

**Message #1**

**Various Texts**

No man had a higher grasp or holier dedication concerning the importance of the local church than the Apostle Paul. He started local churches, he taught local churches, he wrote letters to local churches and he sacrificed himself for the local churches (i.e. II Cor. 11:28).

As he was nearing the end of his life, he was not interested in establishing a local church that pleased people, but he was intent upon establishing a local church that pleased God.

Paul wanted God's local churches moving God's way. He wanted the church to have God's instruction, God's organization, and God's emphasis. He was not concerned about having a church that catered to the whims of man, but he was concerned about having a church that conformed to the will of God.

**QUESTION #1** – Why study I Timothy?

**Reason #1** - Because I Timothy is in the Word of God.

There is only one way God speaks to people today—not through emotional surges, not through burning sensations. God speaks to people through His Word!

As a book in the Bible, I Timothy sits as the 15<sup>th</sup> book of the 27 New Testament books. From an actual chronological standpoint of the writing of the N.T. books, I Timothy also is about the 15<sup>th</sup> book written.

I Timothy has good external evidence and supports that it belongs in the Word of God. It was named an authentic N.T. book by the councils of Nicea (A.D. 325), Hippo (A.D. 393), Carthage (A.D. 397), and Carthage (A.D. 419). It was named authentic by the early translations in Latin (A.D. 150) and Syriac (A.D. 200). It was named authentic by the major canon listings—the Muratorian (A.D. 170), Barococcio (A.D. 206), Apostolic (A.D. 300), Cheltenham (A.D. 360), and Athanasius (A.D. 367).

I Timothy was also quoted, alluded to or named as authentic by Clement of Rome (A.D. 95-97), by Polycarp (A.D. 110), by Hermas (A.D. 115), by Didache (A.D. 120), by Irenaeus (A.D. 130), by Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150), by Tertullian (A.D. 150), by Origen (A.D. 185), by Cyril of Jerusalem (A.D. 315), by Eusebius (A.D. 325), by Jerome (A.D. 340), and Augustine (A.D. 400).

**Reason #2** - Because I Timothy gives God's direction to a local church.

There is to be structure, authority, organization and administration. There is to be systematic instruction.

**Reason #3** - Because I Timothy gives God's doctrine to a local church.

As we near the end, churches that stand for true and sound doctrine will be harder and harder to find. There will be a major demonic movement designed to pull people away from the true faith of God and the true doctrines of God (I Tim. 4:1).

I Timothy is a book that clearly sets forth the importance of sound teaching and sound doctrine in the church. Even though a church that sticks to the greedy, pure Word of God will be criticized and challenged, and even though there will be a great departure from the truth, God's church is to stand for the truth and stand against anyone who stands against the truth (i.e. I Tim. 6:3-4).

**Reason #4** - Because I Timothy gives God's practical instruction for church life.

There is to be grace and love and there also is to be law and order in God's New Testament churches. I Timothy is a very practical book.

**Reason #5** - Because I Timothy gives good insight when thinking about building a new church.

I Timothy is a book that not only gives sound, ecclesiastical advice for the future, but also for the present.

**Reason #6** - Because I Timothy gives God's counsel and insight to the pastor and to the leaders.

I Timothy helps a pastor or an elder or deacon, and everyone in the congregation to see exactly what God wants in His Church.

**QUESTION #2** – What is I Timothy?

I Timothy is an inspired letter of God. It is one of two inspired letters written to Timothy. It is a very personal letter and a very pastoral letter. I Timothy is not a private letter for it deals with many public matters pertaining to the church.

**QUESTION #3** – What is a pastoral letter?

The term "Pastoral Epistles" is a term which has been used to describe three New Testament letters—I Timothy, II Timothy, and Titus.

This classification of letters was not inspired by God, but was invented by a man. The term was first used in 1703 by B. N. Berdot, and was popularized around 1723 by Paul Anton. Since this time, the term "Pastoral Epistles" has attained "universal" status (D. Edmond Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, Vol. 2, p. 307).

The irony of name-tagging these three books as Pastoral Epistles is that the key pastoral words of the New Testament like “shepherd,” “feed,” “tend” and “flock” do not occur in these books. There is, however, a heavy emphasis on pastoral care of the church with its organization and order. The books do share common denominators of authorship, date and content.

**Point #1** - Although these books were written to an individual, they were inspired by God and intended for the church.

The letter to Timothy is for the church.

**Point #2** - Neither Timothy nor Titus were pastors as we know the term pastor.

The truth is we cannot even determine whether or not Timothy or Titus ever served as an elder or deacon in a local church. We do know they appointed them (Titus 1:5). Timothy and Titus were apostolic representatives of the Apostle Paul, whose primary job was to get God’s churches functioning in a proper apostolic way. Timothy was primarily Paul’s agent in Asia Minor and Titus was Paul’s agent on the island of Crete.

The heavy weight of truth in these letters falls to the leaders. The content of the pastorals is in view of the leadership’s responsibility, not the congregation’s. Other epistles emphasize the congregation’s responsibility, whereas these three emphasize the leader’s responsibility.

**QUESTION #4** – Who wrote I Timothy?

I Timothy was written by the Apostle Paul. This point was not even questioned or debated until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first to question Pauline authorship was F. Schleiermacher in 1807. Alfred Plummer says, “It is little or no exaggeration to say that from the first century to the nineteenth no one ever denied or doubted that they (I & II Timothy, Titus) were written by St. Paul” (Alfred Plummer, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 4).

Establishing the fact that Paul wrote I Timothy is not too difficult:

**Proof #1** - The letter clearly says it was written by the Apostle Paul. 1:1

**Proof #2** - The letter is written to Timothy, who was a close friend of Paul. 1:2

**Proof #3** - The letter describes Paul’s life prior to his conversion. 1:12-13

**Proof #4** - The letter contains Pauline-type judgments against people. 1:20/I Cor. 5:5

**Proof #5** - The letter identifies Pauline’s specific ministry to the Gentiles. 2:7

**Proof #6** - The letter is written by one who had the authority to establish governmental authority in God’s church. 2:12; 3:1, 8

**Proof #7** - There are several quotations of early church fathers who clearly state or imply that I Timothy was written by Paul.

Eusebius, for example, was a Greek Christian writer who is called the father of Church history. In a reference to Linus, who is named in II Timothy 4:21, he writes this:

“Linus, who is mentioned in the second Epistle to Timothy as being with Paul in Rome...” (Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, Book 3, p. 110).

Notice carefully that Eusebius writes that there had been two letters written to Timothy and Linus was mentioned in the second. It only becomes necessary to discover the author of one letter and we will know the author of both. Again we cite Eusebius: “After the martyrdom of Paul and Peter the first man to be appointed Bishop of Rome was Linus. He is mentioned by Paul when writing to Timothy from Rome, in the salutation at the end of the epistle” (*Ibid.*, pp. 107-108).

Clearly Eusebius implies that his conviction was Paul wrote two letters to Timothy. There are many others as well, men like Clement of Rome (A.D. 95), Ignatius of Antioch (A.D. 112), Polycarp of Smyrna (A.D. 112), and Theophilus of Antioch (A.D. 180).

There is no doubt from both the internal and the historical evidence that we may dogmatically state I Timothy was written by Paul!

1) The chronological or historical argument.

This basically says Paul could not have written I Timothy because it doesn't fit nicely into the historical account of the book of Acts. The simple solution is that I Timothy was not written during Paul's life as described in Acts, but after Acts has ended.

2) The ecclesiastical argument.

This basically says Paul could not have written I Timothy because there is such a strong emphasis for organization and structure in the church—elders and deacons—which is too soon for Pauline letters.

The solution to this is very simple as Hiebert says, “On the first missionary journey Paul had already ordained ‘elders in every church’ (Acts 14:23); and in Philippians he addressed the church, ‘with the bishops and deacons’ (1:1). ...Instructions for the appointment of elders by Timothy and Titus (I Tim. 5:22; Titus 1:5) are not due to advanced hierarchical Church government, but to the starting of new churches under missionary conditions (Hiebert, Vol. 2, pp. 312-313).

Paul wanted church structure and organization from the earliest times of church ministry and life in every church.

3) The doctrinal argument.

Some assert that Paul's key doctrines are overlooked in I Timothy.

The solution to this is that Timothy had been personally trained by Paul, and didn't need a refresher course (II Tim. 2:2), plus many of Paul's favorite doctrines are in I Timothy: grace (1:2), faith salvation (1:16), the deity of Christ (1:17; 2:3), and spiritual gifts (4:14).

4) The linguistic or stylistic argument.

Some have argued that I Timothy contains too many new words for Pauline authorship. The style and language is different than the other letters. The solution is that there are many Pauline phrases and words in I Timothy, and different issues and problems require different language and words.

**QUESTION #5** – When was I Timothy written?

There are many fine commentators who have attempted to determine the chronological events of the life of Paul after the book of Acts ends so that a precise dating of I Timothy might be determined. However, after Acts ends, much of Paul's life is speculative.

We do know that the events of I Timothy (i.e. 1:3) do not fit the travels of Paul described in the book of Acts. We also know that at one time Paul was in prison in Rome and expected to be released (Phil. 1:19, 25).

We also know that when Paul wrote I Timothy, he was free, traveling to Macedonia, having left Timothy in Ephesus (I Tim. 1:3). We also know that when Paul writes I Timothy, there is no hint of Paul fearing a future imprisonment or an immediate loss of life. We may assume that I Timothy was written somewhere near the year A.D. 63-64.

Here, then, is a look at how Paul viewed the church and what Paul thought about the church some 30 years after his conversion. What this tells us is the more spiritual and mature we are in our walk with God, the more serious we will be in our perspective of the church!

**QUESTION #6** – What is the theme of I Timothy?

Many interpreters have agreed that the key verse of I Timothy is I Timothy 3:15! This verse declares the church to be the "church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth."

Actually, upon close examination of the book we may discover that certain key words continually surface in the letter: "truth," "sound teaching," "faith," "teach," and "godliness."

Based upon this, we cannot be far from God's theme for I Timothy with this statement:

"The leadership of a local church is to see to it that the church of the living God is properly organized and taught so that it becomes a pillar and support of the truth of God so that people may develop into a faith that is sound and into a lifestyle that is truly godly."

There is a major difference between any church and a church that is a pillar and support of the truth of God.

There is a major difference between having faith and having faith that is sound. There is a major difference between having a spiritual life and having a spiritual life that is godly.

Is your life orderly? Is your life sound and godly? Is your life one that stands out as a pillar and support of God's truth? I Timothy will force you to answer these questions here and now, before you face God!