

The Most Excellent Way

Discipleship/Leadership Bible Study Homework

“Teach Sound Doctrine”

ATTITUDE: Seeking God’s Truth in All Things

Paul instructed Timothy to preserve the Christian faith by teaching sound doctrine. He was to oppose, in love, false teachings that create divisions within the Church. We must know the truth in order to defend it. Our goals must be spiritually motivated, not temporally centered. We must speak the truth, and persuade others by our behavior — allowing God’s Word to speak for itself.

Christians who argue for A.A., N.A., etc., expose their ignorance of the Bible. As Christian leaders, we must allow nothing to distract us from the main point of Scripture — the Good News of Jesus Christ.

1 TIMOTHY 1:1-11 (NIV)

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, (1)

To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. (2)

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer (3)

Nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies.

These promote controversies rather than God’s work—which is by faith. (4)

The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. (5)

Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. (6)

They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm. (7)

We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. (8)

We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for law breakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, (9)

For adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine (10)

That conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me. (11)

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• FOCUSING

1. Would you rather receive a letter or a phone call from a good friend? Why?

2. What are some laws that you benefit from directly?

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- **STUDYING GOD'S WORD**

3. How does Paul describe Jesus as he begins this letter to Timothy? (1:1)

The United States has become a nation of "victims" and "whiners," where the government and humanistic philosophies offer false hope. For the Christian, living within the reality of the spiritual realm, our only hope is Jesus. Keep this in mind as you proceed through this study.

4. To whom was this letter written? (1:2)

Reread the Scriptures and imagine that Paul is writing to you: "To (your name), my true son (daughter) in the faith."

5. Why did Paul want Timothy to stay in Ephesus? (1:3-4)

Ephesus was probably plagued by the same heresy that threatened the Colosse church, the false doctrine that to be acceptable to God one had to gain certain "hidden knowledge" and worship angels (Colossians 2:8,18). People in Ephesus constructed lists and genealogies with the hope it would aid their salvation. The false teachers were motivated by personal interests rather than Christ's, and they engaged the Church in endless and irrelevant questions and arguments. Such worthless discussions sidetrack Christians from the life-changing message of Christ, taking precious time away from the study and sharing of the truth.

6. What did Paul say about myths and genealogies? (1:4)

7. What was the goal of the command Paul urged Timothy to enforce? (1:5)

False teachers are motivated by pride, power and fame. By contrast, genuine Christian teachers are motivated by love, truth and faith. It may be exciting to explore difficult doctrines in order to impress people with our great "knowledge," but any position based on falsehood is ultimately empty, a cheap, temporary thrill. Teachers and leaders who truly follow Christ will find lasting, eternal rewards as they see His truth spread throughout the world and His love transform people everywhere.

8. In what way had some believers been misguided? (1:6)

9. How did Paul assess those who wanted to be teachers of the law? (1:7)

10. When is the Law good? (1:8)
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11. For whom was the Law made? (1:9-11)

When teachers don't understand the purpose of God's Law, they can do nothing but present a list of do's and don'ts to their Christian hearers, robbing them of the joy that comes from salvation by faith. The Law was not meant to give us a list of commands for every occasion, but to show non-believers their sin and bring them to God. (See Romans 5:20-21, 13:9-10; Galatians 3:24-29.) God's Law becomes easier to follow when we walk in the Spirit, having the Holy Spirit's power to obey the Law out of a pure heart toward God.

In verse 10 "perverts" refers to homosexuals (see Romans 1:26-27). Some Christians have joined those who attempt to legitimize homosexuality as an acceptable "alternative lifestyle" all people have a right to chose. They too demonstrate their ignorance of Biblical truth (see Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:18-32; I Corinthians 6:9-11). Christian leaders must be careful to condemn the practice of homosexuality based upon the truth, not the people engaging in the behavior. Being aware of the discrimination we have experienced as addicts and alcoholics should cause us to not fear, ridicule or hate those who commit homosexual acts.

12. What did God entrust to Paul? (1:11)

If we call ourselves "Christian," we must provide a haven of forgiveness and healing for all repentant sinners — without compromising Biblical truths.

• **UNDERSTANDING**

13. When was the last time you wrote someone a letter of encouragement or received such a letter?

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14. With whom do you have a relationship of mutual discipleship?

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15. What false doctrines have you struggled with, if any?

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16. What sort of doctrines promote controversy within The Most Excellent Way?

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17. What goals motivate the Christian leaders whom you respect?

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18. What goals motivate your service in The Most Excellent Way?

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19. In what way should we use God's law today?
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