

Two Year Bible Trek
Week 99
1 Timothy; 2 Timothy

Key Concepts: The key concepts are that the church needs to have an orderly leadership, leading to an orderly life, that the church ought to remain faithful to its founding vision and that its leaders, Timothy in particular, need to continually rekindle their passion for teaching and leading.

Background: Timothy was a Christian before Paul met him and Paul invited him to accompany him on his journeys. These letters offer us a look at the structure and theological struggles of the early church as well as the personal struggles of its leaders.

Brief Summary: Salutation, Love and Christ (1 Timothy 1:1-1:20) The letter opens with the usual address (from Paul, to Timothy, grace from God and Christ), then reminds Timothy that the aim of faith is love and not “vain discussions.” It continues with the comment that the law is for sinners to redirect them. Then Paul admits to being chief among sinners, yet a sinner who has been saved by Jesus Christ (which is why Christ came, to save sinners) for the purpose of being an Apostle.

A Peaceful and Ordered Life (1 Timothy 2:1-2:15) Believers are not only to pray for themselves but for all in authority that all persons might come to believe the truth; which is that Jesus came and offered himself as a ransom for all of humanity. In worship people are to lift their hands, women should dress modestly (no braided hair or jewelry) and be silent (which contradicts other Pauline teaching).

Rules for Leaders (1 Timothy 3:1-16) Paul offers rules for Bishops and Deacons, which implies that the church has some organized leadership structure. The rules essentially say that they are to live lives which reflect the “proper” life as recognized by Roman society. This means not divorced, dignified, temperate, gentle and no lover of money. This section also makes it clear there are women deacons, who must abide by the same rules.

Warning against false teachers (1 Timothy 4:1-4:16) One of the core issues in the early church was false teachers who were offering all sorts of teaching including forbidding marriage and the eating of certain foods. Timothy is not to be led astray by them, but instead stick to the truth as one who has been called to teach and lead.

Rules for the church (1 Timothy 5:1-6:20) Paul offers a series of instructions for widows (young and old), elders and teachers (be honorable), slaves (obey your masters), teachers (do not be greedy and be above reproach), and the rich (they are to generously share what they have).

Salutation and Exhortation (2 Timothy 1:1-1:8) Paul opens with the usual salutation then encourages Timothy to “rekindle” the gifts of leadership that he had been given.

Take Courage (2 Timothy 1:9-2:13) Timothy is challenged to continue to lead even in the face of the kind of opposition that had been faced by Paul, even to the point of going to prison. The image used is that of an athlete who must complete the race in order to be crowned. Paul also reminds Timothy that if Timothy denies Jesus, Jesus will deny him.

Good Advice and conclusion (2 Timothy 2:14-4:5) Timothy is now given advice about avoiding Godless chatter, shunning youthful passions, aiming for faith, love and peace, and avoiding controversies, quarreling, ungodly people, continuing in the faithful life, trusting scripture, and preaching the Word “in season and out of season.” Paul closes with the fact that he has “fought the good fight, finished the race and kept the faith.” He then asks Timothy to come quickly to visit.

1. How does this letter differ theologically from some of Paul’s other letters?
2. What do you make of the command for women to be silent?
3. What do you make of the rules for church leaders?