



First Timothy

False Teachers

Paul Condemns The Bad Influence

I Timothy 1:3-7

Lesson Two

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum

First Timothy

A Study of the First Letter of the Apostle Paul to His Son in the Faith

False Teachers

Usually Paul spends a bit more time with his greeting. (See Romans 1:1-15 or Philippians 1:1-11) However, in I Timothy he charges right into the business at hand. The language and quick transition from greetings to the subject at hand, tell us how urgent his message to Timothy is.

Timothy was instructed by Paul to challenge false teachers.* (Read I Timothy 1: 3-7)

Paul had moved on to Macedonia to continue his missionary work. However, he left Timothy in Ephesus because there was a problem in the church. These events could have happened after Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, which probably ended around AD 67. There were people in the church, as mentioned in our last lesson, who were teaching things that Paul didn't approve. Timothy may have written Paul describing the problems mentioned in this letter.

We use three words in English: "teach false doctrines." In the language in which Paul wrote, this is one word. It may be that Paul created the word just for this occasion. What Paul is telling Timothy is that these teachers were trying to convince the people in the Ephesian church that there were several things, in addition to what Paul had taught them, that they needed to know in order to be saved and grow as Christians.

Paul mentions "myths and genealogies." Exactly what this means is not very clear. Some think that Paul was talking about false teaching, about things as old as the creation story. Others think that the myths were stories they made up that had nothing to do with the real truth about Jesus. Some think that the word genealogies refers to the Jewish idea that salvation was according to who your father or mother was and if they were related to Abraham.

Whatever they mean, Paul said that they were speculations (theories and unproven ideas). They were not only a waste of time, but also, when people took sides, it divided the church. Paul said, in verse four, that they were wandering down dark paths which tended to be hurtful to people, and they took the focus off doing God's real work which is accomplished by faith.

In verse five, Paul said that unlike the "wandering" theories of these false teachers, the true word of God is a focus on love, real love. (See I Corinthians 13) This is a commitment totally focused on the person loved.

This love pours from a someone with three things: a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith. Wow, that is really deep! Let's break it down some:

We have mentioned that the kind of love Paul talked about here takes others into account first. So, Paul was challenging Timothy to teach the Ephesians that this speculation, this babbling,



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this endless theorizing is not a loving thing. It is confusing, and not helping other Christians. Love that puts others first comes from a pure heart. Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart. (Matthew 5:8) A pure heart is one that is cleaned up by God and has no bad motives.

Next Paul told Timothy, love comes from a good conscience. A good conscience is one that has no guilt. In Paul’s thinking, this is a conscience that understands God’s forgiveness.

The third foundation of true love is a sincere faith. That is, a faith that is not put on...or pretend. There is no falsehood in sincere faith. When that kind of faith is examined, one will not discover fear or a desire to abandon that faith. (You can find many places in Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus where faith and love are linked together. See, I Timothy 1:14; 2:15; 4:12; 6:11; II Timothy 1:13; 2:22; 3:10; Titus 2:2)

In verse six, he said that there were those who have wandered away from faith. These were, most likely, teachers in the Ephesian church who had not made a full commitment to Jesus as Lord, and had lost purpose in their teaching. Paul said that they let their minds wander so much that their words were empty. They were just talking to hear the sound of their voice. If you study the words “wandered away” in the language Paul spoke, you will find that he originally said these teachers had “missed the aim.” They saw the goal, but when they aimed at the right place, something changed their view, and the arrow went wobbling through the air, making sounds like the wind, but way off from the bull's-eye.

This would be like some teachers today who pick out a Scripture and make it say what they want it to say, not what God originally intended it to say. There are those who use the Bible to justify their own ideas without caring about the truth.

Finally, in verse seven, Paul says that there are those who want to be teachers of the Bible, but they really don’t have any idea what they are talking about or how to teach.

Do you see the contrast? There is the Good News (the Gospel story about who Jesus is and what He expects from us) and then there is a lot of noise; that is, the sound of people developing their own theories about things that don’t matter. Paul had no respect for these teachers.

*Underlined words and phrases answer questions on the *Student Worksheet*.

Lesson Goal: To show Paul’s frustration and disrespect for false teachers.

Scripture Memory: “**The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.**” I Timothy 1:5

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Student Worksheet—Following Through

False Teachers

1. Timothy was instructed by Paul to challenge _____ teachers.
2. Why did Paul leave Timothy in Ephesus?
3. What did Paul say about the “myths and genealogies?”
4. What did Paul say that the true word of God is focused on?
5. What are the three things Paul says are in the person who pours out God’s love?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
6. If you study the words “wandered away” in the language Paul spoke, you will find that he originally said these teachers had “_____.”
7. Some use the Bible to justify their own ideas without caring about the _____.
8. What is the Good News about?

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that the God of the Bible is the true God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God’s Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus’ name. Jesus’ death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.