

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday November 2, 2022 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



HONORING GOD
“Faithful Christian Service”
1 Timothy 1:18-20

We began our study through the book of 1 Timothy a couple of week ago now. 1 Timothy is a New Testament book that is actually a letter and a different type of letter. It's a personal letter, not written to a particular church or group of people like most of the New Testament letters, but to an individual, and it has a personal word and truth for us as well... for our lives. Sometimes when a book of the Bible is titled with a personal name it indicates that the book is written by that person. For example in the Old Testament we have the book of Jeremiah written by the Prophet Jeremiah, or Isaiah written by Isaiah, or Daniel written by Daniel. In the New Testament we have the book of Matthew, written by Jesus' disciple Matthew, or John written by the beloved disciple John. But the book of Timothy is different. Timothy didn't write the book of Timothy. Rather the book is written to him, for him, and it's personal... for a reason. Here is a simple truth that we need to get our heads around even as we begin this study. God's inspired Word is personal and sometimes the word is personally directed to us. God inspired the writer of Timothy to write a personal letter to Timothy (2 of them to be exact), and it included in the canon of Holy Scripture, and Timothy is one of the only individuals (Titus the other), to get a book of Bible written personally to Him. That is an incredible thought, and an important thought. It reminds us of how personal God desires to be in our lives, in directing our lives, in speaking into our lives, in helping us with our troubles and struggles, how much He cares what we are facing. If he cared enough about Timothy to, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, have one of His men write a personal letter to him, He (God) surely cares for us in the same way. And it says we need to study this great personal book and grab hold of the truths it has for us.

The book of Timothy is a letter. This is the first of two inspired letters Paul wrote to his beloved son in the faith. Since the title of the book/letter bears the recipients name it might

be good for us to get to know the letter's namesake... Timothy. The following are some facts about Timothy that will be helpful in our study.

Getting to Know Timothy Facts:

- (1) **The name Timothy means “one who honors God”** – Hence the name of our study “Honoring God.” Timothy received his name, which means “one who honors God,” from his mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois), devout Jews who became believers in the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 1:5) and taught Timothy the Old Testament Scriptures from his childhood (2 Tim. 3:15). His father was a Greek (Acts 16:1) who may have died before Timothy met Paul
- (2) **Timothy was from the town of Lystra** - Timothy was from Lystra (Acts 16:1-3), a city in the Roman province of Galatia (part of modern day Turkey).



- (3) **Timothy came to know Jesus through Paul during his first missionary journey** - Paul led Timothy to Christ (1 Timothy 1:2; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 2 Timothy 1:2), undoubtedly during his ministry in Lystra on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:6-23).
- (4) **Paul recruited Timothy to join his ministry team during Paul's second missionary journey** - When Paul revisited Lystra on his second missionary journey, Paul chose Timothy to accompany him (Acts 16:1-3).
- (5) **Timothy was likely a teenager when he first joined Paul's ministry team** - Although Timothy was very young (probably in his late teens or early twenties, since about 15 years later Paul referred to him as a young man, 1 Timothy 4:12), he had a reputation for godliness (Acts 16:2).

- (6) **Timothy was with Paul throughout the rest of Paul's life and ministry** - Timothy was to be Paul's disciple, friend, and co-laborer for the rest of the apostle's life, ministering with him in Berea (Acts 17:14), Athens (Acts 17:15), Corinth (Acts 18:5, 2 Corinthians 1:19), and accompanying him on his trip to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4). He as with Paul in his first Roman imprisonment and went to Philippi (Philippians 2:19-23) after Paul's release. In addition, Paul frequently mentions Timothy in his epistle (Romans 16:21; 2 Corinthians 1:1, Philippians 1:1, Colossians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; Philemon 1).
- (7) **Timothy became the pastor of the church at Ephesus** - Paul often sent Timothy to churches as his representative (1 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Corinthians 16:10; Philippians 2:19; 1 Thessalonians 3:2), and 1 Timothy finds him on another assignment, serving as pastor of the church at Ephesus (1 Thessalonians 1:3).
- (8) **Timothy was imprisoned for his faith** - According to Hebrews 13:23, Timothy was imprisoned somewhere and released. In Hebrews 13:23 the writer says, *"Know that our brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly."* This indicates that Timothy has been imprisoned and released. Interestingly, this statement has also led many to believe Paul the author of Hebrews, because of his close association with Timothy.

Those 8 facts give us a little more information about the one to whom this letter is written. These are just some things we know from Scripture itself, but they do give us something of a picture of the young man we are talking about here.

You know I think we often have a tendency to come to Scripture with rose-colored lenses (at least I do sometimes), viewing the people God used significantly as if they were these amazing, gifted, remarkable, holy, extra-ordinary people and in doing so, I forget that they had to live the spiritual life just as I do. The people God uses in the Bible are flawed. All of them are flawed. They come from sorted backgrounds and many exhibit major limitations. They are often frail in their faith, at least initially, and weak in many necessary skill sets.

Despite all of this, God uses them mightily. This point seems significant to me, because it seems that we often think that God can't use us the same way that he has used many of these people, and that simply isn't true. We compare ourselves to a false standard by not looking at these people for who they really were. God has called us all to ministry... to service, but often we feel inadequate and incapable.

This point comes home clearly when you study closely the life of Timothy as revealed in Scripture. I want to share 8 observations with you, that may be encouraging for you to know. They remind us that God can and wants to use even us... regardless of how inadequate and incapable we may feel.

8 Observations About Timothy That Remind Us That God Can Use Even Us?

- (1) **He didn't come from the right background** - He was biracial. He was neither fully Jew, nor fully Greek. Acts 16:1 – "Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek." Your heritage isn't a factor for God. He can use you despite the advantages or disadvantages your ethnicity and other background factors bring.
- (2) **His father wasn't his spiritual leader** - It seems Timothy's father was an unbelieving gentile, leaving his mother and grandmother the responsibility of raising Timothy in the ways of God. 2 Timothy 1:5 – "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 as well." **Few wounds seem to leave larger scars than those made by an inept or absentee father.** Timothy didn't have a great male spiritual leader in his home. He didn't have an earthly father to grease all the right connections. Timothy had some responsibility for his spiritual life and was responsible to acknowledge the spiritual influences God did place in his life. In the same way, you and I cannot let our parents determine the level of our surrender. We are responsible for our spiritual lives, and we should have more confidence in the equipping of God than in a spiritually anemic parent.
- (3) **He wasn't Paul** - Timothy was second-string. He was Paul's representative. Paul makes this point abundantly clear in 1 Corinthians 4:16–17 – "I urge you, then, be imitators of me. That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church." 'Hey, Corinth, I'm sending Timothy to you so that he will remind you of how I live. Just let him point you to me so that I can point you to Christ.' Really? Yes, really. That was Timothy's role. God did not appoint Timothy to be the role model, but the one pointing to the role model. So it may be with you. You might not be first-string, but you have a role. Are you open to God using you in the role He has in mind?
- (4) **He needed to avoid temptation** - Timothy could be tempted; he was not fail-proof. Paul warns Timothy to be careful in this regard at the close of his first letter to Timothy. "O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called "knowledge," for by professing it some have swerved from the faith. Grace be with you" (1 Timothy 6:20–21). Timothy had to be instructed to avoid certain conversations and controversies so that he would not be tempted to buy into false knowledge and swerve from the faith. Early in the second letter, Timothy had to be reminded not to be ashamed of the testimony of Jesus nor of Paul (2 Timothy 1:8). **Sometimes, we feel spiritually inferior because we struggle and stumble. Sometimes, we think that if we were really godly, we wouldn't have some of the desires we do.** That's not the Bible talking, that's pride. According to the Bible, the mark of a godly person is not someone who isn't tempted, but someone who chooses to obey God instead of giving into their desires (Galatians 5:16). Despite your inner desire for the things of this world, God will use you! Resist those desires and trust in him.
- (5) **He had health issues** - 1 Timothy 5:23 – "No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments." Regardless of your

physical condition, God can use you for his glory. Are you willing? So long as you have breath in your lungs, God's not done with you.

- (6) **He was young for his role** - Timothy's exact age isn't given, but we know that Paul had to encourage him not to allow others to look down upon him as he brought reform to the church in Ephesus. Paul writes, "Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). Regardless of your age, God can use you.
- (7) **He hadn't figured it out** - Timothy still needed instruction even well into his ministry. This point is evident in the mere fact that Paul had to send him the letter of 1st Timothy. 1 Timothy 3:14–15 – "I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth." You don't have to have all the answers. Sometimes God calls you to a ministry where you will not have the pre-established knowledge on how to do that which God has called you to. This point isn't an excuse not to pursue formal education, but also serves as a reminder that no matter where you are in your ministry, feelings of inadequacy are no excuse to keep you from fulfilling God's call.
- (8) **He had a heart for God** - Look at how Paul describes him to the church in Philippi, "I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon.... For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know Timothy's proven worth..." (Philippians 2:19–22a). The reality was that Timothy had been touched by grace. Timothy knew he wasn't special, but that his Savior was. Timothy knew that his sins, as small as we might have thought them to be, deserved eternal hell, punishment, and separation from God, yet God being rich in mercy provided a way for redemption through Jesus. And, not only did God provide a way for salvation, but now, as a follower of Jesus Christ, Timothy, the foolish, bi-racial, sickly-stomached youth could be used to shape a church for the glory of God!

Here it is... God uses the weak things of the world so that through us, his surpassing grace, glory, and strength may be shown. Feel you aren't useful? Need a reminder of God's methodology? God uses the willing. God uses the available. God uses the weak. He uses us. He uses us not because he needs us, but because he wants us to experience the glory of service, submission, and spirit-infused living. God wants us to be the vessel through whom he works. What's needed is a surrendered heart that puts Jesus first.

"¹⁸ This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, ¹⁹ having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, ²⁰ of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme." -1 Timothy 1:18-20 (NKJV)

Discussion Questions

1. Does the thought of your being “in the ministry” scare you? How would your life be different if you saw yourself that way?
2. So many today talk about “burn out” in ministry. Why do you think this is so? Is burn out avoidable?
3. How important is it to know your spiritual gift? How can a person know it? What difference does it make?
4. What is the most difficult thing for you in serving the Lord? How do you deal with it?

FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN SERVICE (1 Timothy 1:18-20)

Dr. Howard Hendricks tells of the time he saw a young reporter interview Bud Wilkinson, who was then the coach of the top-ranked Oklahoma Sooners football team. The reporter enthusiastically bubbled, “Coach Wilkinson, tell us what contribution collegiate football has made toward physical fitness in America.” He was rather stunned when Wilkinson replied, “I do not believe that football has made any contribution to physical fitness in America.” “What do you mean?” asked the dumbfounded reporter. “I define football,” replied Wilkinson, “as 22 men on the field desperately needing rest, and 50,000 people in the stands desperately needing exercise.” Dr. Hendricks concludes by saying, “What a description of the local church!”

Sadly, Christianity in America is often a spectator sport. You go on Sunday and sit and watch while the pros perform. After all, that’s what they’re paid to do, isn’t it? “But me? Well, you see, I’m just a layman.” But as we saw last week, “there ain’t no such animal in the Bible.” In the New Testament, there is no special class of persons called “ministers” or “clergymen” or “priests.” Rather, every believer in Jesus Christ is a minister and priest before God. Every believer is to be a functioning member of the Body of Christ, with a God-given ministry to fulfill.

I emphasize the point because we have been so indoctrinated with the faulty viewpoint of our culture that it’s difficult to shake. I’ll bet that if someone new in the church asked, “Who is your minister?” most of you would reply without a thought, “Bro. Buddy is our minister.” Do you know what you should reply? You should say, “Which minister did you have in mind? We have about 150-200 of them here. If you’re asking ‘Who is it we support so that he can devote full-time to preaching and teaching the Word and maybe shepherding the flock?’ the answer maybe, Buddy. But he is only one minister of many in the church.” We need to challenge faulty cultural views and evaluate everything in light of the Scriptures.

WHO IS A MINISTER?

Here is the question you are going hear throughout this study... s every Christian believer a minister of God – or is ministry specifically delegated to a select group of people, such as a priest, a pastor, worship leader or evangelist?

According to the Bible every Christian believer is a minister of God. Every Christian! That includes you. Therefore every Christian is a man / woman of God who has been authorized by God to minister to other people according to the plan and the gifts that God has given us.

In the Bible, the word *ministry* is translated *diakonia* in Greek which means “service” or “to serve”. So here is a good definition of Christian ministry as it pertains to all Christians:

Definition: *Christian ministry is an act of spiritual service with the purpose of edifying others, spreading the Gospel and glorifying God.*

3 Things to Remember About What Ministry is NOT:

- 1. Ministry (Christian service) is not limited to a select few** - Such as a pastor or to someone who is paid a salary by a Christian organization.
- 2. Ministry work is not confined to what one does within the four walls of a church building** - Instead the work of God extends far and beyond the walls of a building and into the work place, the streets, families, the entertainment industry and much more. Ministry work can be done at any place and at any time regardless of one’s vocation.
- 3. Ministry is not only about what you do, but it’s also about how you live your life daily** - Therefore ministry can be done by any born again believer who seeks to serve God and serve others and glorify God’s name in any capacity.

Here are 6 reasons why every Christian is a minister according to the Bible...

6 Reasons Every Christian is a Minister: (according to the Bible)

- 1. Every Christian is a Priest and is part of the Priesthood of all Believers (1 Peter 2:5,9)** - 1 Peter 2:5 describes every Christian as being “... like living stones (who) are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a ***holy priesthood***, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 2:9 reveals that all Christians are part of a “royal priesthood” who have been chosen to “***proclaim the excellencies of Him who called (us) out of darkness into His marvelous light***”. The act of “***proclaiming the excellencies***” of God means that every Christian is called to announce, declare, preach and glorify the name of God to others – including proclaiming to unbelievers. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers states that all believers in Jesus Christ have access to God through Christ, the true High Priest, and therefore do not need a **priestly mediator apart from Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5)**. The priesthood of all believers also states that every Christian shares in Christ’s priestly status; therefore, there is no special class of people who mediate the knowledge, presence, and revelation of Christ to the rest of believers. Instead every Christian believer has the right and authority to read, interpret, and apply the teachings of Scripture as lead by the Holy Spirit.
- 2. Every Christian has been given Gifts by the Holy Spirit for the Purpose of Ministry (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)** - The Bible states that there are many varieties of gifts for spiritual service which the Holy Spirit has given to whomever He chooses. Therefore

every Christian believer has at least one or more gifts that he/she has been given by the Holy Spirit. The purpose of every gift from the Holy Spirit is to edify the Church, to minister to unbelievers and to glorify God. The gifting by the Holy Spirit authorizes every Christian to use his/her gifts as led by the Spirit, for the purpose of ministering to others and fulfilling God's plan and purpose. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 says, *"4Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the **same God who empowers them all in everyone** 7to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."*

Therefore by assigning specific gifts to all believers, God has empowered every Christian to minister so that God's name is glorified. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are not for a few select believers; instead it is the duty of every Christian believer to discover the specific gifts that the Holy Spirit has given you so that you may minister effectively for His Kingdom and for the plan and purpose which He has for your life.

- 3. No Christian has a Function or Gift that is better than the Other (Romans 12:3-6/1 Corinthians 12:14-21)** - Every Christian is a minister because in the sight of God all true Christian believers are equal. True Christian ministry requires humility. There is no Christian who is more important than the other. There is no Christian who has better gifts or a better function and purpose than another Christian. Instead Scripture reveals that the Body of Christ or the Church of Christ is an entity where every part of the Body has a unique and specific purpose where each part cannot properly function without the others. Romans 12:3-6 says *"For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them..."*

1 Corinthians 12:14-21 says, *"For the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as He chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'"*

- 4. Every Christian has Received the Person of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16)** - Every Christian is a minister because the Holy Spirit dwells within every true born again

believer. 1 Corinthians 3:16 says *“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?”* The Holy Spirit has many roles and functions in the life of a Christian. Some of the roles of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian is to be our Helper (John 14:16) who will lead us into all truth (John 16:13) and empower us to bear good fruit (Galatians 5:22-23). Therefore without the Holy Spirit we cannot display the nature and character of Christ in our daily living and neither can we fulfill the specific purpose God may have for our individual lives. Furthermore without the Holy Spirit, the Body of Christ cannot work together nor function to the glory of Christ. The Holy Spirit enables Christian believers to work both individually and corporately for the purpose of sharing the Gospel, edifying the Church and glorifying Jesus Christ. It is therefore the duty of every Christian believer to consistently yield to the Holy Spirit and to be led by Him. Galatians 5:16-17 says *“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.”* Galatians 5:25 says *“If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.”*

5. **Every Christian is Called to Share the Gospel and Make Disciples (Matthew 28:18-20)** - One of the primary duties of every Christian believer regardless of our different functions and gifting is to share the Gospel to unbelievers. As a “royal priesthood” every Christian has the duty of participating in fulfilling the Great Commission by sharing the Gospel concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the finished work He completed on the cross. Matthew 28:18-20 says, *“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”*

Romans 10:14-15 says, *“But how are they to call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’”* As Christian believers we are encouraged to not be ashamed of the Gospel because the Gospel is *“the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes”* (Romans 1:16). Learning to share the Gospel and living according to the Gospel is a universal duty of every Christian believer because without the knowledge of the Gospel people cannot be saved and have a genuine relationship with God.

6. **Every Christian is Called to be More like Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:2-3)** - Another primary objective of every Christian believer is to be an imitator of Jesus Christ by reflecting His character and nature. Your individual life may be the book or epistle that someone reads. How we live and conduct ourselves in our daily living is a ministry

to others who are observing our life. 2 Corinthians 3:2-3 says, *“You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. 3 And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.”*

2 Peter 2:21 says, *“For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps.”*

Ephesians 5:1-2 says, *“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”* Therefore every Christian is called to minister to others through his/her daily life without hypocrisy and in such a way that Christ is glorified and the Gospel is proclaimed.

It's not only the pastor, the worship leader, the evangelist etc. who are meant to minister. Instead every truly born again Christian is a minister of God, because God has ordained every Christian believer to be part of the royal priesthood of believers.

- Ministry work comes in all forms and methods depending on how God is leading you and how the Holy Spirit has gifted you and equipped you for His plan and purpose in your life.
- All Christian believers are equal before God even though they have different functions.
- Every gift and function within the body of Christ is just as important as the other.
- Every member of the body of Christ is just as important and integral to God's overall plan and purpose for His Church.
- Ministry is not only confined to what you do within a church building or for a Christian organization – instead ministry is a lifestyle.
- It is also about how you live because your life might be an epistle that someone reads.

Since Jesus Christ is the only High Priest and He is the only “Mediator” between God and man, the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers states that there is no special class of people who mediate the knowledge, presence, and revelation of Christ to the rest of believers. Instead every Christian believer through a personal relationship with God has the right and authority to read, interpret, and apply the teachings of Scripture as led by the Holy Spirit.

PRINCIPLES OF MINISTER THAT APPLY TO EVERY BELIEVER

Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus to confront some false teachers who were leading people astray through their wrong teaching from the Law. That wasn't a “fun” assignment, especially for someone of Timothy's young age, timid disposition, so he was probably tempted to look for a more peaceful situation.

- Paul urges him to remain on and confront the problems (1:3).
- As he reminds Timothy of the gospel he is to preach (1:11), Paul is diverted to remind Timothy again of the life-changing power of that gospel as experienced by Paul (1:12-17).
- In our text, in verses 18-20, Paul returns to his task of urging Timothy to “hang in there” in the ministry to which God has called him.

Notice our passage in **1 Timothy 1:18-20 (READ: 1 Timothy 1:18-20)**

“¹⁸ This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, ¹⁹ having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, ²⁰ of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.” -1 Timothy 1:18-20 (NKJV)

These verses reveal seven principles of ministry that apply to every believer, because every Christian is in the ministry. These are not the only principles you need to know, nor are they even the most basic. But you won’t survive in Christian service and hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant,” from our Lord without them.

To serve the Lord faithfully, you must understand and follow these principles of ministry:

SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF MINISTRY THAT APPLY TO EVERY BELIEVERS

- (1) **The ministry is a sacred trust to be obeyed** – Notice it... Paul writes in **verse 18**, *“¹⁸ This charge (command) I commit to you...”* It’s the same word used in verses 3 and 5, and refers to the command to promote sound doctrine by confronting the false teachers and their doctrines. **It’s a military word that means an order passed through the ranks from superior to subordinate**. Paul received his orders from the Lord; he passes them on to Timothy, who is to relay them to the church. The word conveys a sense of urgent obligation.

Donald Guthrie writes, **“Timothy is solemnly reminded that the ministry is not a matter to be trifled with, but an order from the commander-in-chief”** (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, The Pastoral Epistles [Eerdmans], p. 67). Paul says that he entrusts this command to Timothy.

The word “entrust” is used of entrusting something valuable to someone for safe keeping.

- It is used of making a deposit in a bank
- It is also used of entrusting a loved one to another’s care.

- “It always implies that a trust has been reposed in someone for which he will be called to account” (William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible, The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* [Westminster Press], p. 51).

The lesson for us is this: The ministry is not an optional choice for the more dedicated. God doesn't call for volunteers. The ministry is a sacred trust from God to each individual which each person must obey and for which that person must give an account.

If God has called you to Himself, then He has called you to serve. His particular orders to you as to how and where He wants you to serve must be seen as a sacred deposit entrusted to you by the commander-in-chief. You're under orders. And you do your ministry to please Him, not for strokes from others or for self-gratification.

- (2) **The ministry is people building into the lives of people who build into the lives of people** - We can see this principle more specifically in 2 Timothy 2:2, where Paul used this same word, *“entrust.”* 2 Timothy 2:2 says, *“² And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, entrust (commit) these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”* The principle is, Paul entrusted certain things to Timothy; Timothy was to entrust them to others; and the others were to entrust them to others. It's a process of multiplication, where a more mature Christian imparts life in Christ to one who is younger in the faith so that person can grow to maturity to repeat the process.

In 1 Timothy 1:18 Paul says, *“¹⁸ This charge I entrust (commit) to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare.”* we see Paul involved in the process with Timothy, whom he affectionately calls, *“son”* (lit., “child”). The word shows that ministry is always in the context of warm personal relationships. What often happens in the local church is that ministry becomes institutionalized instead of being personalized. In other words, “having a ministry” comes to mean, “I serve on the board of elders,” or on the budget committee, or “I teach Sunday School.” All these are important ministries, of course. I'm not belittling them. But it's possible to keep the institution rolling along, but to miss the heart of ministry, which is building into the lives of people.

I read of a new Christian who was leading a number of his friends to Christ and seeing them begin to grow in Christ. But the people in his church were encouraging him to become one of the sponsors of the high school youth group so that he could have a ministry!

The reason ministry tends to become institutionalized is that we're threatened by people. We're afraid to open up and share our lives. We're afraid to have others be honest with us. It's so much more comfortable just to keep the institution functioning. But the

ministry is not an institution. It's people. I define ministry as a person being full of Jesus Christ and slopping over to build others through open, caring relationships.

- (3) **The ministry is in accordance with spiritual gifts** – Verse 18 says, *“¹⁸ This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare.”* The phrase “according to the prophecies previously made concerning you...” probably should be connected with 1 Timothy 4:14 which says, *“¹⁴ Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.”* This probably refers to God's confirmation of Timothy's spiritual gifts through the elders in the church. If this is the sense, it means that Timothy was ministering at Ephesus because of his divinely indicated spiritual gifts, confirmed through these church leaders.

While not everyone's ministry is so dramatically indicated (I think Timothy was an exception), the principle still holds true that ministry should be in accordance with the spiritual gifts God has given you.

- God has given each one of us spiritual gifts which equip us for unique ministries in the Body of Christ.
- You can do things that I can't do as well, because I don't have your gifts and personality.

When you minister in the area of your gifts, it is usually a source of joy to serve, because you're doing what God has equipped you to do. (I said usually! I'll say more on that in a moment.) Two cautions are in order at this point... let me give these to you.

2 Warning About Your Spiritual Gift:

- (1) **Don't sit around waiting for some special revelation of your gift** - Some Christians study the lists of spiritual gifts and pray that God will reveal their gift to them. But they never get involved in serving. Their excuse is that they don't know their gift. That's a fallacy. Gifts are always revealed in the context of serving. Timothy was already serving the Lord in Lystra when Paul returned to town, Timothy's gifts were recognized, and he was asked to join Paul in ministry. Paul himself, as soon as he was saved, began preaching Christ in Damascus. He went into Arabia for some special training and returned to Damascus, still preaching. He went to Jerusalem and kept preaching. He went to his home region in Tarsus, where there is good evidence that he continued preaching. Barnabas tracked him down and took him to Antioch, where they taught the church for a considerable time. In that context God called him to go out on his first missionary journey. Spiritual gifts are revealed and recognized in the context of serving. So get involved in building people in Jesus Christ, and your gifts will become obvious. The second caution:
- (2) **Don't neglect serving in certain capacities because they aren't your gift** - We're all commanded to do almost every one of the tasks for which there are spiritual gifts.

Some people cop out of their responsibilities by saying, “I don’t have the gift of evangelism, so I don’t have to witness for Christ.” Or, “I don’t have the gift of helps, so I can’t get involved in setting up chairs and tables.” That’s ridiculous! As your gift emerges, it should define your primary focus for ministry. **But it should not exclude you from tasks that may be unpleasant to your personality.** Timothy was a timid soul, and yet Paul is exhorting him to hang in there and confront those false teachers. Being gifted doesn’t mean that the Christian ministry is all fun!

- (4) **The ministry is a long fight, not a short picnic** – Notice verse 18 again... especially the last phrase, *“¹⁸ This charge I entrust (commit) to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare.”* Notice the phrase, *“... that you may wage the good warfare (fight).”* Paul doesn’t say, “Play at church,” or “Just hit at it if you feel like it.” NO! He says, “Wage war!” “Fight the good fight!”

The ministry is spiritual warfare. The word “warfare or fight” signifies a campaign rather than a single battle. To change the metaphor it is a marathon race, not a hundred yard dash. And the enemy is trying to trip you up and get you to drop out.

To serve the Lord faithfully, you’ve got to realize that you’re in for the long haul and it isn’t going to be easy.

- Some people get all excited about ministry, but they burn out.
- Others get excited until problems hit, and then they quit.
- Others bail out when they catch criticism (which you will!).
- Others expect instant results; when it doesn’t happen, they get discouraged and quit.
- Others are so excited about ministry, they don’t get any training, and they run dry after a while.

All of these problems could be solved if people would realize that the ministry to which God has called each one of us is a lifetime campaign against a powerful enemy. Note that Timothy’s fight was against men who were in the church. That’s usually where the battle is waged.

- (5) **The ministry is more dependent on personal integrity than on polished technique** – Here is how Paul said in verse 19... notice it, *“¹⁹ Having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck.”* Paul exhorts Timothy to keep **“faith and a good conscience.”**

- “Faith” is probably a broad reference both to doctrine and to belief. Timothy is to hold to his trust in the truth of the gospel. And he is to walk uprightly. He is not to violate his conscience, which is to be shaped by the Word of God.

- Belief and behavior always go together. In the case of the false teachers, they had rejected or abandoned (the word means “to push away”) their good conscience, resulting in the subsequent shipwreck of their faith.
- Quite often, doctrinal errors are the result of moral problems rather than intellectual problems. Men who teach false doctrine often do so to avoid the moral implications of God’s truth in their own lives.
- The basis for having a ministry in the lives of others is to have a personal trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word and to walk in obedience to Him... “faith and a good conscience.”
- We live in a day that has gone crazy over methods. Hardly a week goes by without my receiving a flyer promising me proven techniques to increase attendance in this church. While there may be some helpful methods, I tend to avoid such techniques like the plague.

The best method for any ministry is to hold on to faith and a good conscience. If you have reality with God, He will use you in fruitful ministry in the lives of others. If you do not, methods will avail you nothing, and you will suffer shipwreck in the faith.

(6) **The ministry has casualties** – Notice again what Paul writes to Timothy in verses 19-20 of our passage, *“¹⁹ Having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, ²⁰ of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.”*

Some shipwreck their faith. To use the earlier analogy, some go down in battle. That fact is not news to anyone who has been around for a while, but it is important to remember.

We all have a tendency to put our eyes on certain church leaders instead of on Christ Himself. Satan can’t cause Christ to fall, but he can work on leaders who have a lot of people looking to them for growth. If such a person falls, there are usually a lot of others who fall as well. We need to develop the attitude that says, “Even if _____ (whoever you admire spiritually) falls away from the faith, I’m going to keep serving the Lord Jesus.”

Another reason it’s important to remember that there are casualties in the ministry is to constantly warn yourself of the danger from the enemy. If Satan can lull you into thinking that the Christian life and ministry to which you have been called is a Sunday School picnic instead of a war, then you’ll let your defenses down and he can get to you. I hear often, as you do, of men who have had effective ministries for a number of years, who have fallen into the sin of adultery. That scares me! It makes me confront the sin in my heart and be alert to spiritual danger. Satan shoots real bullets! Watch out or you’ll get hit!

(7) **The ministry involves unpleasant tasks at times** - Paul mentions two examples by name, Hymenaeus and Alexander. Look at verse 20, *“²⁰ Of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.”*

- Hymenaeus is probably the same man mentioned in 2 Timothy 2:17, *“¹⁷ Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus.”*
- Alexander may be the same as the man mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:14, *“¹⁴ Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done.”*
- At any rate, these men were apparently church leaders who were involved in some sort of sin (violation of conscience) as well as doctrinal errors.

Paul had “delivered them over to Satan.” What does he mean?

What do you think Paul means by the phrase, “delivered them over to Satan,” and what does it mean for us today?

Paul uses the same expression when dealing with the Corinthian man who was openly committing adultery with his father’s wife (1 Cor. 5:5). Paul viewed the world as Satan’s domain. To be in the church, under the authority of the elders, provides a person with a certain amount of protection from the devil and his attacks through the world. What Paul probably means is that these two men were delivered over to Satan’s domain, the world, by being excommunicated from the protective covering of the church and from the fellowship of its members.

I personally believe it has the idea of taking your personal hands off of a situation and turning it over to God and letting Him discipline and handle certain people and their situation in His own way and time... sometimes that means God lifting their hands and allowing the enemy be used in their life to show them their need for God and His ways, and drive them back to Him and a righted relationship. ***Paul’s desire was not to get rid of these men, but to see them “taught not to blaspheme.”***

Sometimes ministering to people involves the unpleasant task of confrontation. On rare occasions, it may have to go before the church and result in formal excommunication, with the prayer and aim of restoration. That is never pleasant, especially for leaders with timid personalities, like Timothy. But it must be done if people are going to grow in Christ and if the body of Christ is going to reflect His holiness and love.

CONCLUSION

The ministry is not easy. But every person who knows Christ as Savior is called to serve. Knowing and following these seven principles of ministry will help you to be a faithful servant of Jesus Christ:

7 Principles of Ministry:

- 1. The ministry is a sacred trust to be obeyed.**
- 2. The ministry is people building into the lives of people who build into the lives of people.**
- 3. The ministry is in accordance with spiritual gifts.**
- 4. The ministry is a long fight, not a short picnic.**
- 5. The ministry is more dependent on personal integrity than on polished technique.**
- 6. The ministry has casualties.**
- 7. The ministry involves unpleasant tasks at times.**

A little boy went to his first day at first grade. When the clock hands reached 12 noon, he got ready to go home as he was used to doing in kindergarten. The teacher decided to take a positive approach, so she said to him, "In kindergarten you only got to stay here 'til noon, but this year you get to stay all day!" He looked at her with shock on his face and blurted out, "Who signed me up for this, anyway?"

Timothy probably felt like that as he faced the task of confronting the false teachers in Ephesus. That's how you will often feel in ministry! "Who signed me up for this, anyway?" The Lord did! He's the commander-in-chief; we are drafted to serve faithfully in His army.

A pastor had a son who felt God's calling to follow in his dad's footsteps. When the pastor heard it, he said to his son, "Keep close to God, keep close to men, and bring the two together." Wise counsel for faithful Christian service!

If you're not involved in serving the Lord--remember, I'm defining service as being full of Christ and out of your fulness seeking to build others--if you're not doing that, I'd ask you to evaluate whether you are walking closely with Christ. You can't give out what you don't possess. The Lord always calls us to be with Him before He sends us out to serve Him (Mark 3:14). The other area you need to evaluate is, are you too self-focused? If you're so busy doing your own thing that you don't have time to serve the Lord, you're too self-focused. If you're focused on yourself, you won't be looking for opportunities to minister to others.

I heard of a successful Southern California doctor who met Jesus Christ and left his lucrative practice to serve in a primitive country. His non-Christian partner couldn't believe that he would do this. On one of his trips around the world, the unbelieving doctor stopped in to see his former partner. The Christian doctor was performing surgery on a poor woman in

extremely primitive conditions. The non-Christian doctor said, “Don’t you remember how much you would have made doing this surgery in Southern California?” “Yes,” replied the Christian, “many thousands.” “Then why are you doing it?” “Several reasons. See her clenched fist? In it there are a few coins she will give to our mission. See those kids over there? They will be forever grateful if I can save their mother’s life. But there’s one more thing--I hope to hear from my Lord someday the words, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant.’”

God may not direct you to go to a foreign country. But He does want each of us to live in reality with Him and then to get involved in the lives of others in this church and with those who do not yet know Christ, with the goal of seeing every person know Christ as you do and grow to maturity in Christ as you’re growing. That’s your job as His minister.