

# 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus

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By Matthew Allen

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Mammertine Prison



# Introductory Thoughts

*Paul and Silas went first to Derbe and then on to Lystra. There they met Timothy, a young disciple whose mother was a Jewish believer, but whose father was a Greek. Timothy was well thought of by the believers in Lystra and Iconium (Acts 16:1–2).*



**W**e are first introduced to Timothy on Paul's 2nd missionary journey in Acts 16. It is believed that Lystra was his home and that his mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois) were converted on Paul's first missionary journey in AD 47–48. His father was a Greek. Luke, the author of Acts, is unclear as to whether his father was still alive at the time of Paul & Silas' second journey through the area. Paul's words in 2 Timothy 3:10–11 seem to indicate Timothy's personal knowledge of Paul's persecution at Psidian Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. Paul refers to Timothy as my true child in the faith (1 Timothy 1:2) and from this we conclude that Paul played an instrumental role in Timothy's conversion to Christ. (See also 1 Timothy 1:18; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 2 Timothy 1:2.) While in Lystra, Timothy gained a solid reputation for godliness.

## **Timothy on Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey (AD 51–54)**

Timothy completed the 2nd missionary journey with Paul, Acts 16:18, 22. Also accompanying Paul were Luke and Silas. These men strengthened churches at Troas and Philippi (Acts 16) and Thessalonica and Berea, Acts 17. Timothy seemed to play a key role in strengthening and edifying congregations. He remained behind in Berea while Paul departed for Athens, Acts 17:14. Sometime after Paul's arrival in Athens, Timothy joins up with him and then is dispatched to Thessalonica to *strengthen and encourage* (them) as to (their) *faith* (1 Thessalonians 3:2). Sometime

later Timothy leaves Thessalonica for Corinth and assisted Paul with that work. (1 Thessalonians 3:6; Acts 18:1, 5) Paul seems to have been greatly encouraged by his return to Corinth and we see his increased efforts in persuading the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.

### **Timothy on Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey (AD 54–58)**

We next see Timothy with Paul in his work at Ephesus. In Acts 19:21–22 Paul sends him to Macedonia along with Erastus. First Corinthians 4:17 and 16:10 seem to indicate Timothy's ultimate destination was Corinth. Paul expected his letter (1 Corinthians) to arrive (by Titus?) in Corinth before Timothy arrived. This is a testimony to Paul's confidence in Timothy since he would be walking into what possibly could have been an unpleasant situation after Paul's stinging rebuke in the 1 Corinthians letter. He reminds them: *now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without cause to be afraid, for he is doing the Lord's work, as I also am*, 1 Corinthians 16:10.

It is unknown how long Timothy remained in Corinth, but by the time 2 Corinthians is written he is back in Macedonia with Paul. As Paul begins to make his journey toward Jerusalem, Timothy is with him, Acts 20:1–3. Whether he accompanied Paul all the way to Jerusalem is not clearly revealed. Some writers assume that he was one of the approved ones (1 Corinthians 16:3–4) who carried benevolence back to Jerusalem.

### **During Paul's 1st Imprisonment in Rome (AD 58–63)**

We are uncertain of Timothy's whereabouts during Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea (Acts 22–23), but we do know he was with Paul during his first imprisonment in Rome. Philippians 1:1; 2:19–23; Colossians 1:1; Philemon 1:1. In Philippians 2:24 we see Paul's hope of being released shortly from a Roman prison. In 2:19 he planned to send Timothy to minister to the church at Philippi.

### **Later Details of Timothy's Life & Work (AD 64–68)**

We next read of Timothy at Ephesus in 1 Timothy 1:2–3. Most feel that 1 Timothy was written sometime in AD 66. Paul encourages him to remain in Ephesus. Most believe he did, although we are not sure of exactly how

long. Probably in the later half of AD 67 he receives Paul's last epistle (2 Timothy). Paul was writing from a prison cell in Rome and urged Timothy to travel to him before winter. (2 Timothy 4:9, 21) Some believe it is on this journey (from Ephesus to Rome) that Timothy was arrested and released (Hebrews 13:23). Whether Timothy made it to Rome before Paul was executed remains a mystery. Many believe Paul was executed in early 68.

### **The Age of Timothy & Titus**

How old was Timothy when he joined up with Paul & Silas? *Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you teach, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity,* 1 Timothy 4:12. Patton observes, "Youth" was applied by Jews and Gentiles to young men up to age forty. It is assumed that Timothy was between thirty-five and forty years of age when Paul penned 1 Timothy. We can conclude that Timothy would have been between twenty-three and twenty-eight years old when he left Lystra to travel with Paul and Silas preaching the gospel (Patton xxii).

Is there a parallel between 1 Timothy 4:12 and Titus 2:15? Paul says to Titus, *You must teach these things and encourage your people to do them, correcting them when necessary. You have the authority to do this, so don't let anyone ignore you or disregard what you say,* Titus 2:15. Would this statement indicate that Titus was a little older than Timothy since "youth" is not mentioned? Probably.

### **Paul's Feelings Toward Timothy:**

*If the Lord Jesus is willing, I hope to send Timothy to you soon. Then when he comes back, he can cheer me up by telling me how you are getting along. I have no one else like Timothy, who genuinely cares about your welfare. All the others care only for themselves and not for what matters to Jesus Christ. But you know how Timothy has proved himself. Like a son with his father, he has helped me in preaching the Good News. I hope to send him to you just as soon as I find out what is going to happen to me here. And I have confidence from the Lord that I myself will come to see you soon.*

Tradition says Timothy was martyred for his service for the King.

### **Titus (AD 43–50)**

Titus' name does not appear in Acts. His name is mentioned thirteen times in the New Testament, nine times in 2 Corinthians, twice in Galatians, and once in 2 Timothy and Titus. In Titus 1:4, Paul calls Titus *my true child in a common faith*. Hendrickson (37) makes remarks of the belief that Antioch of Syria was his home and that he could have been converted as early as 43–44 AD during Paul and Barnabas' first work in Antioch (Acts 11). He was probably among *some of the others* (Acts 15:2) who accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem for the purpose of challenging the teachers who wanted to bind circumcision as being necessary to salvation.

### **During Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey (AD 54–58)**

Titus was sent to Corinth at least twice. Did he personally deliver 1 Corinthians while Timothy and Erastus traveled through Macedonia, Acts 19:22. Titus was expected to stand firm through whatever reaction the Corinthians had to the sharp rebukes of Paul's writing. After delivering the letter to Corinth, Titus was supposed to meet up with Paul in Troas. For some reason, Titus caught up with Paul in Macedonia. To Paul's great relief, the Corinthians had received 1 Corinthians in a good light. 2 Corinthians 8:16 tells us Titus delivered 2 Corinthians to them.

### **On Crete**

After Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey was completed, we hear nothing of Titus until Titus 1:5 where Paul mentions him as being left in Crete. We assume Paul left Titus there after being released from his first Roman imprisonment—probably in 63 AD. In Titus 3:12, Paul requests that Titus meet him in Nicopolis, where they would spend the winter. Nicopolis was located in southwestern Greece and would have been a central meeting point since Paul would have been coming from Macedonia and Titus from Crete. In the spring of AD 64 it is thought that Paul and Titus traveled to Spain—although we have no other evidence for this than tradition. Titus' whereabouts are mentioned one last time in 2 Timothy 4:10 where Paul says he had departed for Dalmatia—probably on an evangelistic endeavor. The



region of Dalmatia is northwest of Greece—in present day Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia. We estimate that Titus' missions into Dalmatia to be around 67–68. Tradition holds that Titus lived out his years on Crete, teaching in congregations on the island. We have no record of his death.

### Background

These books are probably Paul's last—written in 66–67. Timothy found himself in Ephesus dealing with false doctrine, disorder in worship, the need for qualified leadership, and materialism. Titus was on Crete working to strengthen the church there. Like Timothy, Titus seems to be one of Paul's most trusted associates. They both were not afraid to deal with testy brethren who seemed determined to *walk disorderly*. The work of these men cannot be undervalued.

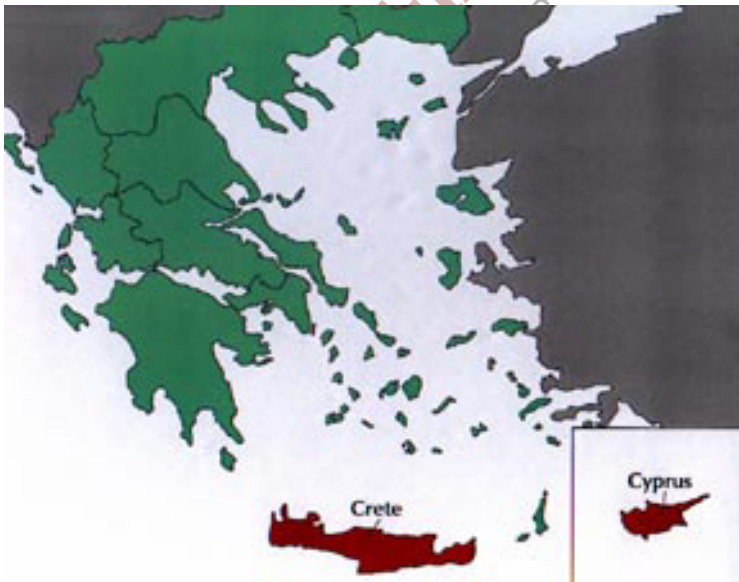


Figure 2: Tradition says that Titus lived out his years preaching on the island of Crete

## Outline of 1 Timothy

### Chapter 1—The Prevalence of False Doctrine

- 1:1–3—The prevalence of false doctrine
- 1:4–11—Strange doctrines and lawless deeds
- 1:12–17—Paul’s personal testimony
- 1:18–20—Fight the good fight

### Chapter 2—Prayer and Worship

- 2:1–8—Public prayer
- 2:9–15—Role of women in worship

### Chapter 3—Leadership Qualifications

- 3:1–7—Elders’ qualifications
- 3:8–13—Deacons’ qualifications
- 3:14–16—How to conduct oneself in the house of the Lord

### Chapter 4—Practicing Godliness

- 4:1–5—Descriptions of false teachers
- 4:6–16—How to progress as a Christian

### Chapter 5—Instructions for Widows and Elders

- 5:1–16—Guidelines on helping widows
- 5:17–20—Concerning elders
- 5:21–25—The need for impartiality

### Chapter 6—Final Instructions

- 6:1–2—The need for service
- 6:3–5—Problems of false teachers
- 6:6–19—Concerning material possessions
- 6:20–21—Guard what has been entrusted to you

## Outline of 2 Timothy

### Chapter 1—Retaining the Standard

- 1:1–11—Timothy’s sincere faith
- 1:12–18—Retain the standard of sound words

**Chapter 2—The Need for Strength**

2:1–7—Being a good soldier of Christ Jesus

2:8–13—Be faithful

2:14–26—Be a diligent worker

**Chapter 3—Getting Ready for Difficult Times**

3:1–9—Character traits of men to avoid

3:10–17—Continue in the things you have learned

**Chapter 4—Farewell**

4:1–8—I have fought the good fight

4:9–22—Personal concerns

**Outline of Titus**

**Chapter 1—Greetings and Leadership Qualifications**

1:1–4—Greetings

1:5–9—Qualifications of elders

1:10–16—Problems rebellious men cause

**Chapter 2—Family Relationships**

2:1—Speak . . . sound doctrine

2:2—Instructions for older men

2:3–5—Instructions for older & younger women

2:6–8—Instructions for young men

2:9–10—Instructions for slaves

2:11–15—Let no one disregard you

**Chapter 3—Godly living**

3:1–11—Avoid foolish controversies and genealogies

3:12–15—Personal concerns

## —Lesson 1—

# Paul's Relationship with Timothy

## 1 Timothy 1

### 1:1–2—Paul's true child in the faith

This letter is addressed to Timothy—one of Paul's closest companions. It is believed Timothy came from Lystra and would have been baptized on Paul's first missionary journey. When Paul returned to Lystra on his second missionary journey we read of Timothy traveling with Paul's missionary party. Timothy would spend several decades working with congregations throughout Macedonia, Greece, and Asia Minor. That the two men had a strong relationship with each other is clearly seen throughout 1 and 2 Timothy and in Philippians 2:19–24 and 1 Corinthians 4:17. Besides Timothy, only Titus is mentioned as being Paul's *true child in the faith*, Titus 1:4.

### 1:3–11—Timothy's mission at Ephesus

This letter is written by Paul around AD 64 from Macedonia. In the middle of AD 63 Paul had been released from his first imprisonment in Rome and immediately began visiting many of the congregations he had worked to establish during the AD 50s. He and Timothy met up in Ephesus where they worked to protect the congregation from an increasing influence of false teachers within the church who were clinging to the Law of Moses as a basis for justification. The church at Ephesus had been in existence for over ten years at this point and was at a very critical juncture in its work. This is why Paul instructed Timothy to remain at Ephesus charging him to *instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines*. This would have been a large task, and some have speculated that Timothy's timid spirit (2 Timothy. 1:7) led to his reluctance to stay in Ephesus.

Timothy's mission was clear and concise. He was to withstand those who would compromise the simplicity of the gospel. The word instruct is important. MacArthur notes that this was like a "military command—

demanding a subordinate to obey an order from a superior” (7). Timothy would need to hold his ground against these teachers as he is operating under the authority of an apostle. Even though the church was in its infancy, it should be understood that the first century Christians were expected to abide in the apostles doctrine (6:3–4). Six years earlier Paul warned the Ephesian elders of a time when *savage wolves would come in not sparing the flock*, Acts 20:29. How long they remained on alert after Paul’s departure is unknown (Acts 20:31), but it is clear by this time that false doctrine was gaining ground with a few—perhaps even the elders of the church? Are the certain ones Paul mentions in 1 Timothy 1:3 Hymenaeus & Alexander? Probably not, but there is speculation that there would have been a few within the congregation that would have been sympathetic to the false doctrine these two men advocated. Timothy was to charge them not to teach any other doctrine. According to Galatians 1:6–9, there is only one doctrine. See also 1 Timothy 6:3–4. In the New Testament, the only time the term “doctrines” is mentioned in a plural sense, it is speaking of the doctrines of men.

Those who were soft on doctrine were relying on man-made additions to God’s law. This has always been the case with false teachers—loving to interweave doctrines of men with the doctrine of Christ. The false teachers in Ephesus had lost their focus from the true gospel and had turned aside to something pointless.

The goal behind Timothy’s instruction was *love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith* (1:5). Contrast this to circumstances often created by false doctrine: conflict and endless disputes. It is in such cases that the focus is removed from Jesus to that of the teacher(s). There is little doubt that this was going on since Paul mentions the false teachers were not as important as they thought they were (1:7). These misunderstood the Law of Moses—failing to grasp that it was temporary in nature (Colossians 2:14–16). When the doctrine of Christ is adhered to, peace and love abound! Keeping this in mind, Timothy would have increased confidence in holding up the truth.

Paul says, *the law is good, if one uses it lawfully* (1:8). What was the original intention for the law? For one, it revealed God's righteous standard of right and wrong. It also brings to light the sin of the lawless with hopes of bringing them to God. See also Romans 3:20. The law was created "for the restraint of evil-doing" (Guthrie 70). The Jewish teachers long had things misconstrued in thinking that law-keeping creates righteousness. Rather, the law reminds us of our sin and the need for tremendous and abundant mercy of God. If one had ever had a chance of being saved by the law—it would have been Paul who was trained according to the strictest aspects of the law (Acts 22:3). Yet, it was he who pleaded for mercy! (1 Timothy 1:15–16; Romans 7:24)

In verses nine and ten, Paul speaks of lawless ones who had no regard for holy and righteous things. The first six items Paul mentions might be classified as *sins against God*. The final descriptions might be described as *crimes against men* (Guthrie 71). The term *sound doctrine* (1:10) is also mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:3 and Titus 2:1. Sound is used in 1 Timothy 6:3; 2 Timothy 1:13; and Titus 1:13. "Sound" is derived from the same word that we use for "Hygienic" today. "It promotes spiritual health" (Hendrickson 70). Unsound doctrine leads to spiritual disease and death. May we realize the importance of adhering to sound doctrine (the apostle's doctrine) today! God had *entrusted* the gospel to Paul. His great trust in the blessed gospel never escaped his mind. Paul treated his responsibilities seriously, and constantly risked his life to spread the gospel wherever he went.

### **1:12–17—Paul's appreciation for God's mercy**

Paul had a constant attitude of gratefulness. He was extremely unworthy to have the honor to preach the gospel, but felt thankful for the opportunity to bring sinners to repentance. One remembers his former life as expressed in Philippians 3:3–6. Note how he would have been considered *blameless* under the law—but yet here is a man who was still in need of God's mercy and forgiveness! This is the message of the gospel! While God expects us to keep His law, we are still in total need of His mercy and grace to be saved! Paul preached under the full authority of God and had been appointed by Him to preach in His service! In Acts 22:15 Ananias told Saul he was

to be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard. God's mercy has shown that even a man such as Paul could be saved! Someone who had blasphemed, persecuted, and injured the cause of Christ had the opportunity for salvation!

He did these things in ignorance thinking that he had the truth and was protecting the Jewish religion. God recognized Paul's potential for spreading the gospel and it was His mercy that allowed Paul to do that. Thus Paul says, *the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus (1:14).*

Patton (25) notes *this is a faithful saying*, appears five times in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Timothy 2:11; and Titus 3:8). This phrase notes a summary of an important doctrine. Paul states the fundamental of the gospel—*Jesus came into the world to save sinners*. He came to save them! Jesus alone provides deliverance from eternal damnation! He can rescue us from the guilt and slavery of sin! He can liberate us from the sentence of eternal death! It is through His blood that we have fellowship with God and have hope of everlasting life. This was the mission of Jesus (Luke 19:10; John 3:16). Paul also notes that he was the chief of sinners. No doubt, he was thinking of his life before becoming a Christian. Remember 1:13? Paul mentions that he serves as an example of the *perfect patience* of God. No person is beyond the saving power of Jesus Christ! The Greek word here means “an outline, a sketch—plan, a first draft, a preliminary model” (Barclay 48). If God's grace and mercy could extend to such a person as Paul—there is no doubt God will save others! You can read of the accounts of Paul's personal testimony of coming to Christ in Acts 9, 22, 26, Galatians 1–2, and Philippians 3:1–14. The remembrance of Paul's former life was always present for Paul. Even though he had been deeply stained with sin, he had been cleansed through Christ. In verse 17, Paul gives all the glory and honor to God!

### **1:18–20—Fight the good fight**

What charge is Paul talking about? See 1:3. The very future of the church depended upon Timothy to uphold the truth of the gospel. Paul had full

faith and trust in his son in the faith. He is intent in helping the young evangelist see there was no room for failure! Timothy was expected to fight the good fight. He would have to actively resist the infiltration of false doctrine fighting both an offensive and defensive battle. Holding on to the truth involves clinging to it with great fervor. Jude 3 comes to mind: *contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints* (NASU). Like Timothy, we must come to understand that there is no room for failure! Our mission is of utmost importance! In an age where doctrinal truth is deemphasized and everything is relative upholding God's standard must be seen as urgent and absolutely necessary!

Some had gone against their conscience and allowed their faith to *suffer shipwreck*. Paul mentions Hymenaeus and Alexander as examples. Hymenaeus is also mentioned in 2 Timothy 2:17 as saying *the resurrection (had) already taken place*. Whether the Alexander mentioned in 1 Timothy 1 is the same person as mentioned in Acts 19:33 and 2 Timothy 4:14–15 cannot be proven. Alexander (then and now) is a very common name. Hendrickson (87) points out “these men were leaders among the Ephesian heretics. They were self-righteous people who yearned to be law teachers, although they understood neither the words which they were speaking nor the themes on which they were harping with such confidence” (1:7). These men had continued in their teaching to the point that now there could be no fellowship with them. *Handed over to Satan* is also used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:5 in reference to the man who had his father's wife. Just as the situation in Corinth demanded action on part of the brethren—there is no doubt the circumstances in Ephesus had risen to the point where fellowship had to be severed with these men because of their insistence in teaching false doctrine. Remember the end view of church discipline. Its aim is to restore a person back to a proper relationship with God. There can be little doubt that Paul was desirous that these men come to repentance and cease their blasphemy against sound doctrine.

Thus ends chapter one. Paul's son in the faith, Timothy, had a huge task before him, but with God on His side success would come! No doubt Paul's letter to Timothy would have been one of great encouragement. Those older



and more mature in the faith must never shirk their duty in encouraging younger ones, who can be often subject to discouragement. Here we are presented with the tender relationship between two soldiers in the faith. May we seek to grow closer to one another so that we can do our best to *consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds* (Hebrews 10:24 NASU).

## Questions for Discussion

1. We see a special and tender relationship between Paul and Timothy. By the time 1 Timothy is written, how long had Paul & Timothy worked together in spreading the gospel? Describe when/where they worked together.
2. How much had Paul been involved with the church at Ephesus?
3. What was Timothy's mission at Ephesus?
4. Read 1:4–7. See if you can find three things that would help one identify false teaching.
5. How dangerous were the false doctrines that were being taught within the Ephesian congregation?

6. From where does false doctrine originate?
  
7. What are some effective ways in dealing with the teaching of false doctrine?
  
8. Read 1:7 and 1:12. Contrast the motivation between Paul's teaching and that of the certain ones who taught false doctrine.
  
9. What is the purpose of the law? How were the people Timothy dealt with using it improperly?
  
10. What is sound doctrine? How can it be identified?
  
11. Was Paul saved by grace? Describe the process by which Paul was saved.
  
12. In what way was Paul an example for the rest of those who would be saved?
  
13. How can we fight the good fight of faith?

14. Find some passages that compare the Christian to a soldier. How are a good soldier and a good Christian comparable?
  
15. What does it mean to keep faith and (have) a good conscience? (See 1:19.)
  
16. How can our faith suffer shipwreck?
  
17. Of what sin were Hymenaeus and Alexander guilty of?
  
18. What is the aim of church discipline?
  
19. Describe the impact of the encouragement you have received from those older and more mature in the faith. How can we look for opportunities to make a difference for those younger in the faith?
  
20. Is there someone within your congregation that you can “adopt” as a son/daughter in the faith?