



# 1 Timothy

(For access to all available commentaries and written sermons of Charlie's click [HERE](#))

**To Timothy, a true son in the faith:**

**Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Timothy 1:2**

Paul, after having identified himself and his commission, now identifies the main recipient of the letter, Timothy. As noted, based on the apostolic identification of himself, something Timothy was perfectly aware of, the letter was certainly intended to be for more than just Timothy though. He was to have it available for any and all to see and read. It is an epistle of church doctrine as much as it is a personal letter.

However, it is still a personal letter, written "To Timothy, a true son in the faith." The word translated here as "true," is the Greek work *gnésios*. It literally means, "born in wedlock." Thus it means "legitimate," or "genuine." However, it came to carry an affectionate or endearing sense. Therefore, Paul's words are not only identifying Timothy as a true Christian, but as a true son of his because of their like-faith in Christ. The bonds were as strong as if Timothy was Paul's own legitimate offspring. As Paul personally took Timothy under his wings, and as Timothy stayed with Paul while so many others departed, the bond was all the stronger.

In Acts 16:3, Paul even circumcised Timothy in order to ensure that the Jews would be more responsive to the message of Christ. It was not a means of making Timothy acceptable for salvation, but a means of ensuring that Timothy would be properly accepted by those Jews who needed to hear the gospel message of Christ. In circumcising him, it would eliminate pre-judgments about Timothy's status. In other words, it was a helpful tool for evangelism. In his letter to the Philippians, he noted his full trust in Timothy –

“But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. <sup>20</sup> For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. <sup>21</sup> For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. <sup>22</sup> But you know his proven character, that as a son with *his* father he served with me in the gospel.” Philippians 2:19-22

Next, after having identified himself and his recipient, he adds in his customary greeting, but with one addition, “Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.” Here, and in his other two pastoral epistles (2 Timothy and Titus), he adds in the word “mercy.” It is variously speculated on why he adds in “mercy” to this salutation, but many commentators tie it in with Paul’s advancing age and the realization of his soon departure. For example, the Pulpit Commentary says, “It seems in St. Paul to connect itself with that deeper sense of the need and of the enjoyment of mercy which went with his deepening sense of sin as he drew towards his end.”

However, the letter is written to Timothy. Thus the words apply to him, not to Paul. Paul petitions for “mercy” in his pastorals because he knew it is a job which requires a great deal of mercy from God. It is a delicate, complicated, often frustrating, always tiring, and very sensitive job. Where those under a pastor often feel it necessary to heap trouble on him, mercy is all-the-more necessary from the other direction. Without this endowment from God, the job will quickly lay low the pastor of strongest faith and resolve.

Therefore, Paul petitions for these things – grace, mercy, and peace to be bestowed upon his beloved son in the faith. And the petition is “from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Here in this verse, he changes the title of God of verse 1 from “Savior” to “Father.” This then is in line with the petition for grace, mercy, and peace. As a father would grant such things to his own son, so Paul knows that God will grant such things to His sons in the faith, a faith which is grounded in Christ Jesus. And as God is the Father of Jesus, the petition for grace, mercy, and peace will naturally flow from Jesus to the Father’s other true children as well. Paul’s salutation is a full example of a complete understanding of the workings of God towards His ministers who are also His sons by adoption.

Life application: Paul’s addition of mercy to the blessings upon Timothy (and thus all pastors) is only as necessary as the congregation he leads is willing to understand the nature of the job, and the ability of the pastor to effectively handle that job. It is estimated that in America alone, 600 pastors a week leave the pulpit due to the pressures of the job. The more mercy the congregation bestows upon their pastor, the less will be needed from above. In regards to the pastor, show a little mercy when he shows his humanity. After all, he is only human.

**As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 1 Timothy 1:3**

After his initial greeting, Paul now begins the main portion of his letter by reminding Timothy of words previously spoken to him. “As I urged you,” is a phrase intending to call to memory the conversation of a previous time, which was “when I went into Macedonia.” Some tie this event into Acts 20:1 –

“After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to *himself*, embraced *them*, and departed to go to Macedonia.”

However, various scholars see this as a different trip into Macedonia which occurred after the completion of the book of Acts, which was after his first imprisonment in Rome. This seems more likely, because Timothy was sent to Macedonia in Acts 19:4, and Paul joined him by going to Macedonia in Acts 20:1. After that, they returned together as is recorded in Acts 20:4. Therefore, it is more likely that this is a later trip into Macedonia for Paul, occurring after his first Roman imprisonment.

After this period of time, incorrect doctrine had crept into the church at Ephesus, and it so infected it that Paul’s letter is now required. The Ephesian church had failed to listen to Paul’s warning, accompanied by tears, to stand fast on the doctrine of Christ (see Acts 20:25-38). Because of this, a letter of instruction, doctrine, and warning is now issued to Timothy, but it is a letter which is intended for all to read and understand.

His reminder to Timothy of their previous conversation was that he was to “remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine.” Paul had confidence enough in Timothy that he could remain without him and still be found competent to uphold sound and proper doctrine. Further, he would be bold enough to make a charge concerning what was wrong and what was right. Paul’s words demonstrate this confidence in his young protege.

The word translated as, “no other doctrine,” is one found only here and in 1 Timothy 6:3. It indicates “a different doctrine” and is thus anything other than that which had been once delivered by apostolic teaching. Paul will outline such things considered “other” in the verses ahead. They center on the law, and thus it is the same group of people as had troubled so many other churches – the Judaizers. They came in with their infectious teachings, and they disturbed the believers with their unsound doctrines. As these things pertain to “law,” and as the law is fulfilled in Christ, it is the same concepts which have been dug up and put on display in modern times by the Hebrew Roots movement. Paul warned against this type of nonsense, and his words still warn today.

Life application: There is one doctrine concerning the law – it is fulfilled in Christ and ended. Any resurrection of law observance is to be rejected. This shouldn't be difficult to grasp, but apparently there are many thick skulls out there. May the words of Paul act as a drill to get through that thick bone, and into the gray area of law-observant heretics.

**...nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. 1 Timothy 1:4**

Paul had just told Timothy that he was to charge certain members of the church at Ephesus to “teach no other doctrine.” Now building on that, he said, “nor give heed to fables.” This is certainly a word of warning concerning the oral traditions of the Jewish schools of learning. It was held that there was the written instruction which guided the people, meaning the words of Scripture, but that there also existed an oral tradition, or a “law upon the lip,” which was passed down concerning rites and rules of conduct for the people.

The rabbinical schools supposedly maintained these authoritative oral doctrines, and surely they were expanded on any time someone felt the need to further codify some part of Jewish life. Eventually, many of these oral traditions were put into writing by Rabbi Jehuda, becoming the Mishna. This was combined with another document, the Gemara. Together they form the Talmud. The Talmud is the codification of Jewish law which is adhered to by observant Jews to this day.

Paul was a trained rabbi, and he was fully aware of these traditions. He was also aware of the fact that Jesus did not hold them as authoritative. For example, we see His words to those who held to them in Mark 7 –

He answered and said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

‘This people honors Me with *their* lips,

But their heart is far from Me.

<sup>7</sup>And in vain they worship Me,

Teaching *as* doctrines the commandments of men.’

<sup>8</sup>For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.” Mark 7:6-8

Understanding that these things were nonsense, Paul held to Scripture alone as the rule and guide of the faith. With the addition of apostolic inspiration for proper church-age conduct, the intent of the Lord was clearly laid out, and fully sufficient, for sound doctrine.

Paul next refers to “endless genealogies.” The Bible, particularly Genesis and Chronicles, is full of genealogies. They are scattered throughout other books as well. These genealogies inevitably would be twisted, and spiritually manipulated to show a Jewish line which was superior to all others. Being a rabbi himself, Paul knew that this was the intent of constantly referring to these genealogies. By allowing the Judaizers to teach these things, it would effectually end any idea of a church of both Jews and Gentiles who were unified as one. Instead, two distinct classes – one supposedly superior over the other – would develop and flourish. All things Jewish would be considered as the ideal. All things Gentile would be considered as base and contemptible.

Paul knew that this would only “cause disputes.” Such fables and endless genealogies have no positive bearing on Christian life and the proper conduct of our faith. They are simply divisive issues intended to subjugate Gentile life and culture. Their introduction into Christian life would make it a walk of works, striving to be more Jewish and thus “more acceptable” to God. This is contrary to “godly edification which is in faith.” The entire plan of salvation, which is found in Christ Jesus, is one of faith in what He has done. There is no distinction between Jew and Gentile when it comes to faith in Him. But to introduce these Jewish traditions and genealogies would then inevitably nullify this precept. The ground would no longer be level. Instead, the Gentiles would ever be striving to become more Jewish, and thus somehow more acceptable.

Paul clearly stated to the Gentiles in Athens in Acts 17 that all people are God’s offspring, being descended from one man. The Jewish people were chosen for a specific purpose, and the law was introduced for a set period of time. In Christ, the law was ended. The distinction between Jew and Gentile is set aside. Paul’s words throughout his epistles confirm this precept time and time again. All people are favorable to God by faith in Christ’s work alone, nothing else comes into the equation.

Life application: The Judaizers of today – some Messianic synagogues, and the Hebrew Roots movement – teach the exact poison that Paul warns against in this verse. All things “Jewish” are held in high esteem. Even certain translations of the Bible are supposedly “the best” because they have a Jewish perspective, using Hebrew terms almost as talismans of spiritual insight. Law observance (always in a pick and choose manner) has become fashionable once again. Gentiles are being swept up into this nonsense, and it will only lead to one sad end. If they are attempting to merit God’s favor through these works, then faith is excluded. Only condemnation can result. Keep far from this heretical nonsense.