

## A Brief Overview of 1 Timothy

Cody Westbrook

The book of 1 Timothy is well known and dearly beloved by God's people. Many sermons have been preached, and articles written, from it that have challenged us and pushed us on to greater spiritual heights. There does seem to be, however, a slight misconception that this book only useful for preachers. While it is true that it contains a great deal of instruction for preachers, it is not a book only for preachers. In fact, one could argue that the primary emphasis of the book is strengthening the house of God—the church (1 Tim. 3:15). A brief overview of each chapter illustrates the point.

### The Church and its Doctrine – 1 Timothy 1.

What doctrine and why does it matter? These questions are answered in the first chapter of the book. The problem of unhealthy doctrine is discussed in verses 3-11. Some in Ephesus were teaching things that were false and spiritually unhealthy. This kind of teaching is deadly because it causes “disputes instead of godly edification” – speculation instead of salvation (1 Tim. 1:4). Timothy's charge was to command that they stop and ensure that only sound doctrine was taught. The goal of sound doctrine is discussed in verses 12-17 in which Paul used himself as an illustration. The problem with false doctrine is that it doesn't save but the goal of sound doctrine is exactly that—salvation. That is why it was so important for Timothy to stand firm and fight (verses 18-20).

### The Church and its Worship – 1 Timothy 2.

God is worthy of worship (Ps. 103) and He seeks those who will worship Him (John 4:23). However, God will not accept just any kind of worship. There is a standard, a pattern that must be followed that is laid out in scripture. That is the subject of 1 Timothy 2. The chapter can be divided into two parts: men and worship (vss. 1-8) and women and worship (vss. 9-15). In the first section Paul outlines the place and restrictions of prayer. In the second he explains the woman's role and also the reasoning behind it.

### The Church and its Leadership – 1 Timothy 3.

God's wisdom is vividly seen in the organization of the local church. The church is a divine institution of which Christ is the head (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22). It is composed of people organized into local congregations, and God knew that the organizational structure of the church required that there be men who occupy positions of authority to carry out the work in a proper and orderly way. Thus He created the office of an elder and a deacon (Phil. 1:1). First Timothy 3 outlines the qualifications that a man must meet in order to serve in these two capacities. We may divide these into three categories: personal, family, and church qualifications.

### The Church and its Servants – 1 Timothy 4.

God needs faithful servants! He needs servants who are willing to wash feet (John 13:12-15), put others first (Phil. 2:2-4), and help bear the burdens of others (Gal. 6:2). But, what qualities should be present in a faithful servant? First Timothy 4 identifies for us 6 character traits of a faithful servant of God. A servant feeds on God's word (v. 6), excels in spiritual athletics (vss. 7-8), works hard (vss. 9-11), sets a good example (v. 12), manifests spiritual growth (vss. 13-15), and saves people (v. 16). The church needs more faithful servants of God who possess these great characteristics.

### The Church and its Relationships – 1 Timothy 5.

The key to unlocking 1 Timothy is 3:15 – the church is God's household! The church is a unique family made up of people from all different kinds of backgrounds, cultures, and life experiences. Though we may be very different, we are all united in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:27). Thus we must love and care for one another at all times. First Timothy 5 deals with this topic. Paul identifies brethren (vss. 1-2), widows (vss. 3-16), elders (vss. 17-25), and masters (6:1-2) all being worthy of honor.

### The Church and its Priorities – 1 Timothy 6.

Priorities are those things that occupy a position of prominence in our lives. They take first place and are given great emphasis. Our priorities are a reflection of our allegiance. The final chapter of the book identifies three important priorities for the Lord's church: sound doctrine (vss. 3-5), godly living (vss. 6-16), and a proper emphasis (vss. 17-22). Every congregation of the Lord's people would thrive if they would put first things first and pursue the proper priorities. Our desire is to dedicate this, and subsequent issues of the Christian Worker, to a study of 1 Timothy with a view toward helping the church. Each issue will be dedicated to an investigation and application of the context and themes of 1 Timothy to strengthen each Christian—not just preachers. As we endeavor to mine the precious gems of truth from this wonderful book, we pray that our efforts will offer some value toward edifying the church of our Lord, which we love so deeply.