

## Lesson #16 -1 TIMOTHY 2019

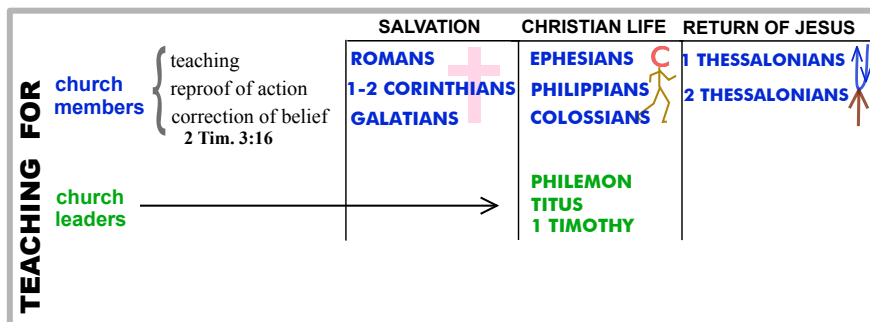
Before starting this lesson, **read the 6 chapters.**

Paul's first series of letters in the New Testament is for **church members**.

He teaches them about **SALVATION**, the **CHRISTIAN LIFE** and the **RETURN OF JESUS**.

His next series is for the leaders of these churches.

In the last lesson, we studied **PHILEMON** and **TITUS**. This lesson looks at Paul's first letter to **TIMOTHY**.



To understand the need for this book, we have to know the background - first of Timothy himself.

He was born and raised in **Lystra**, some 300 miles east of **Ephesus**. His father was Greek, but his Jewish mother and grandmother trained him in the Old Testament as a typical Jewish boy. He put his faith in Jesus when Paul preached in his city c. 47 AD. Some 3 years later, when he was about 20 years old, he became part of Paul's team.

By nature, he is timid and hates confrontations. Around this same time he was ordained, probably in his own church and received spiritual gifts for his ministry. By the time of this letter, Timothy has worked with Paul some 13 years. This is Timothy's background.



We also need to know the background of the Ephesian church.



It was on Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary trip that he spent more than 2 years in **Ephesus**. He taught every day and eventually established a local church. This was from 53 to 55 AD.

From there Paul continued west and worked thruout **Greece**. A year later, on his way to Jerusalem, he stopped near the city of **Ephesus**. He warned the church leaders that false teachers would infiltrate the church. Some would even be from their own congregation. So a major responsibility of church leaders was to limit who can teach and what they teach. Paul's teaching was to be their guide and later, as his letters became available, they also should be used.

When Paul arrived in **Jerusalem**, he was taken prisoner. He spent the next 4 years in prison, first in **Caesarea** and then in **Rome**, under house arrest.

In 60 AD he got his freedom and started working with the churches once again. While in **Crete** in 63 AD, he hears the church in Ephesus is in chaos. Timothy is there but is not in authority. False teachers have taken over the Ephesian church, just as he warned 7 years earlier. This is why Paul leaves Titus on the island of Crete and goes to **Ephesus**.

When he gets there, he finds some teachers have wandered from the true gospel message and are confused. They are caught up with Jewish Gnosticism - or with other kinds of false doctrine. Other teachers in the church have knowingly rejected the gospel message. This includes one man who is determined to make Paul look bad. He has done everything possible to oppose him, so the congregation will reject Paul. 2 Tim. 4:14

To deal with the chaos, the first thing Paul does is to remove all the leaders and teachers. He becomes the pastor/teacher in order to get the believers once again grounded in their faith. But after some 10 months, there is a problem in Macedonia. So he puts Timothy as head pastor/teacher and leaves for northern Greece. But within 6 months, wrong people are taking over and other people are out of control.

Timothy is comparatively young - in his early 30's. He is still timid by nature and has never been a church leader with full authority. Older people as well as the false teachers are challenging his authority. So Paul writes from Macedonia - in the fall of 63 AD.

## Purpose of this letter

- To encourage Timothy
- To give him **written** authority
- To let him know what is expected of church members and church leaders

## OUTLINE

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|---|
| Conduct of church members 1-3<br>Conduct of Timothy 4-6 |
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Paul begins by giving Timothy written authority to say which **men** are qualified to teach and what they can teach.

*As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines **any longer** nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work, which is by faith.* 1:3-4

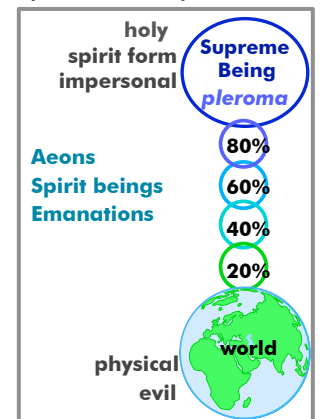
The word *false* in verse 3 means a *different* kind of gospel - one that looks like Christianity, but in reality, undermines it. Some in the church are undermining the gospel message.

Others are caught up with genealogies. This is Gnostic teaching about the 30 levels of spirit guides that united the Supreme Being to the evil world. Jewish teachers are taking Old Testament verses and twisting them to combine Jewish beliefs with Gnostic teaching. They consider themselves experts in the laws of Moses and are very convincing.

So Paul continues,

*They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.* 1:7

What these men are teaching is wrong and must be stopped - both the undermining and Gnosticism.



Paul believed God entrusted him with the true gospel message - **SALVATION** thru Jesus, the **CHRISTIAN LIFE** with Jesus as Head and the **RETURN OF JESUS**. He is now entrusting this gospel message to Timothy. He is to make sure the message is not changed or undermined.

But this will be a problem for Timothy. When he begins to say, *this is right - this is wrong - you can teach - you cannot teach*, some will accept it. But others are going to resent or challenge it. So Paul reminds him,

*Timothy, my son, - meaning his spiritual son - I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, meaning at his ordination, so that by following them, you may fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience.* 1:18-19

When others question Timothy's authority or when he is tempted to avoid confrontation, he is to remember his ordination. God had not only called him but also gifted him for ministry. Now he must be true to his faith and his conscience. He must limit what is taught in the local church so the gospel message does not get ruined or lost. Seven times Paul refers to it as **the Faith** - Jesus as Savior, Jesus as Head, Jesus' return.

## MEN TEACHERS

Paul knows the danger in the church because when he had been there, he had specifically dealt with 2 of the men teachers. They had willfully pushed away what they knew to be true and shipwrecked the faith. Paul uses this picture language to say it was as tho the faith had been broken apart. Everyone in the church was willing to believe anything. As a result, according to verse 20, Paul had handed them over to Satan. This was Paul's term for church discipline.

These men could attend the teaching part of the service, but could no longer have any responsibility, authority, or leadership in the church.

They could not participate in the potluck meal after the teaching part of the service or receive holy communion which was at the end of the meal.

Since these men wanted to follow Satan's path, Satan would be allowed to bring some kind of suffering to their lives. It could be problems, loss, pain or illness.

The purpose was to teach and correct. Notice the phrase in verse 20, *to be taught*.

When these 2 men admitted their teaching was not part of the gospel message and they repented, the suffering they experienced would be removed. They could once again receive communion and if they remained faithful, their leadership would be restored. Paul had disciplined these 2 men.

Now Timothy is to stop other men from false teaching and use church discipline if necessary.

Timothy, as church leader, has the authority to say **which men** can teach and **what** they can teach.

He also has authority to set **standards** for church members who lead in public prayer.

According to 2:2, church members should not just pray for themselves but also for those in authority.

They should pray for Nero so they have freedom to practice their faith as long as possible. None of them have any idea they have just one more year of religious freedom. In July 64 AD, part of Rome burns and Nero blames the Christians. From then on, there is severe persecution for believers.

Church members in Ephesus are to pray for Nero.

But for their prayers to be effective, they must be led by qualified people.

### **MEN LEADING IN PRAYER**

*I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. 2:8*

Raising hands with palms open, facing upward, was the normal way to pray in the first century. This was the way everyone prayed - Christians, Jews and even pagans. Paul is not giving instruction about their body position of raising hands towards God.

He is talking about their **spiritual** condition. Hands stretched towards God must be **holy**. They should never think of leading **others** into the presence of a holy God without first making sure **their** life is holy.

In chapter one, Paul said there were controversies and arguments between church members. Some of the men were angry at those they argued with. They used public prayer to denounce those who did not agree with them. Paul says when **men** lead in public prayer, it is to be done with the right attitude - without anger or disputing.

### **WOMEN LEADING IN PRAYER**

In all of your translations, you will have 2:9 beginning with the words, *Similarly, in like manner, also, in the same way*. Paul has just explained how men are to pray. The Greek word for *men* means male gender. Paul continues, *In the same way*, meaning, *As men lead in prayer, in the same way, when women lead in prayer...*

*I also, in the same way, want women - when they lead in prayer - to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. 2:9-10*

During the time of public prayer...

**Men** are standing up and using prayer to continue their arguments with other church members.

**Women** are standing up and using prayer to show off their hairdo, clothes, or jewelry. Paul says when women lead in public prayer, they are to draw attention to God, not themselves. And if they want respect and leadership on the weekend, they should be known for their godly life during the week.

Whether in Paul's day or our day, when a woman has a life of godliness, a godly church will respect her and **seek** her leadership.

Up to this point Paul has dealt with...

**Men** who are teaching

**Men** and **women** who are leading in public prayer

## WOMEN TEACHERS

In the last part of chapter 2 he deals with **women** who are teaching.

He is going to explain that...

Women need instruction

Men's ideas need correction

Women can be respected for abilities and leadership – their reputations can be saved

There are only 2 locations - Corinth and Ephesus - where Paul told the local church that women had to be limited in their actions or their teaching.

Both of these cities were controlled by a goddess who dominated their worship and their life. She was the ultimate authority ; she could not be wrong or questioned. Men accepted it because she said prostitution was a way to worship her. Women accepted it because it gave them power.

In Greece, women had lots of freedom and were involved in political leadership. **Corinth**, in southern Greece, was controlled by the goddess Aphrodite. **Women** dominated the religion and life of the city. When the local church was formed, women thought they could set the rules and decide what was acceptable. Their actions caused unbelievers to think prostitution was a part of Christianity. They also disrupted the church services as they challenged their husbands while they were speaking. Paul had to put restrictions on women in the Corinthian church.



In **Ephesus**, the idol goddess Artemis was the center of attention all the way back to the 500s BC. By the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, goddess worship was a basic part of the culture. Political leaders were men, but women had a prominent role in city life. In the church, after Paul left, women thought they could set the rules and be in charge. Two problems develop.

First of all, strict Jewish men - believers from Jerusalem, move to Ephesus and are part of the church congregation. These men believe all women are inferior and should never be allowed to learn. They want to remove women from having any part of church activity.

The second problem involves the widows. Older widows in the church have a teaching ministry. But in addition, younger widows are also teaching. However, **they** have been deceived by false teachers. 1 Tim. 5:15; 2 Tim. 3:6 During the week, they are visiting church members in their homes and teaching these errors. They are also repeating all the local gossip.

So to deal with the false teaching of the women, Paul says these women are not to teach.

To deal with the prejudice of the Jewish men from Jerusalem, Paul corrects their wrong ideas.

Paul's instruction to Timothy about this local problem does not mean it is for all churches in all cultures in all centuries.

But whenever and where ever these problems do arise, here is the pattern for dealing with them.

*A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But she will be saved thru childbirth, if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.* 2:11-15

Reading this in English from a western point of view in the 21<sup>st</sup> century makes it sound like Paul hates women. But Paul is writing in Greek from a Jewish point of view in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. This changes the meaning of several statements.

### *Let a woman learn* 2:11

In the Greek, it is a direct command. So either he is saying, *Women, learn.* Or, *You men, let a woman learn.* This is a radical statement. The Jewish men from Jerusalem said women were inferior and incapable of learning. Women should not be educated. Paul says, *wrong, let a woman learn. The church is to provide her with correct spiritual teaching and training.*

### *Learn in silence* 2:11

To us, that is a putdown. But in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, it was a Jewish phrase given to rabbis in training. *He learns in silence* meant he shows wisdom by learning with an open mind. Because of his maturity, he does not argue nor resist instruction.

So when Paul says a woman is to *learn in silence*, it is a compliment. He means that when a woman learns, she can be known for wisdom, maturity and an open mind just like rabbis who are in training.

#### *Learn in all submission* 2:11

The Greek word translated *submission* (authentein) has the meaning of acting on one's own authority or wanting to dominate/have control over another. Women in the Ephesian church **must** learn and receive instruction from Timothy, their leader. They are not to put themselves above him or try to have authority over him. Women are not to resist or say they do not need instruction. Until they get training, they must be stopped from teaching, before they lead anyone else astray. It is not the teaching that is the problem, but the attitude or motive for teaching – the desire for personal power and control over others.

Women leading people astray was a big topic with Jewish men. They were always discussing it among themselves. And when they did, they always brought up the story of Adam and Eve.

#### *Adam was formed first; then Eve* 2:13

So Paul begins with this popular quote. But then adds the statement - when Adam sinned, he was **not** deceived, meaning Adam knew exactly what he was doing. It was intentional. In contrast, Eve sinned because she **was** deceived. This is not said to make her inferior, but to show there was a reason for her action. She did not knowingly believe Satan's lie. We in the West are not going to see Paul's logic. But it was very obvious to the Jewish men.

They were always saying that Adam had more influence and power than Eve.

Paul is pointing out - if that were true, he should have used his influence and power when Eve gave him the forbidden fruit. He should have told her she was deceived and had disobeyed God. But according to the account, Eve gave the fruit to him and he ate it. Later, when God asked him about it, he said, *The woman **You** put here with me gave me some fruit and I ate it.* Paul is making the point - it was Eve who influenced Adam. Women have an ability to influence men. Sometimes it is done for personal gain or power.

Jewish men also said because Eve was deceived, it means all women are gullible.

It is why they cannot learn and should not learn. God knew Eve was inferior. The proof was He **created** her a sinner.

Paul corrects that idea by saying Eve **became** a sinner. His logic is that Adam and Eve started out the same - both were formed by God; both were innocent and both sinned. If Adam disobeyed and had a right to learn, then Eve who disobeyed had the right to learn. And it is important for women to learn. Eve was deceived and then influenced Adam to disobey. In Paul's day, women who are deceived can still influence men to disobey.

The answer is not to make women silent forever, but to make them silent until they can be taught. Then they can use that knowledge along with their power of influence to benefit the church for good.

From science, we know that generally, women have better verbal skills. Since that is how God made women, it is logical they should be teachers. But within the church, they can only teach if first they have been given adequate and correct instruction.

#### *But she* - meaning Eve - *will be saved thru childbirth...* 2:15

Because Eve sinned first and was deceived, people down thru history, when they hear the story, would associate her with failure. But God did not want that. To change the negative image, God gave Eve childbearing ability. To this day, Eve is thought of as the mother of the human race. And thru **her** descendants, Jesus would come, who would deal with the sin she started. Eve's reputation and respect was saved thru her role of childbearing.

#### *...if they continue in faith, love and holiness.*

The women in Ephesus have been deceived - their reputation and respect can be saved if **they** continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety. In the Greek, Paul starts with a singular noun – **she** – and ends with a plural noun – **they**. Most translations do not show this because it is a violation of our grammar.

Paul is making a specific comparison between Eve and the women in the Ephesian church. Both were deceived into believing false teaching and while deceived, influenced others in their thinking and decisions. And based on the Greek word that Paul used in verse 12 (authentein), evidently both had the desire for power and control over others. But both were given an opportunity to save their reputation and earn respect. Eve thru her role of childbearing. The Ephesian women being able to teach after being trained and giving evidence of spiritual maturity.

In this book Paul is not just stopping women from teaching in the church. He is stopping everyone unless they are prepared.

**In chapter one - men** must be stopped from giving false teaching.

If they refuse to listen, they should be handed over to Satan so they will learn. If and when they learn, they can be restored to leadership and teaching. These men are like Adam in knowing what they are doing. Therefore they are considered more guilty.

**In chapter 2 - women** must be stopped from giving false teaching.

However, they should not be handed over to Satan, but rather told to submit - to accept instruction from Timothy so they will learn. If and when they learn, they can be restored to leadership and teaching. Like Eve, they have been deceived. They do not realize what they are doing. They are not guilty to the same degree, but they still must be stopped from teaching. Because of their sin nature, a desire for personal power or control can also develop.

Women should not expect leadership nor take leadership until they have received instruction from qualified teachers. Men should let women learn and give them due recognition.

Because of false teachers and false teaching, Timothy has authority...

To stop men and women teachers

To set guidelines for men and women leading public prayer

To choose new church leaders

## CHURCH LEADERS

### PASTOR/ELDER

The pastor is to be from the local congregation. He is responsible for the spiritual welfare of the church. His qualifications are similar to those mentioned in the book of Titus.

The Bible says a pastor/elder is a man. The qualifications are clearly stated. Both words, *pastor*, *elder* refer to the same position in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. In our day, we have separated the roles of pastor and elders. In small churches in this country or mission churches in other countries, there may be a male pastor. But there may not be enough or no qualified men for elders. Based on the importance of spiritual qualifications, if God has placed within the congregation older, godly women who are qualified, they should be seen as God's gift and should be used **until** qualified older men are trained.

The same applies to the role of pastor. I personally believe the pastor should be a man. It is God's plan. But if none are available with the gift of teaching and there is a qualified woman with that gift, God will bless and use her in that role **until** a man is available. This often happens in missions. Gender is important, but it is not the most important. What really matters in spiritual leadership is - does the person have spiritual gifts, spiritual maturity and the attitude of humility?

### DEACONS

They are men and women

They were responsible for administration so the pastor had time for prayer and teaching.

Qualifications for men deacons 3: 8-10

Qualifications for women deacons 3:11 *In the same way, women...*

Some Bibles say, *their wives*. The word *their* is not in the Greek.

The word *wives* is the Greek word meaning *women*.

The description in the verses about men and women deacons are parallel.

*Men deacons are to be worthy of respect, not double-tongued, not drinking too much wine, not wanting dishonest gain. 3:8*

*Women deacons are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers, but temperate and trustworthy. 3:11*

Eight years earlier, the book of Romans refers to a woman named Phoebe, who was a deacon in her church.

Women deacons were in the church as far back as the mid 50s AD.

Paul closes the chapter 3 by explaining why he has given all these details. First, verse 14.

*Although I hope to come to you soon...*

In the Bible, when the word "hope" is used as a noun, in the Greek, it means *absolute certainty*.

It is used in connection with God - the things of God have certainty.

"Hope," when used as a verb is often connected with travel plans that involve uncertainty. So it means "maybe."

*Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. 3:14-15*

## **CHAPTERS 1-3**

How **church members** should conduct themselves: teachers, prayer leaders and church leaders.

## **CHAPTERS 4-6** How **Timothy** should conduct himself.

### **He is to be faithful in his message.**

Paul says teaching that denies the gospel message comes from deceiving spirits and demons, meaning Satan's angels. The source of false teaching is Satan. This is why it must be stopped within the church. Timothy should not be afraid to deal with false teaching.

### **He is to be faithful in his personal life.**

*4:12 Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.*

This is true for Timothy in the first century; it is also true for young people of today. If they follow God's rules in how they talk and live, then even if they are young, God is able to use them.

### **He is to be faithful in his leadership** - chapters 5 and 6.

#### About widows

Once again, Paul explains about widows who had no family to provide for them. A widow could take a vow and pledge herself to the local church for the rest of her life. She would be given responsibilities, including a teaching ministry. In return, the church would give her food, clothing and housing.

In the Ephesian church, younger widows had taken vows, met eligible men and then wanted to be released from their vows so they could remarry. Paul says younger widows should be encouraged to remarry. So now he makes a rule that only widows who are 60 years or older with godly lives, can pledge themselves to the local church.

#### About church families in need

*If anyone does not provide for his relatives and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. 5:8*

This applies only to those who have acted responsibly and used their resources wisely. We are never commanded to help those who use money for addictions, uncontrolled spending, greed or bad choices. Remember Paul's rule, *if a person will not work, he should not eat.*

#### About people who want money

*But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 6:8-10*

Paul is not saying it is not wrong to make money; it is not wrong to want to make more money. But the desire to get rich should never be our driving, consuming passion. Riches bring danger. In the Ephesian church, it was church leaders who were eager for money and it got them into trouble.

#### About people who have money

*Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their certainty in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their certainty in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life. 6:17-19*

Notice the balance. If we do not have a lot of money, we should not let making money be the only priority in life. If we have money, we should enjoy it. God does not want us to feel guilty for having money and nice things. He does not command us to give it all away. He gives us these things to enjoy **and** to use wisely.

This book is about ministry. Some of us have roles of leadership or ministry in the church; some have other kinds of ministry in the community, at work or in the family.

We can only lead others as far as we have gone ourselves. This means before we try to minister to anyone else's life, we need to first let God minister to our life. Paul referred to Timothy as a "man of God". When people think of us, would they ever give us the title - "man of God" - "woman of God"? It is possible, if we are willing to let God work in our lives - if we are willing to let Him change us.

## **EXTRA INFORMATION FOR THE STUDIOUS AND INQUISITIVE**

### **Eve was deceived; Adam was not deceived**

Our Western thinking assumes that when Paul talks about Eve being deceived, he is putting her down – that she is inferior because she was able to be deceived. However, Paul is doing just the opposite. He is saying she is less guilty. There was a reason why she listened to Satan.

To get his point, let me use a modern-day illustration.

You know the laws on income tax deductions. You believe you cannot claim a certain deduction. But then your tax consultant convinces you it is OK. He explains the law means something different and he knows the laws. You believe him and claim the deduction. You have no idea he has lied and deceived you. A friend takes the same deduction, knowing clearly he is not eligible. He does it anyway hoping he can get away with it.

Later you both end up in tax court, are declared guilty and fined. If the court is fair, your friend would have a bigger fine/sentence because he did it knowingly. You would have a lesser fine/sentence, because you were deceived. The court would not see you as inferior because you were deceived. It would know there was a logical reason for your action. It was not intentional.

Both Adam and Eve disobeyed. However, Adam disobeyed willfully and knowingly. Eve disobeyed because she was deceived. This did not mean Eve was inferior. Instead, it means Adam has the greater guilt.