

Paul to Timothy

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Well, Good Afternoon to all of you! I'll try to keep up with John here and I'll say "Hello" to my mom.

Well, as usual, we broadcast what the speakers are going to be talking about every Sabbath. I've often toyed with the idea of maybe giving Rick a topic and then speaking on something else. And if you knew my wife, she would say, "Don't worry about him, he can't help that!"

But I am going to be talking about—the title that I gave Rick was *Paul to Timothy*. And it's actually going to be *Lessons from Timothy*. I didn't want to title it *Lessons from Timothy* because, as we know, there's a whole bunch of lessons there and obviously, you can't cover one of those in one session.

But many times if we look at these epistles, it's not necessarily for us. We know they're for Timothy and by extension for the ministry. So we kind of tend to skip over them. There are a few things that we hear from time to time from the ministry in sermons that come from letters of Timothy and we know these instructions are to the addressee, Timothy. However, if we look at the closing comments of each of the letters with Timothy—1 and 2 Timothy—there's a common denominator there. I'd like to start over in 1 Timothy 6, 1 Timothy chapter 6 and verse 20 from the New King James where Paul says to Timothy, he says:

1 Timothy 6:20. *O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle [babblings] and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge— (NKJ)*

And verse 21 is what I'm getting at here. It says:

1 Timothy 6:21. *by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith.*

And then it closes with:

1 Timothy 6:21b. *Grace be with you. Amen. (NKJ)*

If you compare that to—you don't need to turn there, but as a reference—2 Timothy chapter 4 verse 22 also ends with the same statement.

2 Timothy 4:22b. *Grace be with you. (NKJ)*

And it looks like it's translated singular there.

But here's a comment from the MacArthur Bible Commentary where it says:

Paul's closing salutation is plural. That is "You all." It goes beyond Timothy to the entire congregation at Ephesus.

That's where Timothy was pastoring, at least a good part of his ministry.

All believers are required to preserve the truth and to pass it on to the next generation.

The implication being that the instructions are for everyone.

The Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary on verse 22, 2 Timothy chapter 4 says the "you" is:

...plural in oldest manuscripts, "with YOU," [having the meaning of: "you, Timothy"] and the members of the Ephesian and the neighboring churches.

And some paraphrased translations also translate "you" as plural. From the New Living, 2 Timothy 4 verse 22 says:

2 Timothy 4:22. *May the Lord be with your spirit. [And may His] Grace be with [all of] you. (NLT)*

And another consideration—and I know I'm kind of building up to this, but the reasons we should be looking at this, but—another consideration is if we look at these Scriptures inductively (in other words, the who, what, where, when and all of that), we see that Paul's very concerned about Timothy and the things that are going on in the Church at that time.

Now he's talking to a younger minister obviously. And Timothy, by the way, was probably in his thirties—not a recent college graduate—and Paul's in his sixties at this point. So we see an older man teaching and mentoring a younger man. And he's passing on—and the point I'm getting at here—Paul is passing on thirty plus years of experience to a younger minister.

The way the world looks at experience these days—I don't know if you've had any experience with a corporation or not—having worked in a corporation in the past, I know that they look at experience as if you've been in a position, for example in a corporation for longer than five years, then you're part of the problem. So they don't count experience very highly; but actually in this world that we're looking at here in these Scriptures, age and experience count for a great deal. The point being that this wisdom is available to us if we'll look at these things. And that should give us cause to listen to and to heed what Paul is telling Timothy.

Another thing, these are letters of encouragement and instruction to this younger minister. And if that's not enough, we know that these are inspired Scriptures. They became part of the canon of Scripture. So they contain lessons and principles for all of us, just like the rest of God's Word does. And lastly, probably the overriding reasons that these principles and lessons are for us today is because there's nothing new under

the sun. Nothing ever changes. And, as we'll see in a little, human nature never changes either. It just keeps going on and on.

So with that being said, just looking at some of the important things that Paul was addressing to Timothy and his instructions about them, we can ask ourselves, "How does that relate to us today?"

When I first started developing this as a topic, I started a list of the lessons in Timothy and it became obvious right away that I was going to be really in trouble if I tried to make this *A Lesson from Timothy* sermon because it just doesn't work that way. So what I'd like to do is look at one embedded lesson in these letters of instruction to Timothy—one lesson.

And if we look at even the very beginning of the first letter to Timothy—and you can be turning over to 1 Timothy chapter 1, if you would—one of the first things that Paul addresses with Timothy is about controversy coming into the Church, about that clash of opinions that seem to keep things stirred up. They always come in the form of disputes and arguments into the Church. Sometimes they come from outside. Sometimes they'll rise within the Church. So let's look at that from that approach.

In 1 Timothy beginning in chapter 1 and verse 1, and this is from the New American Standard:

1 Timothy 1:1. *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, {who is} our hope, (NAU)*

Paul here in a way, he's establishing his authority to be able to instruct Timothy in the first place. Even though he treats him, as we can see even from the next verse, he treats him like a son.

Verse 2:

1 Timothy 1:2. *To Timothy, {my} true child in {the} faith: (NAU)*

And Paul in a sense had raised him in spiritual matters.

1 Timothy 1:2b. *Grace, mercy {and} peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. (NAU)*

Verse 3:

1 Timothy 1:3. *As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus (NAU)*

That's where Timothy was ministering and that's where he spent a good part of his ministry. And if we want to look at it this way and if you ever study these letters, study them with Ephesians. Actually Timothy accompanied Paul to a number of different places and served in different places for Paul. And some scholars say that he actually helped in some of the writing of the epistles.

But continuing there in the latter part of verse 3:

1 Timothy 1:3b. ...so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, (NAU)

You have to pause here and consider for a minute that if he's instructing how he should conduct himself, how he should treat these individuals that were teaching, we have to realize that if they were in a teaching position, they were part of the Church. In other words, they had influence among the Brethren. And we can see that from the context of both these letters. These leaders were actually vying for recognition if not outright position within the Church.

And that's usually the case, if we think about that. We've had our own experiences in this particular time that we live in as far as the Church goes. If we looked at all the different groups that we see around us that have fragmented from God's people, we usually see that there's hardly any difference amongst most of us when it comes to basic doctrine, but if we get into the position where—and this often happens with different individuals. They'll have a favorite or particular teaching that they like. In other words, they take a stance or a position on something. And if we do that, then the way human nature works, we'll defend our position. We'll defend our stance. So inevitably it seems like a group will break away because of the things from this one individual that we have a position on this certain thing. "This is what we believe. This is our main doctrine." And I'll touch on some of those things later. I did make a list of those things that we see today.

So in order to see what Paul's talking about there that this would go on, this would continue and the reason it's comes down to our day, we can have to jump over to Acts 20 to kind of catch what Paul meant here, how he knew this was going to be an ongoing problem in the Church. We see the same warnings; we see the same instructions from things coming into the Church not only in Timothy, but in Titus. We see it in Jude. We see it in Peter. We see it in many of the epistles.

But over in Acts 20 beginning in verse 16, again this is from the New American Standard.

Acts 20:16. For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

17) From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church.

18) And when they had come to him, he said to them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, (NAU)

And as we know there were a number of churches in Asia.

Acts 20:18b. ...how I was with you the whole time,
19) serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; (NAU)

They were always after him. They viewed him as a threat. Verse 20:

Acts 20:20. *how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, 21) solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. (NAU)*

As he did that, the Jews had a hard time with Christ—recognizing Him as the Messiah—and the Greeks wanted to make Christ fit with their philosophies, as we know; but Paul never deviated from that gospel message of repentance and faith towards Christ.

But going on in verse 27 of Acts 20:

Acts 20:27. *"For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. (NAU)*

And actually that word's kind of interesting because we remember how zealous Paul was in persecuting the Church in the things that he did. It's interesting to see that God when He blinded Paul, when Paul went through his conversion and all the things that he did that God never took that zeal away from him. He continued with that same zeal in doing the things that God wanted him to do and preaching the gospel. How could he have suffered all the things that Paul suffered? So he had that zeal. He continued that. He said he didn't shrink from doing that.

Verse 28:

Acts 20:28. *"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, (NAU)*

He's talking to the elders here. And it's interesting that he uses that term "to guard yourselves." You have to think about that for a little bit because as we've seen in our experience, however long we've been around and how many of the ministers that we have known, if they don't take care of themselves, if they spend—and I've even heard ministers say this—that they've devoted so much of their life serving, they lived in cars; their kids were raised in cars, that they've traveled, done this, done that for the Church, that they neglect their own spiritual well-being. Paul is warning these elders, even back then, not to do that because it's very easy to do.

If we look at some of the history and things of the city of Ephesus, it's said that it had anywhere from a quarter to a third of a million people there. So there were actually a lot of different churches, small groups. We know that there were small house churches. There were many elders there is the point. And they were taking care of a lot of people. It's said that one individual sent an emissary to find out what was going on in Ephesus when Paul was there preaching and Timothy was there preaching. And he said, "The temples are empty." The temples where the idols were, were empty because there had been so much conversion, people coming to God.

But continuing there in verse 28:

Acts 20:28b. *...among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers [and there were many of them], to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. (NAU)*

And his point there is he's emphasizing that it's God's Church. It's not theirs. We can kind of look back and read between the lines. That probably happened back then when people thought they owned God's people. And we've seen that in our day too.

Verse 29:

Acts 20:29. *"I know that after my departure... (NAU)*

He knew that he wasn't coming back. He saw the storm clouds building up to his own impending death.

But he says:

Acts 20:29b. *...after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; (NAU)*

And isn't it interesting how wolves and lions—which 1 Peter 5:8, Satan is a roaring lion—isn't it interesting how wolves and lions stalk their prey, how they work on a flock. They work it to death actually. If we think about that in the context of what I'm trying to get at here, all these things can actually come in and create diversions, all kinds of things that will eventually destroy a congregation.

Verse 30:

Acts 20:30. *and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. (NAU)*

You have to think about that for a minute too, because you think about how that works. When someone does that, when someone brings in a teaching or something like that, it doesn't always mean that they're trying to get a following after themselves to start their own group, their own church, or whatever. In some cases, if we think about it, individuals try to get a following with just their philosophy. They want someone to agree with their ideas. And Paul is warning these elders about that at this point.

Verse 31, it goes on:

Acts 20:31. *"Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. (NAU)*

That's how long Paul served there.

And if we go back to 1 Timothy chapter 1, we see some similar things back there. Back to 1 Timothy chapter 1 and picking up the last part of verse, 3 which I read previously.

1 Timothy 1:3b. *...so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, (NAU)*

And then verse 4:

1 Timothy 1:4. *nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, (NAU)*

And we can kind of see from commentaries, from other sources that the Church at Ephesus was dealing with some cultural influence there. They had a mix of Greek. They had a mix of Jewish people that actually were never even raised in Israel. They were not raised there at all. They were raised under the Greek and Roman influence and all these things were taking place in the Church in Ephesus. And that's where all these tales and genealogies, these arguments— You know the big argument of Moses, if you ever look into that—Moses' genealogy where it actually started from, where it wound up and all that. Anyhow they were getting embroiled in all these endless things.

Continuing the last part of verse 4:

1 Timothy 1:4b. ...which give rise to mere speculation rather than {furthering} the administration of God which is by faith. (NAU)

In other words, it didn't really have anything to do with God. It was a diversion from what they should have been doing.

Verse 5:

1 Timothy 1:5. But the goal of our instruction is love... (NAU)

And remember He's teaching Timothy how he should conduct himself, how he should operate and run the Church. And this "love" here is the *agape* love. That's God's love. It's the total opposite of human nature, which we'll see later.

Continuing the verse:

1 Timothy 1:5. ...from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.
6) For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, (NAU)

It doesn't go anywhere. It just creates friction and barriers. We see that today. Nothing's every changed. Verse 7:

1 Timothy 1:7. wanting to be teachers of the Law, (NAU)

You kind of have to, again, get into their thinking here because these Jewish teachers, what they were having a hard time letting go of was law keeping. That was why Paul persecuted the Church the way that he did. He saw the Church as a threat to the Jewish way of life which is law keeping. That was their path to salvation. It didn't have anything to do with repentance, faith, all of that. It was law keeping. So they were having a hard time letting go of that.

And another thing that they were having a hard time with, they were thinking, "Well, the Gentiles, they have it too easy." You can kind of see the way the human nature plays out there in these individuals. Israel had to go through all these troubles, all these trials, all these captivities and everything, and these Gentiles just to come in? They have grace and all that? They thought it was too easy on them. So they were having a

problem with that. They wanted to change that. They wanted to be the teachers the way it should be. That's just the way it happens today.

But continuing verse 7, the last part:

1 Timothy 1:7b. ...even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.
8) But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, (NAU)

Law keeping is not, and we know, is not a means to an end. It's just to show us what sin is. It shows us what we need to repent and change of. Sometimes when we fall into sin, we know that we broke something. We broke God's Law. We need to repent of that and change that.

Verse 9:

1 Timothy 1:9. realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, (NAU)

And this doesn't mean literally. It just means that they hate them. And we can see later how that plays out.

1 Timothy 1:9b. ...for murderers,
10) and [for] immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers [liars], and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, (NAU)

Eventually God's Law is going to show these people why their lives never worked.

Verse 11:

1 Timothy 1:11. according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted. (NAU)

Paul's passing, again, that experience, that knowledge, that wisdom, along to Timothy. And we can pick up on some of this here.

Verse 12:

1 Timothy 1:12. I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service,
13) even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; (NAU)

He didn't mean that his ignorance was an excuse for what he did, for breaking God's Law, but he was ignorant especially in his persecution and probably even the death of many of God's people. He was a blasphemer because he at first called Christ a blasphemer for calling Himself "the Son of God."

Verse 14:

1 Timothy 1:14. *and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are {found} in Christ Jesus. (NAU)*

Always pointing to Christ!

Verse 15:

1 Timothy 1:15. *It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost {of all.}*

16) Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. (NAU)

He taught Timothy to follow his example as he followed Christ.

Verse 17:

1 Timothy 1:17. *Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, {be} honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.*

18) This command I entrust to you, Timothy, {my} son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight,

19) keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck [spiritually speaking] in regard to their faith.

20) Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme. (NAU)

These were people that were part of the Church. They probably had a function in the Church. And Paul said they were blaspheming.

But there are some things to note in these last verses. One of the things being that Paul was telling Timothy—actually charging, commanding him—to fight the good fight. The meaning of that word "fight" in the Greek is equivalent to serving in a military campaign. It's talking about—he's instructing Timothy to execute his duties like a soldier would. And that's with courage. He's telling Timothy who apparently, from what we can tell, was just a little bit timid. That when people came in and started these false teachings or any of these arguments that they would get into that would separate, that would divide people, that he was to stand up to them like a soldier. That he was to be courageous.

And there's an embedded lesson here for us too. Sometimes we have to raise a personal battle to stand up for what we believe. Many of us have had to deal with Sabbath issues, with Holy Day issues, and other things all of our lives. But also—and the point I'm trying to make here is that—we need to stand up, sometimes courageously, to some of the things that come to us that people try to tell us that might seem to make sense at first but if we look at them in the light of God's Word, that's not what Scripture says.

And we need to also remember that all the things that we have proven and laid our foundation for our beliefs in God, our beliefs in Christ, we need to hang onto those things, but we'll go on and show that more later.

And another part of the expression for this in the Greek means that we also have to resist our human nature, which wars against (as Paul tells us back in Romans) wars against God's Law, right principles, moral concepts. And we have to think a little bit about "How does that work?" The antonym of that is peace. In other words, carnally sometimes it's easier to compromise or to go along with somebody because they're our friends if they bring something to this that might be a little bit different, a little strange than anything we've ever heard before. It's easier to do that—to go along with that—rather than resist it and to fight it, but Paul is trying to teach Timothy here not to fall into that trap because that's exactly what it is.

Sometimes if we stand up, a good question to ask ourselves, "Where is this idea leading to?" Because that's usually the way it starts in a very small way. And that was the problem for Timothy in his day and the Churches in that day, in the early days of the Church, and it's still with us today.

We know there are no time limits on arguments, on human nature. James talks about that quite a bit more. And in fact, in a lot of ways, he's a lot more direct. I'd like to turn over to James 4. You might keep your place here in Timothy. We'll be coming back here, but just to support this idea about how things come into the Church, how things divide, how things cause problems. And we see that all the time, if we're not alert to that, if we don't guard against that, which we'll see shortly too. But in James 4 beginning in verse 1:

James 4:1. *Where do wars and fights come from among you? (NKJ)*

Some translations say, "Where do the conflicts come from among you?" And we see a lot of conflicts today because there are conflicting ideas. Again, we have different groups with conflicting ideas, conflicting positions and stances even though the basic foundational things that we all believe are the same. We have to remember too that James is talking to the Church.

James 4:1b. *Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? (NKJ)*

The Greek here for "pleasure" is where we get the English word "hedonism". And it's basically just defined as self-gratification; in other words, getting our own way, to be self-satisfied. It becomes the most important thing to us.

I've mentioned this before and I'll probably catch some flack for doing it, but we like to watch Judge Judy. In our local area, it comes on just before the news. (I'm getting a thumbs up there!) And yeah, I know that Judge Judy is just entertainment and she's very insulting to people and all that, but if you really look at that, it's a real study in human nature because if we look at the things that are going on there, people rarely want justice. They don't want a fair judgment. They want their way! That's the way human nature works. I don't know how many arguments are lost right there in front of poor—no, not poor Judge Judy—the poor defendants or the plaintiffs, whatever's going

on there, because she kind of rips them apart. She exposes their human nature. But they want their own way. They always want things—they always want a judgment in their favor, not the other parties.

Well, let's go on here in James chapter 4 verse 2:

James 4:2. *You lust and do not have. (NKJ)*

And what do they lust for? The same thing then, the same thing today—lust for power, recognition, etc.

James 4:2b. *You murder... (NKJ)*

And again this is just hatred for others. It's not literal killing anyone. And usually this happens, this hatred, this dislike, will crop up between people because they disagree with each other. It separates Brethren. It separates people.

Continuing the verse:

James 4:2 continued. *...and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you [don't] ask.*

3) You ask and [you] do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. (NKJ)

In other words, if you want your own way, if you want self-gratification, God's never going to answer a prayer like that! It's not to glory and honor God; it's because you want your own way! And that's what James is telling these folks here.

Verse 4:

James 4:4. *Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (NKJ)*

And you kind of have to wonder why God inspired James to put this right there. We'll get back to that in a little bit, but let's go back to 1 Timothy chapter 6 verse 3. As we see in the context here, Paul is instructing about relationships among Brethren if they're employees, employers of one another, even slaves in that culture at that time, but then it jumps back to—it seems that he jumps back to—the subject in chapter 1, which was about strange doctrine, different ideas coming into the Church in verse 3 of 1 Timothy 6.

1 Timothy 6:3. *If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, (NAU)*

In other words: spiritually healthy words.

1 Timothy 6:3b. *...those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, (NAU)*

He just defined right there what that soundness is, what those sound words are. Verse 4:

1 Timothy 6:4. *he is conceited {and} understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, (NAU)*

And all these things that he's talking about here in verse 4, they're not godly ideas because they lead to the carnal worldly things that James alluded to. And that's where that spiritual adultery and being friends with the world comes in. James—they all say the same thing; all the apostles said the same thing. They agreed with each other. And Paul instructed Timothy that. So if we go down now to verse 20 of 1 Timothy 6 where Paul's instructions to Timothy are basically the same things that James said:

1 Timothy 6:20. *O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you [the truth of God's Word], avoiding worldly {and} empty chatter (NAU)*

Stuff that's never really spiritually profitable! We have things like "What hymns to use?" And I won't go into that. Again, I'm trying to stay out trouble again. But to continue the verse here, it says:

1 Timothy 6:20b. *...{and} the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge"— (NAU)*

And from the Greek we know that that word is *gnosis*—the big G—the *gnosis*. And I'd like to quote again from a commentary. It says:

The Gnostics of Paul's day claimed to lead their disciples [and this sounds very familiar] past the common herd of mere believers to a superior and gifted circle who should know the mysteries of being and who, by such knowing, should live emancipated from the slavery of matter ranging at liberty in the world of spirit.

All that comes down to is basically the doctrines of a lot of the religions that we see around us today. Sin doesn't matter. Matter doesn't matter. Only the things that we can get in this rarified air of our intellect matters. Nothing else matters.

Verse 21:

1 Timothy 6:21. *which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. (NAU)*

In other words, they've been part of the Church, were led astray by error, got drawn away by some intellectual sounding idea or teaching that tends to draw one into kind of a narrow spiritual focus. You know, "This is our favorite teaching. This is our favorite doctrine." We can look at groups and we can see that. Not to put them down in anyway, but eventually it leaves one like we've already seen. Like Paul said, "It leaves one floundered spiritually." "Shipwrecked" is the term he used. It saps your spiritual energy.

If we look at military or law enforcement or anything like that, any good tactician knows that if you create a diversion or enough diversions, you're going to win the battle. And, of course, that's what Satan does to the Church. We've heard the thing of divide and conquer. That can be incrementally. It can be like all these things coming in.

But it's kind of interesting that Paul uses the word to Timothy in verse 20 of "guard." And that just means to use, to be aware, to protect yourself and others that you teach. And how do we do that? One of the ways that we do that is because we use our knowledge to protect ourselves.

Recently—we have an LCD TV and it takes a lamp to make the thing work. The TV's about five years old and that lamp finally burnt out. So I went online looking for a replacement lamp for that. And the website that I went to was a very well-known website. I won't mention it. And I won't give the URL.

But what they had was they had a bogus part and they used the subtle little language, "Well, this part's compatible with the original equipment." And they had a picture of the real thing sitting there, a package of the real thing. It was just a lamp. And see this lamp was made who knows where—maybe on another planet. I don't know. And then I started looking at the—being a little bit savvy reading the reviews on this particular website because there's a lot of them. I read the reviews and found out this was a bogus part. It says that they give you a picture of the real thing, but they send you a phony thing and it doesn't last. And these are expensive.

So I went to another website and found the real thing. And the whole point there is I protected myself with knowledge. And that's what we do. How many times are we warned in God's Word not to be deceived, to check things out? 2 Thessalonians 2:

2 Thessalonians 2:3. *[Don't be deceived] by any means; (NKJ)*

Paul wrote that. And actually some scholars say that Timothy helped Paul write Thessalonians—the letters to the Thessalonians. We have the warning there, the man of sin who will send a powerful deception right at the end. And if you look at the context of Thessalonians, it's talking about the Day of the LORD, right? The things that are coming down to our day!

Marie and I were sitting at a Starbucks one time and a lady walked up to us that we'd known years ago in Worldwide. And she came up, very friendly. And we've known her and her husband—her previous husband—for a long time (been remarried a couple of times). But she went back to the Catholic Church and was explaining to us how she got deprogrammed from Worldwide and went back to the Catholic Church. And we're kind of—she didn't use, the point being—and we didn't look down on her or anything. We felt kind of bad for her. But she didn't use the things that she had learned. She let them go.

Eric Hoffer wrote a book, True Believer. I don't know if any of you are familiar with that or not. I have a couple of editions, that of an older one and a newer one, but anyhow, he defines a "true believer" as someone that believes something even when it's proved wrong or different. The person will still believe it! That's what a true believer is. And

Eric Hoffer looked at that as a dangerous thing in America. And in some ways it probably is.

But Paul instructs Timothy how to guard against these things coming into our minds, coming into the Church.

Continuing here in 1 Timothy 6 verse 17—did I take you from there? No. We're still in 1 Timothy 6? Okay. 1 Timothy 6 verse 17:

1 Timothy 6:17. *Instruct those who are rich in this present world [materially] not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, (NKJ)*

And that's kind of the way we do today. That's kind of the way that society was at that point in Ephesus. It was actually a well-to-do society.

We think we have a little bit of money in the bank. We're kind of secure. I know we were so poor at one time whenever I could get a full tank of gas to get to work, I thought we were pretty well off!

Anyhow, continuing the last part of the verse there:

1 Timothy 6:17b. *...but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. (NKJ)*

Many times that's material blessings and spiritual, especially spiritual. And again, if we take those things, if we actually internalize those spiritual things, especially on that foundation, don't deviate from that foundation, we're going to be rich spiritually.

Verse 18:

1 Timothy 6:18. *{Instruct them} to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19) storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, (NKJ)*

That's a spiritual foundation. That's a spiritual foundation that we all have of God's basic truth. And sometimes if we get a little off, we have to revert back to that and recalibrate. Don't we? If we get back onto something and our thinking starts getting a little bit skewed and we start believing something that really isn't true.

But continuing the last part of verse 19:

1 Timothy 6:8b. *...so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed. (NAU)*

That's eternal life! That's what that's pointing to. That's what these spiritual things, those things that God has given us and called us into, that's where it's leading.

So the point there being that just like I protected myself buying a lamp for my TV, we protect ourselves from the scams of the things that we might hear. We protect

ourselves. How do we do that? We do that by study. We do that by listening to sermons.

In other words, we store up a bank of truth and of knowledge. If we could go back to the days, if we could meet Paul or Timothy and we mentioned the KIP factor to them—Knowledge is Power—they wouldn't know what we were talking about. But if we explained it a little bit, they'd know exactly what we were talking about because that's what Paul was instructing Timothy to do—to store up that knowledge, to teach people, to help them to store up that knowledge so that they could confront these things whenever they came to their minds. They could hang onto the truths that they had.

Mr. Armstrong used to say, "The trunk of the tree, don't get away from the trunk of the tree." And most of us lived through that.

It's kind of an aside, but let's jump ahead about thirty or forty years from this writing over to Revelation chapter 2 where it talks about the Church at Ephesus. (Too late, but you might have wanted to keep your place there.) Revelation 2, because this also gives us some insight and again, this is thirty to forty years later that John records this. Revelation 2 verse 1:

Revelation 2:1. *"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, (NAU)*

We know that's symbolic of the seven Churches.

Revelation 2:1b. *...says this:*

2) "I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them {to be} false; (NAU)

In other words, they were on their guard. They watched out for these things and they didn't fall for these things. There were many people that would come into the early churches in New Testament times and they would actually promote themselves as being apostles or from the apostles. Remember, in some cases, they actually had false letters from the apostles—letters of introduction and all that—and wanted to be teachers in these various congregations.

Verse 3:

Revelation 2:3. *and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary.*

4) "But {this} I have against you, that you have left your first love. (NAU)

Maybe their enthusiasm for their calling had waned. It kind of parallels the Laodicean Church here. Maybe the love for the truth began to dim a little bit because that's when deceit creeps in.

And the point here is—and kind of a lesson for us—is that we can't let our guard down. We heard the expression many times—there was even a book written one time—

"Satan's alive and well." Well, we need to remember that he also never sleeps. Sometimes we can spiritually, we can slip off and we can doze off as a sense and we can let down a little bit.

But continuing verse 5—but they were fairly strong in this, but things were slipping a little bit. Verse 5:

Revelation 2:5. *"Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent. (NAU)*

Come right back to repentance and faith—the things that Paul preached and taught and taught Timothy to preach and teach.

Verse 6:

Revelation 2:6. *"Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. (NAU)*

And again, we've heard it many times. The word "Nicolaitan" means "conquer the people" or "victory over the people," trying to lead them astray—diversions, words, arguments. All these things become wedges in a congregation.

Verse 7—but they were fairly stable.

Revelation 2:7. *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches [That's for all ages.]. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.' (NAU)*

So we can put all these Scriptures together and we can see that all the controversy and disputes about words that seems to crop up once in a while that we see in these Scriptures also, we see that we have today. It's very similar.

If we look back at those early Churches, it was a blend of things. A lot of the controversy, again, was because of those cultural things that each one of the individual early Churches found themselves in. It was kind of a blend of legalistic Judaism, Hellenism which is basically just Greek philosophies that crept in; and kind of an early version of Gnosticism, although some scholars say that that never really took hold until about the second century, but there were some early things of that. And that's where they get the idea of matter doesn't matter. It's the knowledge, the spiritual things that do.

And we can look at the way the Jews and the things that they were always after Paul and the things that they thought, they felt. Their emotions were all in the Law. It was a common issue among the Churches that Paul dealt with, that Timothy dealt with. There were people that insisted on the Mosaic Law to be kept. Circumcision was a big issue. That was one of the major issues.

We have our own list of stuff today. We have calendar arguments. Passover debates—which date? We have debates and arguments over when the Holy Days

should be kept. "When's the barley ripe in Jerusalem?" and that kind of thing. It goes on and on. What defines sundown? When's sundown? That's been bounced around. What *gennao* means—born again? What that really means. Sacred names, we have whole groups. Origin of—

I'm not knocking these people by the way. And I'm not saying all of these things are bogus studies or arguments. And some of these things may be legitimate studies. I don't know. I've looked at tons of papers. And I know that we probably all have. It depends on how long we've been around. It depends how we were affected by everything when things started breaking up as we looked at different things. Hopefully, none of us, none of those things stuck! But we looked at a lot of things.

And the point being, for me anyway, I don't have the brain capacity to process a lot of that stuff. So again, I will come back to those foundational things. I'll stick with those.

We have debates. One of the big things going around now is the origin of Christ. That seems pretty plain who He is. Where did He really come from? Was He created or not? All those kinds of things, they become arguments and actually separate people.

D and R, back in the old days and some people, younger people don't even know what I'm talking about. Back in the days of divorce and remarriage when Mr. Armstrong changed that, there were actually a whole group of people that split off, formed another congregation because they thought that was wrong. They thought divorce and remarriage should be a doctrine, a major doctrine of the Church. And again, I'm not knocking that. That's what they believed.

We have arguments about eating out on the Sabbath. We have arguments about whether we should meet in Masonic Temples or not. And again, I already mentioned this—"What hymns to use?" That's been flying around for—I have an old history book on the History of the Church of God. And that was an issue way back when, way back in the 1800s.

I don't know whether you've ever had the pleasure or the misfortune to have people hand you papers on conspiracy theories. We've seen a whole bunch of those. We, actually one time we were back in the old days when we still had kids at home and we were traveling, staying at different people's houses. We stayed at, one very nice family, we stayed with them one time. And they were convinced that Russia was controlling the weather affecting the United States. I don't know whether you've heard that one or not.

We have the vitamin things and all that that go around the Church, the diet things, all this and that. Do you remember the one about vinegar cures everything? I throw that one in there for a little [indiscernible].

Let's go back to 1 Timothy chapter 6, if we're still there. Do you remember the last part of verse 4, 1 Timothy 6? It kind of went:

1 Timothy 6:4b. ... *controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, (NAU)*

And then in verse 5, which is where I'm going:

1 Timothy 6:5. *and constant friction... (NAU)*

And that's generally what these things cause. They're issues that separate. Sometimes they're almost ridiculous.

The Greek term translated "friction" here and it's kind of interesting because that Greek word implies something that is perpetual. That friction just keeps going and going and going. It doesn't go away.

It just seems like those individuals continue to create problems with individuals and the Church, but continuing in verse 5:

1 Timothy 6:5b. *...between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, (NAU)*

They were once part of God's Church. They had the truth. They had the foundation. Now they're deprived of that and their minds have become depraved. That's what this means.

1 Timothy 6:5 continued. *...who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. (NAU)*

And "godliness" here is just an external piety.

And I don't know about you, but really religious people scare me to death! And sometimes we see that in the Church. I remember years ago attending at the Feast—very first Feast I ever attended—there was a gentleman there that the Church didn't seem to be religious enough for him because he fasted the whole Feast. He kind of missed the point I thought. Even then as naïve as I was and as gullible as I was, I thought that was a little bit strange.

You'll often see that with individuals. They will be very nice on the surface, very good, all smiles, and all that. And yet, they'll have something very strange that they're trying to get you to buy into. And you have to think about the gain here. And again, a lot of times that may not be a literal following as a group, but it could be a philosophical following. Just get people to agree with your ideas, especially if it's some new doctrine.

Paul instructed Timothy about this very thing. And now if we go over to 2 Timothy chapter 4—it happened then. It's happened down through history and it still happens today even though we don't see it all the time. 2 Timothy 4 verse 3, this again from the New American Standard:

2 Timothy 4:3. *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but {wanting} to have their ears tickled [in other words, something intellectually titillating], they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,
4) and will turn away their ears from the truth... (NAU)*

Did you ever hear anyone say, "The truth is just old stuff."? That can happen.

2 Timothy 4:4b. ...and will turn aside to myths. (NAU)

Once again, Paul giving this advice to Timothy that we can all apply to ourselves.

In 2 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 1, we've heard this many, many times. I remember one time years ago that **Rex Section**, when he was attending Ambassador in Big Sandy, there was a deacon that gave a sermonette quite often. And every sermonette, he used 2 Timothy 3 where it says in verse 1:

2 Timothy 3:1. But realize this, that in the last days... (NAU)

And that's from then till Christ's return, that's the last days. We're in the last days. No matter how we want to look at that or even if we want to be here. That's where we are.

2 Timothy 3:1b. ...difficult times will come. (NAU)

That's conditions in the Church and out of the Church.

2 Timothy 3:2. For men will be lovers of self, (NAU)

This is not that *agape* love. This is not God's love. This is self-centered love.

2 Timothy 3:2b. ...lovers of money [which just means covetous], boastful, arrogant [which just means proud], (NAU)

Lots of pride going around! We see a lot of that out there.

2 Timothy 3:2 continued.revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,
3) unloving, irreconcilable, (NAU)

And both of those words just mean unforgiving.

2 Timothy 3:3b. ...malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, (NAU)

And that word [brutal] in the Greek just means hard and difficult, the exact opposite of gentle and meek, which is what we should be.

2 Timothy 3:3 continued. ...haters of good,
4) treacherous, reckless, conceited [lots of ego out there], lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,
5) holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; (NAU)

In other words, they make that profession of being religious, but they're actions deny it. There's no evidence of it. There's no fruit. In fact, the Phillip's translation says that these have a "façade of 'religion,' but their conduct and motives deny its validity."

It goes on at the end of verse 5:

2 Timothy 3:5b. ...avoid such men as these. (NAU)

We see other admonitions as far as Church people go. If there are Church people that are sinning, we shouldn't have anything to do with them. We shouldn't associate with those folks. Paul teaches us that. We go back and look at Corinthians and we go back and look at other Scriptures. That's what we're told to do and Timothy is being told that to teach that.

Verse 6:

2 Timothy 3:6. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak [which probably just means "spiritually immature"]women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, (NAU)

And Paul's not against women here. That's not what that's talking about. It just means evidently some in Ephesus there were just easily led astray and became a following, a literal following for some of these teachers, these false teachers.

Verse 7:

2 Timothy 3:7. always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (NAU)

Always delving into something except the truth!

To me it takes a tremendous amount of energy to produce some of the stuff I've read and some of the stuff I've seen on the internet. It takes a tremendous amount of energy. And, again, I'm not—some people just have those minds. The synapses can snap to those things, but mine can't. So, I'm not necessarily putting them down.

But it goes on here to say in verse 8:

2 Timothy 3:8. Just as Jannes and Jambres... (NAU)

Evidently magicians in Pharaoh's court that were opposing Moses, where it goes on to say:

2 Timothy 3:8b. ...opposed Moses, so these {men} also oppose the truth, (NAU)

And what they really—if we look at this, if we see what's going on here and see what he's talking about, what they really opposed, these magicians opposed in Pharaoh's court, to them the authority was Pharaoh—so they were actually opposing the authority of the God behind Moses, that Moses represented.

And that's what often happens whenever we have these problems in the Church. One of the major ingredients that is almost always there is an opposition to the structure, to the authority in the Church. I don't know whether you've experienced that or seen that, but I've seen it many times. In fact, I've even been there a little bit.

But continuing the last part of verse 8:

2 Timothy 3:8 continued. ...men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith.

9) But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes' and Jambres' folly was also. (NAU)

What happened to the snake they created? The miracle they produced? Moses' snake ate theirs! God showed them where the real authority was.

Verse 10:

2 Timothy 3:10. Now you followed my teaching, (NAU)

Which was God's truth, not something that Paul concocted. Not some concocted teaching!

Timothy 3:10b. ...[his] conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, 11) persecutions, {and} sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium {and} at Lystra; (NAU)

And we can see all the persecutions he endured. We can see all that in the Book of Acts, but you know you have to think about that for a minute too because he didn't do that for himself. In other words, if we look at Paul's life, he asked Timothy to imitate him, to follow his example. And his life was consistent with what he taught, which is the way our life should be! That's the way we should conduct our lives.

Verse 12:

2 Timothy 3:12. Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. (NAU)

It will happen to some degree. Paul never taught a "health and wealth gospel." Never! He didn't live that way.

Verse 13:

2 Timothy 3:13. But evil men and impostors will proceed {from bad} to worse, deceiving and being deceived. (NAU)

In other words, it's a perpetual thing. It's always going to go on. Satan is always there inspiring that behind it.

Verse 14:

2 Timothy 3:14. You, however [and all of us by implication], continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, (NAU)

This relates to when we were first called. We established a basic foundation.

2 Timothy 3:14b. ...knowing from whom you have learned {them} (NAU)

Not necessarily through Paul and his thinking, but through God's, through the message and the truth that Paul taught.

Verse 15:

2 Timothy 3:15. and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings [through his mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois] which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (NAU)

Timothy, just like us, learned God's way from square one on through, but he had to do that on faith just like we did when we were called. We had to take a lot of it on faith, but as we lived it, God fills in the details, right, even up to and including some of the trials that we do through. We get the details. Things get explained to us as we live it.

Verse 16:

2 Timothy 3:16. All Scripture is inspired by God... (NAU)

Heard that about a million times! Haven't we? But what we should really note there that it's Scripture. It's not men's idea of what it says. It's Scripture, what it really says! Like we've heard so many times, "One part of Scripture has to agree with another part of Scripture." We don't form a doctrine; we don't form a teaching or an opinion just by one word or one paragraph or one simple statement in God's Word. It needs to agree with the rest of God's Word.

Look at all those places we have of how to tell a false prophet. It tells usually he's not speaking according to God's Word. He's deviating from that.

But continuing the last part of verse 16:

2 Timothy 3:16b. ...and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (NAU)

In other words, as we live it! Sometimes it's mostly on faith. God will fill in the detail. We'll get it sooner or later. A lot of things we don't understand yet. A lot things I don't understand yet. I know there are people out there saying, "Yeah, we recognize that yet." Verse 17:

2 Timothy 3:17. so that the man [or any of us] of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (NAU)

Again that knowledge is a power that we have coupled with God's holy spirit and it comes through God's holy spirit that we protect ourselves with. Just to comment there: Paul instructed Timothy to study and absorb that truth, protect himself spiritually, to teach it to protect the Church from the error.

My wife gets after me especially when it comes time to dust. I have probably a ton of books in my library. And it doesn't take too many books to accumulate a ton of them, if anybody's ever moved and stuck them in boxes, tried to haul them from Point A to Point B.

But anyhow the point I'm getting at there is 99.9/10 of those books are written by Protestants, but when I come to something like "eternal security," all kinds of different doctrines—immortal soul, all that kind of stuff, trinity, all that—it doesn't bother me because I know. I just read right past that. I try to get the gist of what the author or the scholar is trying to teach, trying to get the technical information, the knowledge out of it, apply it to what I know, to the truth, add it to that foundation, to add it to that fund of knowledge. That's how you protect yourself. If you didn't, you'd be believing all of that.

Someone told me one time, "Don't read any Protestant stuff because it will get you confused." Well, that was early on and at some point, I guess what you really should be aware of is reading it and believing it because they're two different things.

Let's go back to James chapter 4. I think I'm going to wind up there. Back to James chapter 4. Remember we talked a little bit and mentioned, actually in James 4 and verse 4 where we left off there, it talked about being friends with the world? In verse 5 of James 4:

James 4:5. *Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit [that] dwells in us yearns [to jealousy]"?*

It's kind of vague there, but it could be a reference back to the Commandments, Exodus 20 verse 5 where it's talking about God is a jealous God, talking about adultery. (Are we in James chapter 4? I read a little bit trying to pick it up from verse 4. Okay verse 5.) But it could be that what it's talking about is that God wants us to use His holy spirit rather than take that worldly approach because that worldly approach inevitably causes the strife, the friction—all those conflicts that we talked about. And He wants us to use that spirit. And it's saying that God is jealous whenever we start drifting back into the worldly, the carnal approach of looking at things.

Verse 6:

James 4:6. *But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (NKJ)*

Pride and humility are two exact opposites.

Verse 7:

James 4:7. *Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil... (NKJ)*

Again, he's behind all the problems that we see.

James 4:7b. *... and he will flee from you.
8) Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (NKJ)*

Now how do we get doubled-minded? You can't believe two different things about the same thing. We can't believe some things which are foundational truths and try to incorporate something else into that. It doesn't fit. We can't serve two masters. Just can't do it.

Just as a reference, back over in 1 Thessalonians 5:21 where it says:

1 Thessalonians 5:21. *Prove all things; hold fast [what's] good. (KJV)*

And again we know that that's talking about the Day of the LORD. The point being that we can't lose focus and try to go in different directions as we get closer and closer to the end. We can't do that. It's going to affect us in too many ways. It's going to be destructive.

Verse 9:

James 4:9. *Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. (NKJ)*

Remember he's talking to the Church here! He's telling them—you know they were in a lot of trouble spiritually with this infighting. He's telling them that's what they need to do. They need to get back close to God. They need to fast.

Verse 10:

James 4:10. *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. (NKJ)*

Verse 11, well verse 11 and 12, I'll kind of skip over that, but it's talking about judging each other. Again human nature plays itself out. It's predictable in every case. If we get in arguments and strifes and controversial things with one another, start judging each other. That's what happens. That's what it's talking about there.

Let's jump down to verse 13.

James 4:13. *Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; (NKJ)*

He's using an example there, an example and attitude of self-will, of self-confidence. In other words, God's not in the picture. "We're going to do this. We're going to do that." God's not in the picture. He's telling them—James is very direct, telling the Church their problems. And actually that's some instruction for us too.

Verse 14:

James 4:14. *whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. [What's] your life? [It's just] a vapor... (NKJ)*

They lost perspective. We can do the same thing because that's a realist's perspective, because that's looking at—if we're looking at it right, we're looking at ourselves in relation to God. And we are; we're very physical, very temporary thing. God's truths—those things we should hang onto—are eternal.

Verse 15:

James 4:15. *Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." (NKJ)*

In other words: including God in everything in our lives.

Verse 16:

James 4:16. *But now you boast in your arrogance. (NKJ)*

What they were doing constituted arrogance and self-pride.

James 4:16b. *All such boasting is evil.
17) Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.
(NKJ)*

I know it's time here. So, if we think about these letters to Timothy, we have to consider the fact that Timothy—Paul was arrested. He actually wrote 2 Timothy, according to the scholars—I don't know how they know this—he wrote 2 Timothy when he was in prison and his execution was imminent. He told Timothy, if we look in the last part of 2 Timothy that he asked him if he would come to him to see him for the last time. But you've got to think about some of the emotion here. Paul [Timothy] probably read these letters over and over again because he never saw his friend, his mentor, his spiritual father in a sense. He never saw him again, but he had these words of encouragement. And he had the wisdom of these instructions. And I'm sure he taught them to all the Churches that he pastored.

So, I hope that as we've looked at this one lesson from Paul's instruction, I hope that we've seen that there's a timeless message there for us. We have that same encouragement to hold dearly the truths that we have. And we have to beware. We have to be on guard like Timothy was to not let anything derail us spiritually. And a lot of times these arguments, these different things that come in can do that. And we have to, hopefully, we'll use the wisdom to deal with these controversial things whenever we're faced with them. We don't want anything, any argument, any dispute, anything to affect our faith in or our loyalty to Jesus Christ. We don't want that to happen.