



# 1 Timothy

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**This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, 1 Timothy 1:18**

There is as much debate about what “charge” Paul is committing to Timothy as there is about a glass being half full or half empty. Commentaries are lengthy, and disagreement is piled upon disagreement. However, there is nothing at all complicated in this. Paul’s words, “This charge I commit to you,” are based upon the “purpose of the commandment in verse 5, and that is then based upon Paul’s words of instruction to Timothy in verse 3 that he “charge some that they teach no other doctrine.” The same word he uses now in this verse was used in verse 5. And verse 3 uses the verb form of this same noun.

After that, Paul then described the purpose of the law in verses 8-11, summing up the thought with the freedom found in the gospel which was committed to his trust. After that, in verses 12-17 he explained the charge, meaning right doctrine as is in accord with the gospel, as it worked through him. Now, he is committing this same charge to Timothy. The scholars at Cambridge sum up the entire thought as, “This is my charge to teach the old simple truths, with a heart and life that retain still the old penitent gratitude and devotion; I trust to you this life and work, as a precious jewel; so precious that to guard and keep it you must be never off duty, always Christ’s faithful soldier and servant.”

With this charge placed in Timothy’s hands, he fondly calls him, “son Timothy.” This is not a term he uses lightly, but rather it is a truth which Paul carried with him always. In 1 Corinthians 4:17, he calls Timothy “my beloved and faithful son.” He then called him a similar term at the opening of this letter as well. After this, Paul then describes one particular reason why he has

placed this most important charge in the hands of Timothy. It is an action which is “according to the prophecies previously made concerning you.”

The words here could easily be taken to unintended extremes. In 1 Timothy 4:14, it says, “Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.” In Timothy’s ordination, the elders who ordained him spoke of the sacred trust which was being placed in his care. 2 Timothy 1:6 then says that Paul was certainly one of those elders. He says, “Therefore, I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” Paul and the other elders would have made proclamations that he was to faithfully carry out his duties, never straying from that which was committed to him.

Now, looking back on those things, Paul is reminding Timothy of this. There is nothing supernatural about the prophecies which were made upon him. Instead, Paul’s word now reminds him of the importance of the trust which was committed to him. These prophecies were simply observations of Timothy’s life and conduct which brought him to the point of ordination, and which were then proclamations based on that known character that he would excel by staying close to that same gospel-centered life and conduct.

Finally, Paul says concerning these prophecies, “that by them you may wage the good warfare.” Throughout Paul’s writings, there is the constant theme that a battle is raging around Christians. It is a spiritual warfare. In the case of true Christians, they are on the good side of this battle, struggling against the forces of evil. As a highlight of this, and how to protect oneself, and even go on the offensive, Ephesians 6:10-20 gives valuable insights. Timothy was ordained as a minister of this cause. Because of this, he could be considered one of the commanders within the battle. He was to align himself and those under him in the proper battle array, and together they were to press on with the charge forward. This is Paul’s intent concerning these words of admonition and encouragement to his young protege.

Life application: The Bible says that we are in a spiritual battle against the forces of wickedness. If the Bible is true, and it is, then what kind of a leader do you wish to serve under while engaging in this battle? Would you rather follow Commander Commendable, or Lieutenant Less-than-Competent? Each pastor must be evaluated based on one standard alone, and that is adherence to the word of God. Sitting in a church filled with uplifting music followed by a sermon by a pastor who fails to hold close to the word of God is a complete waste of time. If you want uplifting music, listen to it on the radio. Your time in church is not first and foremost for you to feel good. It is intended for you to worship the Creator, and to be properly instructed in the word of God. This is your one life before facing Christ. When you stand before Him, will you say, “I really loved the music at the church I attended,” or would

you be more commended for saying, "I spent my time learning Your word, and learning how to apply it to my life." Don't spend your time foolishly. Stand approved and commended!

**...having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, 1Timothy 1:19**

Paul's thoughts about faith and conscience are rather consistent, having stated almost the same thing as he did in verse 1:5 –

"Now the purpose of the commandment is love *from* a pure heart, from a good conscience, and *from* sincere faith."

He unites the two again here in relation to the "good warfare" of the previous verse. One cannot enter into the spiritual battles of Christian life without "having faith and a good conscience." If one lacks faith in what he is battling, the battle is already lost. Imagine a group of soldiers knowing that their commander is a drunk and is going to lead them to certain death. They have no faith in him, and they have no will to fight. They will be quickly defeated.

Likewise, having a good conscience is necessary in order to fight the good warfare of Christianity. If one has been engaged in the very sins they are supposed to be fighting, his conscience will be defiled, and he will be ineffective in his conduct. If a soldier is treasonous, and assists the enemy, how will he effectively fight the battle in which he is engaged? He will not! Rather, he will be harmful to the side he is on, and destructive to his own person if the battle comes directly to him. Such a person is like those spoken of by James when he says that the demons believe there is one God, but despite believing, they tremble. Their conscience is defiled, and they are set for a bad end.

Paul next gives a real life example that Timothy would be aware of. In doing this, he highlights the failings of others, and the inevitable result of their failings. He begins to describe them by saying, "which some have rejected." Obviously this is so, because he has already said that Timothy is to "charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (verse 3). He is speaking of those passing on false words instead of sound doctrine. Because of this, he concludes the verse with words which directly reflect their state, "concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck. "

Here he returns to the same metaphor that he used when writing to the same church Timothy is at now. In his letter to the Ephesians, he implored them to hold to proper doctrine. In so doing, he says "that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting" (Ephesians 4:14). He equated our life in Christ as a ship on the seas. We are to hold to the fair

winds of sound doctrine which will carry us along safely and smoothly. However, when we introduce crazy, nutty, unsound, or theologically bizarro doctrine into our lives, then we are like ships on a sea, tossed to and fro. This is what was occurring at Ephesus, and it is what resulted in those who held to such doctrine as, “concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck.”

Their faith was misguided, having held to the law rather than to Christ, and their consciences were defiled because they were fighting alongside an already defeated foe. With Christ’s completion of the law, salvation and a right walk before God can only be found in Him. Anything else will result in shipwreck. In such a case, there are sad consequences which result. This will be seen in the coming verse.

Life application: How incredibly sad that people get duped into crazy theology. There are those who hold to parts of the Law of Moses as still binding. There are those who add in unbiblical doctrines such as praying to Mary and the saints. There are those who hold to single versions of the Bible as being the only “inspired” and correct translations. On and on it goes. These things are not sound, and they lead to disharmony, dysfunction, and unsound conclusions about what is right and what is wrong. Be wise, be discerning, and test all things. Hold fast to what is good. Don’t suffer shipwreck because of crazy theology.