read 2 Tim. 1:7, 8.

Paul’s admonition intimates that his young co-worker may have been, by natural temperament, tilted more toward being an introvert than an extrovert.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is there a particular kind of personality that God can best use as a Christian worker? If so, how would you describe that person? What about those who don’t fit the pattern?

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pages 469-474.

Part 5
PAUL'S
CO-WORKER

What became Timothy's clearest teaching manual on how to become a faithful pastor?

"Now you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, my sufferings, what befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra, what persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me." 2 Tim. 3:10, 11, RSV.

Four times in the two letters to Timothy (two in each) Paul called him "son" (KJV) (in RSV two of these are rendered "child"). Although Paul probably had no son after the flesh, his relationship with Timothy seemed to compensate. The bond between these two men, one in his middle forties and the other yet in his teens, melded almost immediately; the mutual trust developed beyond the normal co-worker cordiality.

Read 2 Tim. 2:2.

Timothy learned by watching and doing. His information was not rented or second-hand, not merely academic but thoroughly experiential. Truth became more than an intellectual experience, more than a knowing; Timothy saw what Paul had early realized, that truth is a matter of *doing* the will of God.

"The great apostle often drew the younger disciple out, questioning him in regard to Scripture history, and as they traveled from place to place, he carefully taught him how to do successful work. Both Paul and Silas, in all their association with Timothy, sought to deepen the impression that had already been made upon his mind, of the sacred, serious nature of the work of the gospel minister."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 204.

THINK IT THROUGH

Does Paul's advice to Timothy, as well as His method of developing his effectiveness as a soul winner, apply only to young ministers? Is there any difference between the way a minister witnesses to the power of the gospel and that expected of an ordinary church member?

"Christ has given to the church a sacred charge. Every member should be a channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that the Saviour desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and His character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love. All heaven is waiting for men and women through whom God can reveal the power of Christianity."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 600.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "To Meet the Bridegroom," pages 416-421.

Part 6
TITUS, THE
OTHER SON**How did Paul regard Titus?**

"To Titus, mine own son after the common faith." Titus 1:4.

Little is known of Titus. He is not mentioned in the book of Acts. References to him in Paul's letters however indicate that, like Timothy, Paul had found in Titus a remarkable young man who could be trusted, not only with the doctrinal content Paul had taught him, but also as a reliable co-worker. He became the leader of the church's expansion into the area now known as Yugoslavia. See 2 Tim. 4:10.

Read 2 Cor. 8:23, 16, 17.

Titus had been sent to Corinth on one of the most sensitive missions ever undertaken in the Christian church. The Christian community in this influential port city was in great danger of destroying itself and bringing doubt into the minds of many regarding the genuine effectiveness of the gospel.

"Pride, idolatry, and sensualism were steadily increasing among those [in Corinth] who had once been zealous in the Christian life.

"As this picture was presented before him, Paul saw that his worst fears were more than realized. . . . Gladly would he have visited Corinth at once, had this been the wisest course to pursue. But he knew that in their present condition the believers would not profit by his labors, and therefore he sent Titus to prepare the way for a visit from himself later on."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 300, 301.

After sending the letter and Titus, Paul could only hope for the best. As time passed and not hearing from Corinth or Titus, Paul left for Troas on his way to Macedonia, hoping to find Titus. "I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother." 2 Cor. 2:13.

Read 2 Cor. 7:6, 7.

This remarkable incident tells us much about Titus. He was young but effective. He was a bridge builder and not one who delighted in polarizing a group. He was more committed to building up a program than taking advantage of misunderstandings between a leader and his followers. Titus could have subtly alienated Corinth from Paul and built himself up as a more understanding, up-to-date leader. If Titus had not been a man of faith, the situation at Corinth could possibly have become a complete disaster.

THINK IT THROUGH **What dangers does a conciliator face? How differently could the Corinth problem have turned out if Titus were self-serving?**

THE PURPOSE OF THEOLOGY



"Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do." 1 Tim. 1:4.

"The ultimate aim of the Christian ministry, after all, is to produce the love which springs from a pure heart, a good conscience and a genuine faith. Some seem to have forgotten this and to have lost themselves in endless words. They want a reputation as teachers of the Law, yet they fail to realize the meaning of their own words, still less of the subject they are so dogmatic about." 1 Tim. 1:5-7, Phillips.

It is a frightening thought that, along with the "lawless and disobedient", as described in this first chapter (verses 9, 10), an appalling number of Bible-quoting church members will also be lost. These church members, known generally as those "in good and regular stand-

ing," will be lost, not because they did not know the truth about Jesus and His second coming, or that the seventh day is the Sabbath, but because the truth did not change their dispositions, daily habits, and attitudes toward other people.

For those who still have time to decide about which group they want to finally end up in, Paul's counsel to Timothy is very real and clear. No amount of theology understood, no great service record of talking about it with others, no commendable program of financial stewardship, nor anything else that is good in itself will do, **if!** If doctrine becomes only an end in itself and not a means to refine the character until it finally reflects Jesus Himself, if an outstanding service record merely reflects human activity and enthusiasm rather than Christ's approach, the terrible moment of truth will come when Jesus says, "I never knew you." Matt. 7:23.

This week's lesson will never have been learned by the five foolish virgins (Matt. 25). Church members, yes, but not candidates for the kingdom. Accepted perhaps as leaders in their local churches on earth, they are not fit to be saved into a community where love springs forth spontaneously and where a rebel thought never arises. Words cannot emphasize the importance of learning what Paul wanted Timothy to make clear to the church members at Ephesus and all Christians ever since.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The Challenge of Ephesus, 1 Tim. 1:3**
2. **Authentic Credentials, 1 Tim. 1:1**
3. **Faith Misunderstood, 1 Tim. 1:4**
4. **Aim of Doctrine, 1 Tim. 1:5, 6**
5. **Faith Exalts the Law, 1 Tim. 1:8-11**
6. **Paul, an Example of Faith and Love, 1 Tim. 1:12-14**

Part 1
THE CHALLENGE
OF EPHESUS

At what famous city was Timothy given major responsibilities?

"As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus." 1 Tim. 1:3, RSV.

Timothy fulfilled many difficult assignments as Paul's representative, but going to Ephesus was perhaps his most important. He had spent more than two years in Ephesus during Paul's third evangelistic tour, followed by a special assignment to Corinth, some time with Paul in Greece, and then the last journey to Jerusalem where Paul was arrested.

During the first imprisonment in Rome, Timothy remained with Paul; after the release Paul and Timothy journeyed to Asia Minor, with Timothy staying in Ephesus while Paul moved on. Ephesus became a key base for the expansion of Christianity, and a clear thinking leader was needed to consolidate the work that Paul and others had developed. That Timothy was accounted capable of fulfilling this assignment is eloquent testimony of his ability and also unqualified vindication of Paul's earlier judgment to train Timothy as his close associate.

Read Acts 19:26, 27.

Along with being one of the great commercial capitals of the ancient world, Ephesus was also a center for the various schools of Greek and Oriental philosophy as well as most forms of pagan religion. Acts 19 refers to the great temple of the goddess Diana, or Artemis, that attracted vast multitudes of pilgrims and brought much wealth and fame to Ephesus. Besides being the swirling center of philosophy and pagan religion, Ephesus also had a strong Jewish community with its teaching and influence.

"Ephesus was not only the most magnificent, but the most corrupt, of the cities of Asia. Superstition and sensual pleasure held sway over her teeming population. Under the shadow of her temples, criminals of every grade found shelter, and the most degrading vices flourished."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 286.

THINK IT THROUGH

If you had been Paul or Timothy, how would you have begun preaching the gospel in such a city as Ephesus? Are there similar challenges today? What evangelistic approaches do you think would be most effective?

"Those who belong to the higher ranks of society are to be sought out with tender affection and brotherly regard. Men in business life, in high positions of trust, men with large inventive faculties and scientific insight, men of genius, teachers of the gospel whose minds have not been called to the special truths for this time—these should be the first to hear the call."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 230.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, Vol. 6, pp. 77-84.

Part 2
AUTHENTIC
CREDENTIALS

What made Paul's credentials authentic?

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope."
1 Tim. 1:1.

Paul's opening words sound out a note of authority, making it clear to all who would read this letter in Ephesus and elsewhere that he was not merely writing a personal letter to his old friend Timothy. After many years of watching young churches develop, knowing first-hand where the unseen dangers would be, Paul sent this very explicit pastoral letter to Ephesus through its chief pastor.

Paul spoke forcefully, knowing to whom he owed his first loyalties. Since those early days with Ananias in Damascus when he first heard the call to the Christian ministry, Paul had lived under the "commandment of God." In holy boldness and humility he took his place with the Twelve as one of Christ Jesus' special emissaries—the apostles.

In what way would God (the Father) be our Saviour? Is Christ our hope only in the sense that He is coming again? Or that He as a Person has become the ground of hope because of what He did as a human being?

All members of the Godhead have participated in the work of saving mankind although they may have had different functions. In emphasizing God as our Saviour, Paul stresses the deliverance from the guilt and power of sin that the Godhead provides; in emphasizing Jesus as our hope, we are reminded that without God becoming incarnate in Jesus, there would be no meaning to life, no reason to hope that anything could truly get better. Life without hope is a depressing, suffocating experience.

The pagan world had been calling some of their chief gods "Savior" for some time. Great men, such as Alexander the Great, were called "Savior," as were the Roman emperors. But all these applications never rose higher than the economic or political spheres; only Christianity, building on the rich background of the Old Testament, applied the concept of Saviour to the spiritual and eternal.

THINK IT THROUGH **If you were Timothy, would you have wanted Paul to begin this important letter on church management any differently? What responsibility would you feel if you had received a letter such as this?**

For us living in the twentieth century, this letter to Timothy carries as much authority as it did to the church members at Ephesus. It contains priceless guidance for the church today.

Part 3
FAITH MIS-
UNDERSTOOD

What is the danger of theological speculation?

"Nor to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than the divine training that is in faith." 1 Tim. 1:4, RSV.

Paul moves directly to the point: anything that does not lead to faith is pure waste and, worse, destructive. God designs that faith should be the beginning and end of divine training.

Faith is a dynamic way of life—a personal relationship with God wherein man cheerfully demonstrates his trust in God by a life habit of obedience. He says Yes to God in prosperity and adversity. Faith is the opposite of sin. A sinner is a rebel; he distrusts God and does not make Him Lord of his life.

When the man of faith turns to his neighbor and witnesses to his Lord, he begins to theologize, to explain doctrinally who it is that he trusts and for what reasons. The quality of his faith, his trusting, obedient relation with God, does not necessarily depend upon how much formal theology he knows.

In what way can you see doctrine (or theology) becoming a handicap to faith? In what way can faith make it possible to understand doctrine?

"The faith that is unto salvation is not a mere intellectual assent to the truth. He who waits for entire knowledge before he will exercise faith cannot receive blessing from God. It is not enough to believe *about* Christ; we must believe *in* Him. The only faith that will benefit us is that which embraces Him as a personal Saviour; which appropriates His merits to ourselves. Many hold faith as an opinion. Saving faith is a transaction by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 347.

Strange as it may seem, many people enjoy the bizarre, the mystical, the novel, rather than the simple message of the gospel. They feel they are on the "inside" when they share some novel speculation, and the excitement is often misunderstood for genuine religion. Here Paul makes it clear that a misunderstanding of faith can open the door to many kinds of useless activity often done under the cloak of respectable Christianity.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I substitute the confidence I have in doctrine for the daily confidence I should have in the empowering guidance of a living Saviour?

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "To Meet the Bridegroom," pages 408-416.

Part 4 **In what way can even Bible study become a substitute for**
AIM OF **faith?**
DOCTRINE

"Whereas the aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith. Certain persons by swerving from these have wandered away into vain discussion." 1 Tim. 1:5, 6, RSV.

The aim of the Christian ministry (the "charge" given to Timothy) is to present before the world a truly loving people, a community of Christians that reflects the love and faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is for this that Christ lingers.

"Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.

"It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 69.

If faith does not produce love, it is not genuine faith. So Paul said: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." Gal. 5:6.

Paul's chief concern is that the gospel should make clear the new kind of life possible in Christ Jesus. We have often found it easier to learn doctrine than to make a life habit out of truly loving others. Thus some swerve from the purpose of the gospel, finding their security in knowing about the truth, rather than living in the truth, loving as Christ loved.

THINK IT THROUGH **What internal connection do you see between a pure heart, a good conscience, sincere faith, and love? Are they synonymous or sequential?**

"It is contrition and faith and love that enable the soul to receive wisdom from heaven. Faith working by love is the key of knowledge, and everyone that loveth 'knoweth God.' 1 John 4:7."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 139.

A good conscience depends upon the source of the information that it is guided by. An ignorant conscience will not produce a sincere faith any more than a sincere faith can function alongside an impure heart or an unintelligent conscience. Faith is the key that awakens conscience, purifies the heart, and prompts genuine love.

FURTHER STUDY *Christ's Object Lessons*, "Without a Wedding Garment," pages 311-315.

Part 5
FAITH EXALTS
THE LAW

"But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; . . . according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." 1 Tim. 1:8-11.

How can a good law be misused and lead to bad religion?

Paul hastens to distinguish between teachers who misuse the law and the law itself. Neither academic credentials, obvious literary skills, or a wealth of information will guarantee that a theologian rightly understands the law of God.

For example, how to apply the Ten Commandments has been the point of contention between well-trained theologians for centuries. Some say it applied only to the literal Jews, others contend that Christians under grace are no longer under the law. The problem gets even more difficult when earnest Christians are deluded into thinking that outward conformance to the law (a necessary and commendable objective) somehow provides security and satisfies God's expectations for His people.

Only genuine faith can rightly understand the purpose of the law. The scribes and other teachers of the law in Christ's day misunderstood this purpose and were rebuked by our Lord. See Matt. 22:29. As Paul said in Romans 7:12, "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." So he reminds the church through Timothy that "the law is good." The man of faith knows that without the law no man would know God's will or how far man has strayed; faith says Yes to whatever God has commanded because faith knows that the law tells the truth about God and man.

What relationship is there between the law and love?

"Love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. 13:10.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I find it easier to keep the law than to have faith? Easier to keep the law than to love? See Matt. 19:16-22.

It is possible to emphasize the law and become recognized as commandment keepers and still miss the mark and swerve from love, a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. See 1 Tim. 1:5. One does not have to dismiss the law as Jewish or outdated to be guilty of misusing the law.

"The life of Christ on earth was a perfect expression of God's law, and when those who claim to be children of God become Christlike in character, they will be obedient to God's commandments. Then the Lord can trust them to be of the number who shall compose the family of heaven."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 315.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Without a Wedding Garment," pages 316-319.

Part 6
PAUL, AN
EXAMPLE OF
FAITH AND
LOVE

Where do faith and love begin?

"I thank him who has given me strength for this, . . . because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. 1:12-14, RSV.

Read also 1 Tim. 1:15-17.

Paul was his own best illustration of what the gospel is all about. He had been guilty of misunderstanding the law—not as a vain speculator as some, not as others who diminished the importance of the law, but as one who confused the purpose of the law. He had trusted in external obedience and had missed the spiritual intent of the law. In serving God with this misguided understanding of the law, he had overlooked the principle of love and mercy that God Himself was showing to all men.

When Paul finally accepted Jesus as his Lord, he saw the law in a completely new setting. Instead of a burden, it became a friend—it showed him how much he truly needed grace.

Instead of viewing verses 12 to 17 as a digression, we should see them as a beautiful snapshot of what the gospel will do for anyone who lets the grace of God overflow in his life. Gratitude for salvation, for knowing Jesus as a personal Friend and Saviour, becomes as spontaneous as breathing. If thankfulness does not spring forth naturally, something very serious has happened to the spiritual life of a professed Christian.

Instead of his former "unbelief" (literally, "unfaith"), verse 13, Paul was a model of living faith (verse 14). Genuine love had replaced a merciless self-righteousness that had once driven a rabid bigot to kill men in the service of God. What greater example could be given of the power of God in Jesus Christ? If Paul could be changed, should any man doubt what God could do for him?

THINK IT THROUGH

If Saul of Tarsus heard the gospel only as interpreted by the teachers of the law described in verse 7, do you think that there would have been Paul, the converted Pharisee? What is the only appropriate response to the gospel? What alone proves that Jesus indeed saves sinners?

"Satan had claimed that it was impossible for man to obey God's commandments; and in our own strength it is true that we cannot obey them. But Christ came in the form of humanity, and by His perfect obedience He proved that humanity and divinity combined can obey every one of God's precepts. . . .

"When a soul receives Christ, he receives power to live the life of Christ."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 314.

Christ's Object Lessons, "Without a Wedding Garment," pages 307-311.

FURTHER STUDY

"I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."

1 Tim. 2:8.

Victorious Christians have discovered that their strength depends on strict attention to key areas such as a good conscience, genuine faith, an open spirit to the secular world and its civic responsibilities, a mission-oriented life, and a healthy concern for decorum in all aspects of life. In this week's lesson Paul clearly shows how all these fit together in an authentic Christian witness.

All Christians will face occasions when the road ahead seems uncertain and the troubles of the day formidable. Paul reminds us that we all have had occasions in the past when older and more experienced Christians have recognized our commitment and our usefulness to the Church's program. That memory of acceptance and trust by others is a deep source of personal strength when the light temporarily dims.

Christians have not always linked their personal devotional life with their civic responsibilities and world outreach. Such nearsightedness has often led to sad consequences. When religious talk is more with Christians than with non-Christians, something very alien to true Christianity has occurred. If Christians are concerned about "the heathen" in lands afar and not also with next-

door neighbors who know not the love and strength of Jesus, something very distorted has happened; serious consequences that spell spiritual disaster soon follow.

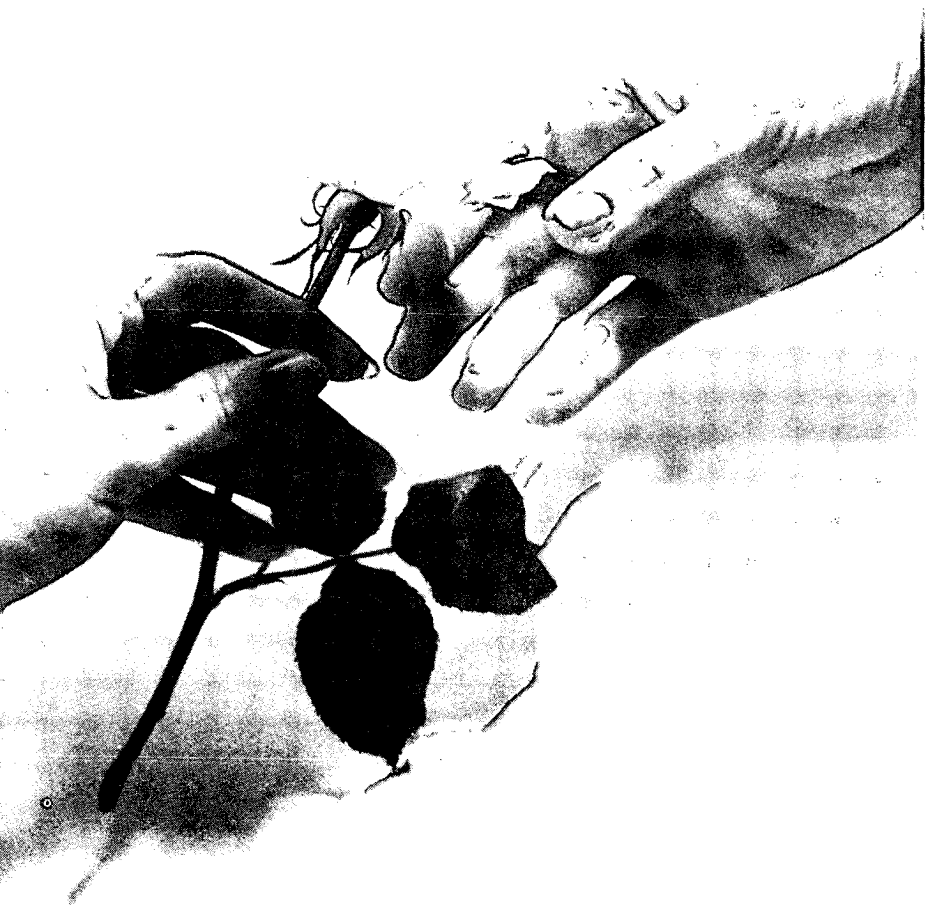
Charging through the world with lances aimed at principles, untempered by timing and propriety, certain people have, in the name of the best of causes, wounded people rather than established truth.

Paul has much to say in this week's lesson about how the Christian should go about gaining the attention of the world as well as how to keep himself strong and untarnished in the process.

LESSON OUTLINE

- 1. Public Recognition and Confirmation, 1 Tim. 1:18**
- 2. Relationship Between Faith and Conscience, 1 Tim. 1:18, 19a**
- 3. How to Shipwreck Faith, 1 Tim. 1:19**
- 4. Relating to Civil Powers, 1 Tim. 2:1, 2**
- 5. Motivation for Missions, 1 Tim. 2:3-6**
- 6. Men and Women of Faith at Worship, 1 Tim. 2:8-15**

THE CHRISTIAN'S WEAPONS



Part 1
PUBLIC RECOGNITION AND CONFIRMATION

What was the source of Timothy's continued inspiration?

"This charge I commit to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophetic utterances which pointed to you, that inspired by them you may wage the good warfare." 1 Tim. 1:18, RSV.

Every Christian is by definition a witness to Christ. In addition the church has always recognized that certain persons are called to a specific work in Christian service. Such recognition has usually been confirmed by public ordination.

Timothy had a general charge and a specific task that changed frequently over the years. Paul had sent Timothy to Ephesus specifically to stabilize the doctrinal foundation in a time of conflict. See verse 3. While emphasizing the specific assignment and how to handle it, Paul also reminded Timothy of his ordination and of the ringing words of support from seasoned elders of the church.

Every Christian worker will have occasions when his immediate assignment is difficult and foreboding and the fear of failure seems crushing. Paul knew all this from experience and here does for Timothy what he would have been grateful for during some of his perplexing days. Today the young pastor, like Timothy, should remember the confidence expressed in being selected by wise church leaders and realize that such public sanction was a recognition of basic qualifications for hard duties. Thus he will often find his courage greatly strengthened and his mind cleared for fresh action.

"God foresaw the difficulties that His servants [Paul and Barnabas] would be called to meet, and, in order that their work should be above challenge, He instructed the church by revelation to set them apart publicly to the work of the ministry. Their ordination was a public recognition of their divine appointment to bear to the Gentiles the glad tidings of the gospel. . . .

"It was an acknowledged form of designation to an appointed office and a recognition of one's authority in that office."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 161, 162.

THINK IT THROUGH

Have you fulfilled the expectations of those who had much confidence in your abilities to serve Jesus in a specific manner? What can you yet do to recover lost opportunities or to assure yourself and the Lord that you will be prepared for the next opportunity to lead someone heavenward?

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "The Work and the Life," pages 77-83.

Part 2
RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN
FAITH AND
CONSCIENCE

What are the two weapons that guarantee the Christian's victory over evil?

"This charge I commit to you, Timothy, my son, . . . that . . . you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience." 1 Tim. 1:18, 19a, RSV.

Paul states that living, genuine faith and a good conscience rests firmly on the conviction that God has spoken through inspired men (verses 18, 19). Faith is not built on human logic or philosophy; conscience is not safe or consistent if it gets its directions from human reasoning or feeling.

Conscience enables a person to pass judgment on his own acts or thoughts, but it acts only according to the light it has. This inner moral monitor is only as dependable as the standards it sets up for itself. Thus a conscience can be over-scrupulous (1 Cor. 10:25) or seared by abuse (1 Tim. 4:2).

The man of faith admits the truth about himself and God when he confesses that he is the rebel and wants forgiveness. Those who do not admit themselves to be rebels do not acknowledge Jesus as Lord. Thus their understanding of truth is profoundly distorted. Such distortion directly affects the quality of conscience. The conscience can be no sharper and safer than the information it calls truth.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is it possible for two people to look at and hear the very same truth and yet for only one to respond in faith? What keeps the other person from faith when the information received is equal?

"God does not conceal His truth from men. By their own course of action they make it obscure to themselves. Christ gave the Jewish people abundant evidence that He was the Messiah; but His teaching called for a decided change in their lives. They saw that if they received Christ, they must give up their cherished maxims and traditions, their selfish, ungodly practices. It required a sacrifice to receive changeless, eternal truth. Therefore they would not admit the most conclusive evidence that God could give to establish faith in Christ."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 105.

It is impossible to have a seared or bad conscience if one has genuine faith. The conscience of a man of faith may be immature and need enlightenment (Rom. 14:22, 23); yet it must not be violated even though it may need education. The man of faith makes a life habit out of knowing as much about God and himself as is humanly possible under the help of God. Such faith is the only guarantee that the conscience is rightly directing the Christian.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, Vol. 2, pp. 118-124.

Part 3
HOW TO SHIP-
WRECK FAITH

What erosion usually precedes the collapse of faith?

"By rejecting conscience, certain persons have made shipwreck of their faith." 1 Tim. 1:19, RSV.

In verse 18 Paul uses the analogy of strategic warfare as the original language suggests. In verse 19 Paul uses another graphic metaphor, that of the shipwrecked vessel.

Hymenaeus and Alexander (verse 20) were leaders among those who were teaching strange doctrine and confusing the Ephesian church regarding the real aim of the Christian gospel. Paul struck at the heart of the problem when he noted that the faulty conscience precedes a shipwrecked faith.

This sequence is as old as the apostolic church and as fresh as tomorrow. It is a pity but true that those who "thrust away" or "reject" a good conscience find things divine less and less appealing. In fact, justifying excuses pampers the indulged conscience, and a strange blindness sweeps over the soul until the blinded one no longer sees or lives in reality.

"The Lord requires us to obey the voice of duty, when there are other voices all around us urging us to pursue an opposite course. It requires earnest attention from us to distinguish the voice which speaks from God. We must resist and conquer inclination, and obey the voice of conscience without parleying or compromise, lest its prompting cease and will and impulse control. The word of the Lord comes to us all who have not resisted His Spirit by determining not to hear and obey. . . .

"Let no man flatter himself that he is a successful man unless he preserves the integrity of his conscience, giving himself wholly to the truth and to God."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pp. 69, 70.

THINK IT THROUGH

Have you noticed in your own life the subtle connection between a compromised conscience and a fading faith? Have you also noticed that peace of mind and heart return only when you have squared your life habits with the will of God, regardless of earthly consequences?

Compromise does not always involve gross sins; it may easily be cloaked with the approval of one's peers. Pride of education and superior skills, pride of popularity, desire to please those who are in power—all such unseen drives can argue a good conscience into a self-serving one. The end of such compromise is a shipwrecked faith that no longer hears the voice of God in either the Bible or conscience.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Other Lessons From Seed-sowing," pages 84, 85.

Part 4
RELATING TO
CIVIL POWERS

For whom should Christians earnestly pray?

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." 1 Tim. 2:1, 2.

In this second chapter Paul begins his specific counsel regarding matters that needed emphasis in Ephesus and perhaps in all the young churches: (1) the importance of intelligent prayer (verses 1-8); (2) the part women were to take in public worship (verses 9-15).

When small in numbers and misunderstood, Christians in any age have found it easy to feel detached from the larger world about them. But Paul attacked this natural inclination to withdraw from civic responsibilities. Especially in public worship, Christians are consciously to recognize their involvement with all men, high and low. Christianity was to enlighten provincial attitudes and to strengthen civil cooperation wherever such could be done in good conscience.

Public prayer was to include petitions, intercessions, and thanksgiving for all men; all men needed the moral lifting power of Christians. To pray for another is the first step in recognizing another's need and how it can be cared for. Inclusiveness in public prayer would keep the face of the church turned toward the world.

But what may have been surprising was Paul's counsel to pray for Nero and other government leaders who had made life difficult for the early Christians. If Paul commanded early Christians to pray for such a despot, surely no leader of any government is beyond the circle of Christian sympathy and intercession.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is Paul's reason for prayer offered on behalf of public officials basically selfish? If not, what would be the desired result of such prayers?

We are reminded of Paul's counsel in Romans 13. Christians are not to be known as unpatriotic; that is, they should always be working to support the common good and not be identified with any particular political faction.

"We are not required to defy authorities. Our words, whether spoken or written, should be carefully considered, lest we place ourselves on record as uttering that which would make us appear antagonistic to law and order. We are not to say or do anything that would unnecessarily close up our way."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 69.

FURTHER STUDY

Gospel Workers, pages 391-396.

Part 5
MOTIVATION
FOR MISSIONS

Why should Christians pray for all men everywhere?

"This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all." 1 Tim. 2:3-6, RSV.

The instruction already given in this chapter was given for two reasons: (1) it would reflect how God has always related to all men; (2) such open concern for the welfare of all men, regardless of their rank or race, was the only way that Christians could please God and do His bidding.

Neither prayer nor church activity in general should be limited to personal interests. The Christian is global in thought and act; he does not interest himself in only part of mankind any more than his Lord limited Himself to only a segment of mankind.

Salvation is not limited by God's willingness but by man's reluctance "to come to the knowledge of the truth." Coming to "the knowledge of the truth" is the act of faith. Accepting "the truth" means that a person recognizes the fact that he is a sinner, that he needs divine forgiveness and help, that he finds such in accepting Jesus as the Lord of his life, and that obedience to truth is hereafter his chief goal in life.

What fundamental fact makes Christianity unique and not just another useful religion among many others? Verse 5.

Probably the most awesome thought expressed in the history of man is here reaffirmed by Paul: "There is one God." But even more than that: "There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Other religions have emphasized monotheism (the oneness of God), but no other religion has developed the concept of a God-man mediator, historically manifested.

Can a more beautiful, moving, powerful thought be uttered and contemplated? God, for man's sake, laid aside the security of divine rights and became man in order that He could speak and act in terms that man could understand. Jesus revealed to mankind how God still thought about sinners and what He desired to do for them, if they would only be willing to cooperate with Him.

THINK IT THROUGH **How is the Christian church to convey to the world today this magnificent truth about God who became Man and make it convincing? Would merely telling this story be enough?**

FURTHER STUDY *Christ's Object Lessons, "The Lord's Vineyard,"* pages 300-306.

**Part 6
MEN AND
WOMEN OF
FAITH AT
WORSHIP**

What are some of the significant characteristics that distinguish people of faith in public worship?

"I desire then that in every place the men should pray . . . without anger or quarreling; also that women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly. . . . Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. . . . Yet woman will be saved . . . if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty." 1 Tim. 2:8-15, RSV.

After giving his counsel regarding the universal scope of public worship in the Christian congregation, Paul now emphasizes the spirit and behavior of the worshipers. Paul was speaking to specific problems that emerged in these emerging churches: (1) the need for order and purpose, and (2) the need to reduce misunderstanding regarding the new role for women that Paul encouraged at a time when such freedoms would have been greatly misinterpreted by the general public.

Is Paul more interested in the posture of prayer or the spirit in the one who prays? Verse 8.

The Ephesus congregation apparently had a number of members who wanted the privilege of being spiritual leaders but were more interested in public recognition of their leadership skills than in the spirit of the gospel they tried to teach. They misunderstood the central feature of Christianity.

Why do you think Paul was so explicit in his counsel regarding women in public worship?

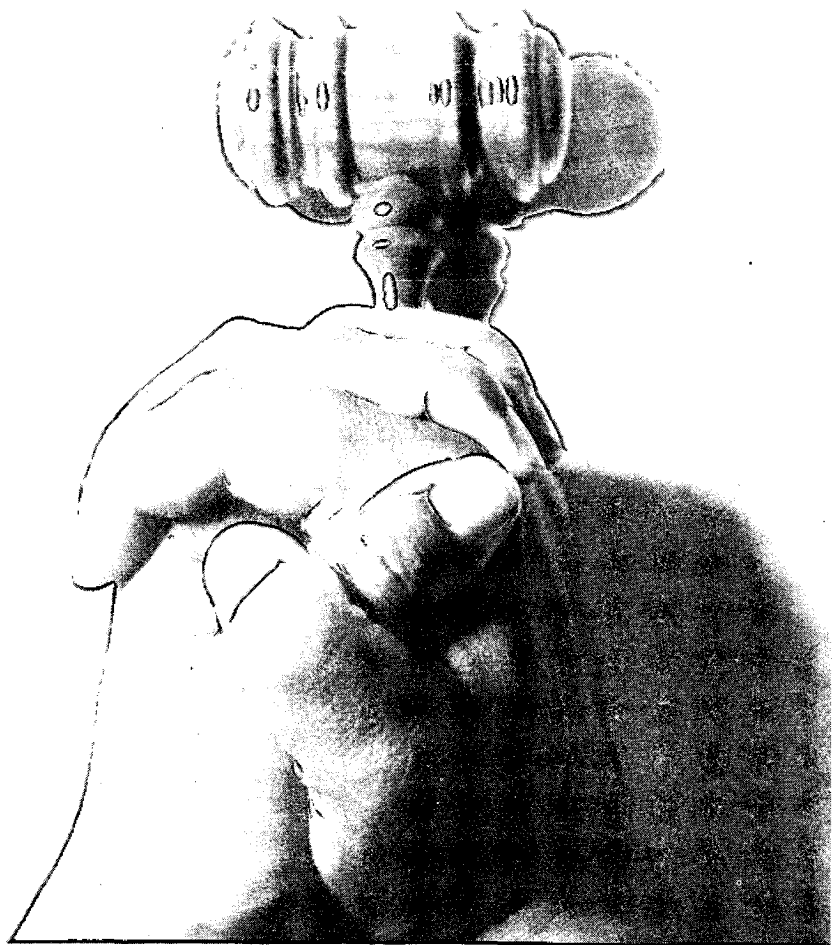
In Paul's day the rights of women, both private and public, were, relatively speaking, nonexistent. Perhaps no one man or group of men has surpassed Paul in radically altering the status of women. His writings have fostered the emancipation of women in securing social, civil, and political rights.

But Paul knew the dangers of misunderstanding in a day when women of ill repute were easily identified by both their extravagant adornment and cosmetics on one hand, and their public assertiveness on the other. Paul expected that the simple principles of the gospel that cut through all self-indulgence and self-assertiveness would be clearly manifested in both Christian men and women.

THINK IT THROUGH **Does my selection of clothes and hair style, my purchases of automobiles and homes, my life-style as a confessing Christian reflect modesty, self-respect, love, and holiness?**

FURTHER STUDY *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, pp. 424-426.

CREDENTIALS FOR CHURCH LEADERSHIP



“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.”

1 Tim. 3:16.

Among Paul's concerns as he wrote to Timothy was efficient leadership in the young Christian communities. In other letters that Paul had written (Rom. 12:1-8, e.g.), he had made clear that the spirit and principles of Christian leadership are vastly different from those that govern the leaders of secular institutions. For the Christian, leadership is not a matter of status but of service. How different from the relations that prevail between leaders and followers in the army or in a great corporation!

Within a century and a half after Paul's death a terrible misunderstanding regarding the authority of ecclesiastical office had been established. Because of this tragedy millions were destined to suffer and die in the centuries that followed. As a result, authentic Christianity nearly vanished from the earth.

Paul's specifications for the selection of leaders, as set forth in this week's lesson, stress the leader's personal example and positive spiritual image. Executive ability alone does not qualify a man to be a responsible Christian leader. Knowing human nature as he did, Paul foresaw the danger that love of position and power would lead men to conclude—consciously or unconsciously—that office makes a man holy and right, that it guarantees correct belief.

Another unfortunate misconception is that one church office is inherently superior to another, and that it confers greater holiness to the one who holds the higher offices.

In Paul's instruction to Timothy he stresses the New Testament principle of faith-fellowship, not the

traditional misconception of dogma-institution. The church is not a building, nor an institution, but a fellowship of men of faith who reveal the truth about life. They demonstrate the superiority and winsomeness of the God-directed life, and they are reliving before the world God's message in Jesus—that truth is not merely a matter of knowing the will of God, but of doing it.

Only Christlike leaders of the Christian community can rightly represent the One who said, "I am . . . the truth." Only irreproachable believers of integrity can be pillars and bulwarks of the truth. The gates of hell, Christ said, would never be able to prevail against that kind of church.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The Household of God, 1 Tim. 3:14, 15**
2. **The Mystery of Our Religion, 1 Tim. 3:16**
3. **The Elder—1, 1 Tim. 3:2, 3**
4. **The Elder—2, 1 Tim. 3:4, 5**
5. **The Deacon—1, 1 Tim. 3:8-10**
6. **The Deacon—2, 1 Tim. 3:12, 13**

Part 1
THE HOUSE-
HOLD OF GOD

What was Paul's chief reason for writing to Timothy?

"I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that, if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth."
1 Tim. 3:14, 15, RSV.

Here Paul gives his reason for writing not only the specific instructions regarding elders and deacons but also the general summary of his important teachings that we now call 1 Timothy.

Paul planned to visit Timothy in Ephesus soon. But knowing the uncertainty of travel and other hazards, Paul wanted to be certain that Timothy had in his hands authoritative guidelines for the organization of the Ephesians into a model church for Asia Minor. Every church since has had the privilege of checking its own procedures against the inspired instruction given by Paul.

The church is not a human institution even though it must be humanly administered. This fact has been hard to remember for many innovators throughout the history of the church. Even though the church is a living fellowship, organized by and for the general welfare of its members, it is also the "pillar and bulwark of the truth."

What relationship exists between the behavior of Christians and the fact that they are to function as the "pillar and bulwark of the truth"? Verse 15.

Worshiping and representing a living God requires a living dynamic faith that is easily distinguished from the anxious, self-indulging men and women living without Christ. The Christian church has more assigned to it than merely to proclaim information—even if that information were without error. To be the "bulwark" or the buttress of the truth means that truth is believable only when the lives of the professing church members back up and clearly give visible structure to the word that is preached.

The central truth of the gospel is that God is able (Jude 24) to keep Christians from sin. Paul proclaims that "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Rom. 8:37.

Only when Christians reveal this power and manifest God's purposes will God be rightly represented and vindicated.

THINK IT THROUGH

What relationship is there between a clear, living witness to the truth about the living God and the end of the world?

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "First the Blade, Then the Ear," pages 62-69.

Part 2
THE MYSTERY
OF OUR
RELIGION

What is the great mystery of the universe that could be made known only through revelation?

"Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory."

1 Tim. 3:16, RSV.

Why does Paul call Christianity a mystery?

In the New Testament frequent references are made to the mysteries of certain aspects of the gospel and to the gospel generally. See Rom. 16:25; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 3:3, 4. But mystery is not used here to suggest that something is covered up and kept secret. Although Paul uses "mystery" often, he always refers to divinely revealed truth that God wants all men to know. It is a mystery in the sense that it could be known in no other way than by God's revelation.

How else, except through revelation, could anyone understand the incarnation of Jesus or His resurrection?

The greatness that Paul stresses is not the mysterious nature of the gospel but its importance, its earthshaking possibilities. Any genuine Christian reading Paul's letter would quickly say Amen!

THINK IT THROUGH

Would you confess with Paul that the central fact and inspiration of your personal understanding of the gospel is the incarnation of Jesus? How would you answer the question: What is the great uniqueness of the Christian religion?

In verse 9 Paul emphasizes that church officers must possess "the mystery of faith with a clear conscience." In verse 16 he discloses the grounds for faith, the substance that faith believes, "the mystery of our religion."

Six tremendous facts (verse 16) about Jesus, God who became man, provide the reason Christians have hope for the future, an endless resource to love in spite of provocation, and a life-style that reverses the degeneration of the human race.

That God became man is the most stimulating, most refreshing, most thoroughly unique statement ever uttered by man. The tragedy is that the Christian church has been most responsible over the years for diluting the meaning of the incarnation by not recognizing that He became truly man. By fearing to suggest that the Holy God should know the tug of temptation, they have minimized His actual feat of being the first man to live without sin.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, Bk. 1, pp. 252-256.

Part 3 **What high standards were to guide the church in the selection of its leaders?**
THE ELDER—1

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous." 1 Tim. 3:2, 3.

The word "bishop" is the translation for the Greek word that literally means "overseer"; in the New Testament this word and another translated "elder" are used interchangeably, one referring to the scope of his work and the other to the dignity that befits such a leader.

The emphasis on the leader's irreproachable character as known among people outside the church as well as by fellow Christians is placed in proper perspective. The word "must" is strongly emphasized in the Greek as it should be. By the very nature of the case, Christian leaders *must* be living illustrations of the truth they profess to teach, not only for the sake of the community in general but also as a model for fellow members.

Also interesting in Paul's requirements of the elder is that there is nothing about this list, except perhaps "apt to teach," that is any different from that expected of all church members. Paul does not recognize two spiritual divisions within the church: first-class being the clergy, and second-class, the laity.

"Husband of one wife" means that the church leader must be a man who is irreproachable in the area of sexual conduct. Although marital fidelity was taken very lightly in Paul's day, this instruction has never grown out-of-date. Perhaps it is needed to be said today as much as Paul needed to say it then.

"Vigilant" means literally, "an abstainer from wine." The elder should refrain from all that is harmful and use all else judiciously.

"Sober" suggests prudence; every church needs sound-minded leaders who can detect imbalance and fanaticism on one hand and devious liberalism on the other.

"Good behaviour" calls for leaders who are true Christian gentlemen. They exhibit a fitness and propriety that sum up the previously mentioned traits.

"Apt to teach" does not mean merely that the elder should be willing to teach but that he be able to teach with a certain measure of skill.

THINK IT THROUGH **Paul lists five negatives that must not be a part of the leader's reputation or character. Is there often a correlation between some or all five of these negative characteristics?**

Part 4 **How closely do a leader's children affect his church work?**
THE ELDER—2

"He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way; for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God's church?" 1 Tim. 3:4, 5, RSV.

For two reasons ill-mannered children are a liability to a church leader, whether he be a minister or local elder; they are a poor exhibit of the power of Christianity, and they give evidence that the father is incompetent for church leadership. Paul is using the argument of the less to the greater—if a man fails in a smaller task (that of managing his own family), he is incapable of successfully managing the many families that compose a local congregation.

Although a man may possess all the other qualities that Paul lists, a recent convert or a hopeful beginner should not be elevated to important church responsibilities. Age is not Paul's point; spiritual maturity is.

What are some of the dangers that may overtake a man who has been prematurely placed in a position of heavy responsibility? Verse 6.

Paul mentions how subtle conceit may be, even in a man of good intentions. Pride loses perspective; the affected one makes hasty decisions, not realizing the implications of the problem. The ability to listen to others is not a mark of a proud man or of many inexperienced men. Falling into the same condemnation that Satan has received may sound harsh, but Paul was realistic.

In determining the qualifications of church leaders, how high a premium should be placed on the opinion of persons outside the church? Verse 7.

Again Paul uses the strong emphasis in the Greek: "He must be well thought of by outsiders." RSV. The potential church leader should enjoy a favorable reputation. Apparently, he should be someone who is already recognized as a man of integrity in his community.

THINK IT THROUGH **Have you ever heard that a member was put into leadership in order to encourage him, showing that the church was interested in him? Why might this be a disaster for that person?**

FURTHER STUDY *The Desire of Ages*, pages 249-251.

Part 5 **How does Paul describe the qualities expected of a deacon?**
THE DEACON—1

“Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for gain; they must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then if they prove themselves blameless let them serve as deacons.” 1 Tim. 3:8-10, RSV.

The precise nature of the deacon's responsibility is not made clear in the New Testament, and about all we know is found in the above text and Philippians 1:1. In Rom. 16:1 reference is made to a woman called a deaconess. (See RSV.) Although the seven men, including Stephen, who were appointed to aid widows in the Jerusalem church (Acts 6) were not called deacons, it seems that their great assistance in relieving the apostles for preaching caused early leaders like Paul to think seriously about such a group in every church.

About the only difference between the qualifications for the deacon and the elder is that the deacons are not expected to be especially trained as official teachers of the church. Paul expected the same spiritual and moral standards to be upheld by both levels of leadership.

Being double-tongued is a serious problem for anyone, but it is a grave problem indeed for someone who has the responsibility of making the rounds of visitation as expected of a deacon or an elder. They would hear much that would require careful discernment; instead of a peacemaker, a double-tongued leader would be a troublemaker.

The warning against greed does not indicate that money-making is evil. It is a warning against dishonorable gain such as tripped up Judas as he handled the disciples' funds. The deacon in his personal business should plan to be successful, but it should be earned honestly. Certainly the deacon should not use his office for personal gain, even though he might not do anything legally dishonest.

THINK IT THROUGH **Why does Paul again join faith and conscience? Is it because Paul demands more than “a good conscience”? Can a person have a good conscience and do some very bad acts?**

Every potential candidate for church office should ask himself whether his conscience can approve his life-style when compared with the expectations of God's will.

As for the elder, so with the deacon—no one should be hurried into church office. There must be a record of mature Christian living. Church offices were not made so that the careless may be given a chance to prove themselves.

FURTHER STUDY *The Desire of Ages*, pages 437-439.

Part 6 **What are the legitimate rewards for those who serve well**
THE DEACON—2 **in church office?**

"Let deacons be married only once, and let them manage their children and their households well; for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. 3:12, 13, RSV.

Again, as with the elders (verse 2), Paul places a high premium on a deacon's marital fidelity and his ability to manage his own household. All Christians should be faithful to their marital vows; if there is reason to question, that person should never be appointed a deacon or an elder.

Apparently Paul feels that ill-tempered, disobedient children are sufficient evidence that a man, in spite of other executive abilities, is disqualified to assume the function of a church leader.

THINK IT THROUGH **What satisfactions and compensations await a church officer who performs his duties conscientiously?**

Certainly men and women who do their church duties faithfully will enjoy the respect and confidence of their fellow church members. More than that, their commitment will be noticed by people outside the church and could become an avenue of blessing to such.

More than the well-deserved commendation and respect of others is the church worker's growing confidence in his Lord's guidance. He knows that without the assurance of his Lord's care and power many would be the occasions for defeat and discouragement. Nothing prepares a man for larger tasks more than the settled confidence that God is always able to provide the wisdom and strength needed, regardless of the duty assigned. Developing such boldness of faith is the highest form of compensation that any Christian could hope for.

"The humble worker who obediently responds to the call of God may be sure of receiving divine assistance. To accept so great and holy a responsibility is itself elevating to the character. It calls into action the highest mental and spiritual powers, and strengthens and purifies the mind and heart. Through faith in the power of God, it is wonderful how strong a weak man may become, how decided his efforts, how prolific of great results. . . . The more one tries to explain the word of God to others, with a love for souls, the plainer it becomes to himself. The more we use our knowledge and exercise our powers, the more knowledge and power we shall have."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 354.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Talents," pages 360-365.

“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.”
1 Tim. 4:16.

Paul’s emphasis in this week’s lesson is on quality people who alone are able to proclaim the good news about God to man. This kind of quality is the result of faith—man cooperating with God, who has promised to supply all that is needed in order to restore in man the long-besmirched image of his Maker. Such Christians know by personal experience that Jesus not only saves man from the penalty of sin but also from its power.

But such an experience does not passively presume that there is nothing for man to do in the development of this quality people. Paul never tires of repeated reference to toiling and striving. But he knows that the strength to strive, the power to overcome, comes not from within man’s resources but from the empowering Spirit of God. The man of faith lives a grateful life, knowing that the peace he possesses and the victories won are all from the God who has promised to keep him from falling. See Jude 24.

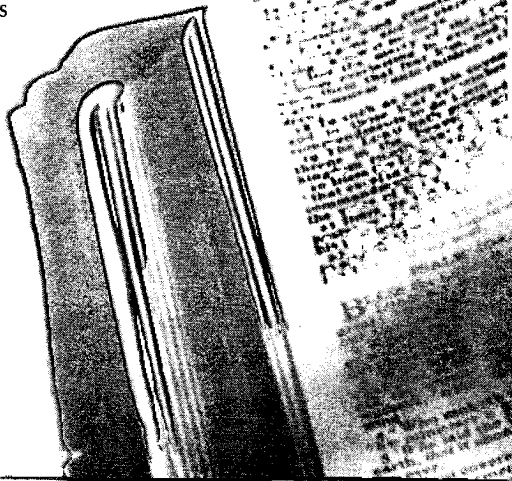
God waits for that generation who will grasp this thought and live its

truth: Men and women can live without sinning even as Jesus lived without sinning; men and women can so live that God can without embarrassment point them out as those who “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Rev. 14:12.

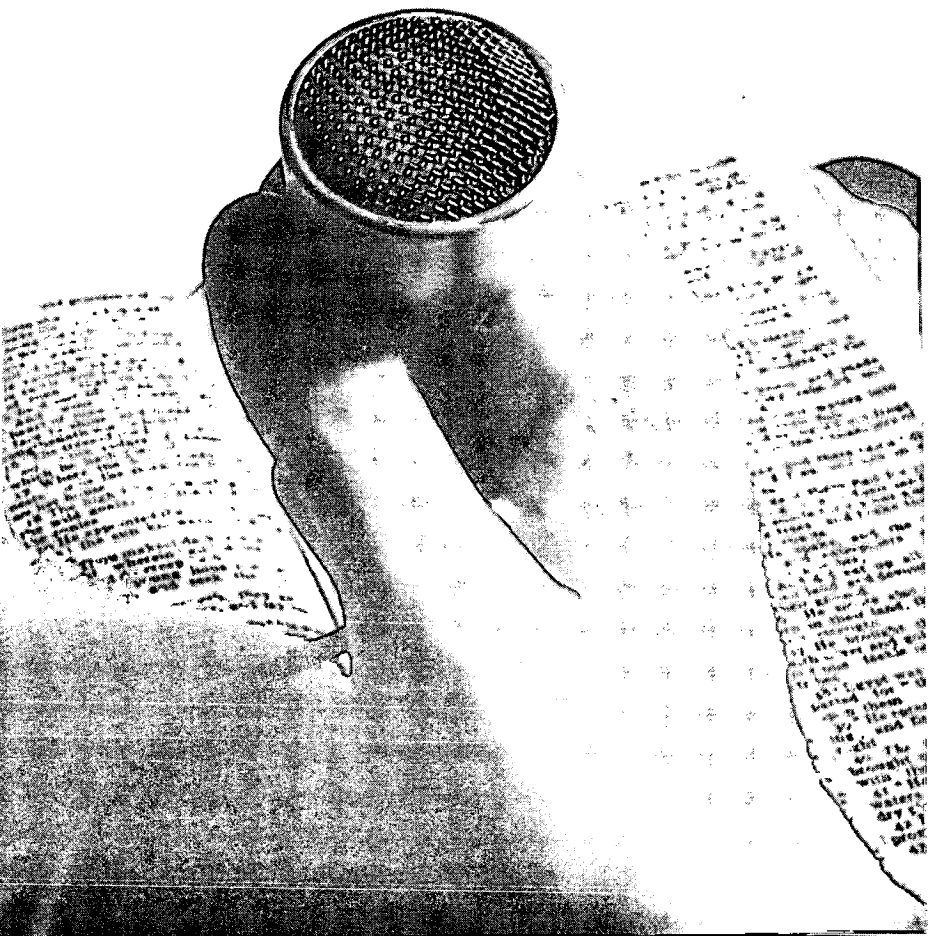
They will have learned well Paul’s admonition: “Take heed to yourself and to your teaching; hold to that, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.” 1 Tim. 4:16, RSV.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Departure From Doctrinal Integrity, 1 Tim. 4:1-3**
2. **Portrait of a Good Leader, 1 Tim. 4:6**
3. **Christian Discipline, 1 Tim. 4:7, 8**
4. **Setting the Example, 1 Tim. 4:11, 12**
5. **Skill in Public Performance, 1 Tim. 4:13-15**
6. **The Greatest Sermon, 1 Tim. 4:16**



PREPARATION FOR MODEL LEADERS



Part 1
DEPARTURE
FROM
DOCTRINAL
INTEGRITY

What special apostasies within the Christian church were predicted by Paul?

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, through the pretensions of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and enjoin abstinence from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.”
1 Tim. 4:1-3, RSV.

“Later times” means in the days to follow, and does not especially refer to the last days. In the previous three chapters Paul has emphasized that one of the chief responsibilities of church leadership is to guard the sacred truth as first proclaimed by the apostles. But, even with such watchfulness, apostasies would occur.

When Paul left Ephesus some years before writing this letter to Timothy (now at Ephesus), what were some of his warnings? Acts 20:29, 30.

Paul here is more explicit regarding these leaders of deceit and some of their false doctrines. They sail under false colors, giving the impression that they are the most loyal to the church’s mission and that what they teach is the deeper meaning of what the church has always believed, et cetera.

Sad but true, a person’s conscience can become so seared by rationalization and habit that all sensitivity to the voice of the Holy Spirit is lost.

Some of these devilish doctrines that would appear logical, and in a strange way desirable in attaining Christian goals, were in the area of asceticism, a visible form of self-denial. Self-denial was central to Christian thought, and any promotion to encourage a person’s self-denial seemed praiseworthy.

But in compulsory celibacy and programmed fasting from certain foods a strange spirit entered the church. Nowhere in the Bible is marriage condemned. In fact in chapter 3, Paul declared it proper for church elders and deacons to be faithful husbands and the heads of godly families. Likewise, nowhere is abstinence from food suggested as a means of developing character. The only prohibition of foods in the Bible (Lev. 11; Deut. 14) refers to unclean foods, and such food was never “created to be received with thanksgiving.”

THINK IT THROUGH

What other ways can you think of that Christians have devised whereby through self-denial or even self-affliction they have sought the praise of men and the pleasure of God?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 257, 258.

Part 2
PORTRAIT OF
A GOOD LEADER

What particular characteristics distinguish a good church leader?

"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." 1 Tim. 4:6.

The reference to a "good minister" does not necessarily mean a clergyman; in fact, any church member who jealously guards the truths of Christianity from the false teachings that so easily creep in would be a "good minister of Jesus Christ."

What is at stake is how men are saved and how God disposes of the sin problem. The evil one will do anything to keep this issue confused, especially in the church. The essence of genuine faith is that men recognize Jesus to be man's Saviour and Example, that there is no good thing that man can do by his own effort without the empowering Spirit of God, and that God's goal for the Christian is to develop a character like his Lord's. Genuine faith and correct doctrine are two sides of the same coin.

Christianity is more than accepting a list of doctrines. If it were only this, the best Christians would be those with the sharpest intellect.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what way did Paul make clear that there is more to Christianity than memorizing good doctrine?

"It is not enough for us to believe that Jesus is not an impostor, and that the religion of the Bible is no cunningly devised fable. We may believe that the name of Jesus is the only name under heaven whereby man may be saved, and yet we may not through faith make Him our personal Saviour. It is not enough to believe the theory of truth. It is not enough to make a profession of faith in Christ and have our names registered on the church roll. . . . Whatever our profession, it amounts to nothing unless Christ is revealed in works of righteousness."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 312, 313.

Genuine faith, Paul's theme here and elsewhere, is concerned about man's relationship with God. Aware of how subtle pride is, the man of faith takes no credit for his good deeds.

"The faith that is unto salvation is not a casual faith, it is not the mere consent of the intellect, it is belief rooted in the heart, that embraces Christ as a personal Saviour, assured that He can save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him."—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, p. 391.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, Bk. 1, pp. 389-398.

Part 3
CHRISTIAN
DISCIPLINE

What kind of discipline is necessary for Christian growth?

“Train yourself in godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.”
1 Tim. 4:7, 8, RSV.

The striving of the false teachers and the pretentious liars was worse than useless—it led to a false sense of security and a self-centered character that misrepresented Christianity.

There is a kind of physical exercise that is useful, Paul says—the kind that builds up health and provides the best possible condition for the spiritual man to grow.

But Paul is more concerned about the discipline that the Christian applies to his attitudes, habits, and desires. The genuine Christian concentrates on those habit patterns that are fitting him to live with the redeemed forever.

“We can never be saved in indolence and inactivity. There is no such thing as a truly converted person living a helpless, useless life. It is not possible for us to drift into heaven. No sluggard can enter there. If we do not strive to gain an entrance into the kingdom, if we do not seek earnestly to learn what constitutes its laws, we are not fitted for a part in it. Those who refuse to co-operate with God on earth would not co-operate with Him in heaven. It would not be safe to take them to heaven.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 280.

How does Paul vouch for the rewards of godliness in the present life? Verse 9.

What is one of the chief motivations that spurs on the faithful Christian worker? Verse 10.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what sense can it be said that the Christian is to “make the best” of both worlds? List the differences between the Christian’s life-style and that of the worldling. Can it be said that, even if there were not a heaven to come, the Christian does not forfeit the best things of this life and enjoys them more than the worldling?

Godliness does have value in this life; it may or may not accompany prosperity, but its blessings are worth more than a rich man’s fortune. What lies ahead when Jesus sets up His kingdom is beyond man’s imagination, but the reality of such promises is as sure as the promises that have been fulfilled in the present life.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pages 497-502.

Part 4
SETTING THE
EXAMPLE**What challenge did Paul give to young Timothy?**

"These things command and teach. 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." 1 Tim. 4:11, 12.

Verses 11-16 are filled with wise counsel for which Timothy and every successful pastor since has been very grateful. Probably equally significant is the heightened awareness that every church member has of the pastor's responsibilities, leading to intelligent understanding and sympathy after reading these verses. Paul did not make the mistake of believing that a blameless life would be sufficient in fulfilling the responsibilities of Christian leadership. There would be times when firm, clear instruction and direction would have to be given in order to correct evil conduct or subversive teachings.

The one factor that could have persuaded Timothy to be less forceful was his comparative youthfulness, although at the time he received this letter he must have been in his mid-thirties. He had to contend with sophisticated men, strong and influential, who had won their way partly because of their apparent piety. But Timothy was commanded to deal forthrightly with the subtle deceptions of the ascetic crowd, regardless of their prestige and his own age.

The young leader's best credentials will be to live above reproach, an example of those Christian graces that are much easier to talk about than to live.

THINK IT THROUGH

From generation to generation, through the history of the Christian church, responsibilities have had to be passed on from the older to the younger. What can be done to guarantee continuing fidelity to doctrine and ethical standards? Should youth be given the opportunity to restructure the church program as they see fit?

"Those who are older must educate the youth, by precept and example, to discharge the claims that society and their Maker have upon them. Upon these youth must be laid grave responsibilities. The question is, Are they capable of governing themselves, and standing forth in the purity of their God-given manhood, abhorring everything that savors of wickedness? . . .

"Not for one moment should the youth think that they can acceptably fill any position of trust without possessing a good character. Just as well might they expect to gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles."—*Counsels to Teachers*, page 536.

FURTHER STUDY

Counsels to Teachers, pages 535-540.

Part 5
SKILL IN PUBLIC
PERFORMANCE

What high premium did Paul place on the Christian leader's performance in public?

"Till I come, attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the elders laid their hands upon you. Practice these duties, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress." 1 Tim. 4:13-15, RSV.

Although Paul turns specifically to the public work that constitutes the major task of a Christian preacher, his counsel should be considered by *anyone who is called to lead out in a public meeting.*

Preaching, teaching, and reading the Scriptures is a difficult art and must be practiced. The novice, or one who has little idea of the sacredness of his work, considers sincerity to be enough. How sad, for their sake and for the many who have a right to hear the gospel given in a clear, meaningful manner.

"The man who accepts the position of being mouthpiece for God should consider it highly essential that he present the truth with all the grace and intelligence he can, that the truth may lose nothing in his presentation of it to the people. Those who consider it a little thing to speak with an imperfect utterance dishonor God."—*Evangelism*, page 665.

Reading the Scriptures in public is no easy task and should be done only after practice and in such a way that will "charm the hearers."—*Evangelism*, page 666.

"The science of reading correctly and with the proper emphasis, is of highest value. No matter how much knowledge you may have acquired in other lines, if you have neglected to cultivate your voice and manner of speech so that you can speak and read distinctly and intelligently, all your learning will be of but little profit; for without voice culture you cannot communicate readily and clearly that which you have learned. . . .

"The tones of the voice have much to do in affecting the hearts of those that hear."—*Evangelism*, pages 666, 667.

THINK IT THROUGH **What is more important—what is said or how it is said? Upon whom is the greater responsibility when the listener doesn't understand or is offended by what is said?**

"The manner in which the truth is presented often has much to do in determining whether it will be accepted or rejected."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 404.

FURTHER STUDY

Evangelism, pages 174-180.

Part 6
THE GREATEST
SERMON

What relationship exists between the Christian's character and the doctrine he believes and shares?

"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." 1 Tim. 4:16.

The genuine Christian first prepares himself before he tries to convince others. He is his greatest sermon. The effectiveness of Christianity rests not on brilliant theological reasoning but on the disarming gracefulness, forbearance, and integrity of its representatives.

God is waiting for a generation who will take Paul's counsel seriously. The doctrine is very important; without it Christian conviction melts into personal feeling that shifts with the circumstances. But doctrine without a demonstration misrepresents the Lord of the doctrine.

The Bible is a light only when it is translated into living color in the lives of genuine Christians. "Through the Holy Spirit, God's word is a light as it becomes a transforming power in the life of the receiver. By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. The light of His glory—His character—is to shine forth in His followers."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 414.

The Greek indicates that Paul is not prodding Timothy into more exactitude in his personal development or in pastoral skills. "Keep on taking heed" would be a better translation.

THINK IT THROUGH

If God alone saves, why does Paul tell Timothy that by constant improvement he will save both himself and his hearers?

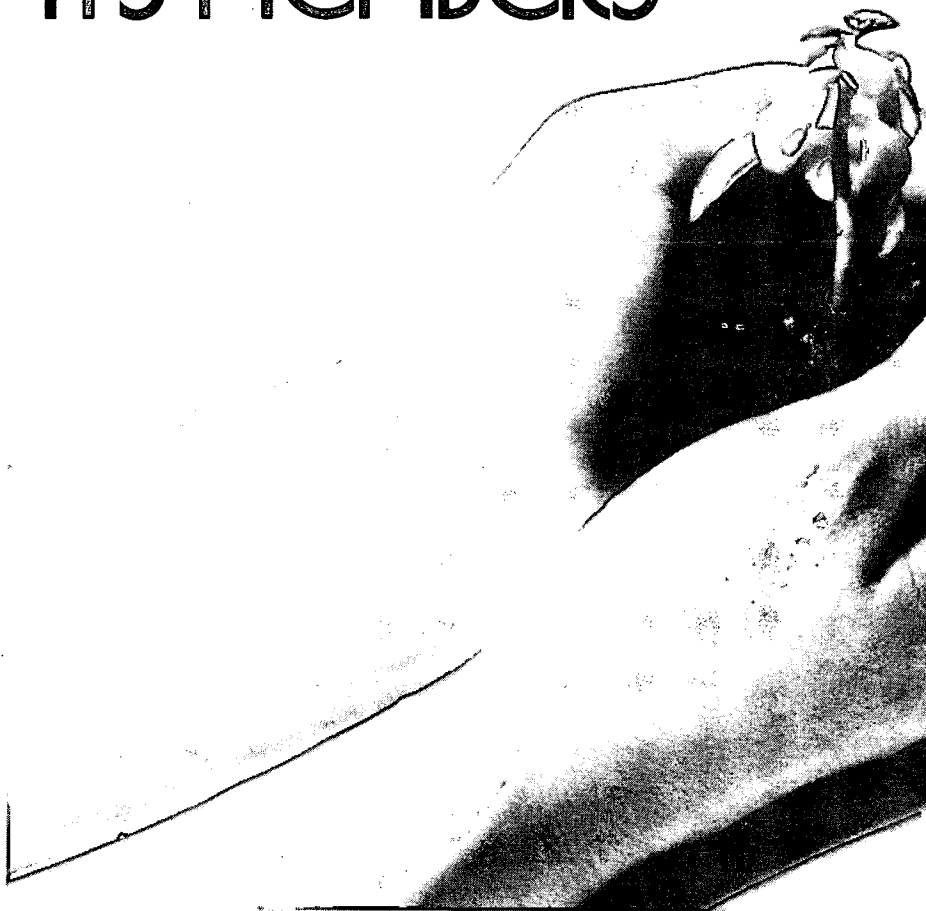
"'Thyself' needs the first attention. First give yourself to the Lord for purification and sanctification. A godly example will tell more for the truth than the greatest eloquence, unaccompanied by a well-ordered life. Trim the lamp of the soul, and replenish it with the oil of the Spirit. . . .

"'Take heed,' first to yourself, and then to the doctrine. Do not let your heart become hardened by sin. Closely examine your manners and habits. Compare them with the word of God, and then cut away from the life every wrong habit and indulgence. Kneel before God, and plead with Him for an understanding of His word. Be sure that you know the real principles of the truth; and then when you meet opponents, it will not be in your own strength; an angel of God will stand by your side, to help in answering every question that may be asked."—*Gospel Workers*, pages 104, 105.

FURTHER STUDY

Gospel Workers, pages 124-132.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCH TOWARD ITS MEMBERS



**"These things teach and exhort."
1 Tim. 6:2.**

It is simply amazing how Paul kept the total picture in balance. Yet when we remember that he was an inspired writer, we recognize the true Source of this balance. He could range the heavens with profound theology and make its application in easy-to-grasp lessons so that the simplest could understand God's will for him. All the while he kept his eye on the mechanics of a well-operating community of saints, perceived areas of tension, and forthrightly ordered procedures that

would have caused endless controversy if authority had not been exercised from the beginning. Just how many today would have foreseen the problems arising within a sensitive congregation that felt certain responsibilities for widows but not really knowing how much responsibility was proper? Or the special target church elders would become when jealous members decided to "hurt" them in some way?

In its work, the Christian congregation faces both the world without and the needs within. Every congregation is composed of many who are new in the Christian walk; they may lack knowledge as well as experience. Some members grow faster than others. Yet all may want to make a contribution to the ongoing life of the local church. A manual is needed to avoid unnecessary misunderstanding, and for this reason Paul wrote out these specific instructions to Timothy and for the church at large.

LESSON OUTLINE

- 1. Basic Human Relationships, 1 Tim. 5:1, 2**
- 2. Responsibility to "Real" Widows, 1 Tim. 5:3-10**
- 3. Guidelines for Young Widows, 1 Tim. 5:11-15**
- 4. Respect for Church Leaders, 1 Tim. 5:17, 18**
- 5. Impartial Justice, 1 Tim. 5:20**
- 6. Truth Will Always Be Revealed, 1 Tim. 5:24, 25**



LESSON 6

Part 1
BASIC HUMAN
RELATIONSHIPS

How should a Christian admonish a fellow church member?

“Do not rebuke an older man but exhort him as you would a father; treat younger men like brothers, older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity.” 1 Tim. 5:1, 2, RSV.

Church leadership involves personal care for individuals as well as developing skills in preaching and in the public reading of the Scriptures. See chapter 4:13.

Some will think they need more attention than truly required; others will complain about what they think to be unfair practices and attitudes on the part of fellow church members. Always there will be some who will be overlooked because they are undemanding, although their need for help will be very great.

When a younger person must admonish an older, respect for age must temper the rebuke. However, age itself does not make rebuke unnecessary. But wise is the young man or woman who deals gently, even when firmness is required, with the person who is older. The counsel is explicit: Do not run roughshod over those who are older.

No matter how correct one is, a person's usefulness is greatly limited by the manner in which he reprimands. Timothy was to be an example of Christian love, showing respect and deference to all who needed to be admonished.

What added caution did Paul give to men as they performed their church duties among young women? Verse 2.

Any breach of propriety may injure or destroy years of excellent reputation of even the most devoted, energetic pastor or church officer.

“The subject of purity and propriety of deportment is one to which we [those called to the ministry] must give heed. We must guard against the sins of this degenerate age. Let not Christ's ambassadors descend to trifling conversation, to familiarity with women, married or single. Let them keep their proper place with becoming dignity; yet at the same time they may be sociable, kind, and courteous to all. They must stand aloof from everything that savors of commonness and familiarity. This is forbidden ground, upon which it is unsafe to set the feet. Every word, every act, should tend to elevate, to refine, to ennoble. There is sin in thoughtlessness about such matters.”—*Gospel Workers*, page 125.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is there anything in my deportment that could be interpreted as an enticement that would appeal to someone else's weakness?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, Vol. 4, pp. 65, 66.

LESSON 6

Part 2
RESPONSIBILITY
TO "REAL"
WIDOWS

How does Paul distinguish between widows who deserve special church support and those who do not?

"Honor widows who are real widows. If a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn their religious duty to their own family and make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God. She who is a real widow, and is left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day; whereas she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives. Command this, so that they may be without reproach."
1 Tim. 5:3-7, RSV.

Paul gives considerable counsel regarding the care of widows—a problem with many aspects. Such care for widows must have been a new concept in the first century A.D. If not properly handled, however, it could have rent the young church. Not only would it disrupt local church budgets, but hazy thinking would divide congregations in endless arguments.

Paul knew how sensitive church members would be regarding the allocation of their funds for the care of needy members. His criteria for the widows who truly deserved church help were as follows: They were not able to support themselves; they had no relatives upon whom they had the right to depend; they were worthy—a credit to the church's name—as well as needy.

How strongly did Paul feel regarding those who did not care for the needs of their relatives? Verse 8.

The care for widowed parents or grandparents is a responsibility resting upon all children and is required by the fifth commandment. Returning the care given to them in their young years of helplessness should be the young's ready response of gratitude to those who are entering their older years of relative helplessness. No amount of Christian service can possibly excuse the abandonment of needy parents or others in the immediate family.

What added qualification does Paul expect of a widow past sixty years of age who demonstrates financial need? Verses 9, 10.

THINK IT THROUGH

As one who is younger, have I done all that I could to make the last years of my parents as pleasant as possible? As a parent, am I a credit to my church and an honor to my children, making it a pleasure for them to help me if I should become helpless?

FURTHER STUDY

The Adventist Home, pages 360-364.

LESSON 6

Part 3
GUIDELINES
FOR YOUNG
WIDOWS

What was Paul's counsel regarding young widows?

"But refuse to enrol younger widows; for when they grow wanton against Christ they desire to marry, and so they incur condemnation for having violated their first pledge. Besides that, they learn to be idlers, gadding about from house to house, and not only idlers but gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, rule their households, and give the enemy no occasion to revile us. For some have already strayed after Satan." 1 Tim. 5:11-15, RSV.

Paul is adamant; young widows (apparently those under 60) were not to be placed on the list of those for whom the church should feel responsible. Such a practice seemed to have already proved dangerous for both the woman and the good name of the church.

Paul is certainly not against remarriage; in fact, he strongly urges it. But he is against giving up the Christian faith in order to be married once again. Paul's chief concern here is for the spiritual welfare of young widows. See also verse 6. The loss of a husband creates a problem that unmarried women do not experience. Paul wants widows to remarry if possible but not for the wrong reasons.

To "wax wanton" means to cast off self-restraint, no longer restrained even by Christ. Such a person intends to satisfy personal desires, regardless; easy it is to rationalize a marriage with a pagan, becoming pagan again in order to satisfy the life-style of the new husband.

For Paul nothing is more important than the image of the church before a pagan world. Nothing should be done, even the formation of a new home, that would "give the enemy . . . occasion to revile us."

How does Paul stress the inherent responsibility resting upon members of the young widow's family, to assist her until she finds a way to support herself? Verse 16.

Paul's principle is that relatives have first responsibility in the care of needy widows. Men are to care for the needs of widowed mothers and grandmothers (verse 4), and Christian women who have means should assist relatives who are widows and need help.

THINK IT THROUGH

What are the various ways that anyone can help a needy widow? Are you doing all you can for those in your own family? Are there those in the church who could use your encouragement and material assistance?

LESSON 6

August 6

Part 4
RESPECT FOR
CHURCH
LEADERS

What special considerations should be given to those who labor full time in the preaching-teaching ministry?

"Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; for the scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain,' and, 'The laborer deserves his wages.' " 1 Tim. 5:17, 18, RSV.

The care necessary in selecting church elders has already been emphasized in chapter 3. They are to be exceptional in spiritual matters as well as model fathers and homemakers. In return for their dedication to church affairs, they deserve double honor and respect.

Those elders who devote themselves exclusively to the up-building of the church, the full-time pastor or evangelist, deserve a living wage. In 1 Corinthians 9:9-11 Paul elaborates the principle of remuneration that he briefly touches here. Paul bases his instruction on a simple principle that settles everything: "The scripture says." He places an Old Testament statement (Deut. 25:4) alongside of a New Testament statement (Luke 10:7), indicating that the principle is one of long standing and has been validated by our Lord Himself. This may be the first instance where the words of Jesus are quoted as "scripture."

How did Paul indicate that the church elder may get the opposite of honor as he faithfully pursues his duties? Verse 19.

It is a serious matter to charge a church elder with misconduct—much is at stake. Not only is a man's reputation questioned but the good name of the Christian community is endangered. Ill will has often trumped up charges against a minister who has had to be firm in rebuking wrongdoing. Not a few ministers and other church officers have had their integrity questioned by unscrupulous persons.

Paul's caution is wise counsel even today. The honor due to the office demands that extreme care be given to accusations demeaning a church leader. There may be times when the accusations are true and the offender must be dealt with. But with the indictment must come the credible witness of two or three persons or else the accusation is not to stand.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do you know of instances where men or women in church office have been hurt by unsupported accusations? What would be your response today if you should hear damaging information regarding a church leader?

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 278, 279.

LESSON 6

August 7

Part 5 **How did Paul order that wrongdoing by church officers be**
IMPARTIAL **dealt with?**
JUSTICE

"As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear." 1 Tim. 5:20, RSV.

Paul considers the charge of wrongdoing, especially against church officers, a very serious occasion. He rejects unsupported accusations on one hand, and cover-up of sin on the other.

The public exposure would remind fellow officers that sin is a terrible enemy wherever found and must be handled as a poisonous snake; otherwise, the end of unrecognized and unpunished sin is a demoralized congregation. Even though the offender is to be publicly rebuked, Paul would want it done in compassion and tenderness. See 2 Cor. 2:6-8.

Paul surely is not referring to gross sins such as stealing, adultery, Sabbath breaking, et cetera. These sins would require more than a rebuke. Elders who have committed grave sins should not continue to hold their office, and the congregation itself should be properly informed and be responsible for appropriate discipline. Paul would not excuse an elder for an offense for which he recommended disfellowshipping regular members. See 1 Cor. 5:9-13.

Against what practice did Paul warn? Verse 21.

When guilt has been established, the church leader must be given no favors; nothing would sour the spirit of a congregation quicker. The younger members would feel cause to question the integrity of all leaders and the organization itself. Paul emphasized the importance of this principle by reminding Timothy and all other leaders that we all stand under the searching eyes of a righteous God.

What special counsel does Paul give regarding the qualifications of church leaders? Verse 22.

If members are elected for church leadership prematurely, before they have made a consistent record of unimpeachable conduct, the church members have a responsibility for the mistakes of these untried leaders. Furthermore, if the mistakes of leaders are overlooked for reasons of friendship or timidity, again such fellow members are participating in those sins.

THINK IT THROUGH **Are you doing all you can to keep the image of the church pure before the world? Are you reluctant to become involved in rebuking sins that have become, to some extent, a public spectacle?**

LESSON 6

August 8

Part 6
TRUTH WILL
ALWAYS BE
REVEALED

How does Paul make clear that selecting men and women for church office, widow privileges, et cetera, is not an impossible task?

"The sins of some men are conspicuous, pointing to judgment, but the sins of others appear later. So also good deeds are conspicuous; and even when they are not, they cannot remain hidden." 1 Tim. 5:24, 25, RSV.

These verses on sins and good deeds close Paul's discussion on making decisions about people for office, assistance, or misconduct. Timothy is told that judging the qualifications of men and women is not an impossible task because both sin and good deeds are sometimes conspicuous, and when not, they will be so eventually. Therefore, delay may be necessary in making some decisions. See verse 22.

There are always three classes: those whose life record is clearly unworthy of sacred trust, those whose character invites trust, and those who keep you wondering about their real loyalty. For the last class, many good points could be added up in their favor, but the discriminating observer also recognizes that there is inconsistency, that their good works and a peaceable spirit cannot be relied on for all occasions. Don't hurry this group into office until the general tenor of the life can be more clearly revealed.

Sin has a way of leaving tracks. "Be sure your sin will find you out." Num. 32: 23. Paul restates this almost matter-of-factly: "the sins of others appear later." If a person is bypassed in a church election, or even if a ministerial ordination is postponed, the true character of that person will be revealed as time goes on. If quality is there, it will be exposed; but if a wrong spirit has been present, it cannot be hid.

Possibly the ambiguity will always be there—not bad enough to censure and not good enough to entrust with sacred office. Ellen White said of such: "Some men's sins are open beforehand, confessed in penitence, and forsaken, and they go beforehand to judgment. Pardon is written over against the names of these men. But other men's sins follow after, and are not put away by repentance and confession, and these sins will stand registered against them in the books of heaven."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 916.

THINK IT THROUGH In what way are good deeds conspicuous? Suppose you want to do good without others knowing about it except the person helped. What then? Is there not a record in the face of the one doing good?

“Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith.” 1 Tim. 6:20, 21.

In this last chapter of his first letter to Timothy, Paul reverted to two themes which he stressed frequently in earlier chapters: (1) the importance of godliness as the test of genuine faith, and (2) the necessity of sound doctrine.

It is not always easy today to know what truly comes first—the life or the doctrine. In the first century when Jesus, who was Life as well as the Word, walked among men, the blend was perfect. After Jesus ascended, the success of the Christian church depended upon how effectively each member could blend his life and his words so that others could believe that something special and appealing was happening. The church has been most effective when this blend of life and words most nearly reflected the life and words of Jesus.

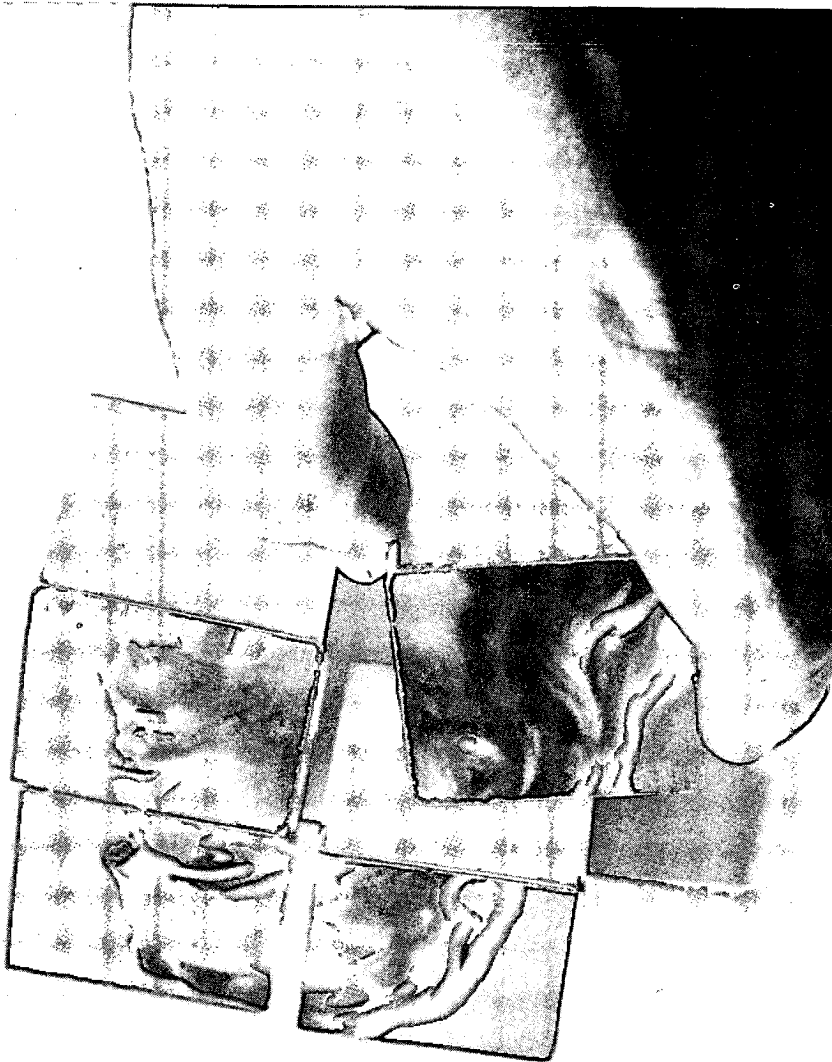
The faith experience that kept our Lord from sinning is the faith that can keep the life of the Christian “unstained and free from reproach.” 1 Tim. 6:14, RSV. The object of faith is to keep saying Yes to God. The fruit of faith is righteousness; or, to say it another way, the goal of the Christian is to seek **righteousness by faith**. The standard of righteousness is “the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching which accords with godliness”—the doctrine that Timothy was to guard carefully.

Today the church must proclaim sound doctrine at a time when much spurious teaching exists. Yet, because there is so much confusion,

the only way that most people will pay attention to the genuine is for the word to come from people who indeed first have the life that is genuinely Christian.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Morbid Craving for Controversy, 1 Tim. 6:3, 4**
2. **Using Religion as a Means to an End, 1 Tim. 6:5**
3. **The Love of Money—1, 1 Tim. 6:9, 10**
4. **The Love of Money—2, 1 Tim. 6:17-19**
5. **The Good Fight of Faith, 1 Tim. 6:11, 12**
6. **Challenge to a Victorious Life, 1 Tim. 6:14**



HOW TO KEEP THE FAITH

Part 1
MORBID CRAV-
ING FOR
CONTROVERSY

What reason does Paul give for some rejecting the gospel and craving religious controversy?

“If any one teaches otherwise and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching which accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit, he knows nothing; he has a morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, base suspicions.” 1 Tim. 6:3, 4, RSV.

Paul chose his words carefully and boldly. The first motive which he ascribed to those in the church who teach contrary to “sound doctrine” (as measured by the “words of our Lord” and apostolic teaching “which accords with godliness”) is vanity, conceit, and pride. In fact, such a person is not only conceited, he is really ignorant concerning what he thinks he knows most about. He has missed the whole point of the life of faith.

Paul was not only talking about heretics, for there have always been those within the church who have put more emphasis on word battles than on Christlike living. Correct doctrine is intended to lead to a godly life. If doctrinal disputes, about even correct doctrine, take precedence over godly living, then the doctrine is misused, and the disputes are afflicted with a spiritually dangerous and sometimes fatal disease.

But Paul did not here depreciate diligent study and the need to keep the doctrine pure as the years go by. Often the need would arise for true soldiers of faith to dispute, in a Christlike manner, with those who may be improperly handling the “sound words of our Lord.”

THINK IT THROUGH **What is the final test that determines whether a person has the truth?**

“A profession of faith and the possession of truth in the soul are two different things. The mere knowledge of truth is not enough. We may possess this, but the tenor of our thoughts may not be changed. The heart must be converted and sanctified.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 97.

The tragedy set forth in the parable of the bridegroom (Matthew 25) is that the five foolish bridesmaids were not lost because they did not know the facts about the advent and the kind of people their Lord was waiting for. On the contrary, they possessed the lamp of doctrine even as the five wise—but the five wise allowed the lamp to be the instrument whereby the light of truth was reflected in their lives. The five foolish made the lamp of doctrine into an end in itself.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, Vol. 3, pp. 570-575.

Part 2
USING RELIGION
AS A MEANS
TO AN END

What other motivation could impel church members to make a habit out of controversy in religious matters?

“. . . and wrangling among men who are depraved in mind and bereft of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.” 1 Tim. 6:5, RSV.

A most insidious motivation for many within the church was to use church employment chiefly for financial security and personal status rather than an opportunity to work full time in Christian witness. The motivation here is greed, whereas others were using their religious activity to puff up their conceit. The two motives are not mutually exclusive. Avaricious people watch the clock, personal comfort, and the fringe benefits more than they watch for the opportunities, in season and out, to represent their Lord.

These wrong motivations, in other forms, can be a problem to the volunteer church worker as well as to the vocational church worker.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why do you do church work? What personal rewards do you seek? Is there a time when you may be more concerned that others think well of you rather than that you can bring permanent good to persons hungry for truth?

In what way is there gain in godliness? Verse 6.

When godliness (*God-likeness*) is made the objective of all one's religious activity, there is great gain indeed. The fruits of the Spirit cannot be bought, but the one possessing them could hope for nothing more. Pseudogodliness can easily become a means of gain, but such is not the life of peace, joy, and integrity. Only when godliness is the end, and not the means to something else, is it even found. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6:33.

But wise Paul added "with contentment" because he knew that there are many ways that man can convince himself that he is godly. However, if he has found genuine contentment, seeking no additional material advantage, completely independent from all outward circumstances, yet completely dependent upon his Lord, such a person may know the "peace . . . which passes all understanding," one of the gains of true godliness.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, Vol. 1, pp. 475, 481, 540-542.

Part 3
THE LOVE
OF MONEY—1

What is the root of all evil and why?

"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. 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." 1 Tim. 6:9, 10.

Nowhere did Paul declare it a crime to own property or to be rich, any more than he declares it a virtue to be poor. Paul is against discontentment of mind and soul, whether it be in the rich or the poor, because real contentment is independent of either poverty or wealth. See Phil. 4:11-13.

But Paul did fear the special temptations that can overwhelm the wealthy if they do not maintain a constant guard. The temptation is always there to use wrong means for further gain or even to maintain their holdings. Wealth has become a trap when the whole life is wrapped up in expectations of things that wealth can provide: new things, visits to new places, and diversions. Paul calls these "foolish and hurtful lusts" that plunge men into ruin and destruction.

Paul is being practical, not theoretical; he is recording what is too often true, examples of which almost everyone has known.

Money, land, investments become the extension of one's personality. Frugality, diligence, foresight are commendable virtues and will produce material gain, given the right circumstances. But there is something sinister about the human heart when unconverted—it wants to make itself self-sufficient. Money in civilized lands is merely the means by which self-sufficiency is measured. For this reason the "love of money is the root of all evil." Out of this soul-soil a bitter root grows, and the end of such growth is a diseased, self-centered spirit.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is there about the craving for riches that leads people to wander "from the faith"? Jesus used the phrase, "the deceitfulness of riches." Where is the deceit?

"The love of riches has an infatuating, deceptive power. Too often those who possess worldly treasure forget that it is God who gives them power to get wealth. . . . Their riches, instead of awakening gratitude to God, lead to the exaltation of self."
—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 52.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, Vol. 1, pp. 479, 482-484.

Part 4
THE LOVE
OF MONEY—2

What counsel did Paul give to his wealthy friends in the church?

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, so that they may lay hold on eternal life.” 1 Tim. 6:17-19.

It has been difficult for Christian churches, it seems, to deal with wealth. On one hand, some churches have, without question, in many lands identified with the aristocracy and enjoyed their favors. On the other, some churches have supported in varying degrees those who would deny the rights of private property, almost intimating that a man is sinful or dangerous if he is wealthy.

Paul fell into neither trap. He knew that circumstances and individuals vary and that sin itself has something to do with the distressing inequalities in every period of world history.

Paul's concern was the same as his Lord's: Rich men are to be condemned only if they put their trust in their wealth and do not use their opportunities to help others. Furthermore, he knew that it would be difficult to identify precisely those who were the rich and the poor, for the next question is obvious: Compared to whom? Everyone, to some extent, needs to heed Paul's counsel not “to set their hopes on uncertain riches.”

The rich are strongly charged to be humble, not “haughty.” Not only is flaunting money vulgar; for the Christian, it is sinful.

THINK IT THROUGH

Are you taking your material assets seriously? Does it really matter how much you own? Are there ways in your life where you can more constructively take Paul's counsel?

“The Bible condemns no man for being rich, if he has acquired his riches honestly. Not money, but the love of money, is the root of all evil. It is God who gives men power to get wealth; and in the hands of him who acts as God's steward, using his means unselfishly, wealth is a blessing, both to its possessor and to the world. But many, absorbed in their interest in worldly treasures, become insensible to the claims of God and the needs of their fellow men. They regard their wealth as a means of glorifying themselves.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 212.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, “Talents,” pages 351, 352; *The Ministry of Healing*, pages 210-213.

Part 5
THE GOOD
FIGHT OF FAITH

What higher motivations than conceit and lust for material possessions did Paul set before Timothy?

"But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. 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." 1 Tim. 6:11, 12.

Eternal life is again held up before Timothy, not only as the steady light at the end of the road, but also as a living reality to be experienced all the way down that road. Grasp eternal life, don't let go, Paul urges all Christians as does his colleague, John. See 1 John 5:12.

This quality of life is not given to man without cooperation and much effort on his part. Christianity is more than a matter of learning doctrine, or even "leaving it all to Jesus." Indeed, Jesus will supply all the needed prompting and power to live the righteous life (that is, the life without sin) but man must choose to accept this power from above and to fight the power from below. This is the "good fight of faith."

The Greek is specific: "Keep on contending; make a life habit of contending." The time will never come, while on earth, when the Christian can say that he is beyond the possibility of sinning. Our perfect Lord had to contend with the alternatives even into Gethsemane; but His victory was always in His will to choose "Thy will be done." The choice every day is Yes or No to God. The Christian finds his peace and strength in a daily Yes to whatever God wants him to do.

THINK IT THROUGH **How do you feel about the thought that the life of faith is considered as a fight? How else could it be?**

"It is no part of His plan that souls shall be sustained in the battle of life by human sympathy and praise; but He means that they shall go without the camp, bearing the reproach, fighting the good fight of faith, and standing in His strength under every difficulty. God has opened to us all the treasures of heaven through the precious gift of His Son, who is fully able to uplift, ennoble, and fit us, through His perfection of character, for usefulness in this life and for a holy heaven. He came to our world and lived as He requires His followers to live. His was a life of self-denial and constant self-sacrifice."
—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 579.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Asking to Give," pages 143-149.

Part 6
CHALLENGE
TO A VICTO-
RIOUS LIFE

What expectation did Paul hold up before Timothy?

"I charge you to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Tim. 6:14, RSV.

The natural bent of even Christians is to think God is expecting something less than an "unstained" life "free from reproach" of all who live the life of faith. But God clearly says that sin and faith are incompatible. Faith says Yes to God and sin says No.

How can you live a life of victory over sin? Just as Jesus lived it—by faith. "Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 664.

This emphasis on the victorious life of faith is a major concern of New Testament writers. God's power to save is not limited or only half effective. See 1 John 5:4.

Jude said it nicely: "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." Jude 24.


This power to change lives so that sin no longer is in control is what the good news—the gospel—is all about. Mankind no longer needs to be shackled by hereditary or cultivated tendencies to sin. "The gospel is to be presented, not as a lifeless theory, but as a living force to change the life. God desires that the receivers of His grace shall be witnesses to its power. . . . He would have His servants bear testimony to the fact that through His grace men may possess Christlikeness of character, and may rejoice in the assurance of His great love. He would have us bear testimony to the fact that He cannot be satisfied until the human race are reclaimed and reinstated in their holy privileges as His sons and daughters. . . .

"Words alone cannot tell it. Let it be reflected in the character and manifested in the life. Christ is sitting for His portrait in every disciple."—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 826, 827.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why must this demonstration of faith be clearly set before the world before Jesus can come? Do you see a connection between Revelation 14:12 and this challenge to Timothy?

MAKING CHARACTER A CREDIT TO DOCTRINE

A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a hand holding a pen, writing on a notepad. The hand is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page, with the pen tip touching the paper. The notepad has a grid pattern. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the skin and the details of the pen and paper.

*Model of
good deeds*

“Show yourself in all respects a model of good deeds, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity, and sound speech that cannot be censured.” Titus 2:7, 8a, RSV.

The letter to Titus was written before the second letter to Timothy, probably between Paul's first and second imprisonments at Rome, about A.D. 65.

Titus, like Timothy, had earned Paul's confidence over the years. In fact, Paul was very grateful for Titus's troubleshooting at the time when the future of the Corinth congregation seemed to be in the balance. See 2 Cor. 2:13; 7:6, 7, 13-16; 8:16, 17.

Titus's assignment on Crete was similar to Timothy's at Ephesus; thus there is a similarity in counsel. If there were differences, the record suggests that Timothy was more soft, reticent, and gentle; while Titus seems to be more energetic and decisive. Both were models of Christian behavior, Paul calling each of them his true child in the faith.

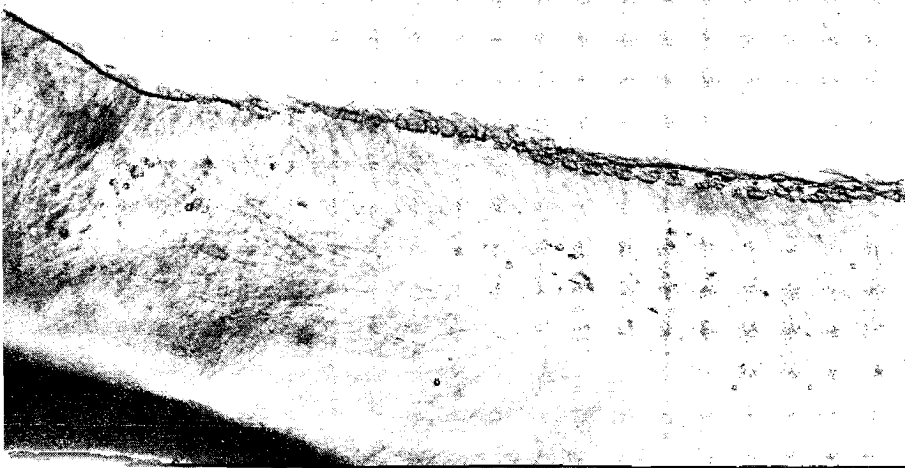
Both Titus and Timothy were to strengthen the work of organization begun by Paul, leave the church in the hands of responsible elders (verse 5), and move on to the next area that required their expertise.

As in the Timothy letters, Paul's instructions emphasized the indissoluble triple theme: sound church organization, sound doctrine, sound living. There is a logical order about these subjects, and Paul develops them essentially in this order in this letter to Titus.

Some of the most beautiful passages in the New Testament are found in this letter to Titus—a perfect blend of theology and practical counsel. Whenever these two elements have been separated, the church has entered hard times.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Godliness: The End of Faith and Doctrine, Titus 1:1-4**
2. **How to Refute Error, Titus 1:9, 10**
3. **The Psychology of Truth and Error, Titus 1:15, 16**
4. **Living a Life That Honors Truth —1, Titus 2:1-3**
5. **Living a Life That Honors Truth —2, Titus 2:4-6**
6. **Living Models of God's Way, Titus 2:7, 8, 10**



Part 1
GODLINESS: THE
END OF FAITH
AND DOCTRINE

What is the chief end of faith and knowledge?

"Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who never lies, promised ages ago and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by command of God our Savior; to Titus, my true child in a common faith." Titus 1:1-4, RSV.

Paul's consistency and foresight in handling this letter to Titus revealed his understanding of the task that they both faced. After Paul left Crete, when others joined the congregation who thus were not present when Titus was appointed to leadership, the question of authority would surely arise. This letter constituted Titus's credentials, providing great authority for the strong counsel that Paul gave in specific areas.

The Greek word, here translated "knowledge," refers to the understanding that comes through experience. More than mere theological information is meant. "Man's advantages for obtaining a knowledge of the truth . . . will prove of no benefit to him unless the heart is open to receive the truth, and there is a conscientious surrender of every habit and practice that is opposed to its principles. To those who thus yield themselves to God, having an honest desire to know and to do His will, the truth is revealed as the power of God for their salvation."—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 455, 456.

In his salutation Paul keeps the priorities straight and the uniqueness of Christianity clear. The Cretans seemed to have had their share of theological speculators and philosophical charlatans (1:9-16). The whole point of Christianity, the theme that permeates all of Paul's epistles, is that God wants to condemn "sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3) by developing the life of faith that produces godliness (God-likeness).

THINK IT THROUGH **Am I living up to all the knowledge I now have? Do I note that the desire to study spiritual matters is closely linked with my willingness to apply the truth I already know in my daily experience?**

"A knowledge of the truth depends not so much upon strength of intellect as upon pureness of purpose, the simplicity of an earnest, dependent faith."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 59.

FURTHER STUDY *Christ's Object Lessons*, "The Sower Went Forth to Sow," pages 58-61.

Part 2
HOW TO
REFUTE ERROR

How is error to be met in the Christian church?

"He [the bishop] must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it. For there are many insubordinate men, empty talkers and deceivers . . . ; they must be silenced." Titus 1:9, 10, RSV.

Here Paul amplifies what he had said regarding elders in Timothy's instruction, that is, "apt to teach." 1 Tim. 3:2. In addition to a character beyond reproach, the elder should be recognized for his intellectual grasp of the gospel and the chief arguments against the gospel.

"Some think that an education or a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures is of little consequence if only a man has the Spirit. But God never sends His Spirit to sanction ignorance." —*Gospel Workers*, pages 105, 106.

Paul is here concerned, not about open and free discussion which has always been the atmosphere in which the church has flourished best, but about deceivers whose end product is not godliness. Differences of opinion there will always be. Those who must be silenced are those whose teachings lead to lowered ethical standards and worldly accommodation.

The most effective method to silence such disrupters who would tailor the church after their own image is to let truth be seen in its simplicity and adequacy. The authority of truth is far more impressive than the authority of mere office.

"We are on dangerous ground when we cannot meet together like Christians, and courteously examine controverted points. I feel like fleeing from the place lest I receive the mold of those who cannot candidly investigate the doctrines of the Bible.

"Those who cannot impartially examine the evidences of a position that differs from theirs, are not fit to teach in any department of God's cause."—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, p. 411.

What is the objective of such forthright refuting? Verse 13.

All church discipline is aimed at the restoration of the delinquent members to fellowship.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the best way to silence those who disagree with me? Is the quickest way the best? Why?

Part 3
THE PSYCHOLOGY
OF TRUTH
AND ERROR

Why is sin self-deceiving?

“Unto the pure all things are pure: but to them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.” Titus 1:15, 16.

A very helpful psychological truth is here emphasized: When the heart (or spirit of man) is right with God, contact with what *man* has declared unclean cannot make the pure in heart impure. Conversely, when the heart is not right with God, no amount of religious activity can make the heart pure. See Matt. 15:10-20.

The Greek word for “unbelieving” would better be translated “those without faith.” The man of faith discerns truth and error because he has his eye on the *external* word of Scripture and his heart open to the *internal* word of the Spirit.

The kind of knowledge these teachers (without faith) have is different than the knowledge learned by “God’s elect.” Titus 1:1. These church members without genuine faith possess only information. It never seems to get to the heart so that the life is changed.

“Many profess to know God, and yet deny Him in their works. They reckon themselves among God’s peculiar, chosen people, who have a special, solemn message entrusted to their keeping to sanctify their lives and to give to the world, and yet the power of the truth is scarcely felt or manifested in our midst in zealous work for God. . . .

“What greater delusion can deceive the human mind than that in which individuals flatter themselves that they have the truth, that they are on the only sure foundation, and that God accepts their works because they are actively engaged in some work in the cause of God, when they are sinning against Him by walking contrary to the expressed will of God? They work mechanically, like machinery; but preparation of heart, the sanctification of the character, is wanting.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 451.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I spend time thinking up reasons why I do not need to put away sinful habits? What excuses do I have for my sins?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, Vol. 1, p. 406; Vol. 2, pp. 125, 444, 682.

Part 4
LIVING A LIFE
THAT HONORS
TRUTH—1

How does Paul connect doctrine and behavior?

“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: that the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, and in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things.” Titus 2:1-3.

Paul never tires of this theme that is stressed many times in his letters to Timothy and Titus—the truth of the gospel will refine a person, both in character and in the externals that reveal his character.

“The truth should be presented in a manner which will make it attractive to the intelligent mind. . . . How important that the cause of truth be stripped of everything like a false and fanatical excitement, that the truth may stand upon its own merits, revealing its native purity and exalted character.

“The truth of God will never degrade but will elevate the receiver, refine his taste, sanctify his judgment, and perfect him for the company of the pure and holy angels in the kingdom of God.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 1, pp. 414, 415.

Older men and women in the congregation are here given specific counsel. Paul chooses his words carefully. “Temperate,” for example, is a translation of a Greek word that means self-mastery. Excess, although not to be condoned, may be understood easier when observed in youth. But adult Christians give evidence of their real maturity when they consistently exhibit self-control in physical, mental, and emotional behavior.

Older women are specifically counselled to be examples of reverent behavior, as befitting sacred persons (as the Greek clearly states). Such recognition of women was a new day in the world and provided the basis for the elevation of womanhood by the Christian church as time passed.

Christian women, whose children may be grown, have a second responsibility almost as great—the training by example and precept of the young women in the church.

THINK IT THROUGH **Does my dress, my speech, my home, my choice of TV programs and books, et cetera, reflect the quality of the truth that I profess?**

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pages 493-496.

Part 5
LIVING A LIFE
THAT HONORS
TRUTH—2

What special counsel does Paul give young women and men?

“Train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be sensible, chaste, domestic, kind, and submissive to their husbands, that the word of God may not be discredited. Likewise urge the younger men to control themselves.” Titus 2:4-6, RSV.

An interesting feature of Paul’s counsel is that he delegates to the older women in the church, not to Titus, the task of training the young women. Male counsel might be helpful to a degree, but genuine Christian women older in years should be the most effective in helping young women establish their homes so that they are a credit to the church in the community.

The young married women should be devoted to their husbands and children. Some will have great difficulty understanding Paul’s counsel, thinking that such an appeal for domestic leadership would be restricting their rights as persons. But Paul’s words here have often been understood only after great regret.

The attribute, “domestic,” emphasizes the high stress placed on the wife and mother as the queen of the home. Proverbs 31 comes to mind.

Paul’s fullest presentation regarding the relationship of Christian wife and husband is found in Ephesians 5:22, 23; he wants no mistake made—Christianity does not alter the marriage relationship—only enhances it.

Paul’s counsel to younger men seems brief, but not so when we think of the extended counsel to Titus and to Timothy who were to be living models for young men in their churches. Self-mastery is the goal set for all; the sooner it is learned, the happier that person will be.

THINK IT THROUGH

How much care do I devote to finding self-mastery? Am I more often the solution seeker or the problem maker when something goes wrong at home or work?

“Forbearance and unselfishness mark the words and acts of all who live the new life in Christ. As you seek to live His life, striving to conquer self and selfishness and to minister to the needs of others, you will gain victory after victory. Thus your influence will bless the world.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 362.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pages 356-362.

Part 6
LIVING MODELS
OF GOD'S WAY

Why should Titus and every other church member be a model of good behavior?

"Show yourself in all respects a model of good deeds, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity, and sound speech that cannot be censured, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say of us." "So that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior." Titus 2:7, 8, 10, RSV.

The unbelieving world has the right to expect something exceptionally different and distinctly better from those who proclaim that they have the only gospel and know the world's only Saviour.

The Greek construction emphasizes that Titus has already been a good model, and that he should "keep on" being such. Probably the best lesson that could be taught in pagan Crete would be the living model of young Titus; self-restrained manhood is always a welcome sight.

Every Christian is being closely watched by the youth and others, in the church and without. Opponents of the truth are undone when they are up against a life-style that indeed reflects "integrity, gravity, and sound speech." The world is waiting, not primarily for new methods or even a new message, but new men.

THINK IT THROUGH **How seriously do I consider my speech, my everyday conversation, to be an index of my character?**

"As followers of Christ we should make our words such as to be a help and an encouragement to one another in the Christian life. Far more than we do, we need to speak of the precious chapters in our experience. We should speak of the mercy and loving-kindness of God, of the matchless depths of the Saviour's love. Our words should be words of praise and thanksgiving. If the mind and heart are full of the love of God, this will be revealed in the conversation. It will not be a difficult matter to impart that which enters into our spiritual life. Great thoughts, noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth, unselfish purposes, yearnings for piety and holiness, will bear fruit in words that reveal the character of the heart treasure. When Christ is thus revealed in our speech, it will have power in winning souls to Him."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 338.

FURTHER STUDY *Christ's Object Lessons*, "Talents," pages 335-342.

THE FRUITAGE OF GRACE



Titus 2:12, 13. At His first coming He made clear that God makes the first move toward man, that love does not wait for lovable objects before there is an invitation to share fellowship; at His second coming He will open wide the gate to eternal life for those who have been "zealous for good deeds." Titus 2:14. In other words, the seeds of the kingdom planted at His first coming will be harvested at His second coming.

The fruitage of His grace, the harvest of a people who have allowed the seeds of Christlikeness to mature in their lives, is the glorious vindication of God's wisdom and government. He will have demonstrated through this harvest from earth that His way has been best and that all who have followed His way are indeed the happiest, nicest, healthiest people that earth could produce.

The time of His second coming will depend upon how soon that harvest will mature. " 'When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.' Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own."—"Christ's Object Lessons," page 69.

**"For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men."
Titus 2:11, RSV.**

Paul's theological insight and skill in proclaiming what he had learned is perhaps never clearer than in the lessons to be studied this week. He combined the two great focal points of Christian doctrine—the first and second advents of Jesus. In His first coming our Lord demonstrated the kind of life He now expects all His followers to live; at His second coming He will welcome into His kingdom those who have trained themselves to follow His example. See

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Grace Provides Reason for Hope, Titus 2:11-13**
2. **Grace Disposes of the Sin Problem, Titus 2:14**
3. **Grace Is Practical, Titus 2:15 to 3:2**
4. **Godhead United in Grace, Titus 3:4-6**
5. **Grace Restores Right Relationships, Titus 3:7, 8**
6. **Grace Revealed in Changed Lives, Titus 3:8, 14**

Part 1 **Do all men have an opportunity to be saved?**
GRACE PROVIDES
REASON
FOR HOPE

"For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." Titus 2:11-13, RSV.

It is difficult to understand how the perverted doctrine of predestination and kindred errors arose in view of this text and others such as John 1:9 and 1 Timothy 2:3-6. "The Spirit of God is freely bestowed to enable every man to lay hold upon the means of salvation. . . . Men fail of salvation through their own willful refusal of the gift of life."—*The Great Controversy*, page 262. Every person in his quiet, honest moments will acknowledge that the light of a better way to live has often flashed in his life.

The light that grace brings to the heart opens up a way of life that is contrary to selfish indulgence. It says No to all that is self-centered and this-world oriented. It says Yes to a totally different life-style which is characterized by self-mastery, piety, and harmony with God's expectations.

This dramatic triumph of grace is motivated in part by the happy hope that Jesus is returning to this earth and will invite all those who have been changed by grace to live in His kingdom. The return of Jesus is the double blessing adding to the rewards a godly life provides even in this life.

The Greek is colorful: "Make a habit of watching." Keeping the return of Jesus ever before us will provide proper perspective as we go about our daily decision making.

THINK IT THROUGH **Is my life very different from the respectable people around me who do not include the return of Jesus in their thinking? Is my difference in the world more a matter of words than of behavior?**

"While you . . . have been forward to engage in controversy with others upon points of our faith, without an exception you have been asleep in reference to those things which pertain to Christianity. You are not even dreaming of the perilous position you occupy."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 332.

FURTHER STUDY *Testimonies*, Vol. 3, pp. 51-53.

Part 2
GRACE DISPOSES
OF THE SIN
PROBLEM

Did Jesus come to save us in our sins or from our sins?

"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2:14.

These few words summarize how God intends to dispose of the sin problem. He will not pretend we're good when we really aren't. In the last analysis those who truly want their sins forgiven will be those who have forsaken them.

"The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. . . . When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 419, 420.

The chief purpose of Christ's incarnation was to prove that, even after thousands of years of sin, men and women could live without sin by the power of the indwelling Spirit. His perfect life in human flesh broke the spell of Satan. No longer could Satan claim that God was asking too much from His creation.

Further, Jesus promised all men that if they would place their trust in Him, He would help them to be purified from all iniquity. Ellen White wrote: "He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ's humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 123.

THINK IT THROUGH

Have I made Christ's sacrifice worthwhile? Has He really redeemed me from all iniquity?

"The world needs a practical demonstration of what the grace of God can do in restoring to human beings their lost kingship, giving them mastery of themselves. There is nothing that the world needs so much as a knowledge of the gospel's saving power revealed in Christlike lives."—*The Ministry of Healing*, pages 132, 133.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "Growing Up Into Christ," pages 67-72.

Part 3
GRACE IS
PRACTICAL

How serious is Paul regarding the quality life expected of Christians?

“Declare these things; exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you. Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for any honest work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all men.” Titus 2:15 to 3:2, RSV.

Paul's command to the church is to “declare . . . ; exhort and reprove. . . . Let no one disregard you.” The church must be kept pure if the young within are to have good reason to stay in. Otherwise, the lack of integrity and courage to call sin by its right name will confuse them, causing some to feel that there is no place except within their own feelings where they can decide right from wrong.

Paul reminds Titus that Christians have civic responsibilities; that Christians, in applying Christ's way of life, should be examples of right conduct to those outside the church, beginning with civil officials.

“It is not wise to find fault continually with what is done by the rulers of government. It is not our work to attack individuals or institutions. We should exercise great care lest we be understood as putting ourselves in opposition to the civil authorities. . . .

“We should not work in a manner that will mark us out as seeming to advocate treason. We should weed out from our writings and utterances every expression, that, taken by itself, could be so misrepresented as to make it appear antagonistic to law and order. Everything should be carefully considered, lest we place ourselves on record as encouraging disloyalty to our country and its laws.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 6, p. 394.

THINK IT THROUGH **Do I seek for ways to assist others in providing community services? Or do I receive more from others than I put in personally? Am I known for being courteous and constructive?**

“You [our ministers] may be true to principle, you may be just, honest, and religious; but with it all you must cultivate true tenderness of heart, kindness, and courtesy. If a person is in error, be the more kind to him; if you are not courteous, you may drive him away from Christ.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 150.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, “Like Unto Leaven,” pages 100-102.

Part 4
GODHEAD
UNITED IN
GRACE

How do all members of the Godhead cooperate in saving man?

"But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior."
Titus 3:4-6, RSV.

The loving-kindness of God is in contrast to the malice, envy and hatred that dominates the unconverted man (verse 3). The only logical response when a person learns of Him is the life of faith that breaks forth in obedience to all that God wants him to do. See Titus 2:12.

This God appeared to men. He wasn't thought up by wise men, nor does He pervade nature so that it is as natural as breathing to think religious thoughts. God is a Person who has made many contacts with mankind, the chief encounter being the incarnation.

Paul summarized the cooperation of the Godhead by noting the historical witness of Jesus and the internal work of the Holy Spirit. The historical, external witness is joined with the always current, internal witness, joining the head and the heart in unshakable conviction. See John 15:26.

God does not wait for any man to make the first move. God's love comes first, awakening the response of faith. Both the miracle of regeneration (second birth) and the renewing process that lasts until every un-Christlike habit is completely worked out of the life are results of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Man's task is to cooperate, willing every day to conform his choices to the will of God.

THINK IT THROUGH

Have I allowed God to do everything that He has wanted to do in my life? Am I completely renewed?

"His love received, will make us, in like manner, kind and tender, not merely toward those who please us, but to the most faulty and erring and sinful.

"The children of God are those who are partakers of His nature. It is not earthly rank, nor birth, nor nationality, nor religious privilege, which proves that we are members of the family of God; it is love, a love that embraces all humanity."
—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, page 75.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 664-670.

Part 5
GRACE RE-
STORES RIGHT
RELATIONSHIPS

If grace is not thwarted, where will it finally lead any person who receives it?

“So that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life. The saying is sure.” Titus 3:7, 8a, RSV.

As a result of the Holy Spirit's work in the new birth and the beginning of a new life (new creation, 2 Cor. 5:17), the new Christian stands as a restored son in the family of God. He is now in the right relation with his Father when before he was in a “far country.”

Being a restored son makes him also an heir, looking forward to the day when the inheritance will indeed be his.

What part does faith play when man is justified by grace? Eph. 2:8.

“Faith is the condition upon which God has seen fit to promise pardon to sinners; not that there is any virtue in faith whereby salvation is merited, but because faith can lay hold of the merits of Christ, the remedy provided for sin.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1073.

What is the real test that genuine faith has truly allowed grace to have its way?

“Justification by faith in Christ will be made manifest in transformation of character. This is the sign to the world of the truth of the doctrines we profess. The daily evidence that we are a living church is seen in the fact that we are practicing the Word. A living testimony goes forth to the world in consistent Christian action.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1071.

THINK IT THROUGH **What is the evidence I have that I have been justified by grace? Am I more of a renewed person today than I was a year ago?**

In order that his personal witness about justification would not be misunderstood, Paul emphatically concluded: “The saying is sure.” See 1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11. This should be the quiet, dynamic witness that every Christian, by speech and life, can tell to his child or to his nonbelieving neighbor. The peace promised when a man is in the right relation with God (Rom. 5:1) is one of the blessings that confirms this great truth.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, “Lost, and Is Found,” pages 198-206.

Part 6
GRACE RE-
VEALED IN
CHANGED LIVES

What relationship does Paul always maintain between belief and works?

"I desire you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to apply themselves to good deeds; these are excellent and profitable to men."

"Let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful."
Titus 3:8, 14, RSV.

Paul will soar in theological explanation of what God has done for man, but he never forgets the earthly reality of man's responsibility in accepting grace. God does not force grace on anyone. He will only stand at the door and knock. His purpose is to assist man in changing his ways; man's part is to will to change, and God's part is to provide the power to change.

Grace is inoperative where there is no faith that leads to good works. There is more to Christianity than "only believe."

"The religion of Christ is something more than talk. The righteousness of Christ consists in right actions and works from pure, unselfish motives. Outside righteousness, while the inward adorning is wanting, will be of no avail."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, p. 528.

The object of sowing gospel seed is to produce a harvest—a fruitful response of people who have allowed the truth to assume complete control in their habit patterns.

"The divine Husbandman looks for a harvest as the reward of His labor and sacrifice. Christ is seeking to reproduce Himself in the hearts of men; and He does this through those who believe in Him. The object of the Christian life is fruit bearing—the reproduction of Christ's character in the believer, that it may be reproduced in others."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 67.

THINK IT THROUGH **Am I a living exhibit of the gracious power of God? Would people believe that God is omnipotent and loving by observing my life? Or does my life stand out enough so that others would even ask those questions?**

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "Growing Up Into Christ," pages 73-75.

“That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.” 2 Tim. 1:14.

The second letter to Timothy is not a continuation of the first; in fact it is very different. It has been called Paul's “last will and testament.” Probably there is no other New Testament letter that is so charged with tenderness; its appeal throbs through the four chapters. No longer is Paul the dauntless missionary roaming the lands of the Mediterranean. He writes this letter from a damp, filthy Roman prison, knowing that his time on earth is very short.

Apparently he is alone except for faithful Luke. Paul, the great apostle, to whom thousands owed hope and life, alone. Where were those who owed him a great debt? But out of that human distress, when the light flickered, came this tremendous affirmation of faith that has cheered countless thousands, perhaps millions, in the centuries since. He wants Timothy to hurry to his side; he longed for his companion of many miles and many crises.

The clouds were gathering over the young Christian church. Heartless Nero had blamed the Christians for starting the holocaust that devastated much of Rome. Hatred, suspicion, and persecution awaited Christians everywhere. How would these young churches stand up under these potentially crushing events? Soon there would be no Paul to gain strength from and to tell them what to do.

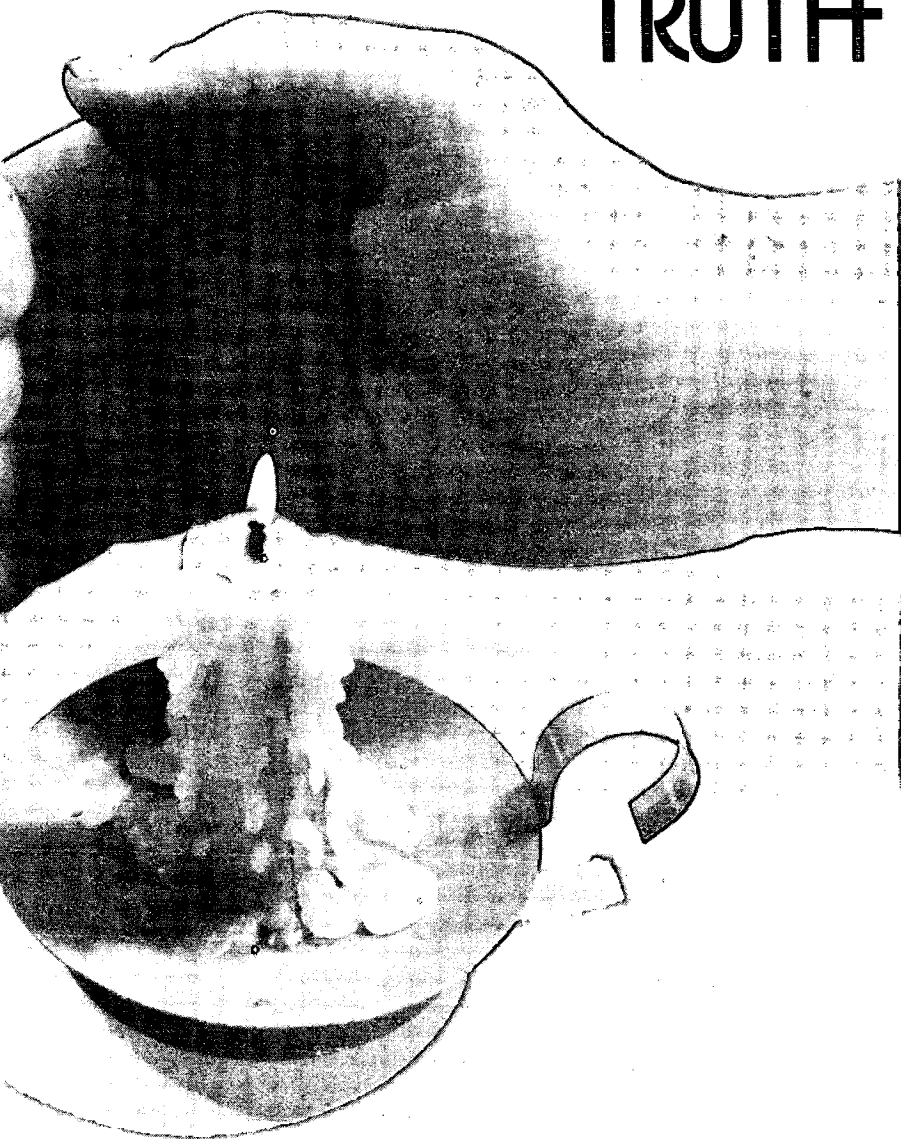
Paul did what he could. He wrote this remarkable letter on the eve of his execution. Place yourself in Timothy's position—or in the place of any lonely missionary surrounded by unappreciative multitudes, or that of a lonely Christian torn by anxiety by living with a family that does not understand. This letter has kept many such heroes of the cross buoy-

ant under great distress, strengthened to renew their effort, even triumphant when death seemed near. Many have read these chapters with a sob in the throat.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Portrait of a Veteran, 2 Tim. 1:1-3**
2. **Portrait of a Beloved Disciple, 2 Tim. 1:5**
3. **A Powerful Gospel, 2 Tim. 1:8-10**
4. **Reality of Personal Knowledge, 2 Tim. 1:11, 12**
5. **Responsibility of Faith, 2 Tim. 1:13, 14**
6. **Shadows Before Noonday, 2 Tim. 1:15-18**

GUARDING THE TRUTH



Part 1 **What simple fact anchored Paul during this dreary moment**
PORTRAIT OF **in his life?**
A VETERAN

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day." 2 Tim. 1:1-3.

Truly a matchless farewell! How would you have addressed your beloved friend for the last time?

Here was Paul, humiliated by men, in a dreary dungeon reserved for criminals, yet he held his head high—he was still an apostle of our Lord Jesus. No Nero could take that away from him.

The essence of the gospel is chiseled here in few words—"the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus." Sin had opened the door to death. Everything about sin destroys. The end of sin is bitterness even though the first sip may be exhilarating. But the good news about Jesus is that He is Life, and He came to give man life "more abundantly." John 10:10. This life changes man *now*, gives him a whole new reason to live *now*, gives him new energy and new hope in this life. But there is life beyond—a thought very high on Paul's mind at that moment. The end was near for Paul but not really; the promise of his Lord was that there was eternal life ahead.

What prayerful wish does Paul ask for Timothy? Verse 2.

Paul's tender prayer for Timothy sums up the blessedness of genuine Christian living: Grace, mercy, and peace to you, dear Timothy. Only in his two letters to Timothy does Paul unite these three terms. They are ready to be enjoyed by anyone who, like Timothy, is committed to God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

THINK IT THROUGH **When I am in a difficult place, lonely and perhaps misunderstood, do I find reason to give thanks as did Paul?**

Paul is no complainer. He lets the happy memories that line life's hallway flood over the present. He recounts the occasions wherein he and Timothy have seen the intervening hand of God. He has seen new churches spring up out of unlikely places. He has seen young men dream and hope when they had lost their courage before Jesus came into their lives.

Every Christian should be lining the hall of memory now so that there will be many occasions to give thanks in the days ahead.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 498-500.

Part 2
PORTRAIT OF
A BELOVED
DISCIPLE

What is the common bond that tied Paul, Timothy, and Timothy's family together?

"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." 2 Tim. 1:5.

Here Paul is saying that every person is, to a large extent, the product of his family background. That is why a good biography does not begin with the featured person's birth but with the parents and grandparents as well.

Paul thanks God for his own parents (verse 3) who must have taught him well regarding the God of Israel; he now recognizes in Timothy the same faith that animated Lois and Eunice. Faith is a total life response to God. It can best be taught by example. How grateful both Paul and Timothy were to their parents.

The bond between Paul and Timothy, between the aged veteran and the stalwart younger disciple, was their common faith. They recognized this "sincere," unpretending faith in each other, and mutual confidence was the result.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I doing all that I can to transmit faith to those who are closest to me? Is it easy for them to have faith in God by watching how I live?

Without actually stating the fact, how could Paul emphasize more the importance of parental responsibility and privilege? Paul points every child or recipient of faith to the simple fact that faith is usually a gift which we owe to someone else's steadfast example.

What kind of spirit did the faith of Paul and Timothy create? Verse 7.

What a remarkable combination of words—how easy it is to have power without love, power without self-control, or self-control without love, et cetera. Paul knew what it took to face up to earth's toughest challenges and not flinch; he knew how to turn every difficulty into a way to preach Jesus Christ, by example if not by word.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, page 341.

Part 3 **What great facts kept Paul and Timothy from being**
A POWERFUL **ashamed of Jesus?**
GOSPEL

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." 2 Tim. 1:8-10.

Paul and Timothy had learned through experience that God was very near, in peace and crisis. They had seen their own spirit made bold when faithless men would have capitulated. They had seen power, love, and self-control develop in their own character. Such is the greatest proof of the existence and power of God.

The time may come for every Christian, as it did for Timothy, when it will be a social disgrace to identify with commandment keepers. Paul's call still rings: Join me in suffering disgrace if need be because we represent the God of the gospel!

The gospel is the story of Jesus who banished the fear of death because He demonstrated that He held the keys of the grave. That is power! The gospel also proclaims that Jesus can banish those destructive forces that kill the spirit, such as envy, fear, pride, and covetousness. That is power! Such a gospel is far more than only the forgiveness of sins.

THINK IT THROUGH **Do I live as though the power of the gospel is real? What evidence is there in my life that such a God as Paul talks about truly exists?**

"The work of pruning and purifying to fit us for heaven is a great work and will cost us much suffering and trial, because our wills are not subjected to the will of Christ. We must go through the furnace till the fires have consumed the dross and we are purified and reflect the divine image. . . .

"No cross, no crown. . . . Our Saviour was tried in every possible way, and yet He triumphed in God continually. It is our privilege to be strong in the strength of God under all circumstances and to glory in the cross of Christ."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, p. 67.

FURTHER STUDY *The Ministry of Healing*, pages 480-482.

Part 4
REALITY
OF PERSONAL
KNOWLEDGE

What was Paul's anchor that empowered him to be such a remarkable Christian witness?

"For this gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, and therefore I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me." 2 Tim. 1:11, 12, RSV.

Paul was not ashamed even when the whole world was crying, Shame! Why? Because Paul knew something and Someone that his accusers did not know. That made all the difference. Even though the preaching of the gospel will always incite opposition and hatred, the Christian knows that he will get no better treatment than his Master received.

Paul's religion centered in a Person whom he knew through experience not merely in information about that Person. "The one great purpose of his Christian life had been to serve Him whose name had once filled him with contempt; and from this purpose no opposition or persecution had been able to turn him aside. His faith, made strong by effort and pure by sacrifice, upheld and strengthened him."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 500.

There is some uncertainty regarding the exact meaning of verse 12: The King James version reads "to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." The Greek reads literally "to guard my deposit unto that day" and could be referring to something Paul has entrusted to God or something that God has entrusted to Paul.

The context suggests strongly the latter meaning. God was able to guard the gospel that Paul above all others had spearheaded throughout the Mediterranean world.

At this bleak moment when the great teacher was about to be killed in disgrace, Timothy was reminded that this deposit of truth was in greater hands than Paul's. Jesus would guard the preaching of the gospel. Men die, but Jesus guards their work and hands it to faithful men who carry on until "that Day" when such labor will be forever over.

THINK IT THROUGH **Do I live as if the gospel's future lies in the hands of men or in the hands of God? Is there a limit to how much God can do if men fail Him?**

FURTHER STUDY *The Desire of Ages*, pages 822-828.

Part 5
RESPONSIBILITY
OF FAITH

What did Paul urge Timothy to do?

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." 2 Tim. 1:13, 14.

Paul knew that the temptation would always be there to trim the truth, to leave out the unpopular. Why create a crisis? Paul knew also that this would lead to spiritual defeat and eventual disaster.

"Sound" words could be literally translated, "healthy" words. Anything other than Paul's straight, clear teaching leads to spiritual infection and moral disease.

Although intelligent people know that truth must always be communicated in a modern way, the "healthy" words of Paul are still relevant and can be quickly understood. If Paul were discussing chemistry or astronomy, there would be no question regarding the necessity of bringing him up to date. But Paul is concerned with faith and sin, responsibility and rebellion, and these categories have not changed. Man still needs a Saviour, not only from the penalty of sin but from its power as well.

Men, in listening to Paul, could see that his message had been produced by a brilliant mind and a great heart of love. Such was Timothy's challenge—to carry on now in Paul's stead, linking faith and love to a wonderful gospel.

In verse 12 the gospel is considered a valuable treasure, committed to Paul and now to Timothy, as a great and sacred trust. So it has been given to everyone who has ever truly called Jesus Lord. What a trust! How few know how valuable this knowledge is! How easily this deposit gets marred in the hands of proud men!

Paul and Timothy had already spent many days contending with those who considered themselves teachers of the gospel. "Guard the deposit" has been one of the highest duties resting on the Christian church for 2,000 years.

The guarding cannot be done in human wisdom alone. Only the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, can provide the insight and perseverance such a duty demands.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I guard the truth so that others are not confused when they watch my life pattern or hear what I say?

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 593-598.

**Part 6
SHADOWS
BEFORE
NOONDAY**

What disappointment did Paul face in his closing days?

"This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me, of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me. . . . The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well." 2 Tim. 1:15-18.

Paul knew the pain of humiliation by enemies and rejection by brethren. Because he could write with such candor and courage, many thousands in the years to follow have been made strong as they were reminded of his spiritual resources.

Jesus understood what it meant to be forsaken by professed followers. See John 6:66; Mark 14:50.

The glimpse of Onesiphorus is refreshing and worthy of much study. When he heard of Paul's plight, his family apparently made it possible for Onesiphorus to leave their Ephesus home and make his way to troubled Rome. Paul had done so much for them—it was now their turn.

Far from being ashamed of Paul's predicament, he searched from Christian to Christian until he discovered where Paul had been imprisoned. Somehow he managed to get through, risking all the hazards that could easily have befallen him as he identified himself with Paul, indicted as a criminal.

Paul did not forget such mercies, and he wanted Timothy to do all he could for this man's family back in Ephesus. More than that, Paul's prayer was that Onesiphorus would be granted a merciful entrance into the kingdom of our Lord "in that day."

For Paul "that day" was about all he had left to look forward to. How many Christians in the centuries that followed took courage because of Paul's courage and the gospel that he faithfully proclaimed.

True friendship cannot be bought; it lasts through hardship, suffering, and disgrace.

THINK IT THROUGH **How reliable has my friendship been to those who have been wrongfully spoken against? Have I treated with mercy those who have borne the heat of the day?**

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 489-491.

“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” 2 Tim. 2:4.

Paul had learned many basic principles about how the gospel can be best proclaimed. He had learned through experience what not to do as well as what is most effective. He had learned that “argument, even when unanswerable, may provoke only opposition; but a godly example has a power that it is impossible wholly to resist.”—“The Acts of the Apostles,” page 511. In this second chapter of the last letter he would write before his execution he stressed the importance of quality control as the gospel treasure is passed on from one generation to another.

He made it clear that every genuine Christian will suffer misunderstanding and outright hardship, even as had his Lord and Paul himself. He calls for the fortitude of the soldier, the discipline of the trained athlete, and the perseverance of a good farmer.

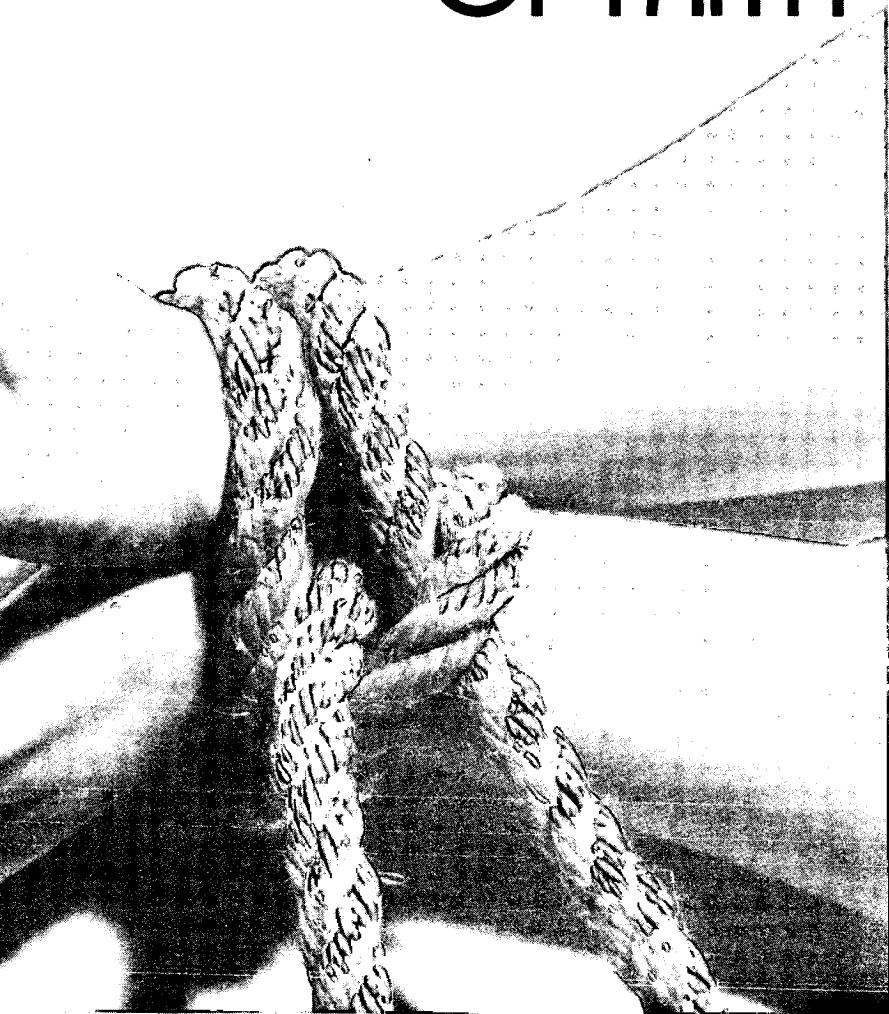
He expects no shoddy work from those who will carry on where he leaves off. Christianity is not primarily a wonderful feeling but a great response of complete dedication to the Lord of glory. This complete dedication will be evident in the Christian’s fervent attention to self-development so that he will be ready for whatever needs may arise in the work of serving his Lord.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The Christian Soldier, 2 Tim. 2:3, 4**
2. **The Christian Athlete and Farmer, 2 Tim. 2:5**
3. **The Willing Sufferer, 2 Tim. 2:8-10**
4. **The Earnest Student, 2 Tim. 2:14, 15**
5. **Evidences of a Pure Heart, 2 Tim. 2:22**
6. **The Kindly Teacher, 2 Tim. 2:24, 25**



PORTRAIT OF MEN AND WOMEN OF FAITH



Part 1
THE CHRISTIAN
SOLDIER**What are the particular characteristics of a good soldier?**

"Take your share of suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier on service gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to satisfy the one who enlisted him."
2 Tim. 2:3, 4, RSV.

In a world where sin abounds suffering is inevitable. Paul, however, refers to the added suffering that anyone who follows the example of Jesus will experience. See 3:12.

The comparison of a Christian life with that of a soldier's suggests that, for both, achievement requires fortitude, often under distressing circumstances. Soldiers do not expect a safe or easy time.

The forces of evil do all that is possible to destroy the believer's spirit. These forces do not come labeled as evil; they may be close loved ones or long-time friends as well as jealous, conniving associates. Ellen G. White wrote of the youth: "They should be taught that this world is not a parade ground, but a battlefield. All are called to endure hardness, as good soldiers. . . . Let them be taught that the true test of character is found in the willingness to bear burdens, to take the hard place, to do the work that needs to be done, though it brings no earthly recognition or reward."—*Education*, page 295.

Furthermore, good soldiers concentrate on what they have committed themselves to do; they are wholly at their commanding officer's disposal. In fact, concentration on their main task would probably do much to protect their own life as well as those around them. This admonition, directed especially to the ministry, surely applies to all Christians in the larger sense.

The full-time denominational employee who is wholly consecrated to his calling should engage in no outside activities that drain his energies or his time from the possibilities and challenges of his task for which he is already paid. See *The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 365, 366.

The nondenominational employee must also sort out the priorities in his life so that ample time and energy may be devoted to his Christian calling.

THINK IT THROUGH **How much time do I devote each week to personal Christian witnessing? Am I letting the good things of life rob me of the best that I may be doing?**

FURTHER STUDY*Education*, pages 295-297.

Part 2
THE CHRISTIAN
ATHLETE
AND FARMER

What are the special characteristics of successful athletes?

"An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules." 2 Tim. 2:5, RSV.

Paul carries through the concept of fortitude begun in his soldier illustration. The successful athlete also must win according to the rules; he must compete honestly and be so recognized by his associates.

A successful athlete determines long before he wins his victories not only that he will abide by the rules during the contest, but that he will rigorously train by the rules that lead to success. Great accomplishment is not happenstance; discipline and personal sacrifice are the predominating aspects of his life.

"The object of discipline is the training of the child for self-government. He should be taught self-reliance and self-control. Therefore as soon as he is capable of understanding, his reason should be enlisted on the side of obedience. . . . Help him to see that all things are under law, and that disobedience leads, in the end, to disaster and suffering."—*Education*, page 287.

What is the special characteristic of the successful farmer? Verse 6.

The concepts of fortitude, discipline, and patience are carried through from the soldier and athlete. Who questions the hard work of the farmer on whom all the world depends for food, and thus life itself?

Paul's spiritual lesson is this: Those who toil to bring salvation to others should be partaking of that salvation themselves. If Christians are not partaking of this spiritual harvest in their own lives, their influence will become barren.

"It is our own character and experience that determine our influence upon others. In order to convince others of the power of Christ's grace, we must know its power in our own hearts and lives. The gospel we present for the saving of souls must be the gospel by which our own souls are saved."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 469.

THINK IT THROUGH **Is my life an example of self-control and perseverance in pursuit of worthy goals?**

FURTHER STUDY *The Desire of Ages*, page 101.

Part 3
THE WILLING
SUFFERER

What connection do you see between the lessons to be learned from the soldier-athlete-farmer illustration and Jesus?

"Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David, as preached in my gospel, the gospel for which I am suffering and wearing fetters, like a criminal. But the word of God is not fettered. Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which in Christ Jesus goes with eternal glory." 2 Tim. 2:8-10, RSV.

The main concept so far in the second letter to Timothy is that the genuine Christian will face suffering, especially because he is a Christian. Now Timothy is told (as a parting reminder) never to forget our Lord. When you are tempted to avoid pain and hard times, Paul tells him, remember Jesus and think again. When you fully understand the experience of Jesus, then you will realize that Christians are called to suffer also.

Before the victory, there is the cross! Suffering is the road to glory. Paul is here speaking not only doctrinally but also experientially when he holds up Christ's death and resurrection.

In reference to his Lord's example, Paul included the thought that Jesus had descended from David. Jesus was not a make-believe man. Although He mysteriously entered the human stream, He did become part of the flow of heredity and faced life as every other baby has had to. "Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. . . . He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life. . . ."

"He [the Father] permitted Him to meet life's peril in common with every human soul, to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, at the risk of failure and eternal loss."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 49.

When Jesus hung on the cross, it seemed that all was lost. The gospel seemed not only fettered but defeated. When Paul was locked up in that dismal Roman prison soon to be executed, the gospel seemed doomed. Who could carry on in Paul's stead? Paul answered the question forthrightly: "The word of God is not fettered"!

Jesus, Paul, Timothy, and all the others who have suffered for righteousness' sake through the years have had to leave the scene—but the gospel moves on in the men and women of faith.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I act as if the gospel is unfettered and God still lives even when hard times come into my life?

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 462, 463.

Part 4
THE EARNEST
STUDENT

What responsibility rested upon Timothy?

"Remind them of this, and charge them before the Lord to avoid disputing about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth." 2 Tim. 2:14, 15, RSV.

There is always the danger that, for some, Christianity should become a matter of doctrine only. The essentials of Christianity, for such people, rest in religious information that can be argued about among those who hold different viewpoints. Even arguments that support Biblical truth may fall short and ruin the hearers if Christianity is left only to the world of information and logic.

Paul appeals to Timothy to hold high before the young men whom he will train that God's genuine workmen move from the head to the heart in "handling the word of truth."

"God requires the training of the mental faculties. He designs that His servants shall possess more intelligence and clearer discernment than the worldling, and He is displeased with those who are too careless or too indolent to become efficient, well-informed workers. The Lord bids us love Him with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and with all the mind. This lays upon us the obligation of developing the intellect to its fullest capacity, that with all the mind we may know and love our Creator.

"If placed under the control of His Spirit, the more thoroughly the intellect is cultivated, the more effectively it can be used in the service of God. . . .

"The Lord desires us to obtain all the education possible, with the object in view of imparting our knowledge to others. . . . We should not let slip even one opportunity of qualifying ourselves intellectually to work for God. . . .

"Self-discipline must be practiced by everyone who would be a worker for God. This will accomplish more than eloquence or the most brilliant talents. An ordinary mind, well disciplined, will accomplish more and higher work than will the most highly educated mind and the greatest talents without self-control."
—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 333-335.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I using all the advantages I have to improve my understanding of the Bible and my awareness of what is happening to people today? Do I find myself merely skimming the surface, hoping to get by?

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pages 232, 233; *Gospel Workers*, pages 92-95.

Part 5
EVIDENCES OF
A PURE HEART**What are the external evidences of a pure heart?**

"Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." 2 Tim. 2:22.

This admonition follows several verses that appeal to every Christian to be fit vessels for the Master's use. The chief condition, no matter how or where one serves, is that each person purify *himself*—a personal work is required before that church member can be useful to others.

The Greek is very instructive: "Keep on fleeing . . . keep on pursuing." Timothy was not being reprimanded but encouraged to maintain his already exemplary life.

The emphasis is not on bodily passions but on a deeper level where all kinds of unholy passions reside. Think about those immature passions that beset everybody, regardless of age, when Jesus is not in control of feelings and ambitions. With all the advantages that Christians have, there is the possibility that immature members will yield to the temptations of pride, conceit, dogmatism, contentiousness, and inordinate ambition. Keep on fleeing from such immaturity.

We should not make excuses for these sins of immaturity; we must not negotiate with them or linger in their presence. We are to flee as Joseph and Mary fled with Jesus from Herod's wrath—the same Greek word is used to describe their haste.

There is a spiritual law about fleeing and pursuing; one cannot flee sin unless he is actively pursuing righteousness. Paul described this law in several ways; for example, in Colossians 3 he talks about putting off sinful practices and putting on the characteristics of Jesus.

There is no other way to please God and have the sanctified life.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I pick my friends because they are pursuing righteousness, faith, love, and peace? Are these traits that which attract others to me?

"Not all who profess to be workers for Christ are true disciples. Among those who bear His name, and who are even numbered with His workers, are some who do not represent Him in character. They are not governed by His principles. These persons are often a cause of perplexity and discouragement to their fellow workers who are young in Christian experience; but none need be misled. Christ has given us a perfect example. He bids us follow Him."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 493.

FURTHER STUDY

Messages to Young People, pages 21-26.

Part 6
THE KINDLY
TEACHER

What characteristics distinguish a person who presents Christianity to others?

"The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to every one, an apt teacher, forbearing, correcting his opponents with gentleness." 2 Tim. 2:24, 25, RSV.

Here Paul erects a measuring stick by which the Christian may measure his Christlikeness in dealing with others. Knowing the doctrine is important and basic, but not enough.

The Christlike teacher is not a debater who loves the heat of battle; in fact, he will avoid a quarrel, knowing that Christianity wants to win the heart as well as the head. Such a teacher wins by a sweet reasonableness and a gracious courtesy that disarms his opponent. The Christlike teacher can do it no other way.

"Those who are handling the great, grand, ennobling truths of the Word, must ever reveal a spirit deep, earnest, fervent, but calm and full of sound sense that the mouths of gainsayers may be stopped.

"Those who are close students of the Word, following Christ in humility of soul, will not go to extremes. The Saviour never went to extremes, never lost self-control, never violated the laws of good taste. He knew when to speak and when to keep silent. . . . He silenced the voice of the caviling priests by penetrating beneath the surface and reaching the heart, flashing light into the mind and awakening the conscience."—*Gospel Workers*, page 317.

Not being prepared to handle the truth properly is another form of rudeness. Paul wants Timothy to stress the quality of teaching skills that every church member should acquire—"apt to teach."

Being right is important; being right with meekness is indispensable. Such a quality is a result of the "pure heart." Verse 22.

What is the final goal of Christian teachings? Verse 25, last part.

Paul says that Christian teachers should do more than answer all opposers and prove them wrong; they are to be brought to repentance. There is a moral element in believing or rejecting truth. Behind the rejection of the gospel there is a rebel heart unwilling to concede to God.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I look upon "preaching the truth" as a chance to vindicate my position or as an opportunity to introduce another to the open arms of Jesus? Do I make it easy for the other to admit his error?

AVOIDING A COUNTERFEIT FAITH

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Tim. 3:16.

In the third chapter of Second Timothy a sharp comparison is drawn between genuine and counterfeit faith. On one side stand religious people who have the form and not the power; on the other side stand those whose record of conduct, patience, love, and steadfastness reveals the "godly life in Christ Jesus."

In Paul's day as well as ours, men and women may enjoy the social rewards that usually accompany membership in the Christian church. Unfortunately it is very difficult to identify those who seek the blessings of Christianity apart from its vital power. They may actually assume leadership in the church, gain standing in the eyes of many, and, in so doing, create division and stress with their counterfeit faith.

Genuine faith can be tested by comparing its results with the instruction offered in the Scriptures and with the life of Jesus and men like Paul. Honest seekers for the truth will be able to detect the ring of authenticity. In the final analysis, genuine faith is validated by behavior and not merely by what a person believes.

The persecution that is predicted for the last generation of Christians is not arbitrarily set; it will be a reaction of a world that is uncomfortable with honor, integrity, and love. When the church lives the life of its Master, then there will be persecution that will compare with that directed at its Master and at His chief apostle of the first century A.D.

The Christian need not fear in times of great stress, within or without the church, if he has permitted the Bible to be profitable to him "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Tim. 3:16.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Form Without Power, 2 Tim. 3:1-5**
2. **Counterfeit Faith, 2 Tim. 3:6-9**
3. **Genuine Faith, 2 Tim. 3:10-12**
4. **Scriptures, the Basis of Truth, 2 Tim. 3:14, 15**
5. **Scriptures Train in Righteousness, 2 Tim. 3:16**
6. **Scriptures Make Man Complete, 2 Tim. 3:17**





**Part 1
FORM
WITHOUT
POWER**

What characteristics would be widespread in the last days?

"But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of stress. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, fierce, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding the form of religion but denying the power of it. Avoid such people." 2 Tim. 3:1-5, RSV.

Paul declares under inspiration that the moral climate of this world will not improve as time goes on. This simple prediction could have saved the Western world much unfounded and wishful optimism during the nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth.

Although every age could be described by Paul's list, he seems to suggest here that the last days will be especially difficult for those who prize righteousness. These times will be perilous because of the kind of men and women who will bring stress into the church. These are not obvious worldlings but rather those who try to pass off what they do under the cloak of religion. They are people whom Christians should be careful about associating with—"avoid such people."

The characteristics of the five foolish virgins (Matt. 25) are reflected in Paul's list, and Ellen White closes her description of the foolish virgins with the observation that "their service to God degenerates into a form. . . . The apostle Paul points out that this will be the special characteristic of those who live just before Christ's second coming. [2 Tim. 3:1-5, quoted]." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 411.

THINK IT THROUGH

Does one of Paul's appalling list apply to me? Do I enjoy the reputation of being a Christian without enjoying the power of a Spirit-filled life?

"Shall the selfishness and the ease of those who have earthly comforts and attractive homes allure us? Shall we cease as moral agencies to use our powers to the saving of souls? Shall our voices be indistinct? Then God will put His curse upon us who have had so great light, and inscribe upon the walls of our homes: 'Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.' "—*Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 55.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, Vol. 2, pp. 285-291.

Part 2
COUNTERFEIT
FAITH

What are some of the marks of a counterfeit faith?

"For among them are those who make their way into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and swayed by various impulses, who will listen to anybody and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth. . . . These men also oppose the truth, men of corrupt mind and counterfeit faith; but they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all." 2 Tim. 3:6-9, RSV.

The astonishing aspect of Paul's summary is that among these self-loving, pleasure-seeking church members would be some who would actively propagate their own brand of religion. Their methods, however, are not open and direct; they are secretive and cunning. Methods often are the first clue to the authenticity of religious doctrine that sounds acceptable on the surface. Another interesting feature of these tradesmen of heresy is that they would rather sneak up on a certain class of women than on men. Somehow they would sell their ideas to souls burdened down with guilt and self-pity.

A tragedy of life is that so many, young and old, would rather spend years searching "new thought," while shying away from commitment. Gospel truth is not palatable to them, because it requires decision and repentance. Large indeed is the amount of money collected each year by merchants of the occult, secret wisdom, and "new" light.

The problem of ever learning without finding the truth is not always the result of insincerity; it may just as easily be the problem of not making a strong attempt to practice it. Such people "need an experience in the truth that will enable them to comprehend the elevated character of the work."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, p. 53.

But Paul gave some timely advice that would help those concerned with keeping the faith pure; it would save some premature heresy hunting. Give them time, Paul counseled. There is something clearly false about counterfeit faith as there is something clearly right about truth. Error may spread for a while—but it will not get far before exposing itself.

THINK IT THROUGH **Is truth for me more a matter of knowing something than doing something? Does my faith bring forth the fruits of the Spirit?**

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Saying and Doing," pages 272-283.

Part 3 **What characteristics set Paul apart from those he has**
GENUINE FAITH **described earlier in the third chapter?**

"But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions . . . ; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Tim. 3:10-12.

In absolute contrast to the sorry description of those with a counterfeit faith (verses 1-9) stands Paul's record. Timothy and all his hearers, and their hearers down to the end of time, should not be overwhelmed by unscrupulous, insincere church members who will be responsible for great stress in the church. Paul lived through no less stress, and his example is there for all men to follow.

But Timothy, remember, he said, the Lord rescued me! He and all genuine Christians would endure similar experiences if they were loyal to the truth and lived a godly life. But through it all, the Lord would preserve. The Greek for "thou hast fully known" is literally, "you have followed." Timothy not only watched, he followed just as one man would follow another down a street. He had allowed Paul's faith to become his own.

In this summary of his life, Paul was not telling Timothy anything new. With only a few hours to live, he was talking like a father to his son. His faith in Jesus has made the difference—the contrast between his life and that described in verses 1-5 is self-evident.

THINK IT THROUGH **Why is it that there is so little persecution in the lives of**
church members today?

"The only reason is that the church has conformed to the world's standard and therefore awakens no opposition. The religion which is current in our day is not of the pure and holy character that marked the Christian faith in the days of Christ and His apostles. It is only because of the spirit of compromise with sin, because the great truths of the word of God are so indifferently regarded, because there is so little vital godliness in the church, that Christianity is apparently so popular with the world. Let there be a revival of the faith and power of the early church, and the spirit of persecution will be revived, and the fires of persecution will be rekindled."—*The Great Controversy*, page 48.

FURTHER STUDY *The Great Controversy*, pages 507-510.

Part 4
SCRIPTURES,
THE BASIS
OF FAITH

How only can the Scriptures become a basis for faith?

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim. 3:14, 15.

This is a remarkable exhortation, one that many Christians have overlooked or rejected. As time goes by, there will always be those who feel embarrassed or dissatisfied with the old truths. They must innovate. They are not satisfied with that which is revealed—they must go beyond. They argue for a new theology, a new morality, a new image. It may be necessary to adapt methods to the changing needs and current thought framework as the generations pass—but Paul's counsel is "continue in [remain in] what you have learned and have firmly believed." Verse 14, RSV.

It is one thing to have passed all examinations on the doctrines with a perfect record and quite another to allow them to control the desires and decisions of life. People may know doctrinal truth and yet not be firm believers. Such is the tragedy of the five foolish virgins in Matthew 25.

The chief reasons for any man's stability and deep assurance were also Timothy's: He knew from whom he had learned the truth and he knew the Scriptures which formed the basis for whatever Paul had taught him in word and example.

When Timothy heard Paul for the first time, he recognized the voice that he had heard when he read the Scriptures. Paul was no innovator; he was consistent with the Old Testament. Paul claimed before Agrippa (Acts 26) that he preached nothing other than what had already been predicted by the prophets.

Knowing about the Messiah was not enough. Timothy had to recognize his need for a Saviour, repent of self-will and self-indulgence, and commit his life completely to the God he heard speaking to him in the Old Testament and in Paul's preaching. Timothy's response to Jesus was the beginning of the life of faith.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I more concerned about what Paul said than I am concerned about doing what Paul did? Do I memorize Paul, or do I see what Paul saw and hear what Paul heard?

FURTHER STUDY

Fundamentals of Christian Education, pages 123-128.

Part 5
SCRIPTURES
TRAIN IN
RIGHTEOUSNESS

For what purpose was the Bible given to man?

"All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." 2 Tim. 3:16, RSV.

Timothy had no need to fear for the future even though Christianity's chief spokesman and his dearest friend was about to be executed. No false teacher need cause him dismay. No matter what happened to men, the Holy Scriptures remained as the unerring guide to Christian faith and practice.

"Profitable for teaching." In verse 15, Timothy was reminded that the Scriptures "are able to instruct you for salvation." RSV. Such teaching is salvation knowledge, full of God's invitation and mercy, full of Jesus Christ as man's example and substitute. The purpose of the Bible is not merely to teach facts that men can discover by their own personal investigation; rather it is to teach spiritual truths that can be learned only by divine revelation.

"For reproof, for correction." Another translation for "reproof" is "refutation." The Scriptures are profitable for the refuting of every error and religious fiction; they are the only writings in the world that can change sinners into believers and commandment keepers. The results of sincere Bible study are unsurpassed.

"For training in righteousness." The chief purpose of the Bible is to lead men to a right relation with God, to that quality of life that God can point to as examples of His way of life.

THINK IT THROUGH **Has the Bible been for me the voice of God speaking to my soul? What was the last passage that spoke to me?**

"God has been pleased to communicate His truth to the world by human agencies, and He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do this work. He guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write. The treasure was intrusted to earthen vessels, yet it is, none the less, from Heaven. The testimony [of the Bible] is conveyed through the imperfect expression of human language, yet it is the testimony of God; and the obedient, believing child of God beholds in it the glory of a divine power, full of grace and truth."—*The Great Controversy*, Introduction, pages vi, vii.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, Introduction, pages v-vii.

Part 6
SCRIPTURES
MAKE MAN
COMPLETE

What is the ultimate purpose in studying the Bible?

"That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3:17.

"Perfect" should be understood as fitted or equipped. The man or woman who chooses to identify with God will use His divinely revealed writings to teach, to refute, to help restore men and women to upright living, and to educate young and old in the ways that will produce righteousness of character.

In other words, the Christian who wants to find victory over sin in his life and who wants a clear statement of what truth is so that he can encourage others to accept Jesus as Lord will find that the Bible lacks nothing and the Christian will be wanting in nothing. All that is needed and more is in the Bible.

All the equipment necessary to live victoriously, ceasing to sin, is available through the record of Holy Scripture. The Christian learns about these divine resources when he studies the Bible with the right motives in mind.

The study of God's Word is not an end in itself; it should always lead to action, to moral restoration, to a change in ethics.

The man of faith is the only person who can read the Bible correctly.

"Through faith they [Bible students] come to know God by an experimental knowledge. They have proved for themselves the reality of His word, the truth of His promises. They have tasted, and they know that the Lord is good.

"The beloved John had a knowledge gained through his own experience. He could testify: [quote 1 John 1:1-3].

"So everyone may be able, through his own experience, to 'set his seal to this, that God is true.' John 3:33, A.R.V. He can bear witness to that which he himself has seen and heard and felt of the power of Christ. He can testify:

" 'I needed help, and I found it in Jesus. Every want was supplied, the hunger of my soul was satisfied; the Bible is to me the revelation of Christ. I believe in Jesus because He is to me a divine Saviour. I believe the Bible because I have found it to be the voice of God to my soul.' "—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 461.

THINK IT THROUGH **Have I been using the Bible as a check sheet of those characteristics that will make me a loyal child of God? Am I fully equipped to represent God regardless of the occasion?**

FURTHER STUDY *Christ's Object Lessons*, "Hidden Treasure," pages 111-114.

FAITH FACES DEATH



"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." 2 Tim. 4:7, 8.

For at least 30 years Paul had been laboring as Christ's tireless ambassador, but when he wrote these lines, his days were numbered. He knew not whether Timothy would arrive before his execution. He spoke as a dying man would to his son. His solemn words are profoundly stirring.

Although Paul said nothing new in this last chapter of Second Timothy, the fact that the shadow of the sword hung over his head gives special importance to what he chose to say. He summed up his career in these few words—a dying man doesn't waste his words. How intently Timothy must have read them with tearful eyes and trembling hands.

What was said to Timothy would apply to every Christian down through the years until Jesus comes. Although the ordained minister should take special heed to Paul's incisive commands, no church member can avoid his own measure of responsibility. Paul talks to everyone who wants to finish his life with the confidence that they too have "fought a good fight, . . . finished my course, . . . kept the faith."

The chapter seems to be divided into three parts: (1) Keep your eye on the coming of the Lord if you want to keep perspective and have reason to hope; (2) keep your eye on what is going on around you so that you are not deceived or disheartened by timeservers and jealous competitors; (3) keep your eye on the Lord who will never desert you and will always provide the strength necessary.

Paul had a great opportunity to think of himself and his predicament as he penned these words. After all, Paul was on trial for his life. He had labored incessantly for untold thousands; he had stored up no material security for his old-age convenience. But now, when he needed his friends, where were they? They had left him, and not always for the best of reasons. Paul had reason to think of himself now; a show of self-pity would have been easily understood. But instead of pleading his case, he continued to plead the cause of Jesus Christ. He asked only that Timothy go and do likewise. Problems Timothy would face. How well Paul knew! But the gospel was more important than a person's comfort and convenience. In summary Paul is saying, "God has been with me and strengthened me and has never failed me—now, Timothy, the same Lord be with you; grace be with you." See verse 22.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Preach the Word, 2 Tim. 4:1, 2**
2. **Teach the Truth, 2 Tim. 4:3-5**
3. **Keeping the Faith—1, 2 Tim. 4:5-7**
4. **Keeping the Faith—2, 2 Tim. 4:7**
5. **Love His Appearing, 2 Tim. 4:8**
6. **The Lord Gave Me Strength, 2 Tim. 4:17, 18**

Part 1
PREACH
THE WORD

What was Paul's last charge to Timothy?

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine." 2 Tim. 4:1, 2.

The charge to all Christians, especially the ministry, is to "preach the word." In verse three, the equivalent word is "sound doctrine"; in verse four, "the truth." This "word" consists of the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:15, 16) and all that Timothy had heard and learned from Paul and the other apostles. The "word" Christians are to proclaim is not their own invention. The Christian's duty is to hear the word and to obey it, guard it from heresy, and proclaim it wherever men are found without embarrassment and without tempering it to curry favor.

Such preaching is clothed in urgency. Hearts are not warmed and broken by listening to a listless, drowsy witness. The judgment is coming, and time is uncertain. Half-hearted witnessing, lazy presentations, give the lie to the Christian message.

Paul added relevancy to urgency—God's word fits the needs of all men—convincing argument for the doubtful, rebuke for the sinful, and encouragement for the weary or fearful.

The Biblical message must be taught in an intelligent manner. Teaching and preaching need not be separate duties. Pity the church that hears not a compassionate witnessing appeal in its teaching and a logical, intelligent presentation of truth in its preaching.

So that Timothy might remember who is behind all proclamation of the word, Paul pointed him to the One who is ultimately responsible for its success—the ever-present God and the coming Jesus, the Judge of the living and the dead.

THINK IT THROUGH

How urgent have I been in the last week about telling close associates about the saving power of Jesus Christ?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, Vol. 8, p. 295; *Christ's Object Lessons*, "The Sower Went Forth to Sow," page 40.

Part 2
TEACH
THE TRUTH **Why was Paul greatly concerned that the gospel be preached with unfailing urgency?**

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist." 2 Tim. 4:3-5a.

Already in Paul's day (chap. 3:6, 7) the church was plagued by those who would seek to remake the gospel after their own whims.

Paul focused on a strange condition called "itching ears." Such people are attracted to certain teachers and preachers who find peculiar satisfaction in serving up novelties and concentrating on the curious and sensational. The pity is that such people close their ears against the clear, old-fashioned gospel, chiefly because the gospel always asks for commitment when it promises its blessings.

By what standards do some church members judge their teachers and preachers? "The apostle does not here [2 Tim. 4:3, 4] refer to the openly irreligious, but to the professing Christians who make inclination their guide, and thus become enslaved by self. Such are willing to listen to those doctrines only that do not rebuke their sins or condemn their pleasure-loving course. They are offended by the plain words of the faithful servants of Christ and choose teachers who praise and flatter them."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 504, 505.

Paul's advice to Timothy was simply this: Don't take your lead from the prevailing theological fashions of the moment; don't quietly leave the scene to the gratifiers of "itching ears." When people are unstable, that is the time for the man of faith to stand his ground. When people would rather hear anything but the sober word, that is the time for conscientious Christians to be even more persevering. The deafer the people, the more forceful and clear must be the proclamation.

THINK IT THROUGH **Do I tend to back away and wait for a more favorable opportunity when people show greater interest in side issues and novelties, or do I think of more effective ways to gain their attention and respect?**

FURTHER STUDY *Evangelism*, pages 158, 337, 625.

Part 3
KEEPING
THE FAITH—1

What pressing reason did Paul give for Timothy to fulfill his ministry?

"Make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight." 2 Tim. 4:5b-7a.

Here Paul gives the chief reason for the importance of Timothy's ministry—Paul was at the point of being executed. Paul uses the language of the temple—sacrificial language. The New English Bible reads, "My life is being poured out on the altar."

"Departure" suggests in the Greek the loosening of a ship's mooring rope, or the loosening of a tent's cords as the tent goes down. How can anyone read these lines without a lump in the throat?

But there is a total absence of self-pity or regret in Paul's last words. This kind of death he did not deserve. Nevertheless, he maintained triumphant hope, and cheer for all, as he showed his converts everywhere how the man of faith faces death.

What kind of fight was Paul referring to? "The life of the apostle Paul was a constant conflict with self. He said, 'I die daily.' 1 Corinthians 15:31. His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. . . .

"At the close of his life of conflict, looking back over its struggles and triumphs, he could say, 'I have fought a good fight. . . .'

"The Christian life is a battle and a march. In this warfare there is no release; the effort must be continuous and persevering. It is by unceasing endeavor that we maintain the victory over the temptations of Satan. Christian integrity must be sought with resistless energy and maintained with a resolute fixedness of purpose."—*The Ministry of Healing*, pages 452, 453.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I depend more on the Bible promises of forgiveness than on the promises of power to overcome sin? If so, might this not tell me how much I am willing to struggle with sin?

"Each one has a personal battle to fight. Not even God can make our characters noble or our lives useful, unless we become co-workers with Him. Those who decline the struggle lose the strength and joy of victory."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 487.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, page 549.

Part 4
KEEPING
THE FAITH—2

What settled assurance did Paul have when he faced death?

"I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." 2 Tim. 4:7, RSV.

Every Christian has his personal race to run—not against anyone else, but on a course that has only one goal, to reflect the character of Jesus. Paul likens this course to the public footraces that were very familiar to his readers.

Timothy had been by his side when Paul had run against stiff winds of hostility and misunderstanding. Timothy knew well what that course would be like after Paul was gone. Paul's record was plain and for all the world to examine—he had not faltered. He didn't run halfway and become satisfied with his progress. He died growing and running.

In what way did Paul keep the faith? Throughout the Timothy letters Paul contrasted faith with a counterfeit religious experience. Genuine faith produces love and does not mistake theological knowledge for true Christian experience. See 1 Tim. 1. But Paul does not depreciate doctrine when he emphasizes faith. Although it is true that a church member may have sound doctrine without faith, he cannot have faith without the foundation of the truth about God and how He saves men. The purpose of doctrine is to lead men to have a trusting, obedient relationship with God—the experience of faith. See 1 Tim. 6; 2 Tim. 3.

Jesus on Calvary also faced death alone. No doubt his Lord's experience provided the courage that kept Paul strong. "Amid the awful darkness, apparently forsaken of God, Christ had drained the last dregs in the cup of human woe. In those dreadful hours He had relied upon the evidence of His Father's acceptance heretofore given Him. . . . By faith He rested in Him whom it had ever been His joy to obey. And as in submission He committed Himself to God, the sense of the loss of His Father's favor was withdrawn. By faith, Christ was victor."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 756.

THINK IT THROUGH

In the minor distresses of life has my faith been strong? What is the foundation on which faith for tough times is built?

"If Christ is my Saviour, my sacrifice, my atonement, then I shall never perish. Believing on Him, I have life forevermore. Oh, that all who believe the truth would believe in Jesus as their own Saviour. I do not mean that cheap faith unsupported by works, but that earnest, living, constant, abiding faith, that eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of God."—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 2, p. 381.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 511-513.

Part 5
LOVE HIS
APPEARING

To whom will the eternal rewards be given?

"Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing." 2 Tim. 4:8, RSV.

Paul never doubted that Jesus would return the second time. He believed Jesus' promises as relayed to him through the other apostles. Furthermore, these firsthand witnesses were corroborated by personal revelation. See 1 Cor. 15:8.

The second advent gives meaning and an end to history. Life on earth will not merely repeat itself endlessly, generation after generation, subject to the whims of man or the mysterious forces of nature. There is a goal toward which all mankind moves—the judgment of all and the reward of life everlasting to those who were comfortable and settled into God's way of living.

The crown (literally, a garland of olive leaves) symbolized victory for those who had identified with righteousness. In this text Paul is emphasizing that the reward of eternal life is a reward for being righteous, for a life-style that was loyal to God. "In the kingdom of God, position is not gained through favoritism. It is not earned, nor is it received through an arbitrary bestowal. It is the result of character. The crown and the throne are the tokens of a condition attained; they are the tokens of self-conquest through our Lord Jesus Christ."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 549.

Eternal life awaits all who have made it clear that they are willing to say Yes to whatever God wants them to do—the way of righteousness. Such a commitment has fitted them for the family of heaven and "the Lord can trust them" to be of that number. See *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 315.

Every Christian should feel the confidence of a victor, knowing all the while that each victory was made possible by the indwelling Christ. Faith carries within itself the assurance that God will open wide the door to those who have trusted and obeyed Him.

Although we must live life to the full each day, the real cause for enthusiasm and meaning to life lies in the Christian's love for the advent. It remains for the genuine Christian, the "blessed hope."

THINK IT THROUGH

Would you want Jesus to return tomorrow, or are there a few things that you want to do before He returns?

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 339, 340.

Part 6
THE LORD
GAVE ME
STRENGTH

What was Paul's reason for peace and assurance?

"But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength to proclaim the word fully, that all the Gentiles might hear it. . . . The Lord will rescue me from every evil and save me for his heavenly kingdom." 2 Tim. 4:17, 18, RSV.

In times of loneliness and impending death, where did Paul's thoughts go? Cut off and virtually abandoned, he longed for the touch of an old friend's hand. For a variety of reasons everyone who had been ordinarily by his side were gone, except faithful Luke (verse 11). (In a way this information tells us as much about the heroism of Luke as about the loneliness of Paul.)

He urged Timothy to come before winter (verses 9, 21); to bring Mark also (the young man he had written off as a coward some years before) (verse 11); to bring a winter cloak; and to bring books and parchments (verse 13). Here was a man with his heart set on the great return of His Lord, but also with a hearty longing for Timothy.

Although Paul rested his confidence in the Lord, who always stood by him, he did not despise the earthly means by which the Lord works. When we are lonely, we need friends; when we are cold, we need clothing; when we are bored, we need books.

Nevertheless, there are times when even the best of friends cannot provide what the spirit needs. No one can give a personal witness for another, especially in times of great stress. By Paul's side, unseen by the curious spectators and malicious persecutors, was One as real to Paul as his own self: "The Lord stood by me."

Such a Presence was not imagination. He helped Paul to witness boldly and convincingly to the truth about Jesus and on numerous occasions He delivered Paul from his impassioned foes.

Paul was not so naive as to believe that God would always deliver him from physical harm; but he did know that none of his enemies could inflict any lasting harm. Evil would not conquer his spirit. In God's time, there would be a place for him beyond the reach of suffering about which he knew so much. No wonder Paul, in the shadow of the executioner's sword, could sing out, "To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen." Verse 18, RSV.

THINK IT THROUGH **When you face the lonely moment when no earthly friend can spare you from responsibility and suffering, even death itself, how do you think you will respond?**

FURTHER STUDY *The Desire of Ages*, pages 354-358.

LESSONS FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 1975

Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the Adult Lessons for the fourth quarter of 1975 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of the series is "Jeremiah—A Message for Our Time."

First lesson: "The Times of Jeremiah." Memory verse, 2 Chron. 36:15, 16. Lesson outline is as follows: (1) The International Scene, Ezek. 17:12, 15. (2) Josiah, Jer. 1:2. (3) Jehoiakim and the First Siege, 2 Chron. 36:1. (4) Jehoiachin and the Second Siege, 2 Kings 24:6, 8. (5) Zedekiah and the Third Siege, 2 Kings 24:17; 23:34. (6) Jeremiah's Fellow Prophets, Dan. 1:1, 3, 4, 6.

Second lesson: "Jeremiah's Call." Memory verse, Jer. 1:9. Lesson outline is as follows: (1) Called by God, Jer. 1:1, 2. (2) Foreknown by God, Jer. 1:4, 5. (3) Overwhelmed by God's Call, Jer. 1:6. (4) God's Enabling, Jer. 1:7, 8. (5) His First Vision, Jer. 1:11, 12. (6) God's Reassurance, Jer. 1:19.

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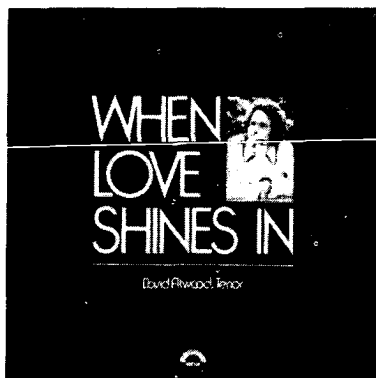
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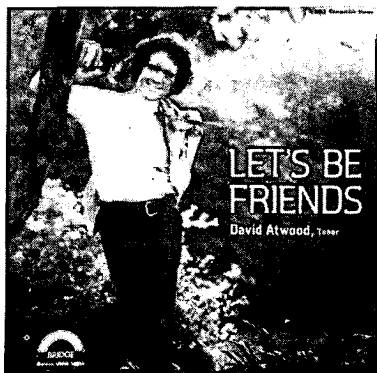
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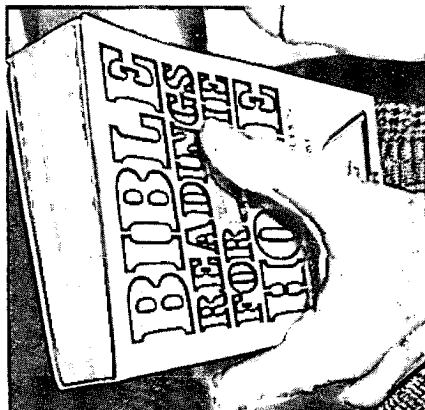
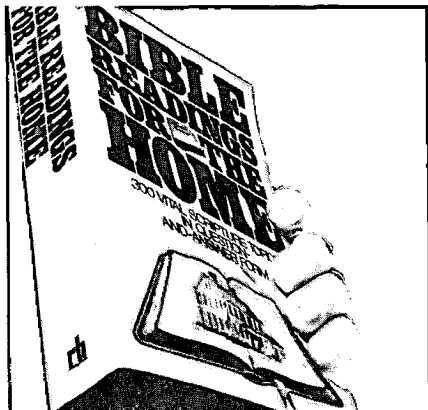
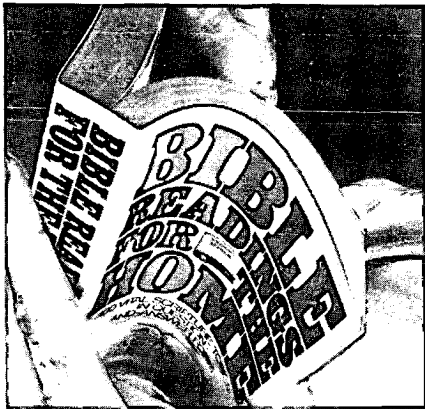
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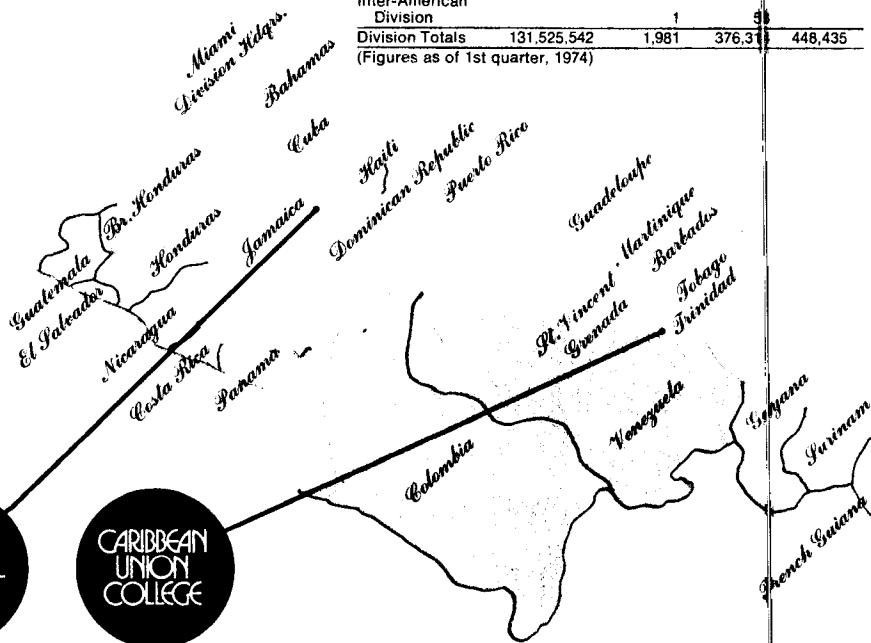
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