

# I & II Timothy

## Bible Book of the Month

These two books of the Bible are letters from the apostle Paul to his younger colleague Timothy. Paul writes personally and pastorally. We “overhear” Paul’s encouragement and instruction.

Timothy first appears in the Bible as a disciple from Lystra (Acts 16:1-3), a town in modern-day Turkey. Paul recruited Timothy to travel with himself and Silas. Timothy was already a disciple. He was the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer and a Greek father. Timothy was well-spoken of by the believers in Lystra and Iconium. His name appears frequently in Acts and Paul’s letters as a friend and trusted associate. Sometimes he is with Paul. Sometimes he is sent ahead or left behind to encourage, teach or strengthen a congregation.

These letters address church issues for the generation or two after the end of the book of Acts. This is one reason that many scholars have concluded that the real author of I and II Timothy is not Paul the apostle but another church leader under Paul’s name. This was an accepted and common practice at that time. If Paul was writing now, this is what he would have said.

Christian leadership is a major theme in these letters. Some of the issues are timeless & the advice applies to us. Other issues were important then but are not part of our life now. Therefore, parts of these letters are crystal clear and helpful. Others are confusing and even troubling. Expect both as you read.

Reading Paul’s encouragement to Timothy will help you grow as a leader.

*But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (I Timothy 6:11-12)*

*For this reason I urge you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and love and self-discipline. (II Timothy 1:6,7)*

Paul’s personal sharing of his own experience is an inspiration for faithfulness and endurance.

*Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect (believers) so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. . . . I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

These letters also address the challenge of false teaching and good order in the church. Some of this applies easily to the church at any time.

*As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. (I Timothy 6:17)*

Other issues are rooted in the context of the latter end of the first century of the church. How do we care for widows who have no income? An organization of widows who devoted themselves to ministry was evolving. Who should be in it? Who should remarry? This is not very helpful for us and we need different answers to care for seniors of all genders.

Among the “difficult to comprehend” statements is one that prohibits women to teach men and one which states “she will be saved through childbearing.” These have perplexed many, including respected Bible scholars over the ages. In cases like these, my best advice is to let Scripture interpret Scripture. The overall witness of Scripture is that each one should fully use the talents which God has granted for God’s service.