

# 1 AND 2 TIMOTHY - A TEACHER'S GUIDE

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## THE CENTRAL QUESTION:

### What does this book/story say to us about God?

This question may be broken down further as follows:

- a. Why did God do it/allow it?
- b. Why did He record it for our study?

**“To be permitted to have a view of God is the highest privilege accorded to man. This privilege should be prized above all earthly distinction or honor.”** *ST*, June 16, 1898

1. Do you learn anything new about God from these books? What was the historical background of these two letters? How would you feel as a young pastor getting such a letter from a conference official? Where was Paul and what do you think he was doing when he wrote these letters? (1 Timothy 3:14,15; 2 Timothy 1:8,16,17; 2:9; 4:6,18, *RSV*) What was Timothy doing? (1 Timothy 1:3, *RSV*)

### Chronology of Paul and Timothy's work together

- 46 AD - On Paul's first missionary journey, he meets Timothy, Eunice (his mother) and Lois (his grandmother) at Lystra. After watching his miracles, the people of Lystra think Paul is a "god", then when he denies this they stone him and leave him for dead. Timothy is there. (Acts 14:8-20; 2 Timothy 1:5).
- 49 AD - On Paul's second missionary journey he ordains Timothy, then Timothy joins Paul for the rest of his journey. (Acts 16:1-3)
- 49-51 AD - Timothy remains briefly at Berea while Paul is forced to flee to Athens. When Timothy joins Paul at Athens he is asked to carry a letter back to the Thessalonians and then returns to find Paul at Corinth. (Acts 17:14,15; 18:1,5; 1 Thessalonians 3:1-6) Works with Paul at Corinth for a year or more.
- 54-56 AD - Timothy assists Paul at Ephesus on his third missionary journey. Paul asks Timothy to visit Corinth to carry 1 Corinthians traveling by way of Macedonia. (Acts 19:22; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 16:10)
- 57 AD - Timothy meets Paul at Philippi and Titus in Macedonia. Timothy assists in writing 2 Corinthians 1-9—which Titus carries to Corinth—and later returns with Paul to Corinth. (Acts 20:4; 2 Corinthians 1:1; AA 323)
- 58 AD - Timothy travels with Paul on his final trip to Jerusalem. (Acts 20:4)
- 61-63 AD - Timothy travels to Rome to minister to Paul in prison [house arrest]. Timothy may have been sent to Philippi where Paul joined him. At some point Timothy is also in prison. (Philippians 1:1,26; 2:19,24; Hebrews 13:23)
- 64 AD - Timothy and Paul together again at Ephesus; Paul leaves to work elsewhere and writes first letter back to Timothy. (1 Timothy 1:1-3)
- 66 AD - During his second imprisonment at Rome, Paul writes second letter to Timothy and asks him to come to Rome. (2 Timothy 4:9,21) This is Paul's last letter.

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Critical scholars have raised a lot of questions about the authorship of 1 and 2 Timothy as well as Titus. Their main arguments are:

1. The historical references in these letters such as 1 Timothy 1:3; 2 Timothy 4:20 and Titus 3:12 refer to events that cannot be found in the book of Acts.

2. These letters show the development of a more complex and sophisticated church structure than is found elsewhere in the New Testament. Paul speaks of elders or bishops (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9) and deacons (1 Timothy 2:8-15).
3. Instructions are given about the way men and women should behave in church. (1 Timothy 2:8-15)
4. Guidelines are given for the care of widows and who should qualify. (1 Timothy 5:3-16)
5. 1 Timothy 6:20 gives a warning against “what some people wrongly call “knowledge.” (GNB) This expression in Greek (*antitheseis tes pseudonoumou gnosis* [knowledge]) sounds like a reference to a book by the name of *Antithesis* written about the middle of the second century by a heretic named Marcion whose views were like the “Gnostics”. Critics suggest that someone else wrote these letters as a correction for Marcion’s heresy and attached Paul’s name to give the letters more authority.
6. Finally, the vocabulary of these letters is somewhat different and includes more unusual words than do Paul’s other letters.

There are however good reasons for each of these differences in the pastoral epistles:

1. These books were written after the book of Acts and therefore talk about events after the close of that book. Paul had been released from prison and had traveled extensively in Crete, Asia Minor, and Greece. By the time of the writing of 2 Timothy, Paul had been arrested again and expected to die. The fact that many people are mentioned by name who are not found elsewhere in Paul’s writings again suggests that these letters were written later and not that they were a forgery. **If someone were trying to write a forgery in Paul’s name, they would mention only names and events that fit with Paul’s other books to make it sound more similar.**
2. There is nothing about Paul’s discussion of church organization that is out of harmony with his other letters or what is known of church development from elsewhere. The fact that these letters were written later means that we would expect progress to have been made in church growth and development.
3. The specific instructions about the conduct of men and women merely means that Paul is dealing with a specific problem that had arisen in the churches at that time.
4. Dealing with widows had been a problem from the earliest days of the church. (See Acts 6:1) Paul just gives practical advice in dealing with some of the commoner problems that had arisen.
5. The problem of Gnosticism had already begun to arise in the church in Paul’s day. His statement here is entirely appropriate in his setting and there is no need to try to limit it to some kind of reference to the book by Marcion.
6. It is quite natural that Paul’s vocabulary would change over time. Furthermore, since he always used scribes to assist him in writing, it is possible that the choice of some words may have been influenced by the use of different scribes.

Paul writes these letters not just as a church leader to a local pastor but as a very personal friend and coworker who thinks of himself even as a “father” to Timothy.

The letter states in the first verse that Paul is the author. This is confirmed by the unanimous testimony of Christians of the first eighteen centuries A.D., as well as by various features in the letter. However, since the rise of nineteenth-century liberalism, the Pauline authorship of the letters to Timothy and Titus has frequently been denied. Several arguments have been used, but none of them, either separately or together, demands a rejection of Paul as author. There are differences between these letters and the other Pauline letters; but the differences are adequately explained by the fact that the other epistles are written to churches, whereas these are written as personal letters to associates. Some linguistic differences may be due to Paul’s use of an amanuensis (secretary), possibly Luke (cf. 2 Tim. 4:11; *LP* 308.1), or merely to the fact that diversity of subject produces diversity of vocabulary. It is highly unlikely that anyone except Paul himself would describe the great apostle as the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15), and the numerous personal allusions also argue for the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles (cf. 1 Timothy 1:18, 20; 2 Tim. 1:5,16; 3:14,15; Titus 3:12,13. (*Believer’s Study Bible*, article on 1 Timothy)

“Men wanted for hazardous journey, small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in case of success.”

That advertisement appeared in a London newspaper and *thousands of men responded!* It was signed by the noted Arctic explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton, and that was what made the difference.

If Jesus Christ had advertised for workers, the announcement might have read something like this:

“Men and women wanted for difficult task of helping to build My church. You will often be misunderstood, even by those working with you. You will face constant attack from an invisible enemy. You may not see the results of your labor, and your full reward will not come till after all your work is completed. It may cost you your home, your ambitions, even your life.” (*The Bible Exposition Commentary*, article on 1 Timothy)

The Pastoral Epistles of 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus were probably written during the latter part of Paul’s ministry. We find quotations or allusion to these epistles by some the earliest church fathers, testifying to their familiarity and use by the early Church. While Clement of Rome (A.D. 96) makes allusions to these epistles, [1 Clement 2,29,45] Ignatius [A.D. 35 to 107; *The Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp* 6; *The Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians* 10; *The Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians* 6] and Polycarp [A.D. 69 to 155; *The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians* 4,9] provide clear quotations from them. Their pastoral character has been identified since the time of the early Church fathers, who described their content as “ecclesiastical discipline” (see the *Muratorian Canon* [late 2nd cent.], Tertullian [A.D. 160–225], (*Against Marcion* 5.21) and Augustine [A.D. 354–430]). Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) called these epistles “virtually a pastoral rule.” The title “Pastoral Epistles” was first applied by D. N. Berdot in 1703, and used again for all three epistles in 1726

by Paul Anton, at which time this title was made popular.—Everett, G. H. (2011). *The Epistle of 1 Timothy. Study Notes on the Holy Scriptures* (9). Gary Everett.

### **Paul's final Freedom**

One proposed itinerary for Paul after his release from Rome takes him quickly to **Crete**, where Titus has been planting churches (Tit 1:5). After some time, Paul departs for **Macedonia**, remembering his promise to visit the **Philippian** Church, but passing through **Asia Minor** first. Trophimus, who had accompanied him, was left at **Miletus** sick, perhaps because of the ship ride (2 Tim 4:20). Paul then made his way to **Ephesus**, where he spends some brief time with Timothy. [When Paul traveled to Ephesus it is possible that he visited nearby **Colossi**. If he did visit Colossi, he would have met with the five Christians whom Paul names in his Epistles to Philemon, and to the Colossians: Epaphras, the founder of the church in Colossae, Philemon, the head of a house church, and his wife Apphia, as well as Archippus, which may be Philemon's son, and finally the beloved runaway slave Onesimus. If Paul did visit Colossi, he would not have neglected to visit the nearby churches in **Laodicea** and **Hierapolis** (Col 4:12–13), for these three cities lay in the same valley not more than six miles from each other. At Laodicea Paul would have met Nymphas, whose house served also as a church (Col 4:15). We also read that while Paul was in Ephesus a servant named Onesiphorus ministered unto him (2 Tim 1:18).]

From **Ephesus** Paul then made his way into **Macedonia** to visit the churches there, whom he had promised to visit after his release (Phil 1:26; 2:24). He disembarked at Troas, where he left his cloak and books with Carpus (2 Tim 4:13), planning to pick them up on his way back into **Asia Minor**. We read in 1 Timothy 1:3 where he did indeed visit **Macedonia**, and very likely **Philippi**, after leaving Timothy in Ephesus. His mind must have been full of meditations during this journey into Macedonia, so that he sat down at this time and wrote 1 Timothy and Titus to encourage them and give them inspired thoughts and fresh counsel. He determined to winter in **Nicopolis**, and thus sent Tychicus or Artemas to **Crete**, so that Titus could join him in Nicopolis. We do know also that Paul left Erastus at **Corinth** (2 Tim 4:13). A popular view suggests that the Romans seized Paul in Nicopolis because of **Nero's recent decision to persecute the church, having blamed them for the fire that burned Rome**. Paul would have been taken directly to Rome, where he was eventually beheaded, according to ancient tradition.—Everett, G. H. (2011). *The Epistle of 1 Timothy. Study Notes on the Holy Scriptures* (11). Gary Everett.

There is some evidence from early church fathers that Paul may have made it to Spain and that he was imprisoned in Rome twice after which he was beheaded. (*Ibid*)

**Paul's Death**—Early Church tradition tells us that Paul was condemned and executed (probably beheaded) along the Appian Way, where his tomb was still standing in the second century. Tacitus, the Roman historian, tells us about the great fire in Rome, said to be caused by Nero himself (reigned 13 October 54 – 9 June 68) on July 19, A.D. 64. As a result, Nero laid the blame upon the Christians and began a persecution that extended throughout the Empire by making it a criminal offence to proclaim the Christian faith. It is possible that Paul was arrested as a result of Nero's decree and brought back to Rome to

suffer martyrdom. Eusebius places the death of Peter and Paul in the thirteenth year of Nero, [A.D. 67] while Jerome places it in the fourteenth year. [A.D. 68] (*ibid*)

He [Paul] then, in the fourteenth year of Nero on the same day with Peter, was beheaded at Rome for Christ's sake and was buried in the Ostian way, the twenty-seventh year after our Lord's passion. [A.D. 31] (Jerome: *Lives of Illustrious Men, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, Vol. 3, Chap.5)

## 1&2 Timothy and Titus

Christians are quite serious in believing that when they gather together for worship and work, God is present and sovereign, really present and absolutely sovereign. God creates and guides, God saves and heals, God corrects and blesses, God calls and judges. With such comprehensive and personal leadership from God, what is the place of *human* leadership?

Quite obviously, it has to be second place. It must not elbow its way to the front, it must not bossily take over. Ego-centered, ego-prominent leadership betrays the Master. The best leadership in spiritual communities formed in the name of Jesus, the Messiah, is inconspicuous, not calling attention to itself but not sacrificing anything in the way of conviction and firmness either.

In his letters to two young associates—Timothy in Ephesus and Titus in Crete—we see Paul encouraging and guiding the development of just such leadership. What he had learned so thoroughly himself, he was now passing on, and showing them, in turn, how to develop a similar leadership in local congregations. This is essential reading because ill-directed and badly formed spiritual leadership causes much damage in souls. Paul in both his life and his letters shows us how to do it right. (*The Message* article on Timothy-Titus)

2. What were some of the problems that Timothy faced about which Paul was deeply concerned? (1 Timothy 1:3-7, RSV) What seems to be the main emphasis of Paul's advice?

Timothy was a mild-mannered person and apparently not as aggressive in his work as Paul sometimes wished. As pastor in Ephesus, Timothy needed to rebuke those who were introducing heresy. He had to deal with organizational matters such as who would be allowed to lead out in church and what to do with widows. Clear guidelines needed to be set down for choosing different types of church leaders. Paul also gave some personal advice for his friend and "son" Timothy. He made suggestions about how Timothy should relate to older as well as younger members, both men and women, as well as how he should deal with elected church leaders and even slaves. There was also some very practical advice about money and dealing with those who have more of it.

**In these two letters there is more talk about discipleship and Christian doctrine that anywhere else in the Bible.** In 2 Timothy Paul is giving final advice to young Timothy, meanwhile hoping that Timothy will be able to make it to Rome before winter and before Paul's death. (2 Timothy 4:9,21) We do not know if Timothy made it in time or at all! Eusebius says that Timothy was the first "bishop" of Ephesus. Hebrews 13:23 suggests that Timothy was also in prison at one time, but we don't know when or where. Tradition says that Timothy died as a martyr during the reigns of either Domitian (81-96 AD) or Trajan (98-117 AD).

Paul repeatedly stated that his only desire was to imitate Christ and to have his converts everywhere do the same. (See 1 Corinthians 11:1; 4:16,17; 2 Thessalonians 3:9,10) Would God have written letters like these to two young pastors?

3. **What is the proper use of “law?” (1 Timothy 1:8-11) How do you compare these verses with Galatians 3:19-25; Colossians 2:14,15? Who is it that seems to need the law? On the basis of these verses, was there any need for law before sin arose? Would it be correct to say that the law was “added” because of sin? Would this include the ten commandment law? Why would God who talks so much of freedom make so much use of law? What does it tell us about Him and His way of governing the universe? Do those who “do what is right because it is right” have to worry about the law?**

Paul clearly teaches that laws are for the purpose of dealing with those who don't “do what is right because it is right”. (See *COL* 97) There was no need for written “laws” in heaven before Satan rebelled, and God intends to return things to that condition as soon as possible. But when dealing with those who are rebellious and untrustworthy it is necessary to exert some form of control to protect the rest of society. It may even result in the benefit of the lawbreaker if that person is willing to learn from his mistakes.

**(Mount of Blessing 109)**

In heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, **the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of.** In their ministry, the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. *Mount of Blessing* 109 (1896); Compare *1SP* 261

**(Patriarchs and Prophets 364)**

If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses.

It should be clear that “laws” were necessary only after sin and rebellion entered our universe. And they are only necessary for those who through ignorance or choice choose not to “do what is right because it is right.”

4. **What does Paul mean when he says, we turned Alexander and Hymenaeus over to Satan? (1 Timothy 1:20)**

**Delivered unto Satan.** Some commentators think that this expression was equivalent to a judicial sentence in the Jewish synagogue. If so, the phrase may have originated when Job's faith was questioned and the Lord “delivered” Job to Satan to be tested (Job 2:6). However, Paul used this phrase evidently not with the thought that the purity of those “delivered” was to be revealed but rather with the thought that their actions should thus be condemned as spiritually incompatible with the standards of the Christian church. As in 1 Cor.

5:3-5, this phrase refers specifically to church expulsion, and was the last measure of discipline that a church community could visit upon an offending member. Because the offender had rejected one or more of the fundamentals of the Christian faith (1 Tim. 1:19) he had, by his own acts, really disfellowshipped himself from the spirit and body of the church proper.

Because there are only two spiritual kingdoms in this world, that of God and that of Satan, the person who renounces the service of the kingdom of God automatically enters the service of Satan's kingdom. The church does not actually make the transfer, but ratifies the choice already made by the offending member (see on 1 Cor. 5:5).—*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 7*. 1980 (F. D. Nichol, Ed.) (292). Review and Herald Publishing Association.

5. Isn't it clear from 1 Timothy 2:4 what God has always wanted? (Compare 2 Peter 3:9; Romans 2:4) If God really wants everyone to be saved, then why do we need a Mediator to plead with Him? (1 Timothy 2:5) Who is "God, our Savior" in 1 Timothy 2:3? In what sense was Christ Jesus a "ransom for all men?" (1 Timothy 2:6) Have we been kidnaped? What would God have to do to buy us back?

God would save all His children if He could, even Satan. But God cannot change the way He runs the universe in order to accommodate those who want to continue in their rebellion without completely changing His government and the nature of the universe. God gives us freedom and He was willing to die rather than to violate that freedom. God wants us to love Him, but if He removes our freedom we cannot love, we could only react to His manipulation of us as robots. But having given us freedom, God appeals to us by every means within His self-imposed limitations to come to Him, relate to Him and maintain a trusting relationship with Him. Thus Jesus has always taken the role of "Mediator" from God to His creatures. He mediated to the angels, and now He mediates to us. He is not pleading with God to change in any way, but always pleading with us to come back.

Jesus is fully God and always has been. (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16,17; Hebrews 1:1-6; Philippians 2:5-11) Thus, He is both God and our Savior. Jesus was a ransom in the sense that the Godhead was willing to pay the price of sending Him down to live here on earth and even to die in order to win us back. God certainly doesn't owe anyone anything to "buy us back."

6. Does 1 Timothy 2:9,10 forbid Christian women from wearing "jewelry?" Why do you think Paul wrote these verses?

Compare 1 Peter 3:1-6 and Isaiah 3:16-24. In Paul's day, the wealthy made a great show of their wealth by putting on different clothes for each different social occasion. Furthermore, there were religious "prostitutes" sometimes called "temple virgins" who dressed in very gaudy and showy clothing to attract "customers." Paul wanted all Christian women to avoid appearing like either of these well-known groups. Christian men and women are to be known for their good deeds, and their modesty.

Under most circumstances, jewelry is worn to either attract attention or to show the "wealth" of the wearer or her family. Neither of these motives is a correct motive for Christian women or men.

7. In the light of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 do you think Paul would agree to ordain women to be elders or pastors in the church?

In the light of the very open, showy, and seductive role that women played in some of the religions in Paul's day, Paul wanted it to be recognized by all that Christians were different.

He thought it best to make sure there was no question about the role that Christian women were to fill and that they not be seen as “leaders” in the church.

This presents a considerable problem to modern churches when trying to interpret what God wants us to do today. There are some with a very conservative attitude about the role of men and women who prefer to interpret this passage very literally. To those who wish to take this approach we would point out that to be consistent they must follow very exactly all the other guidelines given by Paul in 1 Timothy 2:8-3:7. If we are not to allow women to be church leaders then we should also immediately disqualify and remove from the payroll any man who is not “without fault”, has had more than one wife, or who is not sober, self-controlled, or orderly. Furthermore, he must welcome strangers into his home and be able to teach. He must not love money! He is disqualified if he does not “manage his own family well and make his children obey him with all respect”. He must be respected by the people outside the church. If we interpreted each of these requirements very literally we would have almost no pastors left!

To interpret this passage very literally, we would have to forbid women from leading out in children’s classes and probably from teaching in any “Christian” school at any level or on any day. Men would have to take charge of the infants as well as the church senior classes. But what we see these “conservative” interpreters doing is that they want to allow women only to do those things that they themselves don’t want to do! This is not what the passage is intended to mean.

Another approach to this passage is to say, “Why did Paul say what he did to young Timothy in his day?” Paul’s advice seemed quite reasonable in the context in which it was given. Those who live in a society where it is quite normal for women to be business executives, presidents and educational leaders should not see any problem with women serving in leadership roles in the church. There are still many of the more primitive societies in our world today where this might not be acceptable, but certainly the church should not be the last institution in society to bring back the equality that God created in the beginning!

8. Do you think anyone would qualify to be a church leader if we strictly applied the criteria of 1 Timothy 3:1-13?

As noted above, I doubt it! Paul’s advice was not given to eliminate virtually all candidates for church office! Paul was setting up an ideal standard here which we should strive to follow as nearly as we can.

9. Why don’t we concern ourselves with Paul’s advice, “attend to the public reading of scripture?” (1 Timothy 4:13, RSV)

This is faithfully done in Jewish Synagogues to this day. But often Christian pastors simply choose a text that is somewhat related to what they want to talk about and use that as a springboard for their talk for the morning. Such sermons may have wonderful messages and be very interesting but they are not strictly Biblically-based. It would be very good to sometimes choose a group of readers to actually read a passage of the Scripture very well and let that serve as the entire church service. Or a sermon could be based on a longer passage of Scripture and include only a small amount of commentary by the pastor. This might have a remarkable impact on the church!

10. Why would Paul give such detailed advice about who are “true” or “real” widows? (1 Timothy 5:3-16, RSV)

Paul is trying his best to make certain that the church did not become the cause of problems even in the community by supporting “busybodies” who went from house to house gossiping. The aim was to choose those who were really in need of the church’s support.

11. What do you think was Paul's intention when he said, "The elders who do good work as leaders should be considered worthy of receiving double pay?" (1 Timothy 5:17,18, *GNB*) Could the church ever apply such a suggestion? Do you think this idea is inspired? How would you like to be on a committee to decide who was eligible?

Does this mean that those who teach and preach should be paid more than those who serve as administrators? Some feel that the use of words such as "care" in 1 Timothy 5:3, and "respect" in 1 Timothy 6:1 suggests that this verse is not talking about money. (Matthew 10:10) Others disagree and believe that this is talking about money as well as respect. All seem to agree that good pastors should receive adequate compensation.

Paul begins the first of his four statements about elders on the same note with which he began and ended the preceding discussion of widows—honor—and in both cases honor involves money. The elders who were following his instructions and doing a good job not only were worthy of the peoples' respect but should also be paid for their work ("double honor"). He will continue in 1 Timothy 5:18 with his reason: workers should be paid. This was Paul's general rule (1 Cor 9:4-6; cf. Rom 13:7) although he himself often chose to earn his own living (cf. 1 Cor 4:12; 2 Cor 11:7-9; 1 Thess 2:9; cf. 2 Thess 3:7-9; Acts 18:3) (*Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 46, commentary on 1 Timothy 5:17)

**Double honor.** Honor has two meanings: "Honor" and "honorarium" or "compensation." Both meanings are doubtless intended here. In the case of those who labor in preaching and teaching, their whole time is thus devoted, and they are deserving of compensation from the church (see 1 Tim 5:18). The word **double** seems to argue for a sufficient or appropriate recompense, rather than a double amount. (*Wycliffe Bible Commentary* on 1 Timothy 5:17)

12. Why did Paul say, "Take a little wine for your stomach's sake?" (1 Timothy 5:23) Is this a prescription for an illness? Would this be good advice for all of us?

This verse should be compared with 1 Timothy 3:8. It is widely recognized that the water that was available in some areas in Paul's day was contaminated and caused many diseases. Remember that this was centuries before anyone knew anything about bacteria or viruses. Is it possible that Paul is here giving a prescription for Timothy? If so, don't we warn people repeatedly against taking other people's prescriptions?

There is also considerable discussion about what kind of "wine" is being discussed here. In light of warnings elsewhere in Scripture against too much wine (Prov. 20:1; 23:29-32; but see Proverbs 31:4-7) it would appear that alcoholic wine is not being recommended. The word *oinos* in Greek can mean either fermented or unfermented wine (grape juice).

Notice that this verse seems completely out of context. Did Paul suddenly remember some recent news from Ephesus that Timothy was ill? Did he know of some previous problems that Timothy had while they worked together in Ephesus?

Tell them [unbelievers who invite you to their homes] also that you do not use spirituous drinks of any kind, because you desire to keep your mind in such a condition that God can impress it with the sacred truths of His Word, and that you cannot afford to weaken any of your mental and physical powers, lest you shall be unable to discern sacred things. Thus you can sow the seeds of truth, and lead out upon the subject of keeping soul, body, and spirit in such a condition that you can understand eternal realities. {MS 23, November 24, 1890; *The Upward Look* 342.2}

Virtually all commentators agree that *if* this is referring to alcoholic wine it is for medicinal use only and does not refer to social use of alcohol.

This verse has often been misused in popular exegesis as an endorsement of social drinking; the use of alcohol here is strictly medicinal. In the other occurrences of *oinos*, “wine,” in Paul’s letters, he urges caution in its use (Rom 14:21; Eph 5:18; 1 Tim 3:8; Titus 2:3). (*Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 46, commentary on 1 Timothy 5:23)

**Water** in the ancient world was impure and the carrier of diseases such as dysentery. Paul’s advice to **use a little wine** would help safeguard Timothy’s health from the sickness-producing effects of polluted water. It was also in keeping with the medicinal use of wine in the ancient world. The Talmud, Hippocrates, Pliny, and Plutarch all spoke of the value of wine in countering **stomach ailments** caused by impure water (Gordon D. Fee, *New International Biblical Commentary: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1988], 135).

13. Why does Paul seem to condone the practice of slavery? (1 Timothy 6:1,2; Ephesians 6:5-9; Titus 2:9,10; Philemon 1)

Approximately sixty percent of the people living in the Mediterranean world in Paul’s day were slaves of one type or another. To try to single-handedly overthrow this enormous “institution” would have immediately branded the Christian Church as mortal enemies of the Roman government. There would be little if any opportunity to preach the gospel. Every waking moment would have to be spent on this one issue and even then the church would likely have been destroyed.

Paul recognized however that if people would just follow his advice, slavery would eventually end. He also no doubt recognized that the fastest way to a truly free and equal society was for Jesus to come back! So while he had some very significant things to say about slavery he chose to focus on the area that he thought would do the most good.

14. Is it true that “the love of money is the root of all evils?” (1 Timothy 6:10, RSV) How does this fit with Ecclesiastes 10:19 (GNB) “Money is the answer for everything?” What about the other sins mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:1-5, do they spring from “the love of money?” Do these verses suggest that we are living in the “last days”?

There is another danger to which the wealthy are especially exposed, and here is also a field for the medical missionary. Multitudes who are prosperous in the world, and who never [BEGIN P.212] stoop to the common forms of vice, are yet brought to destruction through the love of riches. The cup most difficult to carry is not the cup that is empty, but the cup that is full to the brim. **It is this that needs to be most carefully balanced. Affliction and adversity bring disappointment and sorrow; but it is prosperity that is most dangerous to spiritual life. . . .**

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

while all about them are human beings in misery and crime, in disease and death. Those who thus give their lives to [BEGIN P.213] self-serving are developing in themselves, not the attributes of God, but the attributes of the wicked one. (*Ministry of Healing* 211.3-212.3)

“The love of money is the root of all evil.” 1 Timothy 6:10. In this generation the desire for gain is the absorbing passion. Wealth is often obtained by fraud. There are multitudes struggling with poverty, compelled to labor hard for small wages, unable to secure even the barest necessities of life. Toil and deprivation, with no hope of better things, make [BEGIN P.651] their burden heavy. Careworn and oppressed, they know not where to turn for relief. And all this that the rich may support their extravagance or indulge their desire to hoard! (*Prophets and Kings* 650.3)

Love of money and love of display have made this world as a den of thieves and robbers. (Compare James 5:1,3-6.) (PK 651.1)

15. How soon did heresies begin creeping into the early Christian church? Did Paul or Timothy have to deal with any heresies? (2 Thessalonians 2:7; 2 Timothy 2:16-18)

Paul clearly points out in these verses that false doctrines/teachings were already entering the early church. We know that the Jews were constantly trying to undo Paul's teachings and even that in places like Colossae there were weird mixtures of Jewish and gnostic teachings! We can be sure that as the early church was growing rapidly and Paul's efforts were accomplishing so much for the cause of Christianity the Devil was not sleeping!

16. What is the original intention of “study to show thyself approved unto God?” (2 Timothy 2:15, *KJV*) Did Timothy have the facilities to “study” as we do today? Does this verse have anything to do with the use of manuscripts or books? (compare any modern version) The word translated “study” means “do your best.” (See 2 Timothy 4:9 where the same Greek word is used.)

The Greek word used here is *spoudazo* which means “to exert one's self, endeavor, give diligence to.” (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*) Paul is not here discussing “study” as we understand it in the modern sense, but simply saying, “do you best.” In this case, Paul is encouraging Timothy to rise to the standard that Paul himself had set in preaching and teaching the gospel.

17. What do we learn from 2 Timothy 3:16? Do all versions translate it the same? (See *The New English Bible*) Is this a proof that the “entire Bible” is inspired? What does “inspired” actually mean? This verse is found in many versions of the Bible that include the Apocrypha (The original 1611 *King James Version* and All Roman Catholic versions, for example). Does this prove that the Apocrypha is inspired? Did Timothy's Bible include the Apocrypha? (Please note that this is the key text used by the Roman Catholic church to prove that the Apocrypha is “inspired.”) Did Paul ever have to deal with letters, claiming to be “inspired,” which were actually fakes? (2 Thessalonians 2:2)

## **2 Timothy 3:16**

πάσα γραφή θεόπνευστος... (*Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27<sup>th</sup> Ed.*)

omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata (*Biblia Sacra Vulgata*)

“For all scripture given by inspiration of God...” (*Tyndale, 1522*)

“For the whole Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God...” (*Geneva*)

“All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God...” (*KJV, NKJV*)

“All Scripture is inspired by God...” (*Concordant Literal, Noyes’s, Moffatt, Douay-Confraternity, Phillips, Williams, RSV, NRSV, Kleist and Lilly, NASB, Jerusalem, Beck, GNB, NAB, NLT; Wm. Paul*)

“All Scripture is inspired of God...” (*New World, Kingdom Interlinear*)

“Every Scripture is inspired by God...” (*Weymouth, sixth ed.*)

“Every (or all) scripture *is* divinely inspired, (*Darby, Goodspeed, Stevens*)

“Everything in the Scriptures is God’s Word.” (*CEV*)

“The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God...” (*TLB*)

“All Scripture is given by God...” (*NCV*)

“Every Scripture, seeing that it is God-breathed...” (*Montgomery*)

“All Scripture is God-breathed...” (*NIV*)

“Every scripture *is* God-breathed...” (*Rotherham*)

“Every Scripture *is* God-breathed (given by His inspiration)” (*Amplified*)

“The Scriptures are given by God. Every book is divinely inspired...” (*Clear Word*)

“Every part of Scripture is God-breathed...” (*Message*)

“Each document is divinely inspired...” (*Schonfield*)

“Every Scripture divinely inspired, is...” (*N. Scarlett, 1798*)

“Every divinely inspired composition is...” (*Dickinson*)

“Everything that is written under divine inspiration is...” (*Twentieth Century*)

“Every scripture inspired of God...” (*ASV*)

“Every Scripture that is inspired by a spirit of God...” (*Greber*)

“Every holy Writing which comes from God is...” (*Basic English*)

“Every inspired scripture has its use...” (*NEB*)

“Every inspired scripture is...” (*Translator’s*)

“All Scripture is inspired by God...” [footnote: *or Every scripture inspired by God is also useful.*] (*GNB*)

This is the classic text used to prove the inspiration of the Bible. But does it “prove” too much. If we accept that everything written in a book that includes such a statement is inspired, then we are in big trouble! In a New Testament “translation” entitled, *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as Revised and Corrected by the Spirits*, that verse is included. Furthermore, it says in the introduction:

Dear Reader, trust in God, who made all things after the counsel of his own will. The Holy Spirits feel much interest in this work, and the spirits who corrected it desire that the world will receive this correction as coming from them, directed by God himself, which is true. [signed] Jesus, the Christ.

That is the *Spiritist’s Bible*! It was thoroughly rewritten to support their beliefs. Would you immediately accept this “revision” as inspired?

In Paul’s day, there were many scrolls circulating around claiming to be “inspired.” We have a number of them preserved today in such documents as the “Old Testament Apocrypha,” the “Old Testament Pseudepigrapha” and even the “New Testament

Apocrypha.” These documents contain many teachings which are accepted even today by some groups, but which are directly contrary to teachings in the Old Testament or *Tanakh* that Jews and Protestants accept and the New Testament that Protestants and Roman Catholics accept today. Paul is saying to Timothy, “Every inspired writing is God given and has it’s use . . .” and “Timothy, you have learned how to distinguish between the ones that are inspired and reliable and the ones that are not!”

This verse is not an endorsement of every kind of writing as “inspired” but rather a statement by Paul that every “inspired” writing is useful for many purposes. We also need to remember that some of the New Testament had not even yet been written at the time Paul made this statement so he was talking about the Old Testament and the other documents that claimed to be a part of the earlier “inspired” writings.

Some commentators take this verse to considerable extremes:

This means that God so directed the human authors of Scripture that, using their individual interests and literary styles, his complete thought for man was recorded without error. As a result, the Bible is inerrant (an accurate record) and infallible (a reliable guide).

In theory the doctrine of inspiration relates only to the original manuscripts. But Paul was not being theoretical here. He was saying that even the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, which he consistently used in his quotations, was inspired by God. (*Tyndale’s Concise Bible Commentary* comment on 2 Timothy 3:16)

18. Would one need to be inspired to say, “Do your best to come to me soon--before winter” (2 Timothy 4:9,21, *RSV*) or “bring the cloak that I left?” (2 Timothy 4:13, *RSV*) Why are these bits included in the Bible? Were Ellen White’s “homey” letters to her children “inspired?”

It should be obvious that this is a letter from Paul to his “son” Timothy and while much of it is very useful for Christians in many ways, the inclusion of such words as these teach us that it was indeed a personal letter. There are many similar verses in Scripture and if we are going to allow such simple matters to confuse us then we need to restudy our understanding of inspiration. (See introduction to *Great Controversy*; 1SM 15-23)

19. How do you suppose Paul used the “books and above all the parchments” (2 Timothy 4:13, *RSV*) that he asked to be brought to him? Was Paul studying other authors? The Old Testament?

The books and the parchments were Paul’s Bible. We, of course, have no way of knowing exactly which books and which parchments were included or even if Timothy could get them from Troas or if he ever reached Paul before his death. Many of us believe that Paul had memorized much of the Old Testament in Hebrew from his days under Gamaliel and his time in the Sanhedrin. But, Paul, in prison in the Mamertine dungeon, had a lot of time on his hands and he no doubt wished for something to read and study. Peter may have been with him in the same dungeon at the same time. Maybe they were studying together.

20. How could Paul say, “And the Lord will rescue me from every attempt to do me harm, and keep me safe until his heavenly reign begins,” (2 Timothy 4:18, *RSV*; compare 1:11,12) when he apparently knew very well what was about to happen to him? (2 Timothy 4:6) Was Paul trying to deceive himself?

Paul is here commenting on the reality of the Christian’s hope in the resurrection and the second coming of Christ. We should not find this surprising at all. Paul firmly believed in the teaching of all of Scripture that when his head was separated from his body he would go to

“sleep” in death (John 11:11-15; Mark 5:35-42) and that when he would arise at the second coming his thoughts would resume just where they had left off.

His life is hid with Christ in God, and he is persuaded that He who has conquered death is able to keep that which is committed to his trust. His mind grasps the Saviour’s promise, “I will raise him up at the last day.” His thoughts and hopes are centered in the second advent of his Lord. And as the sword of the executioner descends, and the shadows of death gather about the martyr’s soul, his latest thought springs forward, as will his earliest thought in the great awakening, to meet the Lifegiver who shall welcome him to the joy of the blest. (*Sketches from the Life of Paul* 333.1)

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### Ellen White’s Comments:

(*Mount of Blessing* 109)

In heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, **the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of.** In their ministry, the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. *Mount of Blessing* 109 (1896); Compare *1SP* 261

#### What Did I Learn from 1&2 Timothy?

1. Even Nero couldn’t discourage Paul. Twice Paul was taken before Nero without being condemned of anything. He was actually released from prison and continued his work for a period of about two years before being re-arrested. Paul had complete trust in God and knew that if God wanted to preserve his life, not even Nero—who was accusing Paul of being the instigator of the fire that Nero himself had set and which burned about half of Rome—could destroy him!

And now the Jews conceived the idea of seeking to fasten upon Paul the crime of instigating the burning of Rome. Not one of them for a moment believed him guilty; but they knew that such a charge, made with the faintest show of plausibility, would seal his doom. An opportunity soon offered to execute their plans. At the house of a disciple in the city of Troas, Paul was again seized, and from this place he was hurried away to his final imprisonment. (LP 304.3)

2. The relationship between two good Christians is like being members of the same family. Paul called Timothy his son. (1 Timothy 1:2,18; 2 Timothy 1:2; 2:1) Paul also had a very loving and tender attitude toward every church that he had worked with. He was willing to die for the cause of Christianity.
3. If you are not on God’s side you will be on the Satan’s side.
4. God is a God of order. Paul instructs Timothy how to organize the churches with which he is working.

5. God has always wanted everyone to be saved. We are the ones who may frustrate His plans.
6. But God also is a loving God, which necessitates His allowing us freedom. That means that we can rebel if we choose to do so.
7. Jesus “paid the price” and did what was necessary to win our salvation. His life and His death give us a picture of what our choices are: to live the kind of loving life He lived, or we will die the death He died.
8. Christian women in Paul’s day were advised not to wear jewelry, either to show off their families wealth or to advertise their prostitution as in the fertility cult religions. God wants all Christians to demonstrate by their lives that they are sons or daughters of the heavenly King. They don’t need expensive ornaments to demonstrate that.
9. The wine that Paul recommended was almost certainly fresh grape juice or perhaps reconstituted grape juice. It was probably safer to drink than some of the water in Ephesus.
10. Having wealth is one of the most dangerous things that can happen to us. “The love of money is the root of all evil.”
11. God and Paul challenge us to do our best in teaching and preaching the gospel to all around us.
12. We are advised to carefully evaluate anything claiming to be from God. Only that which is consistent with the rest of Scripture is to be believed and followed. Beware of religious claims.
13. These two documents from Paul to Timothy were originally personal letters. Christians recognize their spiritual significance and thus they have been preserved and studied. The fact that Paul has some personal information included reminds us that it was originally a letter to a friend.
14. Paul, because of his close association with God through much of his life, had no fear of death. He knew what would happen after he died and he wasn’t afraid at all. His complete trust was in God.