

1 Timothy 1 • The Goal of Christian Instruction

Introduction

Once upon a time I foolishly complained to God that He demands that I love everyone as Christ loves them and that it's impossible since I'm not Christ. He pointed me to 1 Timothy 1:5, the precise blueprint for how Christ's love is obtained in our life. It's worth noting that throughout Paul's discourse to Timothy that there is really no mention of emotions or feelings; the focus is on the Truth and what one does with it.

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope,

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

³As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, ⁴nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith.

⁵But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

[Read v.1-2]

Q: If you've already read through 1 Timothy, what is the word that jumps out in v.1 that is a recurring theme throughout?

A: "Commandment". Among other variations, Paul uses "command", "commandment", "instruct", "instruction", and "conduct" 10 times throughout his letter to Timothy.

Application: Paul's encouragement of others is **ALWAYS** provided within the context of God's truth. On what is our interaction with fellow believers based? Is it provided within the framework of biblical truth or does it rely on pure emotion?

[Read v.3-4]

Q: What does Paul define as bad teaching, as a waste of time?

- "Strange doctrines"
- "Myths"
- "Endless genealogies"

Q: To what does he contrast these things in v.4?

- "...mere speculation..." Basically they don't lead anywhere but just continue an endless circle of conjecture and talk.
- "...faith..." Whereas focusing on God's teachings result in something tangible, a visible result of its effect in one's life.

Application: Have you ever become involved in a discussion about myths, theories, philosophy—whether about the Bible, God or End Times? How fruitful was it? Why do you suppose so many of those discussions lead nowhere? [Hint: They're lacking the truth. What good is a compass if it points in whatever direction it desires?]

[Read v.5]

Q: What is Paul's inference in the difference between "bad" teaching (aka "instruction") versus "good"?

A: "Bad" teaching focuses on speculation and never results in concrete changes in our life; "good" instruction provides the tangible results of love.

Q: How is biblical love made manifest in our life?

- **A Pure Heart.** Another way of stating this is having an "unpolluted" heart, one that shuns and rejects sin. It's not living a divided life that allows some elements of the world to live side-by-side with God's truth.
- **A Good Conscience.** Not just an intellectual knowledge of what is right and wrong according to God's truth, but living according to it. It's never hesitating to take the right path nor regretting the choice.

- **A Sincere Faith.** Both the Greek and Hebrew words for “faith” can be translated either as “faith” or “faithfulness”. Paul is speaking of the quality of one’s commitment to being a faithful bride to Christ and Christ alone.

Q: So can we measure one’s love? Is it according to pure emotion?

A: It’s according to the purity of one’s heart (rejecting all sinful behavior), sensitivity of one’s conscience (obedience to the right choices), and sincerity of one’s faithfulness (whole devotion to Christ alone and no other).

Application: *How do you measure up personally? Do you see your love as being rooted in your heart, conscience and quality of walk? On what do you need the most work?*

Application: *How would you “love” others if your love was rooted in rejecting all sin, always choosing God’s way, and wholly devoted to God? Would you simply “love” someone regardless of **THEIR** heart, conscience and faith? How is biblical love therefore different from the world’s definition of love?*

[Read v.6-7]

Q: What happens to those who do not pursue God’s teaching “...from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith”?

A: They constantly “turn aside to fruitless discussion.” In other words, they engage in conversations that lead **AWAY** from addressing the issues of their heart, conscience, and faith and therefore fail to achieve biblical love.

Application: *When we avoid talking about the quality of our heart, conscience, and faith, we are essentially going nowhere spiritually. What can you do for yourself personally to change this? How would you change your interaction with others?*

[Read v.8-11]

Q: IF one possessed the traits of v.5, why would the Law be a secondary consideration?

A: Because a pure heart, good conscience, and sincere faith are all **NATURALLY** obedient to God’s Law. One isn’t checking spiritual boundaries of right and wrong when one is living obediently from the heart, mind and soul.

⁶For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, ⁷wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.

⁸But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ⁹realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers ¹⁰and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, ¹¹according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

¹²I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, ¹³even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; ¹⁴and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. ¹⁶Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. ¹⁷Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

¹⁸This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight, ¹⁹keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. ²⁰Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.

[Read v.12-17]

Q: How does Paul's mini-dissertation in v.12-14 relate to his teaching points thus far? Is he changing the subject?

A: This is a personal application of Christ's teaching in his own life. Paul is pointing out that change came about in his own life not by what he did but by what Christ did.

Q: How might the teaching of v.5 be applied to v.16?

A: If Paul has allowed a changed heart, conscience, and faith through Christ, Paul becomes a visible, tangible proof to others of Christ.

Application: Share an experience when someone saw "something different" in you, evidence that led them to a knowledge of Christ over and above just a knowledge of you as an individual.

[Read v.18-20]

Q: Were prophetic utterances all the guarantee Timothy needed to ensure a quality, spiritual life?

A: No. The attainment of spiritual goals is specified by Paul as having to

- "fight the good fight" (v.18) (Keeping one's heart pure.)
- "keeping faith" (v.19) (Remaining faithful to Christ alone.)
- "a good conscience" (v.19) (Clinging to the right path.)

In other words, Timothy needed to continue in obedience and faithfulness.

Q: What is the implication in contrasting Timothy with Hymenaeus and Alexander?

A: All of them were at one time faithful and productive Christians, perhaps all were even church leaders. However, Timothy's faithfulness did not waiver as opposed to that of the others. It's the contrast of following through with obedience to spiritual knowledge as opposed to thinking that "knowing" is simply enough.

Q: How is Paul's definition of biblical love put into action in the case of Hymenaeus and Alexander? How could someone that truly "loves" someone hand them over to Satan?

A: They have chosen to allow sin in their life, or to not follow what they know to be God's direction, or to no longer live completely devoted to God alone, or any combination of these things. Biblical love does not allow others to be deceived from the truth about their choices.

Application: Is there someone with whom you've avoided discussing the spiritual contradiction of their life, someone whose behavior continues to lead them into sin? Are you afraid of damaging your relationship with them by bringing it up? Do you see the greater responsibility you have in regard to helping to repair their relationship with God, even at the expense of your own?