



WHAT I WISH I'D KNOWN SOONER

A Weekly Devotional
From 1 Timothy

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From 1 Timothy**

Eagle Brook Church

WELCOME!

We are excited to be diving into the Book of 1 Timothy together! There are so many truths in these verses that can apply to our everyday lives.

HERE'S HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

- 1 Every week, start by reading the chapter from 1 Timothy in the New Testament in your Bible.**
- 2 Next, read the devotional thought and dive into the action item.**
- 3 Grab a notebook and write down some thoughts and what you're praying for.**

We find it works best to set aside a specific time each day to spend with God. Maybe it's early in the morning, on your lunch break, or right before bed. If you miss a week, that's okay! You can pick up right where you left off.

We're so proud of the steps you're taking to become more like Jesus every day. And we're praying this book breathes fresh life into the time you spend with Him.

Love,

Your Campus Pastors

The goal of such instruction is LOVE – the LOVE that comes from a PURE HEART, a GOOD CONSCIENCE, and SINCERE FAITH.

1 Timothy 1:5

A LITTLE INTRODUCTION

The Book of 1 Timothy was written by the Apostle Paul. Paul was a big deal. He wrote almost two-thirds of the New Testament and played a huge role in shaping what Christianity is today. Paul was a Jewish scholar and teacher, but after putting his faith in Jesus, he traveled the world as a missionary. He was intelligent, passionate, and fearless. In his travels, he crossed paths with a young man named Timothy. Paul eventually led Timothy to faith and partnered with him in ministry.

This situation would be like if the best person in your field of work decided to take you under their wing. That is the kind of relationship Paul and Timothy had. Paul was Timothy's pastor, mentor, and friend. They traveled the world, telling everyone about the love and freedom they had experienced in Christ, and they invited others to do the same. In their travels, they went to a city called Ephesus.

In Ephesus, there was a church community that Paul gave pastoral leadership and guidance. The Book of 1 Timothy has two main points. Paul is writing to Timothy to inform him of the issues happening in the church. Some people were teaching things counter to the gospel, and Paul is challenging Timothy to address them. Timothy is young, and Paul is encouraging him to be wise and bold. Paul is also making the point that believing in Jesus will have observable changes in the way we live. People who believe in the gospel will live differently than those who don't. Two thousand years later, Paul's letter to Timothy still rings true for us today as we do our best to live out the gospel in our everyday lives.

WEEK ONE

THE BEST KIND OF INSTRUCTION

Read 1 Timothy 1

The goal of such instruction is love—the love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith. 1 Timothy 1:5

My college English professor had a tremendous impact on my life. He would saunter around class interweaving William Butler Yeats, Wu-Tang Clan, and the Psalms into his daily instruction. But it wasn't his colorful lectures that touched my heart; it was the love he had for his students. Every quarter, he would schedule time with each of his students to hear about their life, offer feedback on their work, and counsel them on their academic future.

The best bosses, coaches, and teachers are always motivated by love. In this verse, Paul gives Timothy the key to having a heart that is motivated by God's love.

A pure heart..

We are all being formed continuously by the voices we listen to. Jesus said, "Watch out for false prophets..." A prophet in that day meant anyone who told you how to live. If you want to have a heart full of God-love, you need to be careful of the voices that you allow to shape your thoughts, emotions, and intentions.

How might God be calling me to guard what is shaping my heart?

A good conscience.

Once my daughter decided it would be a good idea to hit her brother with a stick she found in our backyard. When confronted about why his forehead was bleeding, she said, "I have no idea." This little untruth nagged at her conscience all afternoon until at the dinner table she broke down and told us what we already knew. A conscience that is carrying guilt and shame isn't free to offer the love we were created to give others. Through confession, we can operate from a clear conscience that allows us to treasure others as we ought.

What unconfessed things might be holding me back from loving others well?

A sincere faith.

The kind of love we need to offer others can only come from an authentic experience of Christ's love for us. "We love because [Christ] first loved us." Without experiencing his grace, we will never understand how to extend grace to those around us when they need it.

How might I be trying to love others from my own strength rather than my relationship with Christ?

Take some time to ask Jesus about these things today, and let's be motivated by love.

WEEK TWO

YOU'VE GOT MAIL

Read 1 Timothy 2

He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time. 1 Timothy 2:6

Do you remember the first time you ever got a letter? I know it is becoming rarer in our digital communication age. Yet, I still find something magical about finding a handwritten card or letter in my mailbox, especially if there's a Chik-fil-A gift card inside. After all, a Spicy Deluxe Chicken Sandwich can change your life. Getting a message at just the right time, knowing someone took the time to reach out, to write a note, to send a gift can be just the encouragement we need to keep moving forward in life.

Regardless if you have or haven't gotten a letter lately, God has crafted a message that can change your life forever. The core of this message is that Jesus gave his life to "purchase freedom for everyone." Freedom for everyone. Think of that. Freedom for the sinner and the saint, the selfish and the selfless, everyone. Paul says this message of hope and freedom came to the world "at just the right time." Maybe this is the right time for you to embrace the freedom that is possible through a relationship with Jesus.

Perhaps this is the right time to share the message of Jesus with a friend. With God, it's always the right time to embrace freedom. And that sure beats a Chik-fil-A gift card.

Spend time this week reflecting on the freedom you have in Christ. Write down 5 ways you have experienced freedom since inviting Jesus into your life.

Write down 5 people in your life who need to experience that freedom.

WEEK THREE

WALK THE TALK

Read 1 Timothy 3

He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money. He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. 1 Timothy 3:2-4

When I was reading 1 Timothy 3, I was reminded that being a follower of Jesus is not just about attending church on the weekends, listening to worship music, or looking at my Bible app. Rather, it's about how I actually live out my life, including the details of my life and what I do when no one else is around. These verses are giving us guidance on how we need to live out our lives in all the details. We shouldn't just talk to make ourselves sound all spiritual—we need to walk the talk!

All of us can be leaders and reach for more in our walk with Jesus by taking two steps:

Surrender to God Daily

I usually think about myself first and how things affect me. But I keep learning my need to put Jesus first because of what he did for me! He loves me unconditionally and died for me that I may have life! When that hits me, I want to serve and respond to Him with my love.

Be Humble

You lead people to Jesus when you show them a caring heart. My ability to love those around me always comes down to how strong my heart is connected to God's heart. When I get a glimpse of God's incredible grace for me, I am humbled to love and care for those around me.

What concern or worry do you need to surrender to God today? Who do you need to connect with today and show them your love and care?

WEEK FOUR

YOU AREN'T DISQUALIFIED

Read 1 Timothy 4

Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. 1 Timothy 4:12.

When I was in middle school, I really wanted to play football. I loved watching football and playing with friends. The problem was, I had never played football on a team before, and I was pretty small. Because of that, I decided not to join the team. Now, it's not like I missed out on my chance for an NFL contract or something, but I did miss out on some fun experiences because I felt like I wasn't qualified. Have you ever felt like that? Maybe there was something you wanted to do or felt like you should do, but there was something that held you back. Perhaps you felt like you didn't have what it takes or that there was something in your life that disqualified you.

As we read 1 Timothy chapter 4, we find out that Timothy faces some tough challenges as he leads the church. In the face of this challenge, Paul encourages Timothy in verse 12 that his age doesn't disqualify him from leadership.

Even though he is young, Paul challenges him to be an example for everyone by the way he lives and the way he speaks. In the same way, God wants each of us to be an example to those around us with our words and actions. No matter what you think might hold you back, God wants you to live a life of love, faith, and purity so that others would see your example and be drawn to him.

This week, answer the question, "What is holding me back from doing what God wants?" (your age, past, failures, etc.) Then, fill in the blank below as your own version of 1 Timothy 4:12. Put this up on your bathroom mirror, car dashboard, or wherever you will see it.

"Don't let anyone think less of you because _____. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity."

WEEK FIVE

IT STARTS AT YOUR FRONT DOOR

Read 1 Timothy 5

But those who won't care for their relatives, especially those in their own household, have denied the true faith. 1 Timothy 5:8

I wish I would have known sooner that following Jesus starts at my own front door.

I didn't grow up in a home where God was the first priority. Instead, it was work first, followed by community engagement, and then sliding into third was family.

I became a follower of Jesus at 18, and so I began working at putting God first, but after that, I continued to model the priorities I saw growing up. That is how I lived, until thankfully, one night, my wife asked, "Who is getting your best? Where does your family fit into your priorities?"

After some reflection, it became clear that I was giving my best energy and time outside of my home. I knew I needed to make my family a priority. Just like 1 Timothy 5:8 says, "But those who won't care for their relatives, especially those in their own household, have denied the true faith."

To live out my faith, I had to keep God as my first priority and then move my family to the next spot on the list. This meant reprioritizing my entire life and learning to say no. Because the reality is every yes comes with a no.

Saying yes to an extra project at work meant saying no to date night with my wife.

Saying yes to volunteering every day with the tennis team at a local high school meant saying no to playing with my kids after work. I had to learn to say no to good things so that I could say yes to the greater things—my family.

I wish I would have known sooner that caring for my family was vital to my faith. But as they say, the best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago; the second-best time is today.

So, where is family is on your priority list? What are the things getting your best attention and energy? What practical things can you do today to get those priorities in order?

WEEK SIX

PURSUING THE RIGHT PRIORITIES

Read 1 Timothy 6

For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows. But you, Timothy, are a man of God; so run from all these evil things. Pursue righteousness and a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. 1 Timothy 6:10-11

We often misquote the beginning of this passage—“money is the root of all evil”—but that’s not what the passage says. It says, “the love of money” is the root of all kinds of evil.

It’s easy to be so consumed with the love of something that we lose sight of where it belongs in relation to our relationship with Jesus. For many, it’s the love of money that takes priority. No doubt, we need money to live. We need it to pay our bills, take care of our families, buy the essentials—the list goes on.

This love is not limited to money, however. It’s anything that lands above God in your list of priorities. What is it for you? Is it a hobby? Is it something you own? Is it something you wish you owned?

There is nothing wrong with having money, hobbies, or stuff. But has it consumed you? Do you have an unhealthy craving for more of it? The love of money and possessions has the potential to create more problems, as Paul describes it in verse 10. So, as followers of Jesus, what do we do?

Paul challenges Timothy (and us) to run from these things. Don’t pursue and fall in love with money—instead, pursue righteousness and a godly life. Pursue Jesus and your faith in him, along with perseverance and gentleness. Then, the rest of our priorities fall into the correct order.

What are your priorities? Take a few minutes to make two lists. List the top 3-4 priorities in your life right now. Be honest. Is your job number 1 on that list? Make a second list and reprioritize in a way that sets you up to live a godly life. Pray that God would help you shift your love towards him as you live out that second list.

WHO IS YOUR PAUL?

We all have heard those stories of people who turned their lives around. They spent their high school or college years living wildly and partying, addicted to alcohol or drugs. Their life was headed in one direction—and now they are on a different path with their trust in Jesus!

Sadly, we have also heard or seen someone who was a strong voice for God and now has turned their back on him. Maybe they've given into a sinful lifestyle, destructive habit, or flat out denied Christ. It's hard to know what went wrong.

In 1 Timothy, Paul encourages a young leader, Timothy, to keep the faith. He says, **"Timothy, my son, here are my instructions for you...may they help you fight well in the Lord's battles. Cling to your faith in Christ and keep your conscience clear. For some people have deliberately violated their consciences; as a result, their faith has been shipwrecked."** 1 Timothy 1:18, 19

I've seen the benefits of having a Paul, someone who's more experienced than I and whom I admired. Steve, Charles, Byron, Eric, and Randy are just a few men who have spoken words of wisdom over me and given me advice. They've encouraged, challenged, and prayed for me.

We all need others to help guide us through life's battles. Who is your Paul? Who gives you spiritual advice and wisdom? Who prays over you?

Think of one person whom you admire as a godly person and ask if you can spend 30-60 minutes talking. Bring a few good questions. Take it further and spend some time thinking about the people who have been your spiritual mentors. Thank them!

Cling to your

FAITH IN CHRIST

and keep your

CONSCIENCE
CLEAR

Why Have a Timothy?

WHO WILL TAKE YOUR PLACE?

You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others. 2 Timothy 2:2

When you're asked to identify a person who influenced your life, who comes to mind? If someone asked young Timothy who most influenced his life, he would undoubtedly have responded, "Paul."

Paul knew his life and ministry had an expiration date. If his legacy were to continue beyond his life, it would have to advance through others. And for that to happen, Paul would need to equip emerging leaders long before nearing his final days on earth.

What did Paul do? He prayerfully evaluated potential candidates and selected Timothy. (Acts 16:1-3) Then, Paul invested time and resources to equip Timothy to serve and lead others. As Timothy grew in his aptitude and ability, Paul strategically released more responsibility to him. (Philippians 2:20, 22) After years of mentoring, Paul acknowledged Timothy as his "true son in the faith." (1 Timothy 1:2)

As the end of his life drew near, Paul realized it was time to pass the baton of leadership to the one who would take his place. To ensure that his legacy would continue beyond both Timothy's life as well as his own, Paul commissioned Timothy to "teach those who will teach others."

Think about your legacy. If the influence of your life is to reach beyond your life, you too will need a "Timothy," someone who will extend the impact of your life for years to come. Regardless of your age, it's never too soon to invest in your replacement. Your legacy rests on your willingness and commitment to equip others to take your place.

Replacing yourself is critical regardless of your age or role. If you're in high school sports, who will replace you on the team when you graduate? In your career, who will replace you in your current role when you get a promotion? This week, prayerfully identify a potential "Timothy" from among your circle of influence and begin a mentoring relationship to help prepare them to one day take your place.

