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1 Timothy

1 Greetings from Paul, an apostle* of Christ Jesus. I am an apostle by the command of God our Savior and Christ Jesus our hope.

2To Timothy. You are [like] a true son to me because you believe.

Grace (*kindness*), mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Warnings Against False Teachings

3I want you to stay in Ephesus. I asked you to do that when I went into Macedonia. Some people there in Ephesus are teaching false things. Stay there so that you can command those people not to teach those false things.

4Tell those people not to give their time to stories that are not true and to long lists of names in family histories. Those things only bring arguments. Those things don't help God's work. God's work is done by faith. **5**The goal of this command is for people to have love. To have this love people must have a pure heart, they must do what they know is right, and they must have true faith. **6**Some people have not done these things. They have wandered away, and now they talk about things that are worth nothing. **7**Those people want to be teachers of the law.* But they don't know what they are talking about. They don't even understand the things that they say they are sure about.

8We know that the law* is good if a person uses it right. **9**We also know that the law is not made for good people. The law is made for people who are against the law and for people who refuse to follow the law. The law is for people who are against God and are

sinful, people who are not holy and have no religion, people who kill their fathers and mothers, murderers, **10**people who do sexual sins, homosexuals, people who sell slaves, people who tell lies, people who speak falsely, and people who do anything that is against the true teaching [of God]. **11**That teaching is part of the Good News* that God gave me to tell. That glorious Good News is from the blessed God.

Thanks for God's Mercy

12I thank Christ Jesus our Lord because he trusted me and gave me this work of serving him. He gives me strength. **13**In the past I spoke against Christ and persecuted him and did things to hurt him. But God gave me mercy because I did not know what I was doing. I did those things when I did not believe. **14**But the grace (*kindness*) of our Lord was fully given to me. And with that grace came the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

15What I say is true, and you should fully accept it: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the worst of those sinners. **16**But I was given mercy. I was given mercy so that in me Christ Jesus could show that he has patience without limit. Christ showed his patience with me, the worst of all sinners. Christ wanted me to be an example for those people who would believe in him and have life forever. **17**Honor and glory to the King that rules forever. He cannot be destroyed and cannot be seen. Honor and glory forever and ever to the only God. Amen.

apostle A person Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

law Probably the Jewish law that God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai. Read Ex. 19 and 20.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

¹⁸Timothy, you are like a son to me. I am giving you a command. This command agrees with the prophecies* that were told about you in the past. I tell you these things so that you can remember those prophecies and fight the good fight [of faith]. ¹⁹Continue to have faith and do what you know is right. Some people have not done this. Their faith has been destroyed. ²⁰Hymenaeus and Alexander are men like that. I have given those men to Satan (*the devil*) so that they will learn not to speak against God.

Some Rules for Men and Women

2 First, I tell you to pray for all people. Talk to God about them. Ask him for the things people need, and be thankful to him. ²You should pray for kings and for all people who have authority (*power*). Pray for those leaders so that we can have quiet and peaceful lives—lives full of worship and respect for God. ³This is good and it pleases God our Savior. ⁴God wants all people to be saved. And he wants all people to know the truth. ⁵There is only one God. And there is only one way that people can reach God. That way is through Jesus Christ, who is also a man. ⁶Jesus gave himself to pay for [the sins of] all people. Jesus is proof [that God wants all people to be saved]. And he came at the right time. ⁷That is why I was chosen to tell the Good News.* That is why I was chosen to be an apostle.* (I am telling the truth. I am not lying.) I was chosen to be a teacher of the non-Jewish people. I teach them to believe and know the truth.

⁸I want men everywhere to pray. These men who lift up their hands in prayer must be pleasing to God. They must not be men who become angry and have arguments.

⁹I also want women to wear clothes that are right for them. Women should dress with respect and right thinking. They should not use fancy braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes to make themselves

beautiful. ¹⁰But they should make themselves beautiful by doing good things. Women who say they worship God should make themselves beautiful in that way.

¹¹A woman should learn while listening quietly and while being fully ready to obey. ¹²I don't allow a woman to teach a man. And I don't allow a woman to have authority (*power*) over a man. The woman must continue in quietness. Why? ¹³Because Adam was made first. Eve was made later. ¹⁴Also, Adam was not the one the devil tricked.* It was the woman who was tricked and became a sinner. ¹⁵But women will be saved in their work of having children. They will be saved if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, and control themselves in the right way.

Leaders in the Church

3 What I say is true: If any person is trying hard to become an elder,* that person is wanting a good work. ²An elder* must be good enough that people cannot rightly criticize him. He must have only one wife. An elder must have self-control and be wise. He must be respected by other people. He must be ready to help people by accepting them into his home. He must be a good teacher. ³He must not drink too much wine, and he must not be a person who likes to fight. He must be gentle and peaceful. He must not be a person who loves money. ⁴He must be a good leader of his own family. This means that his children obey him with full respect. ⁵(If a man does not know how to be a leader over his own family, then he will not be able to take care of God's church.) ⁶But an elder must not be a new believer. It might make a new believer be too proud of himself [if he were made an elder]. Then he would be judged (*condemned*) for his pride the same as the devil was. ⁷An elder must also have the respect of people who are not in the church. Then he will

prophecies Things that prophets said about Timothy's life before those things happened.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

apostle A person Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

Adam was not ... tricked The devil tricked Eve, and Eve caused Adam to sin. Read Gen. 3:1–13.

elder Here (verse 1), literally, "overseer."

elder(s) A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called "overseers" and "pastors" (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God's people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.

not be criticized by other people and be caught in the devil's trap.

Helpers in the Church

⁸In the same way, the men who serve as special helpers* must be men that people can respect. These men must not say things they don't mean, and they must not use their time drinking too much wine. They must not be men who are always trying to get rich by cheating others. ⁹They must follow the faith (truth) that God made known to us and always do what they know is right. ¹⁰You should test those men first. If you find nothing wrong in them, then they can serve as special helpers. ¹¹In the same way, the women* must have the respect of other people. They must not be women who talk evil about other people. They must have self-control and be women who can be trusted in everything. ¹²The men who serve as special helpers must have only one wife. They must be good leaders of their children and their own families. ¹³Those persons who serve in a good way are making an honorable place for themselves. And they will feel very sure of their faith in Christ Jesus.

The Secret of Our Life

¹⁴I hope I can come to you soon. But I am writing these things to you now. ¹⁵Then, even if I cannot come soon, you will know about the things that people must do in the family* of God. That family is the church of the living God. And God's church is the support and foundation of the truth. ¹⁶Without any doubt, the secret of our life of worship is great:

He (Christ) was shown to us
in a human body;
the Spirit* proved that he was right;
he was seen by angels.

men who serve as special helpers Literally, "deacons," a Greek word meaning "servants." These people, it seems, were chosen to serve the church in special ways.

women This can mean women who serve as special helpers, or it might mean the wives of the special helpers.

family Literally, "house." This could mean that God's people are like God's temple.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

[The Good News* about him] was preached
to the nations (non-Jews);
people in the world believed in him;
he was taken up to heaven in glory.

A Warning About False Teachers

⁴The Holy Spirit* clearly says that in the later times some people will stop believing the [true] faith (teaching). Those people will obey spirits that tell lies. And those people will follow the teachings of demons.* ²Those teachings come through people that tell lies and trick other people. Those bad people cannot see what is right and what is wrong. It is like their understanding was destroyed by a hot iron. ³Those bad people say that it is wrong to marry. And they say that there are some foods that people must not eat. But God made those foods. And the people who believe and who know the truth can eat those foods with thanks. ⁴Everything that God made is good. Nothing that God made should be refused if it is accepted with thanks to God. ⁵Everything God made is made holy (pure) by what God has said and by prayer.

Be A Good Servant of Christ Jesus

⁶Tell these things to the brothers and sisters there. This will show that you are a good servant of Christ Jesus. You will show that you are made strong by the words of faith and good teaching that you have followed. ⁷People tell silly stories that don't agree with God's truth. Don't follow [what] those stories [teach]. But teach yourself to truly serve God. ⁸Training (teaching) your body helps you in some ways. But serving God helps you in every way. Serving God brings you blessings in this life and in the future life too. ⁹What I say is true, and you should fully accept it. ¹⁰We hope in the living God. He is the Savior of all people. And in a special way, he is the Savior of all those people who believe in him. This is why we work and struggle.

¹¹Command and teach these things. ¹²You are young, but don't let any person treat you

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with him forever.

demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

like you are not important. Be an example to show the believers how they should live. Show them with the things you say, with the way you live, with your love, with your faith, and with your pure life. ¹³Continue to read the Scriptures* to the people, strengthen them, and teach them. Do those things until I come. ¹⁴Remember to use the gift that you have. That gift was given to you through a prophecy* when the group of elders* put their hands on* you. ¹⁵Continue to do those things. Give your life to doing those things. Then all the people can see that your work is progressing (*continuing*). ¹⁶Be careful in your life and in your teaching. Continue to live and teach rightly. Then you will save yourself and those people who listen to your teaching.

Some Rules for Living with Other People

5 Don't speak angrily to an older man. But talk to him like he was your father. Treat the younger men like brothers. ²Treat the older women like mothers. And treat the younger women with respect like sisters.

³Give honor to (*take care of*) widows* who are really alone. ⁴But if a widow has children or grandchildren, the first thing they need to learn is this: to show respect for their own family [by helping their parents]. When they do this, they will be repaying their parents or grandparents. That pleases God. ⁵If a widow is really alone and without help, then she hopes in God [to take care of her]. That woman prays all the time, night and day. She asks God for help. ⁶But the widow who uses her life to please herself is really dead while she is still living. ⁷Tell the believers there to do these things (*take care of their family*) so that no other person can say they are doing wrong. ⁸A person should take care of all his own people.

Most important, he should take care of his own family. If a person does not do that, then he does not accept the [true] faith (*teaching*). That person is worse than a person who does not believe.

⁹To be added to your list of widows,* a woman must be 60 years old or older. She must have been faithful to her husband. ¹⁰She must be known as a woman who has done good things. I mean good things like raising her children, accepting visitors in her home, washing the feet of God's people, helping people in trouble, and using her life to do all kinds of good things.

¹¹But don't put younger widows* on that list. When they give themselves to Christ, they are often pulled away from him by their strong physical needs. Then they want to marry again. ¹²And they will be judged for that. They will be judged for not doing what they first promised to do. ¹³Also, those younger widows begin to waste their time going from house to house. They also begin to gossip and be busy with other people's lives. They say things they should not say. ¹⁴So I want the younger widows to marry, have children, and take care of their homes. If they do this, then our enemy will not have any reason to criticize them. ¹⁵But some of the younger widows have already turned away to follow Satan (*the devil*).

¹⁶If any woman who is a believer has widows* in her family, then she* should care for them herself. The church should not be troubled to care for them. Then the church will be able to care for the widows who have no living family.

¹⁷The elders* who lead the church in a good way should receive double honor. This is especially true for those elders who do the work of counseling and teaching. ¹⁸Why? Because the Scriptures* say, "When a work animal is doing the work of separating grain, don't cover its mouth [and stop it from eating the grain]."* And the Scriptures also say, "A worker should be given his pay."*

¹⁹Don't listen to a person who accuses an elder.* You should listen to that person only if

Scriptures The Holy Writings—God's message to people through the writers of the Bible.

prophecy Something said about Timothy's life before that thing happened.

elder(s) A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called "overseers" and "pastors" (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God's people. See Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; Tit. 1:7,9.

put their hands on A sign to show that Timothy was being given a special work of God.

widows A widow is a woman whose husband has died.

woman ... she Some Greek copies have: "man or woman ... he/she."

"When a work animal ... grain" Quote from Deut. 25:4.

"A worker should be given his pay" Quote from Lk. 10:7.

there are two or three other people who can say what the elder did wrong. ²⁰Tell those who sin that they are wrong. Do this in front of the whole church. In that way the others will have a warning.

²¹Before God and Jesus Christ and the chosen angels I command you to do these things. But don't judge people before you know the truth. And do these things equally to every person.

²²Think carefully before you put your hands on* any person, [making him an elder]. Don't share in the sins of other people. Keep yourself pure.

²³Timothy, stop drinking only water, and drink a little wine. This will help your stomach, and you will not be sick so often.

²⁴The sins of some people are easy to see. Their sins show that they will be judged. But the sins of some other people are seen only later. ²⁵It is the same with the good things people do. The good things people do are easy to see. But even when those good things are not easy to see, they cannot stay hidden.

6 All people who are slaves should show full respect to their masters. When they do that, then God's name and our teaching will not be criticized. ²Some slaves have masters who are believers. So those slaves and those masters are brothers. But the slaves should not show them any less respect. No! Those slaves should serve those believing masters even better. Why? Because those slaves are helping believers that they love.

False Teaching and True Riches

These are the things you must teach and tell the people to do. ³Some people will teach things that are false. Those people will not agree with the true teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. And they will not accept the teaching that agrees with the true way to serve God. ⁴Those people are proud of what they know, but they understand nothing. Those people are sick with a love for arguing and fighting about words. And that brings jealousy, quarrels, insults, and evil mistrust. ⁵They are always making trouble, because they are people

whose thinking has been confused. They have lost their understanding of the truth. They think that serving God is a way to get rich.

⁶It is true that serving God makes a person very rich, if that person is satisfied with what he has. ⁷When we came into the world, we brought nothing. And when we die, we can take nothing out. ⁸So, if we have food and clothes, we will be satisfied with that. ⁹People who want to become rich bring temptations to themselves. They are caught in a trap. They begin to want many foolish things that will hurt them. Those things ruin and destroy people. ¹⁰The love of money causes all kinds of evil. Some people have left the [true] faith (*teaching*) because they want to get more and more money. But they have caused themselves to be very, very sad.

Some Things You Should Remember

¹¹But you are a man of God. So you should stay away from all those things. Try to live in the right way, serve God, have faith, love, patience, and gentleness. ¹²Keeping your faith is like running a race. Try as hard as you can to win that race. Be sure you get that life that continues forever. You were called to have that life. And you confessed the great truth [about Christ] in a way that many people heard you. ¹³Before God and Christ Jesus I give you a command. Christ Jesus is the One that confessed that same great truth when he stood before Pontius Pilate.* And God is the One that gives life to everything. Now I tell you: ¹⁴Do the things you were commanded to do. Do those things without wrong or blame until the time when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. ¹⁵God will make that happen at the right time. God is the blessed and only Ruler. God is the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords (*rulers*). ¹⁶God is the only One who never dies. God lives in light so bright that men cannot go near it. No person has ever seen God. No person is able to see God. Honor to God and power forever. Amen.

¹⁷Give this command to the people who are rich with the things this world has. Tell them not to be proud. Tell those rich people to hope

put your hands on A sign of giving authority or power to another person.

Pontius Pilate Roman governor of Judea from 26 A.D. to 36 A.D. Read Luke 23:1–3.

in God, not their money. Money cannot be trusted. But God takes care of us richly. He gives us everything to enjoy. ¹⁸Tell the rich people to do good. Tell them to be rich in doing good things. And tell them to be happy to give and ready to share. ¹⁹By doing that they will be saving a treasure for themselves in heaven. That treasure will be a strong foundation*—their future life can be built on that treasure. Then they will be able to have the life that is true life.

²⁰Timothy, God has trusted you with many things. Keep those things safe. Stay away from people who talk about useless things that are not from God. Stay away from people who argue against the truth. Those people use something they call “knowledge”—but it is really not knowledge. ²¹Some people say that they have that “knowledge.” Those people have left the true faith (teaching).

God’s grace (kindness) be with you all.

foundation The bottom part or first part of a house that the rest of the house is built on.