

Session 5: Churches

Scripture questions:

1 Timothy 3:1-7

1 Timothy 3:8-13

In this section, Paul explains two levels of leadership within the Church. In verses 1-7, he is speaking about the requirements of an overseer, or bishop. In verses 8-13, he is speaking about the requirements of a deacon. How would you compare and contrast the requirements of those who are bishops to those who are deacons? (Note: In some more recent versions, the words “overseer” or “elder” are used instead of “bishop.”)

1 Timothy 4:1-5

1 Timothy 6:3-5

Why does Paul warn Timothy about false teachings? How does Paul describe the character and goals of false teachers?

1 Timothy 4:6-16

In contrast to false teachers, what does Paul tell Timothy to focus on? How can proper teaching be distinguished from false teaching?

2 Timothy 1:6-16

What does Paul expect of Timothy? What does the example with Onesiphorus teach us?

2 Timothy 2:3-13

What does Paul encourage Timothy to do? How are a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer all good examples of what Paul expects of Timothy?

2 Timothy 4:6-8

What is Paul's attitude toward death? What does he look forward to? How does it motivate others?

The books of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus are known as **the Pastoral Epistles**. They address issues concerned with leading a church and are meant to help young church leaders in their development.

Early church leadership had two basic levels. The **bishop** was a church leader that held the highest level of leadership, and was responsible for teaching and guiding the church. The **deacon** was beneath the bishop, and helped with day-to-day activities of the church.

In 1 & 2 Timothy, Paul encourages Timothy not to be ashamed, but proud of his faith. Onesiphorus, a friend of Paul's that came and stood by him during his most trying times, served as an example for Timothy about this concept. Paul also encourages endurance in Timothy by telling him to embrace his persecution, and be proud of what they are both suffering for.

Paul looks ahead at his impending death, then looks behind at his service to God. He is able to accept his death and remain calm during this time because he feels a sense of accomplishment about his life, which was completely committed to Christ.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.
2 Timothy 4:7 NIV

Application Questions:

In 1 Timothy, Paul talks about the destructive nature of false teachings, which divide and cause arguments. How can you make sure to avoid false teachings, and not waste time on useless arguments that are not central to your faith?

1 Timothy provides a model of church leadership based on spiritual maturity. Why do you think we look more at external traits or abilities than spiritual maturity in selecting people to lead? Would you be fit to be a bishop? Why or why not?

Is your faith the product of coincidence, or is it part of a purposeful plan? Recalling Paul's example of a soldier, athlete, or farmer, what are you doing to ensure your spiritual success?

If you died right now, would you be able to calmly and confidently say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith?" If not, what concrete steps can you take to get to that place in your walk with God?

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