



# 1 & 2 Timothy

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## Guarding the Gospel: Leadership 101

Paul's two letters to Timothy and his letter to Titus are often called the "Pastoral Epistles". In them the apostle is conveying his encouragement and instructions for pastoral leadership on a philosophical, personal and practical level.

The need for these letters is occasioned for two main reasons: geography and time. First, Paul is simply not able to be in more than one place at a time. The delegation of leadership to others was an essential task for Paul if there was to be a geographically broad gospel movement. As Paul traveled on his missionary journeys moving from region to region, city to city, town to town, many new congregations were planted. New leadership has to be developed in each region, city and town. Coordination and support of those various congregations also becomes mission critical for the gospel.

The second issue is related to time. Paul was always keenly aware that his days of "fruitful ministry" were numbered. The issue of succession is critically important to Paul as he empowered Timothy to lead and then to identify and empower more leaders for the churches. Each generation must keep in mind the needs of the next generation of believers.

In Asia Minor, we have letters which Paul wrote to the congregations in Colossae and Ephesus. From those letters, we discern that there were other congregations in nearby cities and towns such as Laodicea. It is also apparent that Ephesus was a type of hub church of strategic mission importance for the entire region of Asia Minor.

In his letters to the Thessalonians, we see how Paul used Timothy as a trusted proxy to support the ministry and leadership of the Church in Thessalonica when he was unable to go there in person. In these letters, we see that Paul, continues to entrust Timothy with the care of congregations as he has appointed him to serve as the leader of leaders in Ephesus.

In this way we see, the first examples of apostolic succession and delegation at work in the church in the personal and pastoral relationship between Timothy and Paul. For Paul, the issue is not merely the passing of a torch humanly speaking, but for him it was critically important that the content and character of the gospel be guarded in order that it may be passed on faithfully to the next generation of leaders.



## Literary Structure

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1 Timothy: Guard the Gospel	Chapters 1-6
<b>Guard the Doctrine, Unity, and Discipline</b>	<b>1:1-4:16</b>
<i>Doctrine Matters: False and True Teaching</i>	<i>1:3-20</i>
<i>Unity Matters: Peace in Worship</i>	<i>2:1-15</i>
<i>Discipline Matters: The Character of Leaders</i>	<i>3:1-4:16</i>
<b>Attend to the Pastoral Concerns</b>	<b>5:1-6:10</b>
<b>Final Charge: Guard the Church and Self</b>	<b>6:3-21</b>

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### **Guard the Doctrine, Unity, and Discipline (1 Timothy 1:1-4:16)**

The primary focus of the first letter of Paul to Timothy is a call to Guard the Doctrine, Unity and Discipline of the Church as a godly leader.

Paul's concern is in three key leadership areas: false and true teaching, unity in worship, and godly character.

#### ***Doctrine Matters: False and True Teaching (3-20)***

Paul's concern for right belief and teaching is manifest in all of his letters. Here Paul is specifically concerned about leadership. One of the primary roles with which Paul is entrusting Timothy is to "charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine." (1 Tim. 1:3)

Doctrine simply means teaching. It is possible to teach things which are "contrary to sound doctrine" (1:10). The key for Paul is that all teaching and doctrine be "in accordance with the gospel of glory of the blessed God which I have been entrusted." (1:11)

The simple truth of the gospel message is summarized succinctly: "Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners... (1:15). Paul will fully develop the content of the gospel and all its nuances and applications in other letters. However, the key for Timothy is that his job, his charge, is to guard the teaching of the Gospel as a soldier faithfully fights to win a battle and resist the false teachers who have



shipwrecked themselves and others by failing to be diligent to steward the Gospel of God that is by faith.

*This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. 1 Tim. 1:18-20*

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### **Unity Matters: Peace in Worship (2:1-15)**

After addressing doctrine, Paul encourages unity in Worship. Apparently, there was some scandal and divisions manifesting within the Ephesian's church which was not only destroying the unity within the congregation with "anger and quarreling" (2:8) but had also spilt out into public controversy to outsiders. Paul challenges Timothy to lead the flock into a unity of worship that is a blessing to those outside and inside the church "dignified in every way".

The ultimate vision of the church is in a unified body that leads all humanity into unity with God:

*This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. 1 Tim. 2:3-7*

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There apparently was a controversy and conflict related to the freedoms and roles of women in worship within the worship life of the church. This along with the quarrellings and vain discussions created by the false teachers had done great harm to the unity of the church.

Paul encourages Timothy to adopt a policy with respect to women in teaching roles as a way of resolving some of the controversies and bring peace and order back to the worship life of the church.

### **Discipline Matters: The Character of Leaders (3:1-4:16)**

Paul then moves to encourage Timothy to be diligent in guarding leadership positions within the body of Christ. Timothy is charged to pay particularly close attention to issues of character and reputation.

*The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he*



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*may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil. --1 Tim. 3:1-7*

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Paul's concern is not only that a leader have a positive character within the body of Christ but also with "outsiders". Character absolutely matters in leadership. For Paul, the gospel itself is on display in the life of the people of the Church, which he calls "the pillar and buttress of the truth" (3:15). The members will take their lead from their overseers and deacons.

There are false teachers who do not follow the discipline of the truth precisely because of their character. He calls them "liars" who have been "seared of their consciences" (4:2). Timothy's charge is to guard his own discipline of character in godliness like a well trained athlete:

*Rather train yourself for godliness; for 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. 1 Tim. 7-8*

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He is called to set the "example" of godly leadership to all the believers in the church in every aspect of his own life: in teaching, in unity and discipline (4:12). But the key thing for Paul is that Timothy persists in faithful teaching of the Scriptures (4:13). If Timothy will guard his own life in godliness and teaching, he will be fully equipped and trained to guard the leadership life of the church.

*Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1 Tim 4:16*

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## **Attend to the Pastoral Concerns (5:1-6:2)**

Paul then turns his attention to general concerns of pastoral ministry. Respect and care of elder men and widows (5:1-16) He is teaching not only pastoral interpersonal skills to Timothy, but also providing practical instruction on the allocations of the common purse for widows and care of the needy within the body.

He also encourages Timothy to teach about respect for the leaders in the congregation in preserving both their livelihoods and their reputations as leaders. (5:17-21) Again leadership is such an important role that Timothy should not be too hasty in promoting people into it. (5:22-24)

## **Final Charge: Guard the Church and Self (6:3-21)**

Paul's final charge to Timothy is to "*guard the deposit entrusted to you*"(6:21) As a minister of the Gospel, Timothy is being sent into a battle on to the frontlines for the very Gospel itself. He needs strong encouragement to see the importance of the task and ministry with which he has been entrusted. So Paul strongly challenges Timothy:



*But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 1:Tim 6:11-12*

## 2 Timothy

Paul's second letter to Timothy continues to build on the theme of Guarding the Gospel and the good deposit of the faith. Timothy is has likely communicated to Paul his insecurities and timidity in the face of strong opposition from false teachers. Because of Paul's chains and impending death, it is absolutely critical that Timothy become strong in the Lord for the sake of the Gospel faith. Paul provides Timothy with 3 metaphors: Soldier, Athlete and Farmer as a way of illustrating the type of leader Timothy needs to be for God.

### Literary Structure

#### 2 Timothy: Guard the Good Deposit

#### Chapters 1-4

<b>A. The Charge: Guard the Deposit</b>		1:1-2:13
<i>Paul's Charge to Timothy (1:4-6)</i>	<i>Paul's Example (4:6-8)</i>	
<b>1. Soldier: Avoid civilian entanglements</b>	I have Fought the Fight	2:14-26
<b>2. Athlete: Compete According to the Rules</b>	I have Finished the Race	3:1-3:17
<b>3. Farmer: Work hard and Enjoy the spoils</b>	I have Kept the Faith/Won the Prize	4:1-8
<b>B. Final Instructions</b>		4:9-22

### The Charge: Guard the Deposit (2 Timothy 1:1-2:13)

Timothy is struggling with timidity. All leaders do. Paul writes to encourage Timothy to match his sincerity for the faith (1:3-5) with confidence in the task (1:6-7).

*For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. -2 Tim. 1:6-7*



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Paul holds up himself as a weak vessel that needed the Lord's strength and power working in and through him in order to be effective. Confidence comes by God's resurrection power manifesting itself in the minister of the Gospel through his Holy Spirit. So Timothy is charged:

*"By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you." 2 Tim 1:14*

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Paul is concerned about succession and he needs Timothy to be concerned about it too! Paul has a vision to see the Gospel passed on for 5 generations.

*You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 2 Timothy 2:1-2*

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The task of guarding the deposit of the faith is critical. So Paul gives Timothy three metaphors from everyday life to illustrate the tasks necessary to ensure the deposit can be faithfully transferred for five generations and more.

The three metaphors are the soldier, the athlete and the farmer.

*Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. 2 Timothy 2:4-7*

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## **Soldier: Avoid Civilian Entanglements, Please Your Commander (2:14-26)**

The first key is to have the mentality and discipline of a soldier. A soldier does not get entangled in civilian pursuits. There are those who want to get in the "weeds" of quarreling over words, irreverent babble, that spreads like gangrene. Timothy is to avoid getting involved with it at all. Here is where leaders can go astray; the examples are known (2:17-18).

The key is in remaining focused on pleasing the commanding officer alone.

*But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." 2 Tim. 2:19*

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The good soldier flees these ungodly and immature pursuits and passions and focuses on the pursuit of "righteousness, faith, love, and peace along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart" (2:22).



## ***Athlete: Compete According to the Rules (3:1-17)***

The second metaphor Paul employs is that of the Athlete. There is a race which is set before Timothy. The key in completion is in winning, yes, but in winning according to the rules. There will be many people who sneak into the life of the church who want the benefits of the church and the faith but they do not desire to follow the rule of the church and faith.

Paul looks at the example of Jannes and Jambres which are the extra-biblical names given to the Egyptian Magicians in Exodus 7:8-13. These are men who contend with Moses but they were posers and cheaters. They didn't compete according to the rules. So they were "disqualified regarding the faith" (2 Tim. 3:8)

Where does the athlete find the rulebook of the faith? Is not in the "sacred writings" which Timothy has been taught since his childhood which are able to make him wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (3:15)?

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2 Tim. 3:16-17*

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## ***Farmer: Work hard and enjoy the spoils (4:1-8)***

Paul then turns to his last metaphor, the farmer. The key to the farmer's success is in day in day out faithfulness to the hard work of the task. Timothy is now encouraged to stick with the consistent hard work of ministry.

*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: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. 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 passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 4:1-5*

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There are times when the minister does not feel like his hard work is bearing fruit. The people "do not endure sound teaching". However, Timothy must like a farmer in season and out of season stay faithful to "do the work" of a Gospel preaching evangelist, thus fulfilling his ministry.

The promise to the farmer is that there will be a prize. "It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops." Paul holds himself up as an example of one who has lived what he has



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encouraged Timothy to live. He has been a soldier, an athlete and a farmer. As a result, he knows that his hard work will be rewarded with a glorious prize.

*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 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. 2 Timothy 4:6-8*

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The letter concludes with final instructions. We hear something of the danger of a martyr's death which awaited Paul in the Roman Coliseum. Is Paul speaking metaphorically or literally?:

*But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. 2 Tim. 4:17-19*

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The torch is being passed to the next leaders who will guard the good deposit. Paul has been faithful, will we?