

Journey Into Living the Gospel

LESSON 1 . . . Requirements for Living the Gospel (1 Timothy 1:1-11)

NOTES

First Timothy is the first of three books called the “Pastoral Epistles” written by Paul. The other two are *2 Timothy* and *Titus*. The theme of *1 Timothy* is **living the Gospel**. The discussion of requirements for church leaders, such as pastors and deacons, simply explains what is required of anyone who wants to live the Gospel. The key word, *godliness*, is found nine times in this epistle. The key verse is 1 Timothy 6:6. Write it below:

The result of **living the Gospel** is *godliness*. Timothy is a young associate of Paul’s. As Paul writes this letter, Timothy is the pastor of the church at Ephesus—a strategic port city on the Mediterranean Sea on the western edge of modern-day Turkey (see map on page 11). With a population of around 250,000, it was one of the largest cities of the ancient world.

Paul begins this epistle by identifying himself as *an apostle of Christ Jesus* (1:1a). The word *apostle* (APOSTOLOS, uh-pos´-tol-os) means “one sent forth with a message.” The same word is used of Jesus when He is described as *the apostle and high priest of our confession* (Heb. 3:1c). In a broader sense, the word also applies to us as believers. This is because of what words of Jesus in John 20:21c-d that applies to us today?

Paul is an apostle *by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope* (1:1b). Paul was not one of the original Twelve, but he met Jesus personally on the road to Damascus. Later, God tells Paul he is to be a very special apostle (Acts 9:1-15).

Paul refers to Timothy as *my true child in the faith* (1:2a). Timothy and Paul had developed a father-son relationship. Timothy was apparently brought to faith by Paul on his first missionary journey. Because of Timothy’s spiritual gifts and rapid spiritual growth, Paul invited him to become his associate (Acts 16:1-3).

Paul continues: *Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord* (1:2b-c). *Grace and peace* are Paul’s standard greeting.

Only when writing to Timothy does he add *mercy* (1 Tim. 2:1 & 2 Tim. 1:2). The word *mercy* refers to compassion shown toward an offender. The publican prayed, “*God, be merciful to me, a sinner*” (Lk 18:13). However, God’s *mercy* is not automatic. How does Jesus express this fact in Matthew 5:7?

After a brief greeting, Paul wastes no time explaining the purpose of this letter. This passage reveals **three** requirements for **living the Gospel**.

Adhere to God’s plan exclusively (1:3-5).

Timothy had to face strong opposition in Ephesus. The city was famous for its temple and worship of the pagan goddess Artemis (ar´te-mis), who was named “Diana” by the Romans. She was believed to be the twin sister of Apollo. Her dazzling temple is one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

Paul reminds Timothy that when he was *going to Macedonia* (northern Greece), he *urged* Timothy to stay in Ephesus and command certain people *not to teach any different doctrine* (1:3). We do not know exactly what the false teachers were teaching, but we can get an idea from verse four. Paul had instructed Timothy to tell them *not to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies* (1:4a).

Some people had apparently fabricated some mythical stories based on genealogies. The church was apparently caught up in this heresy. Such teachings *promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith* (1:4b). Instead of promoting *speculations* that tear down believers, we are to advocate God’s *stewardship*, or plan, *that is by faith*, which refers to God’s plan of salvation. How does Jesus give us God’s plan in capsule form in Mark 16:15b?



Satan loves to see believers stray from God’s plan and devote all their time to doctrinal controversies, forgetting to win the world. To live the Gospel, **adhere to God’s plan exclusively** and . . .

Anchor in love permanently (1:5-7).

Concerning his command to forbid certain men from teaching false doctrine, Paul writes: *The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure*

heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith (1:5). The word translated *love* (AGAPĒ) is a love that unselfishly seeks the welfare of others. This kind of *love* cannot harbor bitterness, resentment, prejudice, or hate. This verse reveals three manifestations of this kind of *love*.

1. A *pure heart*. The word translated *pure* refers to a heart uncontaminated by sin and selfish motives. AGAPĒ love can only reside in a *pure heart*. What does Jesus reveal about a *pure heart* in Matthew 5:8?

A *pure heart* sees God in people, place, and problems. Not only that, but when we have a *pure heart*, people can “*see God*” in us.

2. A *good conscience*. Our conscience is a God-given internal sin detector. It is what makes us feel guilty when we have done wrong and feel good when we have done right. AGAPĒ love will be manifested in a *pure heart*, a *good conscience*, and . . .

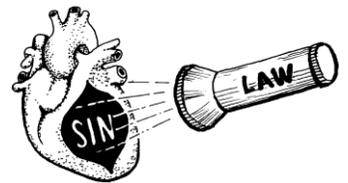
3. A *sincere faith*. The word *sincere* means “without deceit or pretense.” This means we have no ulterior motive in our service to God, people, or His church.

The false teachers at Ephesus were *swerving from these* and had *wandered away into vain*, or meaningless, *discussion* (1:6). Yet, they wanted to be *teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions* (1:7). In other words, they don’t know what they are talking about, but they speak with confidence. This is because their motive is not love. True believers always have love as their motive when speaking or teaching (1 Cor. 13:1).

To live the Gospel, **adhere to God’s plan exclusively, anchor in love permanently**, and . . .

Apply God’s Word properly (1:8-11).

When it’s tough to live the Gospel, one great temptation is to retreat from the truth of God’s Word. While Paul says the false teachers at Ephesus are bad, he writes: *the law is good, if one uses it lawfully*, or properly, (1:8). These false teachers are using the Law to support their false teachings and selfish goals. However, when used properly, what does God’s Word do (Romans 3:20b)?



In verses nine through ten, Paul lists the kind of people for whom the Law was given. First are the *lawless and disobedient*, those who deliberately break God’s Law to satisfy their own lust and ambition. Next, the Law is for the *ungodly and sinners*, those who have no reverence for God. Then, Paul mentions the *unholy and profane*, which refers to people who desecrate what is sacred. *Those who strike*, or kill, *their fathers or mothers* and *murderers* are those who commit the ultimate act of dishonoring God’s Law—the taking of a human life.

Paul writes the Law is also for *the sexually immoral* and *men who practice homosexuality* (1:10a). This refers to any kind of sex outside the marriage of a man and woman. The Bible says we should not be deceived because *neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality* (among other sinners) *will inherit the kingdom of God* (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Paul lovingly adds: *And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified . . .* (6:11a-c). Then, what does he write in the rest of that verse?

Many wonderful believers at Corinth came out of a life of sexual perversion because the Gospel of Christ has the power to change anyone.

Paul continues by writing the Law that reveals sin is also for *enslavers*, or “menstealers,” which refers to slave traders. Finally, the Law was given for *liars* and *perjurers*. The phrase *and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine* (1:10) makes it clear this list is not exhaustive. Paul then explains what *sound doctrine* is. It is whatever is *in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted* (1:11).

God has given us His Word as a sacred trust that we are to apply properly. To do that, we must realize Jesus said God did not send Him “*into the world to condemn the world*” (Jn 3:17a). Instead, what does Jesus declare (3:17b)?

To apply God’s Word properly, remember we are sent into the world to be liberators of those deceived and enslaved by sin, not be their prosecutors.

To live the Gospel, **adhere to God’s plan exclusively, anchor in love permanently, and apply God’s Word properly.**

