

BIBLE STUDENT STUDY GUIDE

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON

**I & II TIMOTHY
AND TITUS**



JOHN D. POMMERT



**THIRTEEN LESSONS ON
I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS**

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Bible Student Study Guide

**THIRTEEN LESSONS ON
I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS**

A Student Book

by

John D. Pommert

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Contents

Introduction	1
Lesson One — I Timothy 1:1-20	4
Lesson Two — I Timothy 2:1-15	12
Lesson Three — I Timothy 3:1-13	19
Lesson Four — I Timothy 3:14 — 4:16	26
Lesson Five — I Timothy 5:11-25	34
Lesson Six — I Timothy 6:1-21	41
Introduction — Titus	48
Lesson Seven — Titus 1:1-16	50
Lesson Eight — Titus 2:1-15	56
Lesson Nine — Titus 3:1-15	61
Lesson Ten — Introduction — II Timothy 1:1-18	67
Lesson Eleven — II Timothy 2:1-26	74
Lesson Twelve — II Timothy 3:1-17	81
Lesson Thirteen — II Timothy 4:1-22	86

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	1
2. The Problem	1
3. The Solution	1
4. The Method	1
5. The Results	1
6. The Discussion	1
7. The Conclusion	1
8. The Acknowledgments	1
9. The References	1
10. The Appendix	1
11. The Bibliography	1
12. The Index	1
13. The Glossary	1
14. The List of Figures	1
15. The List of Tables	1
16. The List of Equations	1
17. The List of Symbols	1
18. The List of Abbreviations	1
19. The List of Acronyms	1
20. The List of Initials	1
21. The List of Roman Numerals	1
22. The List of Greek Letters	1
23. The List of Mathematical Symbols	1
24. The List of Chemical Symbols	1
25. The List of Physical Symbols	1
26. The List of Biological Symbols	1
27. The List of Astronomical Symbols	1
28. The List of Musical Symbols	1
29. The List of Geographical Symbols	1
30. The List of Historical Symbols	1
31. The List of Literary Symbols	1
32. The List of Religious Symbols	1
33. The List of Political Symbols	1
34. The List of Social Symbols	1
35. The List of Economic Symbols	1
36. The List of Legal Symbols	1
37. The List of Medical Symbols	1
38. The List of Scientific Symbols	1
39. The List of Technical Symbols	1
40. The List of Artistic Symbols	1
41. The List of Cultural Symbols	1
42. The List of Educational Symbols	1
43. The List of Environmental Symbols	1
44. The List of Energy Symbols	1
45. The List of Information Symbols	1
46. The List of Language Symbols	1
47. The List of Communication Symbols	1
48. The List of Transportation Symbols	1
49. The List of Travel Symbols	1
50. The List of Tourism Symbols	1
51. The List of Hospitality Symbols	1
52. The List of Food Symbols	1
53. The List of Beverage Symbols	1
54. The List of Clothing Symbols	1
55. The List of Fashion Symbols	1
56. The List of Beauty Symbols	1
57. The List of Health Symbols	1
58. The List of Fitness Symbols	1
59. The List of Sports Symbols	1
60. The List of Entertainment Symbols	1
61. The List of Media Symbols	1
62. The List of Technology Symbols	1
63. The List of Innovation Symbols	1
64. The List of Research Symbols	1
65. The List of Development Symbols	1
66. The List of Progress Symbols	1
67. The List of Growth Symbols	1
68. The List of Success Symbols	1
69. The List of Achievement Symbols	1
70. The List of Excellence Symbols	1
71. The List of Quality Symbols	1
72. The List of Precision Symbols	1
73. The List of Accuracy Symbols	1
74. The List of Reliability Symbols	1
75. The List of Consistency Symbols	1
76. The List of Stability Symbols	1
77. The List of Durability Symbols	1
78. The List of Longevity Symbols	1
79. The List of Endurance Symbols	1
80. The List of Resilience Symbols	1
81. The List of Flexibility Symbols	1
82. The List of Adaptability Symbols	1
83. The List of Versatility Symbols	1
84. The List of Multifunctionality Symbols	1
85. The List of Versatility Symbols	1
86. The List of Versatility Symbols	1
87. The List of Versatility Symbols	1
88. The List of Versatility Symbols	1
89. The List of Versatility Symbols	1
90. The List of Versatility Symbols	1
91. The List of Versatility Symbols	1
92. The List of Versatility Symbols	1
93. The List of Versatility Symbols	1
94. The List of Versatility Symbols	1
95. The List of Versatility Symbols	1
96. The List of Versatility Symbols	1
97. The List of Versatility Symbols	1
98. The List of Versatility Symbols	1
99. The List of Versatility Symbols	1
100. The List of Versatility Symbols	1

Introduction

In 1274, Thomas Aquinas called I & II Timothy and Titus the "Pastoral Epistles" since they dealt with the work of the pastors (which means "shepherd" and refers to the work of the elders, not that of the evangelist). The name has stuck although a better title might be "The Practical Epistles" as each chapter deals in a practical way with church administration and oversight. Many of Paul's epistles wrestle with important theological or doctrinal themes. But as his life draws to an end, the apostle is concerned with the on-going of the church and wishes to guide his two young sons-in-the-faith into a more effective ministry. These are personal letters with much personal exhortation and advice and a minimum of "theological" emphasis.

Paul had been imprisoned for two years (Acts 28:20, A.D. 60-62), and according to early church writers was given his freedom. Paul returned to Ephesus with Timothy and Titus and soon left Timothy there to minister (I Tim. 1:3) while going on to the island of Crete to drop off Titus (Tit. 1:5). He himself, according to tradition, traveled on to Spain to accomplish an age-old dream (Rom. 15:24, 28). While in Crete, he writes the first letter to Timothy (A.D. 62). In Spain, he writes Titus to meet

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

him in Nicopolis, a mid-way point between them (Tit. 3:12, A.D. 63). The great four-day fire that devastated Rome in July, 64 A.D., was blamed on the Christians by Nero who had started the blaze to burn down the slum area in a first century "urban renewal" project. But the wind shifted, and a scapegoat had to be found to blame. Thus began the terrible persecutions that plagued the church for years. Paul journeyed to Rome to strengthen the church there, was arrested and imprisoned a second time (A.D. 64-68). During the more severe second prison term, Paul writes his final letter to Timothy noting that the time of his death was near at hand (II Tim. 4:6, A.D. 67 or 68). Paul's death came soon after, probably by beheading since he was a Roman citizen. Thus, II Timothy stands as the last writing from Paul even though these two letters have been placed side by side in our assembled Bible. For those who wish to study further this second imprisonment and Paul's travels, read the concise but quite complete discussion in DeWelt, *Paul's Letters to Timothy and Titus*, College Press, Joplin, Mo. Another helpful commentary is that of Wm. Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary, Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. As noted in their discussion, a number of things Paul mentions in these epistles cannot be fitted into the Acts account and can only be explained by travels of which we have no record. Almost every conservative scholar accepts this position whereas the unbelieving critics have chosen to denounce the epistles as forgeries done by an incompetent unfamiliar with the book of Acts. But most forgers are extremely careful about such details and this theory is easily refuted.

TIMOTHY

A brief background of Timothy should prove helpful. (Titus' background is given in the first lesson on that epistle.) This young man had been raised by his mother Eunice in the Jewish faith (II Tim. 1:5; 3:15) and converted to Christianity by Paul on his first missionary journey through Lystra when Timothy was about ten years old (Acts 14:6-18). When Paul returned six years later (A.D. 49), he needed a young man to take the place of John Mark who had deserted the evangelistic team (Acts 13:13; 15:36-40), and he chose the sixteen year old Timothy (Acts 16:1-3). He was probably "ordained" by the elders at this time (I Tim. 4:14) and given a gift by Paul (II Tim. 1:6). He is circumcised by Paul as his father was a Greek and had not performed this function and Paul feared lest this hinder his ministry with the Jews (Acts 16:3). Paul had already settled the issue that circumcision was "a matter of opinion and not of faith" in the case of Titus (Gal. 2:3; Acts 15:1-35).

INTRODUCTION

Timothy received the highest praise ever given by Paul to a fellow worker (Phil. 2:19-23) and, with Titus, is called "son" suggesting Paul's warm feeling for these young men. He is Paul's most constant companion being mentioned twenty-two times in the N.T. His health is somewhat poor (I Tim. 5:23) and he appears to be of a quiet or somewhat shy nature (I Cor. 16:10; I Tim. 4:4, 12; II Tim. 2:1-3; 4:1). As Paul writes his final letter, he calls Timothy a "youth," a word not used of those over age forty. Timothy is probably in his mid-thirties at this time.

According to tradition, Timothy stayed on in Ephesus to minister and met martyrdom during the reign of Domitian when he tried to stop an indecent heathen procession during the festival of Diana and was beaten to death.

EPHESUS

This large city was famous for the temple of the "Ephesian Diana" (not the chaste virgin goddess of purity), a fertility goddess which brought much revenue into the city (Acts 19:21-41). Paul stopped here briefly on his second journey (18:18-21), and on his third journey stayed three years, his longest sojourn anywhere (19:1 — 20:1, 31). This long stay shows how important he felt the conversion of Ephesus was for the furtherance of the Gospel. At the end of his third journey, Paul stops briefly at Miletus and sends for the Ephesian elders that he might encourage them (20:17-38). The final mention of the church is in Revelation 2:1-7.

This Grecian city was permeated with the worship of Diana and all the pagan myths of that day. Paul makes reference to them in these epistles. A difficult ministry for anyone — especially a young man. No wonder Paul wrote to give advice.

ABBREVIATIONS

In the following notes, I Timothy is usually referred to as I and II Timothy as II. The printed text is the Revised Standard Version (RSV); other versions referred to are the King James Version (KJV) and the American Standard Version (ASV). Often following the word under discussion is a word in quotes; this is the literal meaning of the Greek word. Please look up the Bible references as these often are the best commentary on the text or refer to related ideas or material.

Lesson One

CORRECT FALSE TEACHERS

I Timothy 1:1-20

SECTION I 1:1, 2

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus our hope,
2 To Timothy, my true child in the faith:
Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus
our Lord.

Vs. 1, 2 — With the exception of I, II Thessalonians, Phillipians, and Philemon, Paul always begins an epistle with a declaration of his office. He is writing an *authoritative* letter ("apostle") combined with a *personal* letter ("to . . . my true child"). Paul is his "father" since he probably baptized Timothy and nurtured him in the faith. Watch for parts of these epistles directed specifically to Timothy (1:3; 4:6:5:1; 5:23, etc.) and those more general comments directed to the church (2:1ff; 3:1ff; etc.).

Paul's apostleship ("one sent") was not self-assumed but one given him by God's command. Read the threefold account of his call to this office — Acts 9:15, 16; 22:15; 26:15. His apostleship also came from Christ, "our hope." He not only gives hope, but is our Hope. (An interesting

project — run a concordance check on all the names and attributes given to Christ with their implications, i.e., peace, water, light, priest, door, etc.)

One unusual feature of the Pastorals is this six-time designation of God as Savior (1:1; 2:2; 4:10; Tit. 1:3; 2:10; 3:4). Too often we forget God's part in our salvation. Also note Paul's departure from his customary designation of "grace and peace" by adding "mercy." **Grace**, God's unmerited favor, covers our *past* sins. **Mercy**, the empathetic compassion with one who suffers, comes from Jesus to help us in *present* difficulties. **Peace**, the resulting state when one has his sins covered and God working in his life, comes from the Holy Spirit as we face *future* struggles. God has indeed provided for our every need!

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Why does Paul not mention his apostleship in four of his epistles?
2. Is God or Jesus our Savior?
3. Can one have peace without first receiving grace and mercy?

EXHORTATION

SECTION II 1:3-7

3 As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, 4 nor to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than the divine training that is in faith; 5 whereas the aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith. 6 Certain persons by swerving from these have wandered away into vain discussion, 7 desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make assertions.

V. 3 **urged** — Paul "exhorts, beseeches, encourages" his son to CHARGE (very strong word of command — cf. 1:3; 4:11; 5:7; 6:13, 17 where same word is used) certain persons about false teaching. Paul urges strong measures to be taken against those who pervert the Gospel. He tactfully omits their names (except the apostate ringleaders — 1:20) lest he harden their hearts toward repentance. Attack ideas and doctrines, not the people who hold them, if you wish to change them (cf. II Thess. 3:11,

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

15; I Cor. 1:12; 15:12; II Cor. 3:1; Gal. 17).

different doctrine — The Greek word for “different” (heteros) suggests a teaching of another kind or nature than that which Paul preached. Gal. 1:6-9 declares the same idea and expresses even stronger abhorrence that anyone dare pervert God’s Word. Our function is not to rewrite Scripture, but to proclaim it. As someone noted, “New theology is not true theology, and true theology is not new theology.”

V. 4 **myths** — Stories of non-historical nature usually embossed some great deed done by an ancient with the design to create admiration or worship in the heart of the hearer. What a shame to resort to “fairy tales” when we have the factual miraculous events of the Scripture to teach (II Pet. 1:16). Repudiating myths is a common charge Paul issues in these epistles (4:7; II 4:4; Tit. 1:14; cf. I, 6:4; II, 2:16; Tit. 3:9).

genealogies — Shaking the family tree to see what “nuts” fall out. What pride-filled joy to discover that “I am related to Moses or Abraham!” Our worth comes not from whom our ancestors were, but from Whom our Father is! And this “genealogy” is open to all. Genealogy-tracing produces snobbishness and idolatry (ancestor worship) if we are not careful. Thus, the content of the different doctrine consisted of half-truths (myths), arrogant gloating (genealogies), and legalistic perversion of God’s Old Testament (vs. 8-11).

speculations — Not only is this teaching wrong because of content, it is doubly wrong because of result. Its end result is not growth in “divine training,” but argumentative “speculations” and “vain discussion.”

V. 5 **aim** — False teaching must be replaced by something positive. God’s program produces love. If our teaching is producing bad results, we need to recheck our attitude and content. Wm. Barclay notes five characteristics of these teachers: (1) desired novelty, v. 3; (2) preferred argument to action, v. 4; (3) substituted head knowledge for Christian action, v. 4; (4) arrogant rather than humble, v. 7; (5) dogmatic without knowledge, vs. 6, 7. But the Christian teacher as seen in verse 5 has his thinking: (1) based on faith; (2) motivated by love; (3) from a pure heart and conscience; (4) without deceitful hypocrisy.

Does Paul suggest that one cannot produce this kind of love if his heart is defiled, his conscience deadened, or his faith hypocritical? The key concepts in this section are faith and love contrasted to arrogance and intellectual speculation.

V. 6 **vain discussions** — Talk that goes nowhere. Again Paul looks to the result of our teaching. Our preaching may be interesting, but if it does not exalt Jesus and move our hearers into a closer fellowship with Him, then we have missed our goal.

V. 7 **without understanding** — James 3:1 warns teachers who lead

without knowledge. Death claims both when a blind guide leads a blind follower down twisting mountain paths. The opposite is also true (4:16).

assertions — The Greek word indicates a bold, confident, strong affirmation. Paul supports this charge by showing how these teachers misuse the law in binding legal precepts on Christians who should walk by faith and love (8-11).

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Is it wise to name specific groups or persons when denouncing false ideas? (cf. 1:3 and 1:20) Are there times when we should and times when we should not?
2. Paul suggests two motives for false teachers (1:5; 1:7). Are there others?
3. Is it enough to denounce sin, or must we substitute something better?

EXPLANATION

SECTION III 1:8-11

8 Now we know that the law is good, if any one uses it lawfully, 9 understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 immoral persons, sodomites, kidnapers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, 11 in accordance with the glorious gospel of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

V. 8 law is good — Evidently these teachers were using Scripture as a basis for their twisted teaching so Paul explains the proper use of the O.T. Lest any misunderstand, Paul affirms the goodness of the law. Some of its blessings were: revealed man's sin and need for a Savior (Rom. 3:20); provided men with God's thoughts (Rom. 3:2); foreshadowed and prophesied Christ (Col. 2:7); brought man to Christ (Gal. 3:24); and provided patience, comfort, and hope by examples of God's goodness (Rom. 15:4). But Christians are not bound by the O.T. law any longer (Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:15; Gal. 3:13; II Cor. 3:1-11). We now live by the Spirit. It is as silly to teach the alphabet to a college professor as to teach law to a Christian. Both have gone far beyond these basics. The law is a restrictive cage that prevents man from doing wrong. The Gospel provides

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

wings that man might soar into the presence of God. Thus, law is not for Christians but for the type of evildoers mentioned in the next few verses.

Notice that Paul's list parallels the ten commandments of Ex. 20:1-17. **Lawless and disobedient**, they make themselves god and break the first of the ten. **Ungodly**, without God in mind, and **sinners**, without God in actions, breaks the second commandment forbidding graven images as man worships things as god and serves them. **Unholy** men no longer keep the Sabbath sacred. **Profane** men use God's name in vain. **Murderers** (literally "smiters") *of fathers is far from honoring father and mother.* **Manslayers** forget the commandment against murder, and **immoral persons** commit adultery. (**Sodomites** go even a step further with their homosexuality.) **Kidnappers** steal more than a man's things as they carry off the man himself to sell into slavery. **Liars** and **perjurers** bear false witness. And **whatever else** probably includes the prohibition against coveting, the starting point for so many other evils. The **sound doctrine** is the basis for our English word "hygiene," that which is pure and health-giving. This recurrent phrase, not found elsewhere in the N.T., emphasizes the spiritual health produced by God's milk, the Word (6:3; II, 1:13; Tit. 1:9; 2:1, 2, 8). In contrast, false teaching is a cancer producing rottenness (II, 2:17).

Christians have experienced the **glorious gospel** as exemplified in the transformation of Paul (1:12-17) and no longer need the narrow restrictions of the law to guide them. As Augustine exclaimed, "Love God and do what you will." If one loves God, he will not blaspheme His name, nor steal, nor do any other evil.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Should a Christian keep the law? Should he obey its bare minimum or excell its demands? (cf. Rom. 13:1-7; Tit. 3:1)
2. If everyone lived as a Christian, what laws could we do away with?
3. Should a Christian read the Old Testament now that we have the New?

EXAMPLE

SECTION III 1:12-17

12 I thank him who has given me strength for this, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful by appointing me to his service,
13 though I formerly blasphemed and persecuted and insulted him;

but I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, 14 and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 15 The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the foremost of sinners; 16 but I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience for an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. 17 To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

V. 12 — Law condemns, but God's Gospel exalts. Paul, contrasting what would be taught, uses his own conversion as an example of Christian teaching.

strength — Our word dynamite, a great power, comes from this and is also found in Rom. 1:6; Phil. 4:13, and Acts 2:22. God, not ourselves, provides the strength to live the overcoming life.

appointing me — God saves us by His grace; we serve Him as our due. And so each one has a ministry and gifts for service (Rom. 12:3-13; I Cor. 12:4-31).

V. 13 **blasphemed** — Paul had breathed out "threats and murder against the disciples" (Acts 9:1) and against God. He had sinned in *word*.

PERSECUTED — He sinned in *deed* as he imprisoned the saints and "tried to make them blaspheme" (Acts 26:11). Does this suggest torture?

insulted — He sinned in *attitude*. This word denotes insolence, violence, one who "outrages the feelings" of others. Rom. 1:30 uses this same word after "haters of God." Paul could condemn himself no more strongly than this. To excuse our sin is to increase its power over us; to confess our sin to God is to destroy it.

Paul suggests two reasons why God saved him. (1) He was ignorant of the whole truth (1:13); that is, he thought he was serving God; he did not sin against his conscience (Acts 23:1). When we sin deliberately, we harden our conscience and can make repentance impossible (Heb. 6:4). (2) God wanted to use the "chief of sinners" as His number one example of His cleansing power (1:16).

V. 15 **saying** — The five "faithful sayings" of the Pastorals (3:1; 4:8, 9; II, 2:11-13; Tit. 3:4-8a) were proverbs or hymns capsulating the truth for easy remembrance much as our motto, "Where the Bible speaks, we speak." These five are worth memorizing.

foremost of sinners — Note the verb tense, "am." Paul still felt the sting of his former insolence and even though many considered him "chief of apostles" he saw himself as "chief of sinners." In the Greek,

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

the "I" is intensified. "I, even I . . ." If God can save the worst, He can save anyone. Paul's conversion is a good example of how one comes to Christ. Paul's pride was broken with blindness (Acts 9:8); repentance and faith filled his heart (9:9); baptism washed away his sin (22:16); service to God's call filled his life (22:21). Paul was not saved *on* the road to Damascus, but only after he had completed the sequence begun on that road for he was yet in his sins until his baptism (22:16).

V. 17 When Paul remembers that glorious experience, he bursts into a paean of praise. Few, if any, experiences of life are more joyous than this.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Who is harder to win — one who is an active persecutor of Christians or one who is indifferent? (cf. Rev. 3:15, 16)
2. Do some people refuse God's grace because they think they are too evil?
3. When is a man saved? From what is he saved? Who saves him?
4. Does God have a "ministry" for each of us?

EXCOMMUNICATION

SECTION IV 1:18-20

18 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, 19 holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, certain persons have made shipwreck of their faith, 20 among them Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

V. 18 **charge** — A resumption of the thought begun at 1:3. **Commit** means to "deposit, entrust" as with a treasure that must be guarded. Paul names two in 1:20 who were false to their trust and lost their treasure.

prophetic utterances "which led the way to thee" (American Standard Version) or "which went before on thee" (Twentieth Century New Testament). These words led Paul to chose Timothy for this ministry, or these words foretold the wonderful things that lay in the young man's

future as he served God. Compare 4:14 and II, 1:6. These passages suggest that Timothy also received some type of gift at the time of his ordination to help him in his ministry. These words would encourage the young man who could remember that God had spoken special words concerning him.

V. 19 **faith and a good conscience** — cf, 1:5, 6. The idea that a strong Christian life is possible only when one does not violate conscience permeates these epistles. Paul urges Timothy to “charge” from a good conscience (1:5); the apostle is saved because he had not violated his conscience (1:13); these have fallen away because they lost their good conscience (1:19); evil teachers even lose their conscience (4:2); deacons hold God’s word in good conscience (3:9); and Paul served God with a clear conscience (II, 1:3). Our conscience may be wrong if limited in knowledge as Paul acknowledges he persecuted Christians in “good conscience” because his knowledge was limited (Acts 23:1). But he also warns against going against what our conscience approves as right (Rom. 14:23; I Cor. 8:11; 10:28, 29). We must obey our conscience while educating it through God’s Word.

V. 20 **Hymenaeus and Alexander** — Paul reveals in II, 2:17, 18 that their basic sin was denying the resurrection, a cardinal truth of the Gospel (I Cor. 15:12). So Paul **delivered them to Satan**. Some see this as reference to bodily affliction such as struck Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 6) or Elymas (Acts 13:4). Probably refers to excommunication from church fellowship (Mt. 18:15-17; Ro. 16:17; II Thess. 3:14; Tit. 3:10) for when one is put out of God’s kingdom, he is thrust back into the devil’s stronghold (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13; Mt. 4:8). Compare I Cor. 5:5 where the “destruction of the flesh” indicates destroying the carnal nature of the incestuous man by disfellowshipping him.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Does God’s Word help us wage our warfare? (cf. Mt. 4)
2. Is a good conscience lost all at once, or by slow stages?
3. Is disfellowshipping apostates contrary to the Lord’s command not to judge? (Mt. 7:1)

Lesson Two

INSTRUCT IN PUBLIC WORSHIP
I Timothy 2:1-15

MEN AND PUBLIC WORSHIP

SECTION I I Timothy 2:1-8

2 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, **2** for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. **3** This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, **4** who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. **5** For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, **6** who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony to which was borne at the proper time. **7** For this I was appointed a preacher and apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

8 I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling;

Chapter two breaks into two main divisions as Paul provides guidelines for men and then for women in worship. "Living Under Authority"

could be a supplementary heading as both men and women are told to respond to authority in definite ways.

That public worship is in Paul's mind is suggested by (1) the statement that prayers "be made"; (2) similarity of this chapter in its latter part to I Corinthians 11 and 14 which deals with public worship; (3) context of chapters 1 and 3 deal with public worship; (4) the reference to praying for kings was in reference to an old Jewish controversy about prayers for heathen kings in public worship; (5) "lifting holy hands" was done in public worship; (6) early church fathers applied this chapter so; (7) and Paul's emphasis upon men leading in prayer would be true in public worship because women surely prayed at home for kings.

V. 1 **first** suggests Paul's beginning comments and **also** (v. 9) indicates his second point. For some reason, most translations begin the second half of this chapter at verse 8.

The four types of prayer overlap in meaning, but each does have a definite emphasis. **Supplications**, special or definite needs; **prayers**, always present or general needs; **intercessions**, needs of others; **thanksgiving**, the spirit of each one. By using different words, Paul emphasizes our need to pray for **all men** no matter what their particular need may be. Too often our prayer pattern falls into the limited, childish, "Bless Mommy, Daddy, and me, Amen." Can we pray for sinners? Paul says we can and should!

V. 2 **kings** — Nero, the butcher of the church, was emperor of Rome at this time. He was the one who burned the city and blamed Christians. He tarred their bodies and used them as torchlights for his garden parties. Ultimately, he beheaded Paul. But the Apostle declared that we must pray even for such as Nero. For this former legalistic, persecuting Pharisee to write such words illustrates the transforming power of the Gospel in his life.

peaceable life — We do not pray for God to overlook the ruler's sin, but that he might rule wisely and justly, permitting us to worship without harassment. Roman rulers soon demanded worship. Paul does not say we should pray to, but for the ruler. A second reason is given in verse 4, that we might spread the Gospel to all men. We grumble about governmental restriction, but do we ever pray that God will guide our leaders into more Christian postures?

V. 4 **desires** — God wishes all men to accept Christ and even delays judgment to permit more to repent (II Pet. 3:9). But He does not force nor predestinate anyone to serve Him, but gives all a choice based upon knowledge. Our work is to provide the testimony (v. 6) by which faith comes to the hearer (Rom. 10:14-17). God has done His part in sending a Savior (Jn. 3:16). Now man must do his part to "save himself" (Acts 2:40) by responding.

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

Vs. 5, 6 Paul notes that the same truth is for all because we have: (1) one God (v. 5); (2) one Mediator (v. 5); one Ransom (v. 6); (4) one message (v. 6). The Jew was not saved differently than the Gentile. A **mediator** is one who communicates between two differing parties. Paul emphasizes the manhood (*anthropos*, mankind, humankind) of Jesus in opposition to the gnostic philosophy which declared God could not become flesh without defilement. But Jesus was both perfect Man (Heb. 4:14-16) and perfect God (Col. 1:15-20). The first Adam separated man from God by his sin; our Second Adam reunites God and man by His obedience (Rom. 5:12-21). Even in prayer, we recognize His mediatorship (Jn. 14:13). No Bible passage ever suggests using Mary or a saint as a mediator.

V. 7 **for this** — Paul sees his life's purpose as being a voice for God. Is there a more noble task than being God's ambassador? We cannot be apostles, but we can be proclaimers and teachers of His Word.

V. 8 **holy hands** — In discussing prayer, Paul has suggested its nature (1a), scope (1b-2a), and results (2b-4). Now he describes prayer attitudes MEN should have. (*Aner* means male, and not mankind, *anthropos*. Paul does not encourage women to lead in public worship — 2:11, 12; 1 Cor. 14:34.) The lifting of hands was customary in public prayer (Psa. 63:4; Lk. 24:50), but other postures are mentioned such as standing (Gen. 18:22), bowing the head (Gen. 24:28), lifting eyes heavenward (Psa. 25:15), kneeling (II Chron. 6:13), face on the ground (Gen. 17:3), head between knees (I Kings 18:42). Attitude of heart is more important than position of our body as is emphasized by the word **holy**.

Anger, quarreling — Early Christians would find it easy to pray in bitterness toward rules of others who had *deeply hurt them*. But, as in the example of Acts 4:23-31, they prayed for those who persecuted them (Mt. 5:38-48). The word for *quarreling* could also be translated "doubting" as it is in Phil. 2:14, Lk. 2:35; 24:38. I'm sure these Christians questioned, "Is God really hearing our prayers? Nero is still laying waste the church." Pray in love, not anger, toward others and in faith, not doubt, toward God.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Are our prayers too often limited to those whom we know?
2. How can we — or even should we — pray for evil people?
3. If God wants to save everyone, why doesn't He?
4. Does the position of our body during prayer indicate or even dictate the content of our prayer?
5. Will God answer a prayer asked in anger or in doubt? (cf. Mt. 6:12; Jas. 1:6-7)

WOMEN AND GODLY SERVICE

SECTION II I Timothy 2:9-15

9 also that women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire 10 but by good deeds, as befits women who profess religion. 11 Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. 12 I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. 15 Yet woman will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.

V. 9 **also** — Paul moves his attention from men to women. This word may indicate a simple conjunction correlating with “first of all” in v. 1. Or Paul may be suggesting that women should display the same spirit and attitude manifested by men in public prayer in v. 8. This section breaks into two parts: (1) proper apparel (9-11); (2) proper attitude (12-15).

adorn — This word, *kosmos*, means well-arranged, orderly, decent, or modest, and is the same word in 3:2 where elders are instructed to be “dignified” (“of good behavior” KJV). It is the root of our word cosmetic, and according to Trench, the well-ordering refers not only to the external, but the internal as well.

modestly — Improperly translated “shamefacedness” in KJV, and corrected to “shamefastness” in ASV. It is that attitude of modesty that makes us hold our “shame” fast or close to us rather than to display it publically.

sensibly — *Sophron* means self-controlled, outward order reflecting inward control. This word is also applied to elders (3:2 “sensible”), and to all Christians (II, 1:7; Tit. 2:2, 4, 5, 6, 12). Legalism forces outward change only; true Christianity produces a controlled inner self that is seen in outward change.

seemly — The same word before translated *adorn*. Paul’s statements can best be summed up in our word modest as applied to attitude as well as dress. Immodesty can be shown by: (1) under-dressing, producing lust in the eye of a man; (2) over-dressing, producing envy in the heart of one poorer; (3) mis-dressing, wearing a swim suit to church or a tuxedo to play ball indicating a careless or rebellious attitude; (4) salad-dressing, weird or faddish clothing to “get a rise” out of others and to call undue attention to our daring.

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

While we properly condemn scanty dress as immodest, please notice that Paul focuses attention on elaborate dressing by wearing gold netting (BRAIDS) in the hair, or sporting costly pearls about the neck, or wearing costly clothing to make others envy us (cf. I Pet. 3:1-6; Isa. 3:18-24; Prov. 11:22). **Good deeds** — not good looks — is what God desires of us. Dressing or acting in such a way to create lust or envy in others, or to call undue attention to our wealth or person is certainly not the Jesus way. And Paul's principles apply to men as well as women!

V. 11 A woman's dress reveals her inner character and so does her actions. Thus, she must **learn in silence**. In the ancient world, women were servers, not learners. Martha reflected this idea (Lk. 10:38-42). Rather than seeing this as a "put down" of women, we should view it as a step up for Paul, as did Jesus, recognizes women as legitimate learners and fellow disciples. But he does not place woman in a place of authoritative leadership for God did not so create her. **Silence** is the converse of "teach" and does not suggest absolute stillness as is seen in Acts 22:2 where this same word is used. Woman may participate in the worship, but not lead it. Paul discusses this idea in greater detail in I Cor. 14:34, 35.

submissiveness — This word does not mean oppressive domination, but humble respect to the one in authority (same word in Rom. 13:1; Eph. 5:23). This is the key to this section. Paul deems it unseemly, unwomanly, and unscriptural for woman to dominate man; God has created her for a supportive role.

V. 12 **I permit** is not merely Paul's opinion for it has the force of a command (cf. Mk. 10:4; I Cor. 14:34), and Paul underscores it with timeless, not cultural, reasons as he refers back to Adam and Eve.

to teach — Women are to do some teaching (see below) and certainly are expected to share their faith with others, but they are not to hold the office of teacher or preacher as a teacher is a person of authority (Acts 13:1; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 2:15). That authority, and not just teaching itself, is the main idea in Paul's mind is seen by the word he uses which means to "lord it over, to dictate to." In Gen. 3:16, this is the phrase used in the Greek Septuagint, "He shall rule (lord over) you," in reference to man's role. The word "usurp" in the KJV is not in the Greek text. It doesn't matter even if she is "given" the authority, she is stepping out of her supportive, womanly role when she lords it over a man.

Women did serve Christ in Bible times. They participated in group prayer meetings (Acts 1:14; 12:5; I Cor. 11:5); gave Bible information to others (Jn. 4:39; 20:17); taught younger women (Tit. 2:3, 4); taught children (II Tim. 1:5; 3:15); shared their faith with others (Acts 18:26); and served in various labors (Acts 9:36; Phil. 4:3; I Tim. 5:10-16; Rom. 16:1, 6, 12). They also prophesied, a gift no longer in the church today (Lk. 2:36; Acts

21:8, 9; I Cor. 11:5). But never did women preach sermons, oversee a church, or function in a role that made her an authority over men.

Granted, circumstances exist when a woman must teach the Word, or it is not taught. Such times exist on certain mission fields, in classes where men refuse to teach, or in a marriage with a non-Christian husband. These exceptions, if they are such, should be of *short* duration until a man is trained to teach the class, the mission field developed, or the non-Christian won. Even in these instances, the Christian woman should conduct herself with proper decorum lest her attitude and action destroy the effect of her words.

V. 13 **Adam formed first** — In alluding to creation, Paul removes his argument from that of cultural bias against women. He amplifies this thought in I Cor. 11:9 by suggesting that man was created with a more dominant nature, and woman of a more supportive one. This is not to suggest woman is inferior to man, has less mental ability than he, or is in any way inferior to the male (Gal. 3:28). Neither does it give man license to grind woman beneath his heel; rather, it demands that he protect her because of his greater strength (I Pet. 3:7) and love her in the same spirit Christ does His church (Eph. 5:21-33). Most women by nature agree that God has designed her to be a home-maker rather than an empire-builder.

V. 14 **Adam not deceived** — This second reason suggests that woman's judgment is less designed for leadership than man's. Eve was deceived; Adam apparently willfully sinned. The woman's action is probably more excuseable (if sin is ever excuseable), but this compassionate and believing nature makes her less suited to be a leader. Her nature better fits her to mend broken hearts and to fill a home with love than to rule others. In I Corinthians, Paul adds three more reasons: (1) nature (11:14); (2) universal custom of the churches (11:16); (3) God's law (14:34). To argue that Paul disliked women or that this was ancient word bias is to ignore the reasons Paul provides.

V. 15 **bearing children** — Three interpretations have been suggested: (1) saved from physical death in childbearing (but Godly women do die in childbirth); (2) saved by bringing the Savior into the world by childbirth (Gal. 4:4); (3) saved by fulfilling her proper sphere in life as wife, mother, and keeper of the home typified by this symbolic act of childbearing. Although the second has a certain charm to it and is preferred by many commentators, I feel that the third best fits the preceding context. Woman is not to be a leader, but a helper. Salvation comes not by ruling, but by being what God has called her to be.

if she continues — Literally, this reads, "if they continue." A person's salvation is never dependant upon what others believe, but it suggested that if she has done well as a mother, her children will reflect it (Prov.

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

22:6). A more reasonable interpretation as indicated by the RSV translation is to realize that Paul now speaks to women (individuals) and no longer as woman (corporate womankind), each of whom finds salvation not only in service, but also in Christian attitudes.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Why do people dress immodestly?
2. Does our choice of dress reveal our character? How?
3. Can clerical collars, Amish dark clothing, Catholic nun's habits, or other religion-proclaiming garb be immodest?
4. Can one be immodest in attitude and not in dress?
5. Does Paul's principle of men leading women suggest that women are inferior?
6. Do you feel Paul's reasoning on this matter applies to our generation?
7. It has been said that "women lead only when men will not." If true, does this suggest that the "woman problem" is really a "man problem"?

Lesson Three

APPOINT RESPONSIBLE LEADERS

I Timothy 3:1-13

CHOOSE RESPONSIBLE ELDERS

SECTION ONE I Timothy 3:1-7

3 The saying is sure: If any one aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a noble task. **2** Now a bishop must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher, **3** no drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and no lover of money. **4** He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way; **5** for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God's church? **6** He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil; **7** moreover he must be well thought of by outsiders, or he may fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

This discussion of leadership rightly falls between the preceding chapter emphasizing proper worship and the following one dealing with false doctrine as both of these matters depend upon the functions of a sound leadership. To properly lead, leaders must be qualified for their tasks. Notice

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

that these twenty negative and positive qualifications (by adding the list in Titus 1:5-9) *should* exist in every mature Christian man. None are unreachable by any Christian possessing a desire to grow. Paul is NOT commanding that a super-Christian be chosen, but a mature one who will be able to handle this task efficiently. How frustrating to be entrusted with a job too big for our abilities. It might even destroy us (v. 6).

In an attempt to catalogue these qualifications, we might classify them under: (1) Moral (blameless, no striker, etc.); (2) Ability (able to teach, rule household, etc.); (3) Maturity or Wisdom (married, believing children, etc.). Or consider that these deal with qualities relating to: (1) Self; (2) Social (dealing with others); (3) Spiritual (dealing with God).

V. 1 This "faithful saying" is the second of five (see under 1:15) and probably applies to what follows rather than what precedes although some few do place with 2:15. What follows seems to be more of a "faithful saying" than 2:15 although Paul sometimes refers to a preceding statement with this formula.

aspires — This word describes the eager desire of a hungry man for food. In 6:10, it is used as "craving" after money and in Heb. 11:16 for the "longing" or "desire" for heaven. If a man has to be begged to take this work, he has disqualified himself already. If he "longs" to serve God as an elder, he will soon qualify himself. Paul rightly begins with this foundation-qualification as the building stone for all the others.

bishop — In N.T. times, bishop was another name for elder (*presbuteros*) or pastor (*poimen*). In Acts 20:17, Paul sends for the "elders" and instructs them to "feed" (literally, "pastor") the church (v. 28), over which God has made them "bishops" or "guardians" (v. 28). All three terms are used in I Pet. 5:1-5 in reference to these men. Titus 1:5, 7 also uses elder and bishop interchangeably.

Bishop, overseer, guardian (same Greek word translated three ways) suggests that these men have *authority* over the church (5:17; I Thess. 5:12). His authority sometimes involves decision-making and at other times discipline.

Elder or presbyter (literally, "old man") suggests his *wisdom* and maturity which comes from a lifetime of experience. He is a man who knows God, God's Word, and God's world. No minimum age is given in the N.T. for an elder, but this word was not applied to anyone under thirty; remember Jesus waited until He was thirty to begin His public ministry. We realize that some men mature more quickly than others and that maturity, not just chronological age, is what is needed.

Pastor or shepherd (never applied to the evangelist or preacher in the N.T.) suggests his *loving concern* for God's flock as he drives away wolves who devour (Acts 20:29) and lovingly feeds his charges (I Pet. 5:2).

Some men by God's grace are better equipped to be decision makers or

rulers; others shine as wise counselors and givers of judicious advice; still others excell in the art of calling and shepherding. Each elder will possess all three of these qualities to some degree but will find that he is best suited in one or two. Thus, a well-functioning eldership complements each member as each uses his gift for God's glory.

V. 2 above reproach — A man is "blameless" (KJV) when no charge of wrongdoing can be brought against him. It does not mean perfection, for every Christian is to be blameless (Phil. 2:15). Elizabeth (Lk. 1:6) is an example of a blameless life. Perhaps the remainder of the qualifications illustrate what Paul means by this word.

married only once (literally, "one woman man") — Six interpretations have been suggested. (1) Forbids polygamy, many wives. (2) Forbids concubinage, as Solomon practiced. (3) Forbids digamy, remarriage after the death of the first wife; (4) Forbids remarriage after divorce. (5) Forbids a single man who might lack maturity in judgment and be subject to moral temptation. (6) Forbids an immoral attitude. If married, he is faithful to his wife; if not married, he is the kind who would be faithful if married. Understanding what Paul means by the parallel phrase in I Tim. 5:9 (lit., "one man woman") may cast light on this verse. All will agree that Paul is insisting the bishop be a sexually pure man. An excellent discussion of the pros and cons of the above positions is given by Carl Ketcherside, p. 289, *Paul's Letters to Timothy and Titus*, DeWelt. May I suggest two cautions: let us not elevate this one qualification above the other nineteen, neither let us be divisive with our preferred interpretation.

temperate — Originally meant an abstaining from wine, but by Paul's day was used metaphorically to include a sober, vigilant (KJV), wide-awake attitude. A shepherd must be an alert watchman.

sensible (Lit., "sound or controlled mind") — Balanced, prudent, discreet judgment which has complete control over sensual desires.

dignified — This is the word *kosmos* (see notes on 2:9) referring to the outward control resulting from a disciplined, orderly inner spirit. His control will show in dress, attitude, and action.

hospitable — The economic status of the poor saints, the political persecution by Rome, the religious antagonism of the Jews, and the immoral quality of the inns made it imperative that Christians open their homes to each other. In that day, one literally risked his life extending Christian hospitality.

apt teacher — One who is willing and able to teach. This may be one to one, in small groups, or before the whole assembly. Some will have more ability in this than others (5:17). It would include stopping those who disrupt (Tit. 1:9).

V. 3 no drunkard (Lit., "one who lingers or sits long at wine") — The

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

primary idea is the brawling or rowdiness that characterizes this type of person.

not violent, but gentle — A man can destroy with his fists (lit., “no hitter”) what he seeks to build with his words (II, 2:24).

not quarrelsome — Neither must he fight with his words. A contentious man divides the flock he is to guide. Even when correcting trouble-makers, he must manifest a gentle spirit (II, 2:24, 25).

no lover of money — Covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5) and the root of all evil (6:10).

V. 4 **rule household** — The church is God’s family and elders should guide it as a loving father does his family. Observe an elder in his own home for he will rule the church with the same methods and attitude.

children — Paul assumes the elder will have children as is the case of most older men who are married. Does this suggest a meaning for verse 2? His children will reflect his influence in their lives (Tit. 1:6).

V. 6 **not recent convert** — This word, often translated novice, means “new plant.” A new believer does not have the knowledge of the word nor the depth of Christian experience to guide the church or to oppose those who attack it. His office may promote a destructive pride in his young spirit (Prov. 16:18). Does this mean the devil will punish him or that he will fall in the same way as did the devil? Probably the latter. When is one not a novice? In Acts 14:23, Paul appoints elders from men who had become believers only a short time before (between six months and two years), but they came from a Jewish background. Some mature more quickly; others have grown up in a Christian environment; but all will feel more comfortable and competent if a suitable growing period is given to the new believer.

V. 7 **outside** — Often a man’s pagan co-workers know him better than his fellow Christians. If they cannot respect him, he cannot be a witness to them and the church is mocked by them for appointing such hypocritical leaders.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Consider the three Bible terms for elders and the implications of each.
2. Must an elder have all the qualifications to be chosen? To what degree? Who is to decide?
3. Suggest how each of the qualifications helps the elder in his task.
4. Compare the qualifications for elders to those for deacons and see where and why they differ.
5. Should we encourage our young men to “long for” and prepare for the eldership with the same enthusiasm we do for the “ministry”? How can we do it?

CHOOSE DEVOTED DEACONS

SECTION TWO I Timothy 3:8-13

8 Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for gain; 9 they must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 And let them also be tested first; then if they prove themselves blameless let them serve as deacons. 11 The women likewise must be serious, no slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons be the husband of one wife, and let them manage their children and their households well; 13 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.

Deacon means minister or servant (Mt. 22:13; Jn. 2:5, 9). Three times in the N.T. it refers to a special class of servants whom we call deacons (Phil. 1:1; I 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-7). Every Christian is a servant, but it is wise to have special men who can perform certain functions that not everyone would have the ability or spiritual character to perform well. When the apostles wanted to free themselves from "serving tables" that they might give themselves to the "ministry of the word," they had the people choose qualified men to serve (Acts 6:1-7). They suggested three general areas: (1) Moral, "honest report"; (2) Spiritual, "full of the Holy Spirit"; (3) Functional Ability, "wisdom." Notice that the people chose, and the apostles ordained, installed, or appointed them. Elders now function in that apostolic overseeing-teaching-pastoring ministry of the Word and present-day deacons follow their guidance. Too often deacons are lumped together with the eldership in a church board and actually function as bishops. Let's let the elders lead and the deacons serve!

V. 8 **likewise** — Paul emphasizes that deacons must also meet certain requirements to function effectively.

serious — This word translated "honorable" in Phil. 4:8 suggests dignity, seriousness, augustness, worthiness of respect. Flippancy and uncouthness do not befit any Christian, much less one of our leaders.

doubletongued — If one of the deacon's functions was to go from house to house administering funds to needy widows, he would be tempted to carry gossip or to talk one way to one person and another way to the next. He must guard his tongue (cf. James 3).

wine — Drink has always been a problem to man. Perhaps the deacon in his ministrations would be offered a cookie and a drink. He soon

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

would be filled with spirits and not the Spirit. The only sure way to keep oneself from criticism by others and from the addiction of drink is complete abstinence.

greedy — Money was probably handled by these men and the temptation to pocket some of it was ever present. Even one of the Lord's apostles fell captive to its seductive lure (Jn. 12:6). Mishandling money, or the charge of such evildoing, has destroyed many Christian leaders and organizations. Let us be wary!

V. 9 **hold the mystery of the faith** — Elders were "apt teachers." Deacons did not teach, but lived their faith. Mystery means something formerly hidden, but now revealed. In this case, the N.T. (Eph. 3:4-16). If one is filled with God's Word, he can withstand temptation to steal or do anything that would defile his conscience.

V. 10 **tested** — A formal questioning is not indicated here, but the idea of examining their lives by general observation before appointing them to office. The "also" reflects back to the elders who were "tested" as one considered their lives in the light of the qualifications. Certainly Paul is not suggesting a probationary or trial period for deacons before final approval. Note that Paul does not suggest that we appoint just anyone to this office "so they can grow." The growth is there *before* the appointment. A novice is no more fitted for this function than he is for that of the eldership.

V. 11 **women** — Is Paul suggesting a third office of deaconess, or are these the wives of the deacons? I prefer the latter idea for the following reasons. (1) Deaconess, as an office, is not referred to elsewhere as would be expected in passages such as Phil. 1:1 (Rom. 16:1 probably means "servant" in the general sense.) (2) Paul calls them women, not deaconesses, as one would expect since he referred to elders and deacons in this context. (3) The sandwiching of these qualifications amidst those of the deacon suggests these are deacons' wives. (4) The function of the deacon would necessitate his wife's help (calling on widows, etc., Acts 6), whereas that of bishop would not. (5) An office of deaconess would be contrary to Paul's insistence that woman not rule over man (2:11-14) unless one makes this function completely one of service with no decision-making responsibilities.

Paul insists these wives have the same basic character of their husbands possessing dignity, control of tongue, temperance (same word as 3:2), and faithfulness to the Lord.

V. 13 **gain good standing** — Does this suggest a "promotion" to elder? I think not. Anyway, we should not think of one function as higher or lower. Some men serve honorably as deacons for a lifetime. Some men never serve as deacons, but begin leadership-function as elders. The "good standing" refers to the high esteem God's people have for

godly deacons. Perhaps it includes the high esteem God has for all who serve Him well, even "servants." Some N.T. deacons were so bold in the faith that they became well-known evangelists (Stephen and Phillip, Acts 6:5, 8; 8:29).

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. In what sense are all Christians servants? How, then, do deacons differ?
2. How accurate is it to call the preacher "minister"? (Cf. Col. 4:7; I Tim. 4:6).
3. How do elders and deacons differ in authority and function? In what *practical* way can this be done in the average congregation?
4. Should we examine a man's family as we consider him for leadership?
5. Are women who serve special functions such as preparing communion, helping with baptisms, etc. deaconesses in a general sense? Do they meet certain qualifications? Do they hold an office?

Lesson Four

GUARD AGAINST FALSE DOCTRINE
I Timothy 3:14 — 4:16

THE GLORY OF GOD'S CHURCH

SECTION ONE 3:14-16

14 I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that, 15 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. 16 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.

The final two verses of chapter three better fit the context of chapter four, so we have grouped them with this section. Verse sixteen appears to be a first century hymn or proverb capsulating the fundamentals of Christ's ministry.

V. 14 **come shortly** — Paul, realizing that plans do not always turn

out as expected, writes needful information to Timothy. This certainly applies to what has already been written, and perhaps to this which follows.

V. 15 **one** — The Greek has no pronoun so the “one” might refer to “men” (ASV) or to Timothy (KJV). Either way, the result is the same as Timothy is to be a pattern for others.

household — (Lit., “house.”) This does not refer to a church building as Christians were forbidden to erect buildings until the second century and had to meet in homes, fields, or catacombs. But the people of God are compared to a building or family. Other metaphors of the church include body (I Cor. 12:18); temple (I Cor. 3:16); bride (Eph. 5:31); light and salt (Mt. 5:13, 14). Each suggests a different function or aspect of the church. Here, Paul is emphasizing the unity and communal spirit existing in a family. What do the others suggest?

pillar and bulwark — Pillars or columns support; foundations or bulwarks undergird them. Paul pictures the church (believers) as a beautiful building that proclaims and protects the truth. God has always worked through people and still works through His people, the church, today. Paul visualized the church as a glorious manifestation of God (read Ephesians!) and not as an institutionalized appendage that strangles truth as some critics today claim.

V. 16 This sixfold refrain summarizes the ministry of Christ. He became Man and endured temptation (Jn. 1; Heb. 4:15). Seemingly discredited by a criminal’s death, God vindicated His message by resurrecting Him by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:11). His resurrection was witnessed by angels (Mt. 27:2-7) and witnesses (“angel” means messenger and could apply to the human witnesses) who proclaimed it to all nations who believed it (Mt. 28:19, 20; Col. 1:23). The conclusion of Christ’s earthly ministry which began in dishonor in a cow stall in Bethlehem climaxes in a glorious heavenly coronation (Acts 2:33-35). When one discards the deity of Christ as revealed by His incarnation, resurrection, and glorification, he has destroyed the heart of the Gospel. Thus, chapter four warns against those who apostate and deny this statement of faith.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Some scientists and philosophers claim that the church promotes superstition and stifles truth. Do you agree? Why do they say this?
2. Examine all the terms, metaphors, and figures used in the N.T. for the church and see what implications they contain about the function of the church.

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

3. What was the purpose of Jesus' ministry? What is the purpose of our ministry?
4. Discuss the statement, "I like Jesus, but I don't like the church."

WATCH FOR APOSTATES WHO PERVERT GOD'S CHURCH

SECTION TWO 4:1-5

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, 2 through the pretensions of liars whose consciences are seared, 3 who forbid marriage and enjoin abstinence from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving; 5 for then it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

V. 1 spirit — Note Paul's contrast as God's Holy Spirit warns against the devil's unholy spirits. The **later times** literally mean "any time after the present." (Mt. 4:2, "after" forty days is the same word.)

Note Paul's use of present tense throughout this section showing that it was being fulfilled in Timothy's time and grows in intensity as the end time approaches (cf. II, 3:1-6 for a similar description.)

depart from faith — (Lit., "apostate") Some untrue teaching is done by those who are mistaken as was Apollos in Acts 18:24-26, but who yet love God and remain in the faith. These teachers are apostates, those who willingly and willfully cast the faith aside. Paul had warned the Ephesian elders that some of them would leave the faith and perhaps these are they (Acts 20:29, 30). No Christian is so strong that he is immune from this fall from faith. Some apostates appear godly and seem to perform great wonders (II Thess. 2:3, 4, 9, 10; II Cor. 11:13, 14; II Tim. 3:1-5; 4:1-4). We must be on guard and judge them not by their appearance nor by our feelings but by the Word of God (I Jn. 4:1; Gal. 1:8). Paul says the source of their doctrine is from the demonic world. The tenor of a godly man controlled by His Spirit is always in direct contrast to the devilish man controlled by the spirit of the world and of Satan (Gal. 5:16-26; James 3:13-17; I Jn. 3:8-16; 4:1-8).

V. 2 conscience seared — (Lit., "cauterized") When a hot iron presses against flesh, it scars it and deadens it. These men have so frequently and so flagrantly violated their consciences that they no longer function

(Eph. 4:19). See on 1:19 for use of conscience in these epistles. Lying and misrepresentation comes easy to those who no longer discern right from wrong.

V. 3 Why are these two areas prohibited? Perhaps this is a reference to the gnostic philosophy which condemned matter, including the body, as being evil. Many gnostics practiced celibacy and ascetic restriction of food. Food and sex frequently become the focal points of false religions (I Cor. 10:6-8, 14-38; 8:1ff; 5:1ff; 7:1ff; Rom. 14:1ff). The N.T. emphasizes that both food (Mk. 7:19) and marriage (Heb. 13:4) are good gifts from God. Let us be careful not to add nor subtract to what God has revealed. If fasting or celibacy helps us to serve God, then practice them but do not bind these on others as a principle of faith.

Vs. 4, 5 Created things are good. God so created them good, a reminder of the sevenfold "it is good" of Genesis 1 and 2. If we receive God's creation in the spirit of thanksgiving, then it remains good. Most sins are perversion of basically good things (sex), or of excesses of these good things (food), or of selfish uses of these good things (Jas. 4:3). Augustine once noted, "The cross of the Lord can become the mouse-trap of the devil." Let us be careful about complaining about God's creation. Everything serves a useful purpose if we but look for it.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Should we react differently to apostate false teachers and those who ignorantly teach mistruth?
2. How does one sear his conscience? What are some safeguards?
3. What good things have you seen become sin because of improper use?
4. Is there spiritual danger in grumping about the weather, the landscape, etc.?
5. Most of us pray before we eat. When are other good times to thank God for His blessings?

WARN THE CHURCH BY WORD AND EXAMPLE

SECTION THREE · I Timothy 4:6-10

6 If you put these instructions before the brethren, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the good doctrine which you have followed. 7 Have nothing to do with godless and silly myths. Train yourself in godliness; 8 for

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

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. 9 The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance. 10 For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.

V. 6 **put before** — Timothy was to “charge” false teachers (1:3), but brethren need only to be “reminded” of God’s will. A good servant will not withhold any needful teaching from God’s people even though it may be painful to proclaim (Acts 20:20, 26). Some think an evangelist should only work with non-Christians. Even though Timothy was an evangelist (II, 4:5), Paul urged him to instruct believers as well.

nourished — Someone has noted that “impression without expression leads to depression.” We don’t wait until we become scholars before we teach, but we become “scholars” as we teach. Personal growth comes when we teach others, for we first teach the lesson to ourselves.

V. 7 **avoid silly myths** — (cf. 1:4 comments) The true Gospel may be perverted, as by the apostates in verses 2 and 3, or it may be pre-empted by substituting another teaching in place of it. Let us guard lest our teaching, even though true, be of silly myth-material or of passing fancies rather than an eternal Gospel.

train thyself — Paul often uses athletic contests to urge steadfast effort (I Cor. 9:24; II, 2:5; 4:7). The present tense meaning here emphasizes, “keep on exercising yourself.” Godliness does not come easy and, like muscle tone, can fade away when we cease to work at it.

V. 8 Physical exercise brings a limited benefit which ends at death. Spiritual effort brings both temporal and eternal blessing. What a shame that an athlete will radically change his diet, habits, and life-style to win a contest while most Christians begrudge even small efforts that affect eternal life.

V. 9 **saying** — This third of five faithful sayings (see 1:15) may apply to verse 8 or 10. Verse 8 seems to be more of a proverbial capsulization of truth while verse 10 appears to be more of a conclusion to that proverb.

V. 10 **toil, strive** — The first word indicates to “labor to the point of exhaustion.” The second (lit., “agonize”) denotes extreme effort applied by an athlete, perhaps a runner, as he drives himself to win. (Same word used in Jude 1:3, “earnestly contend,” KJV.) Even as the runner keeps his eye on the finish line and presses toward it, so our present effort is motivated by God standing at life’s finish line cheering us on (cf. Heb. 12:1, 2).

Savior of all — (1) God is potentially the Savior of all men, and presently the actual Savior of those who do believe (I Jn. 2:2; I Tim. 2:4; Tit. 2:11). Or, (2) God is the sustainer or preserver of all men as he provides food, air, etc. (Job 7:20; Psa. 107:28; Acts 17:28). Savior does not necessarily mean redemption from sin. The ancients applied it to princes, kings, or men who had brought special benefits to their country. Either interpretation is possible but I prefer the second with the idea that God physically preserves all men now, but ultimately He preserves only the believer.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Is it possible to grow without ministering to others? (4:6, 15, 16)
2. What should be the content of our teaching? Do we sometimes advertise false teaching while in the act of condemning it? (4:7)
3. How does one "exercise himself in godliness"? Be practical.
4. Does the hope of heaven motivate us? Is this selfish?
5. Does the Christian receive God's blessings now, or must he wait until Heaven?

GIVE YOURSELF TO YOUR MINISTRY

SECTION FOUR I Timothy 4:11-16

11 Command and teach these things. 12 Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 13 Till I come, attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching. 14 Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the elders laid their hands upon you. 15 Practice these duties, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. 16 Take heed to yourself and to your teaching; hold to that, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

V. 11 **these things** refer to what has been discussed beginning with verse 6.

V. 12 **despise your youth** — "Youth" was applied to one up to age

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

forty. Timothy was in his early or mid-thirties at this time, but considering that Paul was in his sixties and the "elders" in their fifties or older, Timothy was thought of as a youth. Hebrew priests did not begin ministry until age thirty. Jesus waited until He was thirty to begin His public ministry. Thirty would correspond to our twenty-one, the time when a youth becomes an adult.

example — Respect must be earned. Young people of good behavior often have to live down an unfair image produced by a few reprobates. Paul names some areas of life in which Timothy needs to excell if he wishes respect.

(1) In daily life, his *speech, conduct, love, faith* and *purity* (II, 2:22) should reflect Christ. (2) In public service, Timothy should show diligence (4:13). Not everyone had a Bible so the Word needed to be read aloud. The exhortation and explanation of the passage would apply it to those assembled. The early church may have followed the worship order of the synagogue with Scripture reading, application to daily life, and then consideration of the finer points of the passage. (3) In his special ministry, Timothy was to exalt God and not self (4:14). Natural abilities given by God at birth are called "gifts" (Rom. 12:3, 6ff). If that is the case here, perhaps his gift was one of preaching. To me, it appears Timothy's gift came from miraculous circumstance as it came by means of Paul's laying hands on the young man (II, 1:6; cf. Acts 8:14-25). He was assisted by the elders who also laid on hands to set him apart for his work (Acts 16:1-4) at which time a prophecy was spoken concerning Timothy (I, 1:18). The Greek preposition here concerning the prophecy means "in the company of" or "together with," but it does not mean "by means of." Whatever his gift, Timothy was urged to use it for God's glory. Even today, many who have gifts from God use them for money-making, or self-glory or simply ignore them. What a waste! The truism, "He who can read and doesn't, is no better off than he who cannot read," applies here. A humble talent given to God is of far greater value than a great ability unused.

V. 15 Timothy is urged to "study" or "attend to" his work and God's Word. He was to *practice* them and *devote* himself to them. This latter word suggests an immersion in them. God's work must not be a thing apart from our daily life; instead, it must permeate every second and minute of it!

V. 16 Paul consistently emphasizes that true doctrine comes from pure lives, and that when morality leaves, sound doctrine is sure to follow (cf. Acts 20:28). If we feed ourselves on God's Word, then we shall be able to nourish others with the end result that both they and we will be saved. Noah's ark saved both that godly preacher and those seven who believed his message. A selfish Christianity is impossible for

it is in the act of saving others that we save ourselves. Jesus was mocked, "He saved others but cannot save Himself," but it was in this act of saving others that He saved Himself and declared for all time His function as Savior and Master. To be great, we too must "lose ourselves" in service.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. When young Christians or young people are looked down upon, how do they react? Is there a better way to encourage good behavior?
2. What practical ways can a young person manifest his love, faith, etc.?
3. Does everyone have a gift? How can he find it?
4. Why does Paul put such strong emphasis upon the public use of the Bible? (4:13)
5. Is it possible to save others and be lost ourselves? Or to save ourselves and not save others?

Lesson Five

WORKING WITH OTHERS

I Timothy 5:1-25

RESPECT OTHERS

SECTION I 5:1, 2

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

This fifth chapter is often neglected as it seems to deal with problems unrelated to our experience, the care of widows by the church. However, Paul provides principles dealing with people in need and with people who lead. Methods change, but basic principles do not.

Vs. 1, 2 Younger men often lose patience with older men who are more cautious than they or who have fallen into set patterns of action. Especially in our country, too many wonder, "Is there really life after thirty?" When our elders (the context shows this to be old men, not presbyters) need correction, let us do it with the spirit Paul taught in 4:12. A respectful son would never "smite with words" (literal meaning of "rebuke" here) his father. And who would call his mother a "meddling, old biddy"? To change the behavior of others we must use tact (cf. Acts 18:26) and loving concern (I Cor. 13).

We are tempted to "boss" those of our own age or younger than we. That always produces friction. Love and guide him as you would your kid brother for he is your Father's son.

A young man must guard his relationships with younger women (II, 2:22). Treat them with the respect due a flower of God. The Arabs call a man of extreme chivalry, "a brother to girls." Unguarded Christian love can degenerate into un-Christan lust.

To the old, show affection and respect. To our peers, show brotherly kindness. To those of the opposite sex, show purity.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. From a practical standpoint, how do we correct those who are older? What of our own parents?
2. "Love is blind." Does that mean we should ignore faults in those we love?
3. In what ways is jealous competition manifested among those of similar age?

REVERE WIDOWS

SECTION II 5:3-16

3 Honor widows who are real widows. 4 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. 5 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; 6 whereas she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives. 7 Command this, so that they may be without reproach. 8 If any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

9 Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband; 10 and she must be well attested for her good deeds, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the feet of the saints, relieved the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way. 11 But refuse to enroll younger widows; for when they grow wanton against Christ they desire to marry, 12 and so they incur

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

condemnation for having violated their first pledge. 13 Besides that, they learn to be idlers, gadding about from house to house, and not only idlers but gossips and busy-bodies, saying what they should not. 14 So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, rule their households, and give the enemy no occasion to revile us. 15 For some have already strayed after Satan. 16 If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her assist them; let the church not be burdened, so that it may assist those who are real widows.

In this section we chose to depart from our verse by verse explanation and pull together all the concepts concerning widows as expressed in this chapter. "Widow" means "desolate, bereft, empty." Note Paul's play on this word. Some widows are completely desolate ("true," v. 3) while others yet have family (v. 4). Also, consider the five types of widows mentioned: (1) Completely desolate widows with no one but God (3, 5); (2) Widows who have children or grandchildren (4, 8, 16); (3) "Merry widows" who live in sinful pleasure (6); (4) Enrolled widows who serve the church (9, 10); (5) Younger widows who are to remarry (11, 14). Of course a widow might fall into two or three of these categories, but Paul is trying to establish guidelines for every situation that might occur.

The word "honor" has double meaning, referring both to respect and financial support. The first meaning is evident in the word. The second is shown by the context of the whole chapter (4, 8, 16-18), and the use of this same word in Mk. 7:10-13. Every widow would receive respect, but certain restrictions are placed on financial support for some.

If a widow had family or relatives, they should support her as Paul emphasizes by mentioning it three times (4, 8, 16). Each of these verses has a reason behind it: (1) They "owe it" to their parents and it pleases God to see them obey Ex. 20:12; (2) Their witness to a pagan community will be destroyed because even unbelievers support their own; (3) It frees the church to help those who have no one.

"True" widows often were in dire straits as government agencies gave no help (cf. I Kings 17:8-17). They were preyed upon by those who were stronger, even by religious leaders (Mt. 23:14; Ezek. 22:7). God had a special concern for them (Ex. 22:22-24). The first controversy in the infant church was over care of widows (Acts 6:1). A concern for widows and orphans is equated with true godliness (Jas. 1:27). Thus, Paul urges the church to get involved in a concern that has always been a part of godliness.

But Paul does not wish to subsidize sin. Some widows used freedom

from marital ties as an occasion for lewd living. Paul does not wish them to receive the Lord's money for the devil's pleasures (6).

The "enrolled" widow is one of the puzzles of this epistle. The word means "put on a list" (9). Qualifications are listed (9, 10) and a pledge of some sort given (12). Several suggestions are offered. (1) These are the widows the church will support. But dare we suggest the church would not help one who was only fifty-nine? Or childless? And Acts 6:1 suggests no such test was made. (2) These are deaconesses. But why not mention them in chapter three? And why age sixty? And why not name them? (3) These are church-supported women who have pledged themselves in service to the church in a teaching or home-ministry capacity. This suggestion best fits as qualifications usually implies work to be done. Also, Titus 2:3-5 harmonizes well with this view. Thirdly, early church history does mention such a group of women. Older women who had enjoyed successful marriages and had raised children and had served the community well would be the ones to teach the younger women these arts. Younger widows would lack these skills and also would have the natural desire to remarry forgetting the pledge they had made to the church. (Some see this pledge as commitment to Christ with a resultant falling away from the faith.) Younger widows would be more prone to gad about carrying gossip from place to place perhaps using this church-supported freedom to look for a man; when one uses the church, he is in danger of losing his soul. So Paul prefers the younger to remarry and "rule" the house, her normal sphere of service and function. Some see I Cor. 7:8 as a contradiction, but there Paul speaks of those few who have a special gift from God to remain celibate; even in that chapter Paul does not condemn marriage (7:9, 10).

Most of the qualifications in verses 9 and 10 are self-evident. Older women of sixty would be less apt to remarry and would have maturity and knowledge. A "one man woman" (literal) would be one who had lived with but one husband; a multi-married woman would have little example to show to the younger. (Is this a parallel verse to 3:2? If so, does it help in interpreting that requirement?) Washing of feet was a social amenity practiced in that hot country of sandal-wearing people; that it was social and not a church function is shown by the other items in this list. The picture is that of a godly woman who had enjoyed a successful marriage in which she has raised a family and ministered to the needs of her community.

As we summarize the lessons concerning older people taught in this chapter, may we suggest the following principles.

1. Families are to provide for their own (4, 8, 16).
2. The church should help those who cannot help themselves (cf. Acts 6:1).

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

3. Immorality is not to be encouraged by our support (6).
4. Respect and concern, as well as money, is needed by older people.
5. The accumulated wisdom of older people should be used by the church to help others.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Does government support relieve the church from her obligation to help needy widows?
2. What needs, other than financial, do older folks have?
3. Do children "owe" their parents something? Do grandchildren?
4. The Bible teaches respect for age. The USA has been accused of worshipping youth. Are we violating Scripture by this attitude?
5. Does putting an elderly parent into a nursing home violate Paul's teaching?
6. *Is it wrong for a widow to remarry? What are some dangers of remarrying? Of remaining single?*
7. Should feet-washing be part of our worship? (cf. Jn. 13:14, 15)

REWARD ELDERS

SECTION III 5:17-25

17 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; 18 for the scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages." 19 Never admit any charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. 20 As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. 21 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without favor, doing nothing from partiality. 22 Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor participate in another man's sins; keep yourself pure.

23 No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.

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

V. 17 The subject of supporting the older women provides Paul an opportunity to discuss the support of presbyters. *Double honor* might mean even greater respect and support than that given widows. More likely Paul is emphasizing that elders are to be paid and highly respected too, a double honor. This verse gives us a glimpse at the function of elders. All ruled or made decisions for the church (I Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:17). Some of that group gave even more time to teaching which would be time consuming; to be able to give it much time, the church would have to help them with support. In a sense, the preacher who spends much time teaching the church is performing the elders' function and everyone accepts his need for support. How much better to support fully or partly those qualified elders who are good teachers and free the preacher to be an evangelist working with the lost (II, 4:1-5). Elders are teachers (3:2; Tit. 1:9; Eph. 4:11) and much of his "shepherding" will involve teaching (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2, 4).

V. 18 The O.T. forbade putting a muzzle on the ox who pulled the grinding wheel to prevent him from snatching a mouthful of grain (Deut. 25:4). If he helps prepare the food, he has a right to share in it (I Cor. 9:9). Paul also uses N.T. authority for paying church leaders as he refers to the words of Jesus in Luke 10:7. For an expanded treatment of this theme, discover the six or seven arguments Paul uses in I Cor. 9 for a paid leadership.

V. 19 Not only should the elder get pay for services if needed, he certainly should get at least the same respect a criminal gets. The O.T. law (Deut. 19:15), as does our own, demanded two witnesses to convict a man of wrong. Many godly elders are "convicted" at the Sunday dinner table by the malicious words of the gossip. Let us revere our leaders and consider criticism of them carefully.

V. 20 If the charge is founded on truth, then act upon it. The "all" may refer to the entire congregation as in Acts 5:11; it may refer only to the other elders. Since the whole congregation is involved in choosing these men, it seems reasonable that the whole body be involved in disciplining him (cf. I Cor. 5:1-4). Common sense should decide which problems are best solved by a small group and which are to be taken to the whole assembly (Mt. 18:15, 16).

V. 21 Paul uses a strong word, "charge," as he pictures a courtroom "before God, and the Lord Jesus, and the elect angels" to impress the seriousness of partiality. The elect angels are those who do not follow Satan (Jude 6). Partiality has been one of the chief perverters of justice in mankind's history. It is especially odious when it affects our actions in the Lord's work. Rightness and wrongness are not determined by *who* is doing the action, but by how God judges *what* is being done.

V. 22 Laying on of hands sometimes refers to apprehending someone

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

for wrong (Acts 4:3; 5:18). It also applies to those being ordained to an office or service (Acts 6:6; 13:3). So Paul is warning Timothy to be cautious in disciplining elders who appear guilty of wrong, or to take care in ordaining to office elders who are unproven (3:8) lest he be a "partner" in the evil they do. Both ideas are in the context and both are true. Perhaps we should apply it both ways.

V. 23 Some would place the last phrase of v. 22, "keep thyself pure," with this verse. Others suggest that as Paul reflects on the temptations Timothy will have as he seeks to practice what has been written, he is reminded of the young man's extreme conscientiousness even to the damage of his health by refusing to use wine for his stomach's distress. Lest we use Paul's statement as an excuse for inbibing, let us note that it was a specific command to a specific person for a specific reason. If your name is Timothy and you have stomach problems, then perhaps you might feel justified in appropriating this verse. Even then, Paul urges only a "little." Most of us practice this in principle as much of our medicines contain alcohol bases. For a fuller discussion of wine, see DeWalt, *Paul's Letters To Timothy and Titus*, p. 301ff.

Vs. 24, 25 Paul returns to the subject of laying hands on elders too quickly. If we could read hearts, we could avoid many headaches. Since we cannot, we must examine lives closely. Gold sometimes proves to be iron pyrite, "fool's gold." And ugly ducklings often grow into majestic swans. Let us be slow to judge knowing that truth will eventually show itself.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Would the work of your congregation be expanded if your elders were enabled to give more time to teaching and the evangelist more time to evangelizing?
2. Is a paid ministry wrong?
3. Are those who listen to gossip as guilty as those who tell it? (5:19)
4. How common is partiality in church affairs? Does it produce factions?
5. What is the purpose of discipline? (5:20; cf. I Cor. 5:1, 5, 7)
6. Why do people drink? Is it wrong for a Christian to use alcohol as a medicine?

Lesson Six

GUARD YOURSELF!

I Timothy 6:1-21

WARN SLAVES

SECTION ONE 6:1, 2

6 Let all who are under the yoke of slavery regard their masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be defamed. **2** Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brethren; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their service are believers and beloved.

V. 1 Slavery permeated the ancient world. The sixty million of them made up one-half to three-fourths of the Roman empire. The **yoke** was that wooden harness used to hook together oxen as they pulled the plow; slaves were sometimes marched through the streets manacled together. Probably the term is used figuratively. To the **master** (lit., "despot"; one with absolute authority) his slave was nothing more than an intelligent animal which he owned. Even the Jew had a low view of the slave as reflected in the old Rabbinical prayer, "I thank Thee I was not born a woman, a slave, or a Gentile."

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

Many slaves were highly educated and served as family tutors. A Christian slave would be strongly tempted to despise his pagan master. This attitude would not help the slave's lot and would destroy any influence his Christianity might otherwise have on his master. Paul gives similar instruction in Tit. 2:9, 10.

V. 2 If a Christian slave had a Christian master, he might think himself equal socially to his master and be disrespectful. Even though all men are equal in God's sight (Gal. 3:28), biological (women are mothers, men have larger muscles) and social distinctions (rich-poor, slave-master) yet exist. The N.T. always deals with problems realistically. Paul accepts these distinctions but exhorts us to bring Christ into them.

Since, in this instance, the master is a Christian and uses his money for God and others, if we profit him by our labor, the kingdom is being enriched.

Although the N.T. nowhere condemns slavery but rather regulates it, it ultimately brings about its destruction by the seed it sows. If the slave is my brother, dare I treat him as an animal or a thing?

Paul does not advocate a slave revolt. That would have resulted in slaughter as Spartacus learned in the first century B.C. when his revolt ended with 5,000 slaves crucified along the Appian Way. Nor did Paul suggest that masters free their slaves. To the Romans, that would have meant economic disaster and the church would have been classified as a political rabble-rousing group and its spiritual message ignored. But Paul does bring Christian love into slavery and just as the beauty of the lily makes more vivid the squalor of the swamp surrounding it, so Christian brotherhood graphically contrasted with the ugliness of slavery.

The N.T. says much about slavery. The Christian slave was exhorted to: (1) Abide in slavery without revolution (I Cor. 7:21-24); (2) Honor masters (I, 6:1, 2); (3) Work, not loaf (Col. 3:22; Eph. 6:5-8); (4) Not steal (Tit. 2:9, 10); (5) Obey the most irritable of masters (I Pet. 2:18-25; Lk. 17:7-10); (6) Not take advantage of a Christian master's goodness or faith (I, 6:2).

The Christian master was instructed to: (1) Realize all men were equal before God and slavery a man-made, social concept (Acts 17:26; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11); (2) Render just treatment for they too have a Master (Col. 4:1; Eph. 6:9); (3) Treat believing slaves as brothers (I Cor. 7:20-22; Phile. 10-22); (4) Be an example of a Christian. The book of Philemon was written to a slaveowner to whom Paul was returning a runaway slave. Notice that Paul never condemns the master nor asks for the release of the slave in so many words, but please catch the subtle implications Paul tucks into almost every verse.

Today, slavery of that sort is ended. But these principles still apply to us whether we are the "master" who employs, or the "wage slave" who works. Re-read the above commands and apply them to employer-employee situation. Paul's advice is yet sound!

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Could a man be a slave-owner and a Christian?
2. Can you make parallels between master-slave and employer-employee relationships?
3. Does Christianity sometimes cause us to mistakenly "look down on" those who are pagan?
4. Should our faith have anything to do with the way we are at work?

WARN THE RICH

SECTION TWO 6:3-10

Teach and urge these duties. 3 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, 4 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, 5 and wrangling among men who are depraved in mind and bereft of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. 6 There is great gain in godliness with contentment; 7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world; 8 but if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content. 9 but those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs.

Slaves have nothing. That condition brings special temptations. But those who are free and rich also have tailor-made pitfalls. This craving for wealth appears to be the underlying motive that produces much of the character Paul now discribes.

V. 3 **sound** means "healthy" or "wholesome" and is the basis of our word "hygiene." Throughout these epistles Paul speaks of God's teachings as healthy and sound (1:10; 6:3; II, 1:13; 2:17; 4:3; Tit. 1:9; 2:1, 2, 8; cf. Heb. 5:12-14), and the false teaching as productive of gangrenous

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

sores (2:17), weakness (4:7, 8), and a sickly appetite for arguing (6:4). Our attitude toward God's Word and His authority reveals to all our spiritual disposition and health.

V. 4 When one departs from God's Word, he follows a progressively downward trail. His arrogance blinds him to true knowledge and causes him to quarrel about opinions (cf. 1:4-7) as he is **sick** (lit., "of morbid craving"). He begins to think evil of those about him causing him to envy them and separate from them, to say slanderous things about them, to suspect them of evil motives, to rail at them — all symptoms of his **depraved** mind (lit., "wasted away") and heart empty of God's healing truth (cf. Jas. 3:13-18). His god has become gold. How many today get rich from the particular "ism" they hawk. The surprise is that so many sheep rush to them to be fleeced.

Vs. 6-8 True godliness is gain, but not in the worldly sense. Jesus possessed only a robe at His death. Paul had little more. Beware of those who preach Christianity as a way of gain. If God does permit wealth to come, use it wisely for Him. If not, do not think of your poverty as a mark of His displeasure. Paul knew from personal experience the ways of both wealth and poverty (Phi. 4:11-13). The real joys of life do not depend upon wealth. The song of a child, the smile of a friend, the glow of sunset, the coolness of water — all come without cost but all are without price! And what price God's love? Only fools live to build big grain bins (Lk. 12:20); the Christian hides his wealth in a safer place (Mt. 6:24-34).

V. 9 Notice that it is the "desire" or "lust" for money that is evil, not the money itself. A poor man who has this money-lust disease will find himself trapped as completely as the rich man who yet hungers for more. Paul combines five figures. (1) Money-lust is the enticing bait that lures us into the death trap. (2) Or it is the deceptive quicksand which appears solid but sucks us down to destruction.

V. 10 (3) It is a root which blooms with myriad temptations and forbidden fruits. Every sin imaginable has been motivated by greed. Paul is not saying that greed motivates every sin, but that it is a root or chief source of most.

(4) Money-love entices us from the strait path to glory and bids us wander in the meanderings of side-trails. (5) Money-love pierces us with wounds, as though we were pitched into the thorn bush, leaving us with strong discontent.

Why does a man pursue money? "To gain security and contentment," he answers. But the more wealth he gets, the more insecure he becomes as others seek to take it from him and he must surround himself with safeguards. His contentment also flees as he never has quite enough. When asked how much money is enough, one wealthy man sighed,

"Just a little bit more." Money lust is like drinking sea water, the more we drink, the more we crave! Only in God does one find real security and lasting contentment.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Do you see a progression in the traits mentioned in verses 4 and 5? (cf. II Pet. 1:5-7)
2. Some teach, "God blesses Christians with riches." Do you agree? Can you name some poor Bible saints? Some rich ones?
3. How should a Christian regard money? Is it wrong to be ambitious and seek better paying jobs?
4. Is there any sin man hasn't committed for money? Would you agree that money is the prime source of most sin?
5. Why do people crave money? When they get money, do they satisfy these cravings?

WARN YOURSELF

SECTION THREE 6:11-21

11 But as for you, man of God, shun all this; aim at righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13 In the presence of God who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, 14 I charge you to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; 15 and this will be made manifest at the proper time by the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

17 As for the rich in this world, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on uncertain riches but on God who richly furnishes us with everything to enjoy. 18 They are to do good, to be rich in good deeds, liberal and generous, 19 thus laying up for themselves a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life which is life indeed.

20 O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. Avoid the

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

godless chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge, 21 for by professing it some have missed the mark as regards the faith.

Grace be with you.

V. 11 Timothy is given a title, **man of God**, that was applied to Moses (Deut. 33:1) and the prophets (I Sam. 2:27; 9:6; I Kings 12:22). He is to follow in their steps! They spoke boldly God's Word without regard to consequences. They kept themselves free from money-love. They endured hardship. They walked with God!

Timothy is to "flee" (lit.) those evils mentioned, and to "follow after" (lit.) these Christian virtues. To only shun evil produces a vacuum. The purpose of cleaning out is to enable the Lord to fill up. Godliness is not a matter of not doing evil, but of replacing it with positive good.

The first three items listed deal primarily with God — righteousness, godliness, faith. The second three with others — love, patience, gentleness. These gleaming pearls in our life make us truly rich!

V. 12 The fight (lit., "agon") of faith reminds us that godliness comes with effort (1:18). The figure is that of a soldier or an athlete. **Take hold** may be a continuation of this image, that of a wrestler getting a better grip. The **good confession** that Jesus is Savior and Lord was made by Timothy at his baptism. Marriage vows help us to keep marriage strong amidst temptation. Christian vows, especially that first one made at baptism, should strengthen our continuing effort.

V. 13 Paul again (5:21) pictures a courtroom as he makes this formal charge to Timothy to discharge his duties. Jesus, while undergoing persecution, made a confession of faith before a judge and others (Lk. 23:3). This suggests that Timothy will have his confession tested by persecution and that he should be as bold as his Lord even if it meant painful death. Speak out for God! "Silence is not always golden; sometimes it's just plain yellow."

V. 14 We not only look backwards to Christ's example, we also look forward to His coming. Then, He was judged; the next time, He will judge.

V. 15 Only God knows when will be the **proper time** (Mt. 24:36). Many have wasted much time and have made Christianity appear foolish in the eyes of the world by their constant confident affirmations of the time of His coming. Let us live each day as if it were that Day. When He comes, all authorities will crumble before Him and He will be crowned King of kings (Phil. 2:10, 11; Rev. 17:14; 19:16).

V. 16 God is always characterized by blinding light, a symbol of purity and power. No one has seen God (Jn. 1:18) although Moses saw His "afterglow" (Ex. 33:17-23) which left his face radiant for a time. Paul was

blinded by the light on the Damascan way (Acts 9). Israel was led from captivity by a pillar of fire. Someday we may see God, but if we have "seen" Jesus, we have glimpsed the essential quality of our Father (Jn. 14:9).

Vs. 17, 18 Paul returns to his earlier theme of verses 6-10. There he warned about the greed which perverted the lives and teachings of those who desired money. Now he directs Timothy to warn those church members who had wealth not to value their gold more than God. Some Christians were well off; one was even treasurer of the city of Corinth (Rom. 16:23). When one has money, he tends to be proud. Too often, he doesn't have money, money has him.

Paul plays on the word riches. Don't trust in riches which may make one poorer spiritually, but trust in good deeds which make one eternally rich. The Israelites were not the last to worship a golden calf (Col. 3:5). Most of our advertising is designed to make us covetous. We dare not let down our guard against the temptation. As one noted, "What a man goes after here will determine where he goes hereafter."

V. 19 Gifts given to God are not lost. If our treasure is on earth, someday we must leave it. If our treasure is above, then someday we are going to it. Even a cup of water given in His name is of greater value than a mountain of gold in that Day (Mt. 25:35).

V. 20 Paul ends his letter with an exhortation to his son. He is fearful lest his boy wander from the way. He pictures Timothy as a soldier protecting a valuable deposit or treasure (II, 1:14). The treasure is God's message which must not be stolen nor transmuted. The **godless chatter** and other false teachings were thieves which would steal the treasure from his very heart if he let down his guard. Some lose their faith by letting it get crowded out with foolish things (Mk. 4:19). Others are so impressed by the **knowledge** (so called) of the world that they surrender faith's treasure without a fight. A learned fool goes to hell as completely as a stupid fool. Guard your treasure, Timothy!

(Paul's last word, **you**, is plural in Greek showing that this epistle was written not only to Timothy but to the whole Ephesian church.)

Titus

INTRODUCTION

Although the traditional outline of N.T. books places Titus after II Timothy, we prefer to place them in the order Paul wrote them. Refer to the chronology in the introduction.

Who was Titus? Our knowledge is limited concerning this Gentile helper of Paul. He, as Timothy, is called "son" suggesting Paul had baptized him and/or trained him in his basic faith. It is strange that his name is not mentioned in Acts. Most suppose he was a close relative of the Gentile doctor Luke, author of Acts, who humbly plays down family achievements. He was the "test case" in the decision that Gentiles need not be circumcised before becoming Christians (cf. Acts 15 with Gal. 2:3ff). He was involved with the Corinthian work (II Cor. 2:13; 7:6, 13, 14; 8:6, 16, 23; 12:18). He appears somewhat older than Timothy (cf. I 4:12; 5:1; II 2:22; Tit. 2:15; 2:2, 6) and perhaps bolder as he is not "charged" by Paul as was Timothy (I Cor. 16:10; I 4:11, 5:21; II 1:7; 2:1; 4:1). Both were loved and trusted by Paul. Other than the letter to the slave owner Philemon, these are the only N.T. letters to individuals.

The church on the island of Crete appears new or immature (1:5) and one of the functions of Titus was to guide it in its growth. The church may have been planted by those present at Jerusalem during Pentecost

INTRODUCTION

(Acts 2:4), or by Paul during his brief stop-over on his way to Rome (Acts 27:8, 9), or by Paul during his inter-prison travels. Any of these would explain the immaturity of the church.

The main functions of Titus were to: appoint elders (1:6-9); guide the teaching (2:1-15); rebuke those dividing the church (3:1-15). At that time, Crete's inhabitants were a mixture of Roman officials, natives, and a considerable colony of Jewish merchants. Crete often supplied mercenaries for foreign armies and had a terrible reputation for money-greed and treachery. Please read these references to see how often Paul makes mention to their quarrelsome nature — 1:2, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16; 2:3; 3:1, 2, 3, 10. A strong minded man like Titus was needed to work with these hot-headed people.

The same basic subjects appear in both I Timothy and Titus but are often treated a little bit differently due to the character of the people or of the man to whom Paul is writing. Christian principles are eternally true, but specific application of them differ with time and place.

Also note that while both of these young men dealt with perverters of the Gospel, those with whom Titus worked appear more Jewish (1:10, 14; 3:9).

A brief topical outline would be as follows. Practice Christianity: In the Church (chap. 1); In the Home (chap. 2); In the World (chap. 3).

Lesson Seven

PRACTICE CHRISTIANITY IN THE CHURCH!

Titus 1:1-16

PAUL'S GREETING

SECTION ONE 1:1-4

1 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, **2** in hope of eternal life which God, who never lies, promised ages ago **3** and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by command of God our Savior;

4 To Titus, my true child in a common faith:

Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

V. 1 As customary, Paul mentions how he appeared to himself, **slave of God**, and how he functions in regards to others, **apostle of Christ**. He also notes the purpose of his calling, not to lord it over God's people but to increase the faith of **God's elect** or chosen people (Psa. 88:3; Isa. 43:20).

V. 2 In contrast to these Cretans who had a reputation for lying (1:12), God always speaks truth for He is truth. Titus after working with people whose word was not to be trusted found great assurance in this reminder

that God doesn't "double deal" nor speak half-truths.

V. 3 The apostle specifically ties God's trustworthiness to the promise of eternal life. God foresaw man's fall into sin, and planned even before creation how He could redeem fallen humanity (Eph. 1:4; II, 1:9). God makes His will known through the preaching of His Gospel, a foolish message to the lost but God's revelation of a mystery to the saved (I Cor. 1:18-31). God has His own timetable (Gal. 4:4), and we are foolish to speculate when and how He will accomplish it (cf. comments on I, 6:15).

V. 4 Paul baptized Titus and/or taught him thus making him Paul's **true child** (lit., "Genuine son," the same as I, 1:2 and II, 1:2). When we have God for a Father, we gain a multitude of brothers and sisters and some who are so close to us that they become fathers and mothers (Rom. 16:13).

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Is it true that the greater a man's position or knowledge, the greater his obligation is to serve others?
2. Has God ever lied? Do some think so? Why?
3. Is it possible to be more intimate with our spiritual family than with our physical one? Should this be so?

THE MISSION — APPOINT ELDERS

SECTION TWO 1:5-9

5 This is why I left you in Crete, that you might amend what was defective, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you, 6 if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of being profligate or insubordinate. 7 For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, 8 but hospitable, a lover of goodness, master of himself, upright, holy, and self-controlled; 9 he 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.

V. 5 Trying to incorporate this verse into the Acts 27 account is difficult as there is no mention of Titus even being along. Probably this

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

was done by Paul during the inter-prison travels. **Mend** is a word sometimes applied to the setting of broken limbs or the straightening of crooked ones. **Defective** means "things that are lacking" suggesting an incompleteness in the church. Paul specifically mentions the lack of elders. Titus' functions throughout this epistle should be read in the light of this defectiveness in the church. Titus is to develop the church, not rule over it (Eph. 4:11, 12). His work will soon be finished if he does it well (3:12).

Can a church exist without elders? Yes, but when this is true, the church is in a state of immaturity and should strive to correct this lack. Every church in the N.T. seems to have had elders (cf. comments on I, 3:1ff). Notice that here each town had its own leaders with no indication that a single bishop ruled the entire island.

Deacons are not mentioned. Perhaps that office was not needed on Crete at this time. Notice the similarity of these qualifications to those in I Tim. 3. Some variations exist indicating that Paul had a definite maturity-level in mind for an elder but did not have a legalistic, hand-out sheet he passed to every congregation.

Appoint means *install, ordain, put into office*. It does not mean choose. In Acts 6:3 this same word is used after the apostles had told the *people* to choose "seven men whom we may appoint." If the congregation has no choice, why bother to give qualifications to guide their selection of elders?

Since the qualifications have already been covered in I Tim. 3, we shall make mention only of those which are different.

V. 6 Paul adds **believing** to children in this passage indicating they are to be Christians. Some prefer to interpret this word as meaning "faithful" children, those who are well behaved. However, the N.T. usage of this word almost always refers to the idea of belief in Jesus. **Children** sometimes means one child (Gen. 21:7; I Tim. 5:4, 8).

V. 7 An elder is God's **steward** or trustee as he acts on behalf of God and is accountable to Him. In speaking of money, Paul adds the idea of "base" gain indicating that some might seek the office for the pay it brought (I, 5:17) or misuse money entrusted to his care (Acts 11:29, 30).

V. 8 A **lover of goodness** is absent from the Timothy list. What a man thinks about and longs for shapes his character (Prov. 23:7; Phil. 4:8). He is to be **upright** for fairness and justice must mark his every action (I, 5:21). **Holy** is the word "saint," one "set apart" for God. Every Christian is a saint (Phil. 1:1). **Self-controlled** is literally "in control of strength" and carries the same basic idea as **master of himself**. This concept of self-discipline permeates these epistles.

V. 9 This function amplifies the qualification of apt teacher in I Tim. 3:2. He must be able to **give instruction** to believers and to **confute** or

stop the arguments of perverters. Part of the shepherd's pastoring involves driving away preying wolves (Acts 20:28, 29). Paul does not say an elder must be able to preach, but he must be able to communicate the faith to others. But forceful preaching and teaching should be the goal of every conscientious elder (1, 5:17).

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Is it better to have no elders than to have unqualified ones?
2. How can we keep the selection of elders from being a popularity contest? Suggest practical ways to make these qualifications meaningful at election time.
3. If preaching is the ultimate goal of the elder's teaching ministry, how can we develop this function?

THE PURPOSE — TO STOP FALSE TEACHING

SECTION THREE 1:10-16

10 For there are many insubordinate men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially the circumcision party; 11 they must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for base gain what they have no right to teach. 12 One of themselves, a prophet of their own said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." 13 This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, 14 instead of giving heed to Jewish myths or to commands of men who reject the truth. 15 To the pure all things are pure, but to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure; their very minds and consciences are corrupted. 16 They profess to know God, but they deny him by their deeds; they are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good deed.

V. 10 One man can incite a riot. **Many** men twisting truth should alarm us. Paul notes three characteristics of these teachers. (1) **Insubordinate** (lit., "not under rule"), refusing to recognize the authority of God's Word or of God's men, the bishops. (2) **Empty talkers** who fill the air with vain words (Jude 16). (3) **Deceivers** who will pervert truth, even God's Word, to gain their end (1, 1:3). The Jewish group apparently were the ring-leaders on Crete.

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

V. 11 The elders must **silence** (lit., “gag” or “muzzle”) them. Perhaps a word of warning would suffice (II, 2:24). If not, a sharper correction should be made (I, 1:3; II, 1:13). If these failed, they should be disbarred from fellowship (I, 1:20).

The book of Acts tells of household conversions; here, Paul speaks of household perversions. Theophylact, an early church writer, calls these perverters, “The devil’s crowbars with which he pulls down the houses of God.” Their motive is the same as that condemned in I Tim. 6:5. Judas sold his Lord for 30 pieces of silver. Some still walk in his shoes.

V. 12 Lest any think Paul too hard on these teachers, he quotes one of their own wise men who would be expected to say something nice about his own people. But Eumenides, a Cretan who lived about 600 B.C. and regarded as a prophet by those people, agrees with Paul’s conclusion (To call him “prophet” is simply recognizing his given title and not affirming he is of God any more than Elijah is referring to the “prophets of Baal” in I Kings 18:40 as though they were of the Lord.) Even long ago these people were liars, brutish, animalistic people, with a dominant concern for bodily appetites. Their lower nature controlled them. In Paul’s day, to call a man a “Cretan” was to brand him a money-hungry liar to whom nothing was sacred. What a people to whom to preach!

V. 13 A strong jerk on the chain can settle the snarling dog; a sharp rebuke is all that settles some people who mistake gentleness for weakness. **Sharply** comes from a word meaning “to cut.” Let us not be afraid to hurt feelings if that is the only way to protect God’s truth. The surgeon often must use his scapel on cancerous tissue if he is to save the rest of the body.

Amazingly, these **evil beasts** are in the church although the church does not seem to be in them. The purpose of rebuke is to correct their faith. Our goal ought always be to help, not just to hurt.

V. 14 These Cretans are following **Jewish myths** whereas the Ephesians are said to be obsessed with myths and idle stories (I, 1:4; 4:7; II, 2:16; 4:4); this suggests a lesser influence by the Jews in that Grecian culture. Anything that leads us away from God’s Word is to be condemned, however interesting it may appear.

V. 15 Paul relates purity to motives. The Jews felt that certain objects were unclean in their own right (Lk. 11:41). But Paul echoes Jesus’ words that it is man who defiles the object, and not the object the man. Doing right things for evil motives corrupts that action (for example, giving alms to receive man’s praise). And sometimes things done with poor judgment are acceptable to our Lord because of a noble motive (Jn. 12:7). Some things are always wrong no matter what the motive (“Love” does not make right adultery.)

V. 16 Profession without performance incurs condemnation (Mk. 11:12-14). Their character is **detestable**, often translated "abominable." In Prov. 17:15, this refers to a perverter of moral distinctions. Their actions are **disobedient** (lit., "unpersuadeable") as they rebel against all authority, even God. Their value or worth is **unfitness**, a word applied to a counterfeit coin, a cowardly soldier who deserts in battle, a stone rejected by careful builders.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. How do we "silence" those who are destroying the faith?
2. Do we have any "Cretans" in our society?
3. Can you think of times when good actions are corrupted by poor motives?
4. When actions or poor judgment are acceptable to God because of the good motive behind them? How far can we carry this principle?

Lesson Eight

PRACTICE CHRISTIANITY IN THE HOME!

Titus 2:1-15

THE WAYS TO SHOW CHRISTIANITY AT HOME

SECTION ONE Titus 2:1-10

2 But as for you, teach what befits sound doctrine. **2** Bid the older men be temperate, serious, sensible, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. **3** Bid the older women likewise to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good, **4** and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, **5** to be sensible, chaste, domestic, kind, and submissive to their husbands, that the word of God may not be discredited. **6** Likewise urge the younger men to control themselves. **7** Show yourself in all respects a model of good deeds, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity, **8** and sound speech that cannot be censured, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say of us. **9** Bid slaves to be submissive to their masters and to give satisfaction in every respect; they are not to be refractory, **10** nor to pilfer, but to show entire and true fidelity, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

Chapter one deals with the church as a whole including leadership positions and teaching roles. This chapter focuses upon specific applications of Christianity in personal relationships. Five groups are mentioned — old men, old women, young married women, young men, slaves. Compare I Tim. 5:1, 2; 6:2 for same basic groupings and teachings.

V. 1 Paul again mentions "healthy" teaching (see comments, I, 6:3) and explains what he means in the specific commands that follow.

V. 2 Timothy was told to speak to old men as fathers indicating they were considerably older than he. Titus is not given this caution suggesting he is closer to their age. Some see these commands covering three areas: (1) Faith toward God; (2) Love toward others; (3) Steadfast patience toward self and life's trials. These same words are found in qualifications for bishops. **Temperate**, moderate in all things including the temptation to lose patience with the younger and become exasperated (I, 3:2, 11). **Serious**, dignified behavior that commands respect (I, 3:5, 8, 11); **sensible**, self-controlled behavior that comes with the passing of years (I, 3:2). These climax in a **sound faith** which manifests in **love** to others and patient **steadfastness** amid life's storms.

V. 3 Older women are to show a dignified **reverence**. Cretan older women, often being alone and perhaps in poor health, had evidently found solace in wine rather than in worship (1:12). Drinking and **slandering** or gossiping about others go hand in hand.

V. 4, 5 Neither Timothy nor Titus, able though they were, were qualified to teach "Christian home ec" to these younger women. Older ladies who had proved by experience their knowledge would be well-fitted for such a task. Too often older women grump about how the younger are "going to the dogs" when they should be taking these "young pups" in hand and tactfully guiding them into a fulfilled life.

The areas of education center about her love for home, husband, and children. A godly woman's attitude permeates the home like aromatic perfume. Character is shaped in the home and shown elsewhere. As Paul has more to say to this group than any of the others, is he suggesting home training as the key to community problems?

V. 6 Only one command is directed to young men — self control! This concept dominates this section appearing in verses 2, 4, 5, 6, 12. Trench once defined this word as "that habitual inner government with its constant reign on all the passions and desires which would hinder . . . temptation . . . from arising. . . ."

V. 7 Controlled behavior is better caught than taught, and both helpers of Paul are used to live the example (I, 4:12). All of us imitate, sometimes unconsciously, those whom we admire. Paul often uses his life as an example to others (Phil. 3:17; I Cor. 4:16; 11:1) Too many carelessly destroy in action what they so strongly proclaim in word.

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

Hypocrites produce more unbelief than all the athiests in the world.

V. 8 Paul now supplies the reason why we must guard our lives. Even idle or off-hand remarks are judged by others and ultimately by God (Mt. 12:34-37). We should so live that we could sell our parrot to the town gossip and still sleep at night.

Vs. 9, 10 Paul gives attention to the last group. See comments on I Tim. 6:1, 2. Slaves easily became resentful of their station in life and would **answer back** to masters. Since they received no pay, one of the few ways they could accumulate anything was to **pilfer** it from the master's chambers. They are to live as Christians for the same reason given Titus in verse 8. **Adorn** often refers to the setting of a jewel in a ring. We provide the setting for the Pearl of Great Price. Our lives dull His luster or make Him sparkle and shine. The harsher life's circumstance, the more opportunity to make Christ's glory more vivid by a surrendered spirit. Slaves were often the ones who taught the children and shaped the character of tomorrow's world by the thoughts they placed in those growing minds. Origen, an early church writer, noted that it was not uncommon for whole families to be converted to Christianity through the instrumentality of slaves.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Compare the commands given Timothy (I, 5:1, 2; 6:1, 2) with these and note the differences. Why the different advice?
2. What are the special temptations of each of the five groups in this chapter?
3. Does a wife working outside the home violate Paul's instructions in 2:4, 5?
4. Why do actions shout louder than words?
5. What actions or attitudes can you show in your daily life to "adorn" the doctrine?

THE REASONS FOR SHOWING CHRISTIANITY

SECTION TWO 2:11-15

11 For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, 12 training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, 13 awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and

Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

15 Declare these things; exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

Paul, as usual, looks in two directions in appealing for Christian action. He looks back to Christ's first coming as He redeemed us by His grace (11, 12, 14), and then looks forward to His second coming to usher us into His presence (13). Notice the negative aspect of things to be given up (12a, 14a) and the positive aspect of things to be accepted (12b, 14b).

V. 11 God's love and mercy are for all men (I, 2:4-6) although not all accept. God's nature is completely shown in Christ beginning with the humble birth in Bethlehem and climaxing with the sacrifice of love on Calvary.

V. 12 Too many want only to avoid punishment for sin, but God does not save us *in* our sins, but *from* our sins. With God's grace in our hearts, we can turn away from evil. God instructs us through teaching (Acts 22:3), chastening (Heb. 12:6-11), godly sorrow (II Cor. 7:10), and a myriad of other ways. God's grace does not instantly transport us into mature Christians but initiates the transforming process of growth (Heb. 5:8-14). Please don't think you are "more saved" thirty years after baptism than in that hour, any more than you are "more alive" as an adult than as a baby; hopefully, you are more mature and better able to serve than when recently born.

The **temperate** or self-disciplined life relates to ourselves; **justly**, as we deal fairly with others; **piously**, as we look humbly to God.

V. 13 The second coming permeates all N.T. hope and thought. Read Romans 8:18-25 to glimpse this joyous spirit. Some controversy exists as to whether Paul is referring to two (Father and Son) or one (Jesus called both God and Savior). Older commentators prefer the former while moderns prefer the latter. Either position can be defended from other Scriptures so the question is academic.

V. 14 Paul always emphasizes that our salvation is tied to the atonement, the doctrine that Christ's crucifixion somehow frees us from sin and guilt. Sometimes it is seen as a sacrifice with Christ as the Scapegoat or Lamb (I Pet. 1:18, 19); or as a war with Christ the Mighty Warrior Who has defeated the devil and his power (Rom. 6:16; I Cor. 15:54-57); or as a ransom paid to a captor (I Cor. 6:20); or as a Representative Victim Who symbolizes all mankind (Rom. 5:12-21; II Cor. 5:21). Each of these views reveal a different aspect of this multi-faceted, climatic act of God.

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

His redemption embodies a two-fold purpose, one negative and one positive. Negatively, we are redeemed from **iniquity** (lit., “lawlessness”), any form of disobedience to God’s law; positively, we are cleansed or **purified** so that we might handle holy things as priests of God (I Pet. 2:5).

A people of His own is often translated “peculiar” or “set apart” people. This word is also used in I Pet. 2:9 and Eph. 1:14, and the same idea is expressed in “saint” or “holy,” someone or something set apart for God’s use. All Christians are saints, holy, priests, God’s people, etc.; it is a shame some have separated these words from their proper use and apply them only to certain “super” Christians.

V. 15 Titus is to **declare, exhort, and reprove**. Note the progression. Some only need to be shown God’s will and they respond. Others need urging. Some need a strong verbal shove. Whatever the form, Titus is to take care lest any **disregard** him (lit., “think around”) and his message. Some translate this “despise” as I Tim. 4:12, but this is a different word. Titus was to be a roadblock making people stop and listen. Too often we are so timid and tactful in our preaching that our message is ignored. The world makes certain we hear its message. Everyone knows the magic qualities of the latest toothpaste or deodorant—how can one ignore that message? Should we be less insistent with a message that eternally matters?

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What is God’s grace? Does it motivate you?
2. When will Jesus come? Should this expectation influence present actions?
3. How wise is it to try and pinpoint the date of His coming? (Mt. 24:36-44)
4. How many blessings can you name that come to you because you are God’s?
5. Are we too timid with our message? Suggest ways to be more forceful without violating tact and courtesy.

Lesson Nine

PRACTICE CHRISTIANITY IN THE WORLD

Titus 3:1-15

IN RELATION TO RULERS

SECTION ONE 3:1-7

3 Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for any honest work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle and to show perfect courtesy toward all men. 3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by men and hating one another; 4 but when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 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, 6 which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life. 8 The saying is sure.

Vs. 1, 2 To be **submissive** (same word in I Pet. 3:1; 5:5; Rom. 13:1) was especially hard for these Cretans who, according to the Greek historian Polybius, were constantly involved in "insurrections, murders, and

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

slaughterous wars." Note that the Ephesians were urged to continue to *pray for rulers* (I, 2:1-7), but these rebellious Cretans were told to *obey rulers* (read introduction for their quarrelsome character). A Christian has a responsibility to the state. He should: (1) Pay taxes (Mt. 22:15-22); (2) Respect rulers as "ministers" or servants of God (Rom. 13:1-7); (3) Pray "for," not "to," rulers (I, 2:1-7); (4) Submit to their rule rather than rebel (Tit. 3:1, 2). To do these things does not place our stamp of approval upon government action. Jesus certainly did not approve of Herod, nor Paul of Nero, but they respected the position these men held even if they could not respect the man. Let us use our influence to change poor laws, but if we cannot get them changed, let us obey man's law except when it is in clear contrast with God's law when we "must obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:29). If this brings punishment as it did in N.T. times, let us accept it as did Jesus, Paul, and the apostles without bad-mouthing or fighting.

A Christian citizen manifests these seven qualities: (1) **Submissive**, as he surrenders his rebellious will; (2) **Obedient**, as he keeps the law; (3) **Ready for any honest work** that edifies his community; (4) Careful in speech lest he slander or **speak evil** of his leaders; (5) Tolerant and able to work with others as he avoids **quarreling**; (6) **gentle**, one who controls his temper; (7) **courteous**, or kind as he tempers justice with mercy. What a country to be peopled with such citizens!

V. 3 Now follows seven areas of disobedience which we (Paul, Titus, all Christians before conversion) once lived: (1) **Foolish**, "not understanding" God's will while following our own; (2) **Disobedient**, both to human and divine authority (1:6, 10; 3:1); (3) **led astray** or deceived (II, 3:13); (4) **slaves** to fleshly desires (Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 1:18-32); (5) Full of **malice**, evil disposition of mind, as we **envy** what others have and desire it; (6) Resulting in a life full of **hating** others and (7) being **hated** in return. Know anyone like that? (Be sure to glance in the mirror before looking at others!)

V. 4 **But**, a glorious word of contrast as Paul focuses upon the source of our new attitude (1, 2) freeing us from these horrible passions. Man does not climb to God through philosophy or a good moral life; our minds are not complex enough nor our works good enough. God is the One Who initiates salvation, not because of our goodness, but because of His! (Eph. 2:1-10)

Vs. 5, 6 The **washing of regeneration** (lit., "laver or cleansing of rebirth") was suggested by the priests who completely and ceremoniously washed themselves before entering the tabernacle to serve (Ex. 40:12); it now refers to the cleansing that comes in baptism as God cleanses us to make us priests fit to serve Him (cf. I Pet. 3:21 where baptism is pictured as a "washing" and Jn. 3:3, 5 where it is described

as "rebirth"). Not only are we cleansed from sin in baptism (Acts 2:38), and regenerated (reborn), but we also experience **renewal** (II Cor. 5:17). All of these actions come through the **Holy Spirit**. (Note that the Word of God is also spoken of as a cleansing or rebirthing agent, Eph. 5:26; I Pet. 1:23; Jas. 1:18). A too-simple analogy of physical birth might suggest that the Word implants life in us resulting in the formation of a new creation emerging or being born at baptism and growing on to maturity through the years. Social reform is not enough as we need cleansing from the past, rebirth for the present, and renewal for the future. Notice that the Father (4), the Son (6), and the Holy Spirit (5) work together in this transformation.

V. 7 We now have a cleansed temple fit for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; I Cor. 6:19) and for God and Jesus (Jn. 14:23; II Cor. 6:16; Rev. 3:20), and a hope for the future as we are **heirs**, sons and daughters, of the King (Jn. 1:12; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 3:26; Heb. 2:11). Many are our blessings: a new name, a new state, a new family, a new hope, etc. And God made this possible by His adoption of us as children. Even when our Father chastens us (Heb. 12:6), that too is a mark of our sonship for God "doesn't spank the devil's children."

The **faithful saying** better fits verses 4-7 than what comes after.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Should a Christian obey an "unjust" law? A law he doesn't like? One that contradicts the Bible?
2. Should Christians take part in revolutions against the government?
3. Are those immersed in sin truly happy? (3:3)
4. Is baptism a "work"? Is anyone in the N.T. called "saved" who has not been baptized after the death of Christ?
5. Enlarge upon the blessings we receive as "heirs" of God.
6. Do we ever forget Whose we are and slip back into the family of Satan?

IN RELATION TO OTHERS

SECTION TWO 3:8-11

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. 9 But avoid

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile. 10 As for a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him, 11 knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned.

V. 8 Titus is to **insist** ("assert strongly") on the preceding so that our faith may show itself in **good deeds** and not just in words. Teachers of God's Word who are too permissive dishonor God and destroy His children.

Vs. 9, 10 Titus is warned, as was Timothy (I, 1:4), about foolish discussions. **A man who is factious** ("heretic," KJV), a division-maker in the church, is to be warned and then avoided (disfellowshipped?) if he does not repent. It is a serious thing to divide the family of God (I Cor. 3:16, 17). The N.T. labels four main areas in which Christians are to disfellowship and avoid fellow churchmembers. (1) Those who cause division in the church (Tit. 3:10; Mt. 18:17; Rom. 16:17; II Thess. 3:11; II Pet. 2:1); (2) Those who continue in open, vileness of life (I Cor. 5:1-11; Eph. 5:3-11; II Thess. 3:6); (3) Those who deny Christ's divinity (Gal. 1:8; II Jn. 10, 11; I Tim. 1:20; II Tim. 2:16-18; II Cor. 6:14-18); (4) Those who refuse to recognize the authority of the apostles and their revealed word (II Thess. 3:14; Gal. 1:8, 9; I Cor. 14:37, 38).

These do not mean that we can never disagree, but we should not be so disagreeable that we become "heir splitters." Nor does it mean we shall live lives of perfection, but let us not persist in sin if perchance we stumble. We will never understand all Bible teaching, but let us accept its authority and not twist it nor deny it (II Pet. 3:16).

Some feel we have no right to judge others, but Scripture demands that we do in the areas listed in the Bible references above. Few would tolerate things in their physical family that they often do in God's family. Do not be "more tolerant than God," but discipline in love and in truth.

V. 11 Anyone so willful as to split God's family over his own position is **perverted** (lit., "distorted, turned aside, twisted") morally and mentally and is **self-condemned** as he persists in his willful way even after being approached several times. Perhaps avoiding him will bring him to repentance; if not, at least he is not in a position to further divide the congregation with his destructive influence.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Do we weaken God's authority in the world by weak preaching and teaching?

2. In "matters of opinion," who is to decide what decision shall be made?
3. How completely must Christians agree in order to fellowship?

IN RELATIONSHIP TO HIS WORK

SECTION THREE 3:12-15

12 When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.

13 Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. 14 And let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful.

15 All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith.

Grace be with you all.

V. 12 **Tychicus**, one of the lesser known heroes of the faith; accompanied Paul on his third journey (Acts 20:4), was with Paul in his first imprisonment (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7), traveled with Paul during the inter-prison period (Tit. 3:12), and was yet by his side in his second and final imprisonment (II Tim. 4:12). Such a trusted companion could carry on the work of Titus. Probably the same could be said of **Artemas** of whom we know nothing. **Nicopolis** of Empirus, Greece, would be a mid-point between Macedonia, where Paul was probably working at this time, and Crete. It would also serve as a good jumping-off place for mission work in Dalmatia to the north (II Tim. 4:10), a pugnacious people like the Cretans.

V. 13 Of **Zenas** the "law expert," we know nothing else, not even if he were adept in Jewish law or Roman law, with his Greek name suggesting the latter. This **Apollos** may be the same mentioned in Acts 18:26-28; I Cor. 3:6; 16:12. The church was to help them on their way.

V. 14 Helping these men would be one of the **good deeds** these Cretan Christians needed to practice. It is not enough to be in Christ; we must also bear fruit (Jn. 15:1-8).

V. 15 As in the epistles to Timothy, Paul sends greetings to **all** the church. For those who may have been with Paul at this time, read II Tim. 4:21 and Acts 20:34. Paul was interested in people and mentions about eighty different ones in his letters. Let us not be like the student who questioned, "Why did Paul ruin his magnificent Roman epistle by

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

tacking on the names of all those silly people on the end of it?" He was rebuked by his teacher, "My boy, those 'silly people' are why Paul wrote the letter."

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Do we often forget those in N.T. times or in today's church who labor quietly for the Lord?
2. Is it possible to be so involved in theology that we forget people?

Lesson Ten

INTRODUCTION

In II Timothy, we have the last written words of the Apostle. This "last will and testament" was written to his son Timothy shortly before Paul's death (4:6) in 67 or 68 A.D., the last year of Nero's reign. As Paul was a Roman citizen (Acts 22:25-29), he was not crucified, but beheaded, a more dignified and merciful death. For further background, please reread the chronology in the introduction to I Timothy. Paul's first imprisonment described in Acts 28:30, 31 differs from this second one described in this epistle. Then he was freer; now he is in chains (1:8, 16; 2:9). Then he had friends, now he is alone (1:15; 4:11, 16). Then he was accessible; now he is hard to find (1:16, 17). Then he expected release as noted in the four "prison epistles" of Colossians, Philippians, Philemon, and Ephesians (Phil. 1:25, 26; 2:24; Phile. 22); now he foresees only death (4:6-8).

A man's final words center upon those things he holds most dear. This epistle, the one that reveals the tender heart of Paul more than any other save II Corinthians, revolves around three topics: Timothy (1:3 — 2:13), the church (2:14 — 4:5); and Paul himself (4:6-18). Lipscomb suggests we look for Paul's exhortations (1:6 — 2:26), warnings (3:1 — 4:5), and

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

testimony (4:6-18). Hendriksen sees each chapter focusing on sound doctrine with Timothy exhorted to: I. Hold to it; II. Teach it; III. Live it; IV. Preach it!

GUARD THE FAITH! 1:1-18

GREETINGS

SECTION ONE 1:1, 2

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus,
2 To Timothy, my beloved child:
Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

This typical Pauline greeting differs from the first epistle only by the addition of the adjective **beloved**, setting the tenor of the whole epistle — that of a loving father trying to extend last-minute advice to a son whom he deeply loves!

A PRAYER FOR TIMOTHY

SECTION TWO 1:3-7

3 I thank God whom I serve with a clear conscience, as did my fathers, when I remember you constantly in my prayers. **4** As I remember your tears, I long night and day to see you, that I may be filled with joy. **5** 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. **6** Hence I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; **7** for God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control.

V. 3 Paul in almost every epistle thanks God for fellow Christians (Rom. 1:8, 9; I Cor. 1:4; Eph. 1:15, 16; Phil. 1:3, 4; Col. 1:3; I Thess. 1:2; II Thess. 1:3; Phile. 4). As he looks upon the face of death, Paul has no stain on his **conscience** (see comments, I, 1:19) and rejoices in the godly heritage he has received from Abraham, Jacob, and others of lesser fame (Acts 24:14, 15). We often forget those in past ages who, not knowing us, have prayed for us, sacrificed for us, and laid a strong foundation for us. The family of God transcends all ages, all cultures, all barriers (Eph. 2:6-22). We do not tread a lonely path but are surrounded by a concerned family (Heb. 12:1). After looking back to his heritage, Paul turns his mind to those who shall follow after him, especially Timothy, who take part in this great procession of faith.

V. 4 Some put **night and day** with **prayers** in v. 3 (KJV), while others place it with **longing** in v. 4 (ASV, RSV). Either rendering is acceptable grammatically, theologically, and practically and both ideas blend into one for if we devoutly long for another, we breathe his name in prayer constantly.

Timothy's **tears** probably came at their last parting (cf. Acts 20:37) showing the young man's love and devotion to his "father." But at reunion, tears will become **joy** (4:20). This type of contrast is typical of Paul's writing style.

Much of life's happiness depends upon the presence of others. Isn't that also much of heaven's joy?

V. 5 **Remember** (lit., "having been reminded") suggests that something special had brought Timothy's character into Paul's mind. A letter from Timothy? A young man who resembled Timothy? A treasured memento Paul fingered? Whatever the cause, Paul remembers Timothy in four special ways: (1) As a person to be thankful for (3); (2) As a loving son who shed tears (4); (3) As a fellow helper with un hypocritical faith (5); (4) As one who possesses a gift God can use (6). How do people remember you?

The **sincere faith** ("hypocrite" or "play actor" is a form of this word) Timothy possessed came from his early home environment (3:15). Faith is better caught than taught. Too many wear a "false faith," but not this young man! His father is evidently dead, has left, or was of little influence in Timothy's spiritual development (cf. Acts 16:1). This young man, like Paul, had also been nurtured on O.T. truths which gave him a firm foundation upon which to build the Gospel faith preached by Paul.

Dwells is literally "makes its home in you," certainly more than a Sunday-only faith.

V. 6 Again Paul plays on words. I was reminded of you (v. 3) and now I remind you. **Rekindle** refers to the stirring up of smoldering embers to produce a blazing fire. Was Timothy not making full use of God's **gift**?

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

This gift (cf. comments on I, 4:14) has been identified as miraculous power (Acts 8:17; 19:6), natural inborn gifts such as the ability to preach (Rom. 12:8), or his ordination as an evangelist or fellow missionary with Paul (Acts 13:3). Whichever it was, and I prefer the first suggestion, Timothy knew that it was given to help him minister and he dare not be slack in using it.

V. 7 Timothy appears to have been somewhat intimidated by the problems at Ephesus (cf. I Cor. 16:10) perhaps due to a quiet and retiring nature. Paul reminds him that God's presence and message enables him to have **power** ("dynamite," Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 4:20) which conquers, and **love** which drives out fear (I Jn. 4:18), and **self-control** which enables us to perform deeds which otherwise paralyze us (Mk. 14:36). Power, not tempered by love and controlled by the possessor, is dangerous. God's Spirit gives us blessings here and now (Gal. 5:22, 23).

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Read the references in v. 3 and see for what things in various congregations Paul gives thanks. How would he characterize yours?
2. How can we "pray without ceasing" (I Thess. 5:17) as did Paul?
3. Who is responsible for teaching faith to our children?
4. Is it possible to have a faith that is not "sincere"?
5. In what ways is faith "caught" by others?
6. Can God use a shy, retiring person in a bold, forceful ministry?

AN EXHORTATION TO TIMOTHY

SECTION THREE 1:8-14

8 Do not be ashamed of testifying to our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but take your share of suffering for the gospel in the power of God, 9 who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago, 10 and now has manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 11 For this gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, 12 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. 13 Follow the

pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus; 14 guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

V. 8 Many would be **ashamed** of Paul and his chains and fear lest they be classified criminals because of association with him. So, echoing Peter's denial, "I know not the man," they deserted. But Paul is not a prisoner of Rome, but of Christ (Eph. 3:1; 4:1; Phile. 1, 9). **Shame** is the key word of this section as Paul urges Timothy not to be ashamed (8), affirms his own lack of shame for Christ (12), disparages those who deserted him out of shame (15); and commends one who is unashamed to call him friend (16).

V. 9 Paul finds strength in Christ's example Who died the death of a criminal and was also deserted by most of His disciples at His time of testing. The Gospel is worth suffering for; however, let us not fall into the error of supposing salvation is by our suffering and **works**, but through **grace**.

Vs. 10, 11 This grace began in the mind of God before creation (Eph. 1:4), began to work itself out in the O.T. dispensation, and has come to a triumphant climax in that glorious act on Calvary's crest and in that empty tomb (I Cor. 15:55-58). Death is dead! Men die, but are no longer trapped in that dark cell (I Cor. 15:54; Jn. 5:24-29). A glorious message — one worth suffering for! Who can be ashamed of a God Who bestows such hope?

V. 12 Because Paul preached Jesus as the Author of Life, the Jews engineered the persecution resulting in his death. But no matter what trials come (II Cor. 6:5-10; 11:23-28), Paul doubts not the value of his efforts. Even if death comes, God will carry us through.

What has been entrusted to me is literally "keep my commitment," and can mean: (1) Paul has entrusted his life to Christ and will not lose it on judgment **day** (KJV, ASV); (2) Or Paul is guarding God's Gospel treasure in his life and nothing can destroy it nor stop it (RSV). Both ideas are true. Verse 14 restates this second idea. As Paul is fond of contrasts, this suggests that the KJV rendering may be the proper one.

Entrusted means "deposit, sacred trust, that given to another to keep."

V. 13 Timothy is to **follow** what Paul taught, **guard** it lest it be perverted (14), and **entrust** it to others (2:2). **Pattern** indicates a recognized body of teaching which made up the doctrine of the church. The emphasis in these last letters of Paul is not on using gifts (cf. I Cor. 12) or discovering new truths, but on practicing, defending, and teaching what has already been revealed through the apostles — the New Testament. This same idea appears in Jude 3, Eph. 4:4; II Pet. 2:2; Gal. 1:8, 9;

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

etc.). "True theology is not new theology and new theology is not true theology." Our task is not to discern new truth (Acts 17:21), but to proclaim revealed truth without perversion (II Pet. 3:15, 16).

V. 14 The enemy is strong; we are weak. The only hope we have of defending God's truth is with the help of God's **Spirit** within us. He was given to us at baptism (Acts 2:38), assumes a greater control as we yield our lives to Him (Acts 5:32), and makes our bodies temples (I Cor. 6:19) as He cleanses us from moral filth (I Cor. 6:11; Rom. 8:13, 14) and **dwells** in us. He helps us pray (Rom. 8:26, 27), revives our spirits (II Cor. 3:6, 18), and makes us fruitful (Gal. 5:22, 23). He indwells every Christian but must "move out" when we will not follow His leading, and practice instead works of the flesh (I Thess. 5:19; Gal. 5:19-21). Today many claim the promise given to the apostles to guide them "into all truth" (Jn. 16:13). This was needful for them as they were writing the N.T. Today God guides by His revealed Word. Those who claim to be Spirit-led show by teaching doctrines that contradict Scripture or others making similar claims that their "truth" is certainly not from God.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Why would anyone be "ashamed" of his faith? How can we overcome this shame?
2. In what sense is death abolished? Should we fear death?
3. Is there a "pattern" we are to teach?
4. How does the Holy Spirit lead today? Are the promises in John 14-16 for all Christians or just the apostles?

AN EXAMPLE FOR TIMOTHY

SECTION FOUR 1:15-18

15 You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, and among them Phygelus and Hermogenes. 16 May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me; he was not ashamed of my chains, 17 but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me eagerly and found me — 18 may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that Day — and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.

V. 15 Paul uses a negative example — those who deserted him, and a positive example — Onesiphorus who befriended him, as lessons for Timothy. Ephesus was in **Asia** and probably had sent a delegation to minister to Paul or to appear at his trial. These two are mentioned by name because they were the leaders of the desertion or because Paul was amazed that “even Phil and Herm” would desert him. Many talk Christianity, but wilt when it costs time, money, or social position.

V. 16 Paul continues his “one-line epitaphs” as he praises **Onesiphorus** whose name means “profit bringer” or “profitable.” He came not once, but **oft** at great danger to himself to **refresh** Paul. A simple visit or word of encouragement means more than we know to one with an aching heart. And God also takes notice and will **grant mercy** in time to us (Mt. 5:7; 25:31-46).

V. 17 As a political prisoner, Paul was somewhat inaccessible to those who dared call him friend. The fire set by the crazed Nero and blamed on the Christians made believers cautious. A stranger in Rome would be viewed with suspicion by the Christians who feared him a spy, and with disfavor by the authorities who considered him to be another of the incendiaries. Can you detect the note of surprised joy as Paul exclaims, “He sought and **found me!**”

V. 18 The blessing on this friend is repeated as Paul marvels at his courageous faith. And Paul realized that this one had been “Profitable” to many in **Ephesus**. Timothy is to follow his example as a strong soldier of the cross.

SUMMARY: Please note in this chapter the various appeals made to Timothy to be strong. We use these same type of encouragements today. 1. His sincere faith (5a); 2. His family background (5b); 3. The gift God gave him (6a); 4. The “office” to which he had been ordained (6b); 5. The new spirit God gave him (7); 6. The importance of the task (8-10); 7. The example of Paul his “father” (8, 11-13); 8. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (14); 9. The negative example of the Asians — “don’t be like them” (15); 10. The courageous example of Onesiphorus (16-18).

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What are some reasons why friends often desert other friends in time of need?
2. If Paul wrote one line about your life, what would it say?
3. Aren’t those who are infirm, aged, or handicapped in “prison” too with few to refresh them? Does your congregation minister to them?
4. Which of Paul’s appeals to Timothy would best motivate you? Why?

Lesson Eleven

SUFFER FOR THE FAITH!

II Timothy 2:1-26

BE STEADFAST

SECTION ONE 2:1-7

2 You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, **2** and what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. **3** Take your share of suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. **4** No soldier on service gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to satisfy the one who enlisted him. **5** An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. **6** It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. **7** Think over what I say, for the Lord will grant you understanding in everything.

Vs. 1, 2 Being unashamed of Christ and His servant Paul is the key concept in chapter one. This will involve suffering and patience as the **then** indicates. Suffering could affect Timothy's personal faith so he must **be strong**. It could also weaken the message he was delivering so he must pass it on to **faithful men** even as Paul had passed it on to him. The Gospel is always one generation from extinction. The best way

to grow is to teach others the way.

Vs. 3, 4 The Apostle encourages Timothy through his three favorite illustrations (cf. I Cor. 9:7, 24-26). Each suggests a respected profession with two elements — a prize to be won and a way to win it. A **good soldier** was one who knew self-sacrifice, discipline, endurance, and obedience (Eph. 6:10-18; I Thess. 5:8; Phil. 2:25; I Tim. 1:18; 6:12; II, 4:7). Paul specifically mentions **suffering** (enduring hardship) and single-mindedness as he forsakes **civilian** interests. Getting a Christian side-tracked from the Gospel warfare remains one of Satan's most effective strategies. A soldier's reward is the "well done" of his captain. One who fled battle or pursued self-interest was unfit to be in the Roman army. Does our Lord deserve less?

V. 5 The **athlete**, highly respected by the Greeks, is alluded to more than twenty times by Paul. The basic idea is that of self-control and endurance (cf. I Cor. 9:25; Heb. 12:1-14). Athletes, then as now, spend weeks or months disciplining their bodies so as to achieve. Before the Greek games, the athlete took an oath that he had practiced ten months, had kept the dietary regulations, and had lived a life of separation from his usual state. Otherwise, he was disqualified for not **competing according to the rules** (cf. I Cor. 9:27). His reward was the laurel wreath proclaiming him a victor (cf. 4:8).

V. 6 The patient, **hard-working farmer** expects a crop for his efforts (Gal. 6:7, 9). The emphasis of the soldier is that of endurance; that of the athlete, self-discipline; that of the farmer, hard toil. Timothy must suffer as the Lord's soldier, obey Christ's rules as an athlete, and as God's farmer patiently plant and water God's seed planted in the hearts of men (I Cor. 3:5-9).

V. 7 It is not enough to read these words, they must be **thought over** ("ponder, consider, grasp"). We should saturate our minds with Scripture and meditate upon it night and day (Psalm 1; Deut. 6:4).

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. What are some ways to "pass on" the faith to faithful men?
2. How many comparisons can you make between an American soldier and a Christian soldier? Or athlete? Or farmer?
3. Suggest practical ways we can fill our minds with Scripture.

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

BE AN EXAMPLE!

SECTION TWO 2:8-14

8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David, as preached in my gospel, 9 the gospel for which I am suffering and wearing fetters like a criminal. But the word of God is not fettered. 10 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. 11 The saying is sure:

If we have died with him, we shall also live with him;

12 if we endure, we shall also reign with him;

if we deny him, he also will deny us;

13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful — for he cannot deny himself.

14 Remind them of this, and charge them before the Lord to avoid disputing about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers.

V. 8 The above examples are helpful, but the one Paul always returns to is that of Jesus (Heb. 12:1). He is the One **risen from the dead** after steadfastly enduring suffering and, as **descended from David**, sits upon a more glorious throne than that of His ancestor. The ideas implied here are expressly stated in vs. 11, 12.

V. 9 A beautiful thought! We can be bound, but the Word of God cannot! In fact, Paul's imprisonments spread the word even into Caesar's household (Phil. 1:12, 13; 4:22) as he witnessed to those guarding him. Jerome, an early Christian, wrote, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

V. 10 Paul's reason for **enduring** suffering is for God's people who will be encouraged by his example. The Apostle measured all of life, not by how it affected him personally, but by the effect it had upon the church and Gospel. Thus, if suffering furthered the faith, it became a reason for rejoicing (Acts 5:41). **Endure** is not a passive resignation, "Let's make the best of it," but a triumphant, courageous, patient expectation (Heb. 12:2) as that of a mother carrying her first child. Others always profit from our suffering if we do it in this spirit.

Vs. 11-13 This fifth of the five "faithful sayings" (see I, 1:15) may have been part of a martyr's hymn or statement of faith to encourage those entering Nero's death arena. It well climaxes Paul's preceding statements of "No cross, no crown." Some see the death as a reference to baptismal death and resurrection (Rom. 6:4, 8; II Cor. 5:14, 15), but as the entire

passage deals with physical suffering and death, we prefer to view it as actual martyrdom. Christians will reign with Christ (I Cor. 6:2, 3; Rev. 3:21; 4:4; 5:11). If we confess His name, He confesses ours; if we deny Him, He must deny us (Mt. 10:32, 33; Mk. 8:38). He will be **faithful** in saving those who obey, or condemning those who do not.

V. 14 Just as Paul had **reminded** Timothy and **charged** him (I, 5:21; II, 4:1), so Timothy is to do to faithful men. Again we see the "word wars" dividing the church (cf. I, 6:4; 1:3-7; 4:7; 6:3-10; II, 2:16, 23; Tit. 3:9). Most of the "great theological debates" which have divided the church have been over matters of little importance and of unclear Bible teaching. For example, one of the issues dividing the Eastern church from the Western in the Eleventh Century centered around the Holy Spirit — was He sent by the Father only or by both Father and Son. As if it really mattered one way or the other. Our word "catastrophe" comes from the Greek word translated **ruin**.

BE A WORKMAN!

SECTION FOUR 2:15-19

15 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. 16 Avoid such godless chatter, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, 17 and their talk will eat its way like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 who have swerved from the truth by holding that the resurrection is past already. They are upsetting the faith of some. 19 But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and "Let every one who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."

V. 15 **Do your best** (same word in 4:9, 21) is more accurate than the KJV "study" which limits the word too much. Study of God's Word is included, but "giving diligence" extends to all aspects of Christian growth and service and applies more to attitude than action.

Again the idea of productive effort is emphasized. A good workman is **not ashamed**: (1) Because his work passes the Divine Inspector's examination; (2) Or because even though the world looks down on Christian service, he need not wince in shame for God approves this work.

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

A skillful carpenter uses his tools carefully. The tool of God's **workman** is the "sword of the Spirit" (Heb. 4:12). **Rightly handling** ("dividing," KJV) carried the root idea of "cutting straight" as in making a path (Prov. 3:6; 11:5 uses same word), plowing a furrow, or cutting a straight seam in camel skin to make a tent (Acts 18:3). A man cannot misuse God's Word and be sound in the faith!

Vs. 16, 17 Paul again warns against what must have been a pervasive danger in the Ephesian church (cf. 2:14). **Godless** talk is that which is devoid of God, centering on myths and old wives tales; it may even be anti-God. Does God and the concerns of His church fill much of our conversation? (Eph. 5:4-6; Phil. 4:8; Mt. 12:36, 37)

What we believe determines what we do, and unhealthy doctrine makes for sick souls afflicted with a spreading **gangrene** (or malignant cancer) which quickly destroys. This affliction must be removed or the whole body will be destroyed; thus, Paul had urged excommunication from such men (I, 1:19, 20). Notice that **Hymenaeus** has a new partner (I, 1:19, 20). Alexander has evidently moved, died, or repented.

V. 18 Their main perversion was denying the future bodily resurrection of believers. They could have done this by affirming: (1) Christ's resurrection was the only resurrection; (2) Resurrection has already taken place in baptism (Col. 2:12, 13); (3) Resurrection is spiritual, from legalistic and outmoded concepts (a gnostic view). However one denies the resurrection, he has undercut the very foundation of faith.

V. 19 But men can never overthrow God's truth even though they may lure some from it. **A seal** indicates *authority* and warns against tampering (Mt. 27:66); it is a mark of *ownership* (Song of Sol., 8:6); it *certifies* as genuine (I Cor. 9:2). All three ideas could apply here.

The O.T. passages referred to (Num. 16:5, 26) deal with the rebellion of Korah who sought to overthrow Moses. Read that chapter to see how God saved His people by separating them from the wicked ones before destroying them. The implication is that man does not destroy God or His truth; God destroys him (I Cor. 3:17).

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Jesus was made "complete" through His sufferings (Heb. 5:7-9). How does suffering "complete" ("make perfect") us?
2. Does persecution destroy or spread the church?
3. What are the standards by which men measure life? What was Paul's standard?
4. If death is a doorway to glory, should we fear it? Seek it?
5. How can we distinguish between defending the faith and simply arguing about words?

BE A SILVER BOWL!

SECTION FIVE 2:20-26

20 In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and earthenware, and some for noble use, some for ignoble. 21 If any one purifies himself from what is ignoble, then he will be a vessel for noble use, consecrated and useful to the master of the house, ready for any good work. 22 So shun youthful passions and aim at righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call upon the Lord from a pure heart. 23 Have nothing to do with stupid, senseless controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. 24 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to every one, an apt teacher, forbearing, 25 correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth, 26 and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

Vs. 20, 21 With a vivid word picture, Paul illustrates the principle of separation and service. Dog bowls and silver platters exist in the same household and both are used by the master. But few of us stack both in the china closet. God can use a Pharaoh or a Cyrus (Isa. 44:28) to accomplish certain purposes, but will eventually cast them into the "garbage can" as worthless vessels for **He knows those who are His** and is not dazzled by outward greatness or goodness (Mt. 7:21-23; 13:47, 48). While we dare not judge the heart or eternal destiny of others (Mt. 7:1), we must determine if we are being helped or hurt spiritually by our association with these **vessels** and, if the latter, avoid them (I Cor. 15:33). Openly evil men are to be disfellowshipped by the church (I, 1:20; I Cor. 5:1-13). These hypocrites, who appear righteous but who are influencing us in the wrong direction, should be avoided until God eventually judges and makes eternal separation. However, let us always remember that God can take a "cracked pot" and make of him a silver bowl!

V. 22 Earlier Paul had warned this young man of middle-thirty about intellectual vices; now he cautions about **youthful passions** ("strong desires"). The young are enticed by certain temptations and those who are older by others (Tit. 2:2, 6). One naturally thinks of sexual passion, competitiveness, and popularity among others. The way to avoid evil is to fill our lives with good things (cf. list in I, 6:11). Again he is urged to maintain a **pure heart**, one of the greatest lacks in the church then as well as today. Those in whom the world is, constantly woo us into

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

walking a far distance from our Lord. Let's see how close we can stay, not how far we can stray!

V. 23 For the third time in this chapter, Paul warns against worthless words whose end result is argument (II, 14).

Vs. 24, 25 God's true **servant** ("bondslave") avoids contention as he is: (1) **kindly** or gentle, a word often used to characterize a patient mother with trying children (I Thess. 2:7) or a teacher with slow-learning students; (2) **apt**, skillful and ready in teaching with a desire to make Christ known; (3) **forbearing** (lit., "holding back evil"), patient with those who injure us even as we try to help them (I Pét. 2:21-24); (4) **correcting with gentleness** (the first "kindly" is gentleness in outward action; this one denotes gentleness in inner attitude or disposition). These **opponents** are opposing God, the truth, and their own best interests and will be more open to truth bathed in Christian charity than words charred by hell-fire. Let us be tactful in teaching, skillful in content, and patient when attacked by our student, that we might someday correct him. We should never use the cross as a club to browbeat people (I, 5:1)!

V. 26 Sin is a snare that traps (I, 3:7; 6:9), and enslaves (Rom. 5:16-23), and destroys (Jas. 1:14-16). **Escape** (lit., "to return to soberness") suggests that a dull stupor caused us to stumble into the snare and only after being brought back to our right senses are we able to escape. To be in sin is to be "insane" (Lk. 15:17). **Him** may refer to God Who is now our "Captor" or, more probably, to the devil from whom we are now free.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. When is judgment of others right? When wrong?
2. How can you be a more "fit" vessel? Please be specific.
3. What temptations are peculiar to youth? To men? To women? To the elderly?
4. Did Jesus practice the characteristics of a good teacher (vs. 24, 25)?
5. How did the devil capture us? How did we escape?

Lesson Twelve

FOLLOW THE FAITH
II Timothy 3:1-17

RECOGNIZE THE COMING APOSTASY

SECTION ONE 3:1-9

3 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of stress. **2** For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, fierce, haters of good, **4** treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **5** holding the form of religion but denying the power of it. Avoid such people. **6** For among them are those who make their way into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and swayed by various impulses, **7** who will listen to anybody and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth. **8** As Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of corrupt mind and counterfeit faith; **9** but they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.

This chapter emphasizes two themes — evil will grow increasingly militant and the only hope to remaining steadfast comes from using

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

Scripture.

V. 1 **Last days** can refer to the immediate days preceding the second coming, but in most cases as here, it refers to the entire Christian era from N.T. times to the end day (cf. Acts 2:17; I Cor. 10:11; Jas. 5:3; Heb. 1:2; I Pet. 1:20; I Jn. 2:18). To warn Timothy to “avoid such people” (v. 5) is ridiculous if they will not appear for several thousand years. (Also, cf. v. 6). These people plagued Timothy, they yet plague us, and if the world continues, they will plague our children’s children. Evolutionists preach man is getting better; Scripture indicates he is getting worse.

These **times of stress** (“fierce, difficult, violent, dangerous”) are characterized in nineteen ways. Compare the similar list in Rom. 1:26-32.

V. 2 **Lovers of self** is the root sin from which the rest sprout. **Money**, for selfish pleasures, **proud**, boastful swaggering filled with self-praise. **Arrogant**, haughty, disdainful as he looks down on others. **Abusive** (“blaspheming”) against God and man. **Disobedient to parents**, even those who gave him life escape not his abuse (I, 5:8). **Ungrateful** to God or parents for he feels he is self-made, an obvious example of “unskilled labor.” **Unholy** as nothing is sacred to his mind.

V. 3 **Inhuman** (“lacking natural affection”), his unloving, heartless manner of life is animal-like (or below). **Implacable** (“truce or promise breaker”) contains two ideas — one whose sworn word is a lie and/or one who will not make peace but continues the feud forever. **Slanderer** (“devil”), one who hacks others to pieces with his sharp tongue. **Profligates**, one who cannot control himself or his appetites. **Fierce** (“untamed”) as a savage animal (Tit. 1:12; Jude 10). **Haters of good**, whether good men or good things or good thoughts (Phil. 4:8).

V. 4 **Treacherous** (“traitor”) as Judas, willing to sell anyone for a dollar. **Reckless** (“rash, headstrong, bull headed”) as he blunders through life running over anyone who dares stand in his way. **Swollen with conceit** (“wrapped in or puffed up with smoke”) and **lovers of pleasure** circles us back to where we began, self-love.

V. 5 **The form of religion** is the most disturbing characteristic of these people as they are “in the church.” To these, godliness is a way of gain (I, 6:5). These make religion a farce, not a force; a cloak to hide sin, not a power to cleanse it. As we examine this list, we may find traces of some of these creeping into our lives. Even the Pharisees began as lovers of God.

V. 6 These perverters capture whole **households** as they worm (“creep,” cf. Jude 4) their way into the family, beginning first with **weak women** (“weak minded women”) who would be more vulnerable than men (Gen. 3; I, 2:11-14). Chrysostom felt that Paul included weak-willed men in this phrase as they were acting like silly-minded women. Certainly, not all women warrant this description (I, 3:11; 5:9, 10).

Three characteristics of these women (not the teachers as the Greek plainly shows) are: (1) **sin-laden**, feeling the heavy burden of wrong doing; thus, easy prey for any conscience-easing teaching; (2) Impulsive as they are **led by various lusts** seeking new and varied delights; (3) **ever learning** but flitting from one moral system to another (Acts 17:21). These conscience-stricken, impulsive, restless beings would gladly invite the "creepy crawlers" into their homes and believe any idea no matter how anti-biblical.

V. 8 These two appear to be the unnamed Egyptian wise men who stood against Moses (Ex. 7:10ff). They, as these teachers, imitated the power of God deceiving people with counterfeit miracles until exposed. We note their: (a) Actions, as they **resist truth**; (2) Heart or motive, **corrupt mind**; (3) Value or eternal state, **reprobate** ("counterfeit"), rejected or disproved as worthless.

V. 9 Again, Paul concludes with assurance as he did in 2:18-20.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Is Paul describing one person with all these vices or society? Can you pin-point some of these vices in our culture?
2. How is it possible to have the "form of religion" but not its power? What is its power?
3. How do false teachers "creep" into our homes today? Are movies, T.V., books, and magazines part of this?
4. What keeps a person "always learning" without coming to a satisfying conclusion?
5. Does anyone imitate God's program today? How can you know they are counterfeit?

AVOID THE COMING APOSTASY

SECTION TWO 3:10-17

10 Now you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, 11 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. 12 Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, 13 while evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived. 14 But as for you,

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

V. 10 Timothy is to be strengthened by: (1) Paul's example to inspire him (10-14); (2) Holy Scripture to instruct him (15-17); (3) Coming judgment to soberize him (4:1-5); (4) Paul's approaching death to motivate him ("All responsibility will soon be yours, my son," 4:6-8).

Observed ("follow by one's side") can mean to understand in the mind or to imitate. Son Timothy studied father Paul's life and is now urged to do the same in his life (Phil. 2:20). These seven items comprise active obedience, while the two in v. 11 are more passive. For greater details of these general categories sketched here, read II Cor. 11:21-31.

V. 11 For persecution at **Antioch** and **Iconium**, read Acts 13, 14. **Lystra**, the boyhood home of Timothy, was the site of Paul's stoning possibly witnessed by this young disciple (Acts 14:19, 20). Perhaps Paul even spent the night in his home and ate at his table. Stoning was used to kill blasphemers (Acts 7:59) and Paul had been left for dead. The next day he continued his journey. Certainly God worked some type of wonder (resurrection or healing of a broken body) to enable Paul to go on with his ministry. Surely, the **Lord rescued** him!

Vs. 12, 13 Timothy will not have it any easier. Whenever the church is active, persecution is bound to follow. Scars, physical or spiritual, is the price every Christian must pay to follow Jesus. Paul suggests that persecution will increase and false teachers multiply as time wears on.

V. 14 The **you** is emphatic in the Greek standing at the head of the sentence. Timothy need not fear persecution nor deception for his faith is built on a firm foundation. God's revelation to Moses was what had kept him strong.

V. 15 Jewish children were taught Scripture from infancy (Deut. 11:19; 4:9; 6:7) and Timothy was no exception (II, 1:5). One Jewish maxim stated that "the Jewish child received the law in his mother's milk." Lessons early taught are firmly established (Prov. 22:6). The purpose of Scripture is to bring us to faith in Jesus (Gal. 3:24) and are not an end in themselves.

V. 16 Here is the classic verse affirming the **inspiration** ("God breathed") of Scripture (Cf. II Pet. 1:21; I Cor. 2:6-16). How one regards the Bible will determine his faith. The modernist who considers part of it God's revealed word or who sees it only as a record of man's search

for God has a faith not grounded on substance and will soon be a disciple of those mentioned in verse 6. The one who knows his faith is based upon God's revealed words, the Bible, has everything he needs for firm footing and growth. That is why Paul constantly returns to this vital doctrine throughout these epistles.

Paul says five things about Scripture. (1) It is **God-breathed**, thus reliable and truthful. (2) It is **profitable for teaching**, its truths are just as valid today as when first uttered to Adam and Eve. (3) And for **reproof**, the negative side of stopping error. (4) And for **correction**, the positive aspect as one is pointed to the correct way. (5) And for **training** ("discipline") **in righteousness**, as one grows into the likeness of Jesus. Where the Bible is taught, faith abounds. When the Bible is forgotten, the whole society sinks into a moral morass.

V. 17 This verse follows naturally out of the preceding. If one gives himself to Scripture, he will find himself **complete** ("fitted") or whole, not a fragmented man who is unable to cope with life or work. And he is able to do **every good work** for God has so prepared him. God doesn't call us to do jobs we can handle; He makes us able to handle jobs to which He calls us. Don't pray for God to remove mountains; pray for God to make you strong enough to climb them!

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Does God always deliver us from persecutions? When He does, does He always use "miraculous" means?
2. If we are not being persecuted for our faith, should we wonder why?
3. How can we make God's Word second nature to us as it was to the Jew? What home practices, church practices, leisure time activities are helpful?
4. The more Bible a man knows, the more God should be able to use him. Are there exceptions to this? Why?

Lesson Thirteen

PREACH THE WORD!

II Timothy 4:1-22

A CHARGE TO TIMOTHY

SECTION ONE 4:1-5

4 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths. 5 As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Paul's last written words center on two subjects — his charge to his son to be strong in testing and his own personal testimony concerning his strength in testing.

V.1 Timothy has been **charged** ("give solemn testimony") before (I, 5:21). Notice the courtroom atmosphere as his commission is given

in the presence of witnesses with a final judgment in view. Jesus is pictured as **judge** of those who are alive at His coming as well as those who have died. Jesus came once to save; now He comes to judge (Rom. 2:16; I Cor. 4:5; II Cor. 4:5; II Thess. 1:7-9; Acts 17:31). He is also presented as an **appearing** conqueror (II Thess. 2:8). This word is transliterated "epiphany" and means "manifestation." II Tim. 1:10 refers to His first manifestation which is completed by this second. Thirdly, He is seen as a King reigning in His **kingdom**. Paul could hardly have used stronger images to stir Timothy.

V. 2 **Preach** means to "herald or proclaim" as the king's messenger. Certainly it suggests the authority and soberness with which we deliver the message. The "pardon-me-please" preaching that is so common today is not contemplated here! Some times seem more **in season** or favorable for our message, but even when the time seems unfavorable, God wants us to witness. The "sermon" Christ preached on Calvary was at a very unseasonable time, but His words and actions have brought many to God.

A good sermon has three basic elements. We must: (1) **Convince** ("reprove, convict") the mind of the truth so that the sinner might see his error; (2) **Rebuke**, as the truth is applied in a practical way to convert the will; (3) **Exhort** ("encourage") the heart to respond. In Acts 2, Peter convinced the Jews that they had crucified the Son of God (14-36), rebuked them for their actions producing a changed will (37-39), and exhorted them to respond (40).

Modifying these three imperatives is the phrase **in patience and in teaching** (cf. II Tim. 2:24). Concern must be given to method as well as content. Many false teachings have been accepted because of the good spirit of the teacher; often truth is rejected because he who carries it lacks kindness in speech.

V. 3 For a third time (I, 4:1; II, 3:1) Paul warns about apostasy. The figure of people having **itching ears** came from animals who enjoy this type of petting. This type of person is not concerned about truth, but wants a message that "makes me feel good." (cf. I Kings 22:8). They prefer the new to the true (Acts 17:21). When one abandons revealed truth, he "apostasizes" into **myths** (cf. I, 1:4).

V. 5 But Timothy is to be **sober** ("temperate, circumspect, alert," I, 3:2), not distracted by these conditions. He is to **endure suffering** as a good soldier (2:3). And he must **do the work of an evangelist** ("one who brings good news") to the lost. He needs to **fulfill his ministry** ("make a full proof") before the conquering Judge-King comes. These things urged upon Timothy have already been performed in Paul's life; in verses 6-8, he will use himself as an example of true service.

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Will our ministry be judged by the Lord? On what basis?
2. Is the preacher the only one who is to "preach the word"?
3. Have you heard sermons that contain only one of the three elements in v. 2?
4. Name some "unseasonable" times for the Gospel.
5. Do we sometimes blame the preacher when it is the message that has condemned us?

AN EXAMPLE TO TIMOTHY

SECTION TWO 4:6-8

6 For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 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.

V. 6 Paul compares himself to a drink offering (Num. 15:1-10) being gradually poured out (cf. Phil. 2:17 for same word and idea). "A living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1) being offered every day is a true picture of a dedicated Christian. The trouble with a living sacrifice is that it keeps crawling off the altar! Paul did not think of his coming death as something *being taken* from him, but as did his Lord (Jn. 10:18) he saw his life *being given* to God as a sacrifice.

Departure ("loosing") is the word used for a ship slipping its mooring rope to set sail for a new harbor, or for a soldier pulling his tent pegs that he might set forth on a new campaign, or for unyoking animals at the end of a long, weary trip. Death to Paul was not fearful, but the entry-way to a new adventure (Phil. 1:21-23). Reread his triumphal words in I Cor. 15:55-58.

V. 7 Shakespeare wrote, "Conscience doth make cowards of us all." But Paul's conscience was clear for he had done what God had commanded, so fear was absent. He had **fought the good fight** (I, 6:12; Eph. 6:10-18) and was now ready to pass on the sword of the Spirit to Timothy. Paul's body bore the scars of many battles for the Lord (II Cor. 11:22-33), and he regretted not a one. He had **finished the race**, or the work God

had entrusted him to do (Acts 20:24; II Cor. 10:13; cf. Jn. 17:4). What sadness to look back over sixty years of life and see little of lasting value; what satisfaction to see individuals and churches enriched because we lived! Many reach life's end after battling a lifetime for the Lord and seeing great works done for Him, without a trusting faith. Somehow it has been lost along the way. To them, life's but an empty dream, "A tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury signifying nothing." But to have done all Paul had done and to have **kept the faith**, what glory! (cf. Jn. 16:33)

V. 8 Paul's efforts will be rewarded with a **crown of righteousness** (I Cor. 9:25), a crown of life (Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10) given to those who have lived righteously. The fastest runner in the Greek games received a laurel leaf crown to symbolize his victory, but the Lord's crown is not given only to him who comes in first, but to **all** who run in faith to the finish of life's race. And the Lord's judgment is not perverted by money or power as was the judgment of those before whom Paul had been tried, but He is a **righteous judge**. The early church longed and prayed for **that day** to come (I Cor. 16:22; Rev. 22:20). We too often get so caught up with running the race that we forget the finish and Him Who awaits us there (Heb. 12:1, 2).

His appearing may refer to His first coming; those who love Him and follow His message will rejoice on that Day. But contextually it refers to His second coming as seen from its completion. For those who are not ready, it is a day of unspeakable terror (Rev. 6:15-17); for the Christian, it is a day of wonderful promise (Jn. 14:3; Rev. 22:20).

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. In what way is the Christian life a "living sacrifice"?
2. Use your concordance and see what the N.T. says about death. Study the various images of death (such as sleep) and see what they suggest.
3. Does God have certain tasks He wants us to complete?
4. How does one win the race of life?
5. If you had it in your power, would you have Jesus come today? Why or why not?

AN EXHORTATION TO TIMOTHY

SECTION THREE 4:9-18

9 Do your best to come to me soon. 10 For Demas, in love with this

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you; for he is very useful in serving me. 12 Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. 13 When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will requite him for his deeds. 15 Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message. 16 At my first defense no one took my part; all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! 17 But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength to proclaim the word fully, that all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

This section is one of the saddest in Scripture. This grand old man of faith who has comforted so many others is now forsaken in his hour of need. He longs to see his son and old friends just one more time.

Vs. 9, 10 **Demas**, whose name means "popular," has yielded to the siren call of the world and **deserted**. He had stood with Paul in the first imprisonment (Phile. 24), but had grown tired or disillusioned. Now this world was more important to him than to the one which was to come. Many yet have the Demas-spirit.

Crescens and **Titus** evidently have been sent by Paul to do mission work; but their departure robs him of their companionship.

V. 11 Doctor **Luke** is still there, perhaps in an official capacity. Places of imprisonment did little to strengthen a man's health, being cold and damp, and Paul's strenuous life certainly provided him with a measure of aches and pains. Paul would love to see **John Mark** again. This young man had deserted Paul on the first missionary journey and, at that time, Paul did not feel too kindly toward one who had so jeopardized his ministry (Acts 15:36-40). But Mark had grown. A Gospel now bore his name. Mark's heart must have warmed as he read that Paul now found him **useful**. When we stumble, we bring a tear to God's eye; when we rise above that mistake, we make Him smile.

Vs. 12, 13 **Tychicus** (see on Tit. 3:12) was to relieve Timothy at Ephesus so he might come. As he would be passing by Troas on his way to Rome, Paul asks that he bring his **cloak** he had left there on an earlier trip. This warm garment would be welcome in a cold, damp dungeon. The **books** were membrane skins used for writing important messages as they were more durable (and more expensive) than the **parchments** or scroll paper. Were these blank, needed by Paul to write more letters? Did they contain

some important reading he wanted to do? Certainly not his Bible for Paul would not leave that behind! I like to think Paul loved his books and wanted to reread some of his favorites for one last time.

Vs. 14, 15 Five **Alexanders** are mentioned in Scripture (Mk. 15:21; Acts 4:6; II, 4:14). The word **coppersmith** seems to differentiate him from the one in I Tim. 1:19, 20, perhaps identifying him with one of the craftsmen employed at the temple of Diana (Acts 19:33, 34). Timothy knew him and would trust him without Paul's warning. Perhaps he brought damaging testimony against Paul at the first hearing of his trial. Even though his friends deserted him, Paul harbors no ill will.

Vs. 17, 18 A triumphant statement of faith — men may desert me but God will not! And Paul even uses this time of testing to glorify God. He evidently preached a sermon at his trial (Acts 26:1-32). The **lion** may be: (1) literal, as Christians were placed into the amphitheatre; (2) a reference to Nero, the Roman emperor before whom Paul stood; (3) Satan, who is called a lion (I Pet. 5:8); (4) or, most likely, a personification of evil (Psa. 22:21). Notice the similarity of verses 16:18 to Psalm 22, the Messianic Prophecy of Christ's death on the cross as seen from the crucified's viewpoint. (Compare 22:1 to 4:16; 11 to 16; 21 to 17; 27 to 17; 28 to 18.) Paul found comfort in this Psalm that reflected his Lord's suffering and loneliness. Jesus could understand his heartache for He had undergone a similar experience.

Paul does not ask for nor expect deliverance from death; he knows it is coming (4:6). He prays to be saved from the evil one and his power, and to be taken to his eternal home. God does not always save us from our trials, but in our trials (II Cor. 12:9, 10).

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Why do so many, like Demas, slip back into the world?
2. Are we, like Paul, willing to forgive those who have failed us?
3. Did an inspired apostle need to read books?
4. Does God always deliver us from the fiery furnace?

FINAL WORDS

SECTION FOUR 4:19-22

19 Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.
20 Erastus remained at Corinth; Trophimus I left ill at Miletus. 21 Do

THIRTEEN LESSONS ON I, II TIMOTHY & TITUS

your best to come before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren.

22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

This last section reveals something of the great heart of this apostle. In spite of his miseries, he still thinks of others and glorifies God. May God so help us to rise above self interest.

Prisca ("earnest") is the name of Paul's dear tent-maker friend (Acts 18:2) who is usually called by the affectionate, diminutive form of her name, Priscilla ("little earnest"). In four of the six times Paul mentions this couple, he places her name before that of husband **Aquila** ("eagle") suggesting she was the more dominant or outgoing of the two. They traveled a lot — Rome, Corinth (Acts 18:2), Ephesus (18:18, 19), Rome (Rom. 16:3), and Ephesus again (II, 4:19). A church met in their house (I Cor. 16:19). They knew their Bible better than some preachers (Acts 18:26). What a wonderful couple!

Onesiphorus (1:16) is to be greeted. **Erastus** also helped Paul (Acts 19:22) and was the city treasurer of Corinth (Rom. 16:23) showing that some important people had become Christians. **Trophimus** was the Gentile traveling with Paul who stirred the riot in Jerusalem (Acts 21:29). His illness must have taken place recently during the interprison travels as there is no way to correlate this with the Acts account.

Timothy should come **before winter** for the weather shut down ship travel and Paul might not be there when the *spring thaw* came. Besides, he needed the warm coat and his books. The others mentioned are unknown to us.

As Paul pens his last known words, they are typical. **Grace be with you.** Grace had brought him safe thus far, and "grace would take him home." What joy it will be to visit with this wonderful man as we share eternity with him at the throne of our Lord.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

1. Do you have "a church" in your house? Just what is a church?
2. Were all the early Christians poor?
3. Do you think Timothy got to Rome before Paul was beheaded?