

The New Inductive Study Series

WALKING IN POWER, LOVE, AND DISCIPLINE

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WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

Before we begin our study, be sure to read the “How to Get Started” section beginning on page 7. This information will make your study easier and more exciting.

To understand *what* the apostle Paul means by what he says, it is very helpful to know *why* he is writing. Sometimes he states his purposes very clearly; sometimes he only hints. Today we will begin the process of determining the context of 1 Timothy by looking at the first three chapters. Read 1 Timothy 1–3. Since this is a letter, read it as if you had just received it in the mail. See if you can discover why he is writing and why he left Timothy in Ephesus. The answers to these two questions will help us establish the context of the letter and understand why he says what he does. Just read straight through—don't get distracted by difficult passages now. We will get answers in due time. Simply familiarize yourself with the letter.

The word *context* comes from a Latin word meaning “to weave together.” Before we can understand a passage, we must see what it is woven together with. In other words, we need to see what is talked about before it and after it.

DAY ONE

Reading through the book will help you see the big picture and then make it easier to see the context of each passage.

Before you start, pray. Always ask the Father for guidance when you are studying His Book. Enjoy.

DAY TWO

Did you discover Paul's purpose? Just in case you missed it, he tells us why he left Timothy in Ephesus in 1:3, and why he is writing in 3:14,15. Read chapters 4–6 to familiarize yourself with the rest of this letter. When you finish, record Paul's purpose in writing and his purpose in leaving Timothy in Ephesus on your AT A GLANCE chart, page 52. These two purposes will help us interpret the difficult passages by giving us a context from which to work.

DAY THREE

Today focus your attention on 1 Timothy 1. Mark every reference to *doctrines* and any synonyms such as *instruction* or *sound teaching*. Continue to mark these words throughout your study of 1 Timothy. The word doctrine simply means "a teaching." You will notice that Paul describes sound and unsound doctrine. Start a list in your notebook of what you learn about each one. Title your lists "Sound Doctrine" and "Unsound Doctrine," respectively. On your list identify what strange doctrine looks like according to verse 4. Also, under "Sound Doctrine," record the goal of our instruction according to verse 5. In the next weeks, you will add to this list as you see the word *doctrine* or its synonyms in 1 Timothy.

Read 1 Timothy 1:1-11 again and mark every reference to *law*. I draw a black tablet like this law which represents two tablets of stone. When you finish, list everything you learn about the law. For example, in verse 8 we learn "the Law is good if one uses it lawfully." Did you notice in verse 9 who the law is for and who it isn't for?

DAY FOUR

The best interpreter of Scripture is Scripture. Many times looking at other passages of Scripture will help give understanding to the passage you are studying. This is called cross-referencing. Read Galatians 3:23-29 and mark every reference to *law* and *faith*. In your notebook, list what you learn about each one. Also, take a few minutes to reflect on what you have learned about sound doctrine. According to 1 Timothy 1:5, what is the goal of sound doctrine or instruction?

DAY FIVE

When we study the Bible, it is always important to pay close attention to what we learn about Jesus Christ. Today read 1 Timothy 1 and Galatians 3:23-29 again. In both passages mark every reference to *Jesus Christ* and the pronouns which refer to Him. Pay close attention to 1 Timothy 1:12-17. This is the first doctrinal passage in this letter where the gospel is presented. You don't

want to miss this. When you finish, start a list in your notebook of everything you learn about Jesus Christ. To mark *Christ*, I use the same symbol and color shown in the “How to Get Started” section, but you are free to develop any marking system which suits you.

DAY SIX

To keep yourself in context, read 1 Timothy 1 today. As you do, mark each reference to *Timothy*. When you finish, list what you learn about Timothy’s responsibilities. In other words, what is Timothy charged to do? Now read 1 Timothy 4:6. How does this compare with what you have learned in chapter 1 about Timothy’s responsibilities?

I know by now you must be curious about this man Timothy. You will learn more about him when you study 2 Timothy, but for now let me say that he was Paul’s most trusted disciple. Paul even described Timothy as a man of kindred spirit. Enough for now—you will see more later. When you finish, record what chapter 1 is about (the main idea or theme) in as few words as possible on your AT A GLANCE chart on page 52.

DAY SEVEN

Store in your heart: 1 Timothy 1:5.

Read and discuss: 1 Timothy 1.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY

What was Paul’s purpose in writing this letter to Timothy? Why did he leave Timothy in Ephesus? Which of these purposes relates to knowing the truth or knowing sound doctrine? Which relates to living the truth or walking in sound discipline?

Discuss the characteristics of the strange doctrines against which Paul warns Timothy. What is the result of these unsound teachings?

What did you learn about the law from 1 Timothy? What did you learn about the law from Galatians? What is the purpose of the law? Who is the law for? What is the relationship of the law to salvation?

Once you come to know Christ, what relationship do you have with the law? What did you learn about Jesus Christ this week? What difference should it make in your life?

In 1 Timothy 1:18, Paul says, “This command I entrust to you...” What command is he talking about? What was the last command he gave Timothy in chapter 1? In your communication of the Word of God, are you careful to adhere to sound teaching? What is the goal of sound doctrine? Can you adhere to sound teaching if you don’t know what the Bible says?

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Our focus this week has been on knowing the truth, on knowing sound doctrine. Paul left Timothy in Ephesus in order that he might instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines. As you study this letter, you need to pay close attention to the truth being presented. The false doctrines Timothy faced are still around in religion today. Do you know the truth well enough to recognize strange doctrine when you hear it? It is vital that you know what God has said instead of simply what man has said about God.

Being dependent on man places you in the dangerous position of being susceptible to strange doctrines.

What is strange doctrine? We may not know everything Timothy faced, but part of the false teaching had to do with the law. This was probably the law of Moses as interpreted by the Pharisees. They taught that to get into a right relationship with God one had to keep the law. You studied that this week. Are you made right with God by keeping rules and regulations? No, of course not. You have seen in Galatians 3:24 that we are justified (put in right relationship with God) by faith. In 1 Timothy 1:15 you saw that Jesus came into the world to save sinners (those who have violated God's law, not those who have kept it).

The point Paul is making in both of these passages is that you are saved by faith, not by keeping some external set of rules or regulations. To come into a relationship with God, we must first recognize that we have sinned against Him. Paul talks about this in relationship to himself in chapter 1, verses 12-17. We then must surrender our will to God's. This is what it means to call Him Lord. Did you notice that there is no mention of keeping any rules or regulations? You enter into this relationship by placing your faith, your trust, in what Christ has done for you.

What is sound doctrine? You saw some of the answer in chapter 1:12-17. Christ came into the world to save sinners. In Him is found mercy, grace, faith, and love. The goal of sound doctrine is love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. It is enough for this week; we will see more in chapter 2.

If I am not under the law, can I live any way I want? Good question. This week we focused on knowing the truth. Later we will talk about living the truth (in chapters 4, 5, and 6).

Now for the question I know you have been asking: What about Alexander and Hymenaeus? They were apparently teachers of strange doctrine. Paul's use of the phrase "handed over to Satan" means that he excommunicated them from the church. The early church believed that unscriptural teaching was so dangerous that anyone found engaging in it was excommunicated. What an idea! You will see these two men mentioned in 2 Timothy when you do the next study.

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