

## Book of 1 Timothy

**Title:** This is the first of two inspired letters Paul wrote to his beloved son in the faith. Timothy received his name, which means “one who honors God”, from his mother (Eunice), and grandmother (Lois). Devout Jews who became believers in the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 1:5), and taught Timothy the Old Testament Scriptures from his childhood (2 Tim. 3:15). His father was a Greek (Acts 16:1), who may have died before Timothy met Paul.

Timothy was from Lystra (Acts 16:1-3), a city in the Roman province of Galatia (part of modern Turkey). Paul led Timothy to Christ (1:2, 18; 1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Tim. 1:2), undoubtedly during his ministry in Lystra on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:6-23). When he revisited Lystra on his second missionary journey, Paul chose Timothy to accompany him (Acts 16:1-3). Although Timothy was very young (probably in his late teens or early twenties), since about 15 years later Paul referred to him as a young man (4:12). He had a reputation for godliness (Acts 16:2). Timothy was to be Paul’s disciple, friend, and co-laborer for the rest of the apostle’s life, ministering with him in Berea (Acts 17:14), Athens (Acts 17:15), Corinth (Acts 18:5; 2 Cor. 1:19), and accompanying him on his trip to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4). He was with Paul in his first Roman imprisonment and went to Philippi (Phil. 2:19-23), after Paul’s release. In addition, Paul frequently mentions Timothy in his epistles (Rom. 16:21; 2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; Philemon 1). Paul often sent Timothy to churches as his representative (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10; Phil. 2:19; 1 Thess. 3:2). And 1 Timothy finds him on another assignment, serving as pastor of the church at Ephesus (1:3). According to (Heb. 13:23), Timothy was imprisoned somewhere and released.

**Authorship:** Tradition strongly supports the fact that the apostle Paul was the author of this epistle. The letter claims Paul as its author (1:1), and it is filled with Pauline themes and even contains a brief autobiography (1:11-15). While some critics tend to reject the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles, the letters’ acceptance dates as far back as Polycarp, Clement of Rome, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria.

Paul wrote 1 Timothy from Macedonia (in A.D. 62 or 63). He sent the letter to Timothy, whom he had left at Ephesus. He wrote to encourage Timothy in his responsibilities for overseeing the work of the Ephesian church and possibly the other churches of the province of Asia. It is possible that he wrote this epistle from Philippi after being released from his first imprisonment at Rome.

Many modernist critics delight in attacking the plain statement of Scripture and, for no good reason, deny that Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles (1, 2 Timothy, Titus). Ignoring the testimony of the letters themselves (1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:1), and that of the early church (which is as strong for the Pastoral Epistles as for any of Paul’s epistles, except Romans and 1 Corinthians). These critics maintain that a devout follower of Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles in the second century. As proof, they offer 5 lines of supposed evidence:

- (1) The historical references in the Pastoral Epistles cannot be harmonized with the chronology of Paul’s life given in Acts;

- (2) The false teaching described in the Pastoral Epistles is the fully-developed Gnosticism of the second century;
- (3) The church organizational structure in the Pastoral Epistles is that of the second century, and is too well developed for Paul's day;
- (4) The Pastoral Epistles do not contain the great themes of Paul's theology;
- (5) The Greek vocabulary of the Pastoral Epistles contains many words not found in Paul's other letters, nor in the rest of the New Testament.

**Background – Setting:** This, the first of Paul's epistles to the young pastor Timothy. In it he exhorts Timothy to guard against false doctrine, protect public worship, and develop mature leadership. Much of the epistle deals with the nature of pastoral conduct, including the qualifications of a bishop (pastor), as a true teacher of God's Word. Practical directions for elders and for widows are also given in detail.

Timothy (Greek Timotheos), means "Honoring God" or "Honored by God." He was the son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother named Eunice (2 Tim. 1:5). Timothy was likely one of Paul's own converts from his first missionary journey to Lystra. The apostle calls him "my own son in the faith" (1:2), and "my dearly beloved son" (2 Tim. 1:2). He became Paul's companion on his second missionary journey. After a period of faithful service, he was sent as Paul's apostolic representative to oversee the affairs of the church at Ephesus. This then was the occasion of the writing of his first epistle. Paul was at Ephesus. This then was the occasion of the writing of this first epistle. Paul was giving Timothy detailed instructions for the care and oversight of the church At Ephesus.

**Historical – Theological Themes:** First Timothy is a practical letter containing pastoral instruction from Paul to Timothy (compare 3:14-15). Since Timothy was well versed in Paul's theology, the apostle had no need to give him extensive doctrinal instruction. This epistle does however, express many important theological truths, such as the proper function of the law (1:5-11), salvation (1:14-16; 2:4-6); the attributes of God (1:17); the Fall (2:13-14); the person of Christ (3:16; 6:15-16); election (6:12); and the second coming of Christ (6:14-15).

First Timothy lays the foundation for ordaining elders in the local church. It provides an apostolic guideline for ordaining men to the sacred office of the church. In essence, it is a leadership manual for church organization and administration. Its tone is practical and spiritual. Its theme is that of conduct in the church of the living God.

Christ is presented in this epistle as the "mediator between God and men" (2:5). As such, He is the Savior of all men who believe in Him (4:10). He is the Lord of the church to whom Timothy is responsible as an under-shepherd. Thus, the young pastor is to fulfill his duties in light of God's authority. The term bishop (Greek episkopous), is used synonymously with the term elder (presbuteros), and refers to the same office (Acts 20:17; 28; Titus 1:5-7). The office of deacon (diakonos, "servant"), is a different office, but with similar qualifications.