



First Timothy

God's Household

Instructions for the Church

I Timothy 3:14, 15

Lesson Twelve

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum

First Timothy

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

God's Household

In this lesson, we will see the conclusion of Paul's instructions to Timothy, and to the church at Ephesus as well. These instructions referred to in verse fourteen began in the first verse of the second chapter and include all of chapter three. Read I Timothy 3:14, 15.

As we see, Paul intended to visit Timothy and the church at Ephesus very soon. He said in chapter four verse thirteen, "until I come," repeating his intention. Whether or not he ever made that visit, Scripture never tells us. It is obvious that he was uncertain of the time when he would visit, so he sent instructions which were important enough to implement even before Paul got there.

Paul loved the church at Ephesus. He thanked God for their faith. (Ephesians 1:15) He prayed that God would strengthen them, dwell in their hearts, that they would be rooted and established in love and more. (Ephesians 3:14ff) His instructions were serious. He spoke of "how people **ought** to conduct themselves." These aren't suggestions, they are instructions about what **ought** to happen.

His instructions are about how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household. And, God's household is the church. There are several interesting words used here. The first is what has been translated *conduct*. It might be better if it was translated *behave*. It actually means *the way you live*. (I Thessalonians 4:1; See also I John 2:4-6) This word not only means your life, but also how you get along with other people. Someone said that a church is not only people who are friends with God, but are friends with one another.

The second word Paul used is *household*. It refers to family, not just a house. The great Admiral Nelson said the victory in a certain naval battle was due to the fact that he "had the happiness to command a band of brothers." A movie of several years ago had that title and told the story of a group of soldiers in World War II who lived and died together as a "band of brothers." That is Paul's emphasis here. The church should see itself as a group of people held together by God's love and their love for God and His work on earth.

The third word is *church*. It literally means "the called out." When Paul wrote this, some cities were governed by the assembly or "the called out." When a major decision was to be made in the city, an announcement was made to all the people in the city that a meeting would be held in a certain place to discuss city business. As many people as responded to "the call" discussed whatever business was necessary and made decisions for the future. The church is made up of the "called out." God calls and as many as are willing respond to His call. Those who answer the call want to be together to make decisions and do the work of God's Kingdom. God chose to lead Paul to call that group the *ekklesia* (ek-lA-see'-uh). That is the Greek word used to describe the city business meetings **and** the church. The people God calls out to be His children, will want to be together with other called out people. It is as natural as families being together.

Another important word used by Paul is *pillar*. This word would be a common word to the

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people in Ephesus. One of the main attractions in that city, and one of the seven wonders of the ancient world was the Temple of Diana also called the Temple of Artemis. At the time of Paul, the third version of this temple had been built it was 450' long by 225' wide and 60 feet high, with more than 127 columns, or pillars. Each of these pillars was beautifully engraved, or covered with Gold or embedded with some precious stones. Pillars represented strength and stability. The church is to be the strength and stability of the truth of God.

The final word that is of special interest is *foundation*. That is the translation of a Greek word which literally means to make stable or support. The word foundation could confuse some who understand Jesus as the foundation of truth. He said of Himself, "I am the way, the truth and the life. (John 14:6) Some would rather see this as the ropes that hold the tent in place. Others would see it as those great supports on the side of cathedrals called buttresses. These "supports" keep the building square and standing up properly. In a world where the truth is constantly challenged, where people want to change the truth to fit their own ideas, where some want to eliminate truth altogether and create their own truth, the church must stand as the guardian, the support of truth keeping it stable when evil winds blow against it.

What Paul is calling truth here is what he has said about worship in chapter two and about church leaders in chapter three. However, that can't be all that he has in mind. He began this letter by telling Timothy that he was left in Ephesus for a specific task. The things Timothy needed to monitor were false teachers who "didn't know what they were talking about." Timothy was to guide the people to faith, pure hearts and good consciences. This was part of the truth to which he refers in verse fifteen. We must also include what He has said about the truth of the Gospel.

One more emphasis before we are through. Paul refers to the church as being "of the living God." "Living God" is a phrase from the Old Testament. It is used fifteen times in the New Testament. In the Old Testament it is obviously used to contrast Jehovah God over against the idols which had no life in them. Joshua 3:10 tells us "you will know that the living God is among you." God spoke to the people of Israel, recorded in Exodus 29:45, "I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God." I Corinthians 6:16 says, "For we are the temple of the living God, just as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.'" In the church, we demonstrate God in us as we love and support one another.

*Underlined words and phrases are to be used in completing the Student Worksheet.

Lesson Goal: To help students understand some tasks of God's church.

Scripture Memory: "You will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God." I Timothy 3:15

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Student Worksheet—Following Through

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>What are the very interesting words Paul uses in the Scripture lesson today?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

>What were the meetings called when people from Roman cities got together to discuss city business?

>What does the phrase “the called out” mean when applied to the church?

>What are some of the things that Paul is talking about when he says truth in verse fifteen?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

For Memory: “You will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God.” I Timothy 3:15

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.