

Leadership & character: 1 Timothy

Gospel godliness and dangers

Read the letter all through.

- How do you feel about this letter? What is the overall tone and impact?
- What themes did you notice?

2 prayers – 1:17; 6:15-16

Charge - 1:18-19; 5:21; 6:13

- Grace – 1:2; 6:21
- Godliness = Jesus, his incarnation, gospel, resurrection, ascension
3:15-16
2:2-3; 4:6-8; 6:3-8; 6:11-12
- 3 x trustworthy sayings - 1:15; 3:1; 4:9
 - Simultaneously a sinner (in myself) & righteous (in Christ) & making progress (4:15)
- 3 x God our Saviour – 1:1; 2:3; 4:10
- Future hope – 1:1; 4:1, 8; 5:5; 6:14, 19
- Life – 1:16; 4:8; 6:12, 13, 19

Dangers: 4:16

Wandering from faith and a good conscience - 1:3-7, 18-20; 3:9; 4:1-5; 6:9-10; 6:20-21

Satan – 1:20; 2:14; 3:6; 4:1; 5:15; 6:10

- Doctrine – 1:8-11
 - Law as mirror and sword; Pharisee and tax collector; law is not a system for righteous people to feel affirmed in their righteousness – it is for sinners to expose their sin and drive them to Christ
- Life – 3:2-10; 5:5-15
 - Desires – 1:5; 3:3, 8; 5:6, 11; 6:4, 9-10 – watch your heart

Pastoral Ministry: 1 Timothy

Aim, means and shape of church ministry

Aim

Church = Buttress of Truth – 3:15

Truth – 2:4, 7; 4:2-4; 6:5

Trust/deposit – 1:11; 6:20

Means

Sound/healthy doctrine → godliness / unhealthy doctrine → ungodliness – 1:10-11; 6:3-4

Pastor teacher – 3:2

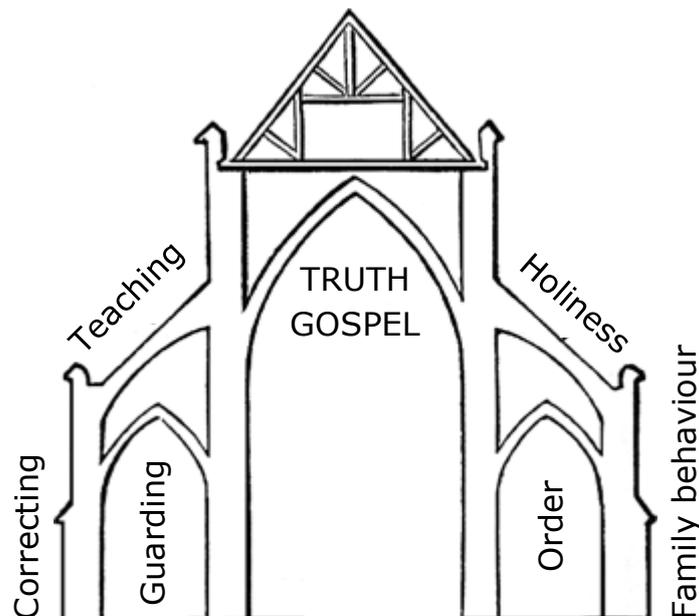
Charge, remind, teach – 1:3; 4:6, 11, 13; 6:2, 17

Household – 3:5, 15

2:1-15; 5:1-2

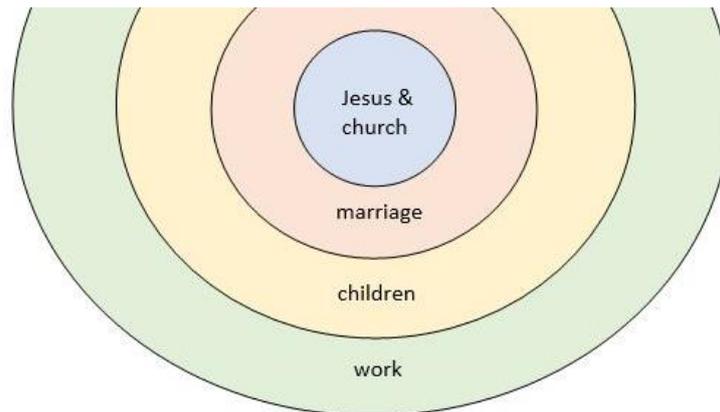
This shape/form/order is part of being the buttress. “How a church conducts its life together has everything to do with how they preserve the truth... God does not desire to preserve truth through theologically accurate books. He wants lives that reflect that truth by living it out together in local churches.” (Ken Mbugua, [Africa, the Prosperity Gospel, and the Problem of Unguarded Churches](#))

So there are two ways in which the church upholds the truth of the gospel: 1. Preaching; 2. Living



Pastoral ministry and 'calling' (1 Timothy 3:1-13)

- What do we think about pastors or missionaries claiming to be called by God?
- What might be some of the dangers of using this terminology?
 - Sacred/secular divide, hierarchy, pride
 - Unquestionable, subjective
 - Must be obeyed, disobedient to withdraw from pastoral ministry
 - Makes others feel that they need to wait for a mystical 'call' before serving.
- On the basis of 1 Timothy 3 where would you place pastoral ministry on the diagram below?
Where would most pastors place it?



How do you know you have a pastoral ministry gift?

1 Timothy 3:1-7

- Desire – Not strictly speaking a necessary criteria here (though see 1 Pet. 5:2) but it is certainly not wrong to desire this position (in contrast to many 'calling' testimonies of being dragged kicking and screaming). God does not want to have to guide by external compulsion (Psalm 32:9); he gives us desires (Psalm 37:4).
- Male – There seems to be a parallel between the family / household (headed by a husband/father) and the church family / household (1 Tim. 3:4, 15).¹
- Faithfulness to wife – 'one-woman man'
- Well-ordered children
- Above reproach, respectable, sober, dignified, well thought of in community
- Self-controlled – what you do when no-one sees
- Hospitable – welcomes into home
- Ability to teach – the only skill mentioned – key task
- Not drunkard
- Not violent, gentle, not quarrelsome – able to handle conflict, not defensive or domineering, no ego, servant leader

¹ Cf. 1 Tim. 2:11-15. This is the most controversial criteria. We need to assert women's complete equality before God and the importance of women's ministry in the church (e.g. 1 Cor. 11, Titus 2, Rom. 16). Also note that many men are also excluded from the position of elder. For more on these issues see [Resources on complementarianism, egalitarianism and the role of women in the church.](#)

- Not a lover of money – not ambitious for lucrative positions, promotions, lifestyle
- Not a recent convert – spiritual maturity – awareness of sin²

Who are these things to be recognised by?

- The individual
- The church
- The community

Other helpful resources:

- [Christopher Ash, *How do I know if Preaching is for Me?*](#)
- [More emphasis on The Call or less?](#)
- [The target diagram \(Jesus, marriage, children, work\)](#)
- Michael Bennett, *Do you feel called by God?* – [review by Ben Pfahlert](#)

Gospel Living – Sacred versus Secular Fasting & the spiritual disciplines (1 Tim. 4:1-5)

Read 1 Timothy 4:1-5

- How do we normally think about sacred and secular? E.g. in relation to spaces, times, jobs, activities
- What seems to have been going on in 1st century Ephesus?
- What is the tone of Paul’s language here? Is it surprising to us that he is so strong on this issue?
- What can be “holy” according to this passage? How?
- How does this passage challenge our thinking on the ‘spiritual disciplines’ and what true spirituality looks like?
- How might we be tempted to have a super-spiritual, [Gnostic](#), attitude towards the physical world, food and sleep?

Further reading:

- [Martin Luther on ‘sacred’ and ‘secular’](#)
- [John Piper, ‘A brief theology of sleep’](#)
- Tim Chester, *The Everyday Gospel: A theology of washing the dishes*

² Cf. quote in Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry*: “I almost constantly find the following temptations, the one or the other, assaulting me in the discharge of my office as a Minister. 1st. If I think that I am unsuccessful, I am in danger, through an unbelieving despondency, of being discouraged, of becoming remiss, and cold ... 2ndly. If I am, or think I am, successful, this also has a tendency to ...make me less careful in watching against sin, and in mortifying universally its whole body. ...I see now the wisdom of the caution which the Apostle gives to Timothy, not to admit “a novice,” (1Tim. 3.6) one who has but *little experience of the workings and deceit of sin*, and has made but little progress in the ways of God—not to admit such into the office of the Ministry, “lest he should be lifted up with pride, and fall into the condemnation of the devil.” The Apostle himself was not without some danger from this quarter. (2 Cor. 12.)”

The importance of administration, wise management and good organisational culture (1 Timothy 5:3-6:2)

5:3-16

- Importance of the family under the New Covenant
 - godliness, good works include child raising, normal support system
 - don't create unnecessary structures or undermine family
 - encourage marriage (cf. 4:1-5) – even when might be culturally difficult
- Enrolment of widows
 - Serious commitment to take on as if family – very specific, high responsibility
 - Concept of the 'deserving' – good works testifying that they are genuine believers within the household of faith
 - Cf. Anna in Luke 2:36-38
 - Not wanting to bind young women or create a convent – realistic, not super-spiritual
 - Church focused on a few very vulnerable and isolated people within their fellowship – concern that the church is *not over-burdened* by bottom-less needs in church and community and distracted from primary task – cf. Acts 6:1-7

5:17-6:2

- Notice:
 - Practical, earthy wisdom which is realistic about the world and the human heart
 - Nothing super-spiritual here. The church is not to be run in a *completely* different way to the 'secular' world. There is still need for wages, tribunals, medicine, common sense.
 - Church discipline
 - How different is verse 19-21 to how things normally happen in churches when there is some sort of immorality or fall on the part of leaders?

There is a *huge* need in our churches and Christian organisations for good administration of resources, focused leadership and wise management, impartial well-applied employment policies, and robust practical godly practices in dealing with relationships and conflicts.

Further reading:

- [Bruce Burgess, 'The hope of biblical peacemaking as a response to the challenge of conflict', *The Briefing*](#)
- [Bob Thune, 'Gospel preaching isn't enough', TGC](#)
- [Matt Perman, 'Management in light of the supremacy of God', WBN](#)

Tithing and gospel giving (Malachi 3; 1 Timothy 6:3-20; 2 Corinthians 8-9)

- What is the teaching we are hearing on tithing and giving?
- What are the questions that we have or people in our churches have about tithes and giving?

3 Tithes:

1. Numbers 18:21-32
2. Deuteronomy 14:22-27
3. Deuteronomy 14:28-29

Offerings:

- Regular offerings tied into the sacrificial system – e.g. Numbers 28-29
- Firstfruits – Lev. 23:9-14 – of grain on entry to the Land
- Freewill offerings – at time of the tabernacle construction (Ex. 35-36), sacrificial (Lev. 22)
- Portions for the Levites - Exod. 29:27, 28; Lev. 7:14

Malachi 3:6-12

- Which tithe and which offerings?
- Notice the echoes of the curses and blessings of Deuteronomy (esp. Deut. 28:10-12?)
- What is our relationship under the New Covenant to the Law and the curses and blessings? (cf. Galatians 3)³

2 Corinthians 8-9

- Who is the giving from and to here?
- How is it motivated? How is it not motivated?

1 Timothy 5:17-18

- How are pastors and preachers to be supported?

1 Timothy 6:3-20

- How does this challenge prosperity gospel preaching?
- How are we encouraged to give?

To tithe or not to tithe: that is not the question

It seems that tithing is so embedded in church culture here that even when you go through all the arguments why it no longer applies to Christians, the question still gets asked, 'So what about tithes?' or 'So should we still give our tithes?' It is as if the categories of tithes and offerings are so

³ On blessings and curses see [here](#).

wired into our brains (like the categories male/female, up/down) that it is impossible to conceptualise the practice of giving without them.

But what if we could soak ourselves in the New Testament to the point that it starts to change our questions from ones about tithing to ones like:

- How can I use all my resources, all my energies, my whole life in the service of Christ and for the advancing of his gospel?
- How does the love of Christ and the joy of the gospel make me want to give, even desperate to give, like the Macedonians?
- How can I be setting free my pastor and church leaders to be focused on the ministry of the word and prayer?
- What are the gospel needs, mission needs, in my context and throughout the body of church? How can I be a partner in the gospel like the Philippians?
- What practical needs are there in my local church and also in the church throughout the country and throughout the world? What would it look like for me to remember my persecuted brothers as if I was in chains with them?

Further reading:

In terms of the specific issue of tithing there are two articles by Andreas Kostenberger and his PhD student David Croteau:

1. [“Will a Man Rob God?” \(Malachi 3:8\): A Study of Tithing in the Old and New Testaments](#)
2. [Reconstructing a Biblical Model for Giving: A Discussion of Relevant Systematic Issues and New Testament Principles](#)

David Croteau’s PhD dissertation, which covers much of the same ground, is [here](#). The gist is that:

- a) it is impossible to fulfil the tithe today (and nobody actually does);
- b) the institutions connected to the tithe (temple, priesthood, land) have been fulfilled in Christ;
- c) the NT doesn’t reinstate the tithe but instead emphasises gospel-driven giving for gospel ministry.