

BIBLE STUDY GUIDES: SEEKING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT

A SERIES OF NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

By Bob Young

FIRST TIMOTHY

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INTRODUCTION

These Bible study guides reflect how I organize and understand the text, taking into account various exegetical factors—syntax, grammar, vocabulary, etc. Along the way, I share some observations that may help clarify passages that are difficult to understand. I have not tried to write about every passage where potential problems or differences in understanding exist. At times my notes may seem to be unnecessary comments on clear passages; in other passages some may ask why I did not include a comment. Such is the individualized nature of Bible study. Some of my comments are designed to help maintain focus on the original author's purpose for writing.

These guides are not intended to take the place of your own reading but are intended to provide help and an opportunity to check your understanding. For each chapter there is a content outline followed by textual notes. The content sections of these guides (including how the text is divided and how subsections are described) are drawn from a comparison of several modern translations and reflect the majority. The textual notes at times provide a periphrastic summary, but as noted above they are not intended to be complete. I have tried to address matters that may not be included in other sources. Texts that are easily understood and matters usually explained in other writings are not treated in detail.

My primary purpose is to make it easier for you the reader or student to analyze and understand the text. Ultimately, you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible and you cannot simply follow what a favorite preacher or commentator says.

INITIAL READING AND PARAGRAPHING

In several previous writings, I have explained the importance of preparatory reading and personal study of the text. It is important that you learn to do this on your own. Once the text is familiar, I suggest you think about what themes you can identify and how you would mark the paragraph divisions, based on the subjects treated in the passage. Once you have completed this work, it is good to compare your paragraphing with that of several modern versions (or you can use the content section of these guides).

A NOTE ABOUT PARAGRAPHING

Paragraph divisions are the key to understanding and following the original author's intent. Most modern translations are divided into paragraphs and provide a summary. Ideally, every paragraph has one central topic, truth, or thought. There will be several ways to describe the subject of the paragraph.

Only when we understand the original author's intent by following his logic and presentation can we truly understand the Bible. Only the original author is inspired—readers must take care not to change or modify the message. A first step toward integrity with the text is to develop the ability to analyze it and establish paragraphs.

Note that this introductory page is not repeated for each chapter. Many students will find it helpful to return to this introduction and reread it before beginning to read, analyze, and study a new chapter of the text.

BIBLE STUDY GUIDES: SEEKING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT

1 Timothy 1

By Bob Young

[Note: it is suggested that the introductory materials on the previous page be read before beginning your own preparatory reading and analysis.]

CONTENT

There is general agreement about the division of this chapter into paragraphs.

1:1-2, greeting or salutation

1:3-11, Timothy is to defend the truth against false teaching

1:12-17, God's mercy evident in Paul's life

1:18-20, the importance of Timothy's responsibility

STUDY HELPS

1:1-2. Writer (Paul, apostle) and recipient (Timothy, child in the faith). Paul may describe himself as an apostle to emphasize his authority. Timothy was as a son to Paul with regard to Christianity. The phrase does not mean physical son or that Paul had baptized Timothy (1:18; see also Acts 16 where Timothy was apparently already a Christian when Paul met him).

The phrase "God our Savior" is unusual (see Tit 1:3), but does not present new theological understandings.

1:3-7. Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to combat false teachings. The characteristics of these false teachers and teachings show both Jewish and Greek influences, as reflected in the descriptions that appear in the text. These include false teachings, myths and fictitious stories, various genealogical points, controversy and argument, desire to focus on Old Testament law, and conceit. The teaching was strange (different) and led to undesirable results. The antidote (or possibly the goal of all sound teaching) is love from a pure heart, good conscience, and sincere faith.

1:8-11. This is one long sentence in Greek and shows the value of the Law in relation to morality (or moral living). The Law is good, but only if used appropriately. The Law is not designed to provide a legalistic doctrinal set. The Law was not given for the "just who live by faith" but for the lawless and disobedient and those who practice things contrary to sound (healthy) doctrine, a doctrine that is consistent with the gospel.

The false teachers focus on observance of the Law as part of their teachings explains the background and importance of this section.

1:12-17. Here begins Paul's doxology (word of glory or praise) for how Christ Jesus had intervened in his life even when he was opposing Christians (see Acts 9). Paul affirms that his ignorant actions were a significant force but that the Lord's grace was greater.

1:15-16. The first of five faithful sayings: Jesus Christ came to save sinners. These sayings seem to point to key teachings (3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11; Tit. 3:8). Paul's response is that none needed saving more than he. Paul marvels that God wanted to save him and was able to use him. The greatness of Jesus' mercy and grace in Paul gives hope to all. In the context, one

should note that Paul identifies with the false teachers in this paragraph; he himself was formerly an opponent and false teacher.

1:17. A concluding doxology.

1:18-20. The command (v. 18) likely refers to 1:3. Timothy is to fight against the false teachers who are described as rejecting faith and a good conscience with the result that their own personal faith is shipwrecked. Two specific names of false teachers are given. Hymenaeus is mentioned again in 2 Tim. 2:16-17. Alexander is unidentified elsewhere in Scripture, as this would probably not be the Alexander of Acts 19 and 2 Tim. 4:14, since this Alexander was formerly of the faith and Alexander the metal workers seems to have always been an unbeliever.

BIBLE STUDY GUIDES: SEEKING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT

1 Timothy 2

By Bob Young

[Note: it is suggested that the introductory materials that precede Chapter 1 be read again before beginning your own preparatory reading and analysis.]

CONTENT

Analyzing the content of this chapter is easier when one sees the book in the larger context. Here is a summary. Chapters 1 and 6, Charges to Timothy, are not included here but are parallel and complete the chiasmus in this chiastic outline.

2_A Charge regarding Prayer and Behavior in Worship

[This charge guides Timothy's work with and instruction to the church]

3_A Charge to Work with the Church Leaders

[This charge contains semi-public instruction about church leaders]

Purpose Statement: how to act in the church [3:14-4:5]

[The nature of the church, the purpose of the church, the mystery and foundation of the church, threats that surround the church]

4_A Charge to Integrity in Ministerial Leadership

[This charge to Timothy concerns his personal life in ministry]

5_A Charge regarding Behavior in the church [5:1-6:2]

[This section gives instructions concerning various groups in the church, their responsibilities and Timothy's interaction with those groups]

The outline above suggests that the content of chapter 2 relates to shared activities of the church, especially in prayer and worship.

- 2:1-7, Prayer (general, and in the assembly)
- 2:8, Men (prayer in the assembly)
- 2:9-15, Women (behavior in the assembly)

STUDY GUIDES

2:1-7. "First of all" is Paul's way of putting things in order; the phrase means "of first importance" (as opposed to suggesting the first of several points). Prayer is for others (everyone, but especially for governmental leaders), even as God is concerned for the salvation of all, and Jesus died for all. Paul was sent to the Gentiles to help with the inclusion of "all." Note the four different words used to describe prayer. All are appropriate in prayers for others.

Jesus as mediator is described as "the man." Jesus is a capable go-between, representing and connecting both God and man, because he was divine but also participated in the human experience. The present mediation is through "Jesus the man." Since he still serves as mediator (see also Hebrews 9), to what extent does he retain his humanity?

2:8. The reference to men uses a word that is specific to the males. (Another word sometimes that is translated man refers to humanity, both male and female, as in vv. 5-6.) The phrase "in

every place” or “everywhere” may eliminate an exclusive application of this verse to public worship settings. The phrase could be applied very broadly; it could apply to numerous house churches in different places in the city of Ephesus.

Three behaviors associated with acceptable prayer are mentioned: lifting holy hands, without anger, without disagreements or arguments. Lifting hands in prayer was common Jewish practice. Lifting holy hands is interpreted by some as meaning holy living. Drawings in the catacombs show Christians with upturned hands, possibly indicating a posture of openness and receiving more than of giving. Lifting hands in this context likely has little relationship to the often observed practice in contemporary churches of arms fully extended upward. Anger seems a reference to personal relationships more than relationship with God. In the same way, dissension (disputes) refers to disruptive actions and argumentation between human beings.

2:9-15. The use of “likewise” to introduce a new group will appear again in 3:8 and 3:11. After men are admonished toward proper behavior, without anger or arguments, the women are instructed to reflect appropriate dress, attitudes, and behaviors.

2:11. The number of the noun changes from plural to singular (women in vv. 9-10, woman in vv. 11-15a). Some translations put the last phrase of v. 10, “with good works,” with v. 11. The singular does not prohibit an application to all Christian women, but some have observed that the context may suggest a special application to married women in relation to their husbands.

We read this text through 21st century eyes and fail to hear it clearly. “All submission” may be better than “full submission.” We abhor submission and forget that Jesus was submissive, that all are called to submission to God, and that all are called to mutual submission (Eph. 5:21) as a part of being filled with the Spirit. That a woman was receiving instruction was an advance over Judaism where she was forbidden to study the Law or attend school.

2:12-14. The verb “to have authority” (Greek, *authenteo*) is not easy; this is its only use in the New Testament. It is defined as domination or acting on one’s own authority (without proper authority). The concept of quietness appears twice in vv. 11-12. The modifier “remain quiet” applies to learning and teaching. The context does not suggest that the named action is acceptable if done with the proper attitude—not domineering. The modifier moves the opposite direction.

An analysis of the text shows that the limiter is not the teaching or manner of teaching; the limiter is the “whom”—that is, the persons taught. As noted above, the singular may suggest that the question is how a wife and husband should interact in the public assembly. How does a woman show respect for her husband (Eph. 5:33)? Remember that both Ephesians and 1 Timothy are addressed to the church in Ephesus.

Paul’s illustration of Adam and Eve may support the husband-wife relationship application. The argument is theological based on the consequences of the Garden and God’s instruction that the woman’s desire will be for her husband (Gen. 3:16). It may be that the women were more susceptible to the false teachers (2 Tim. 3:6-9). Paul notes that Eve was created second as the helper, was the one deceived, and the one who fell into transgression. Two consequences were assigned to Eve: submission to her husband and pain in childbirth.

2:15a. Translations of this verse often ignore the number of the pronouns. The singular continues in the first part of this verse; literally, she (the woman, Eve) will be saved (delivered,

protected) through bearing children. The use of the singular maintains a close connection to Gen. 3:13, 16.

2:15b. With Eve as the model or representative of all women, the second part of the verse returns to the plural number: “if they continue in faith...”

2:9-15. If the paragraph with the singular number noun or pronoun (2:11-15a) is treated as a complete thought, for the purpose of illustrating Paul’s point, then the reading of the text would be something like this (2:9,10,15b).

...likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

The ESV suggests this connection between v. 10 and v. 15 with hyphens, setting off the section of text that is illustrative.

...but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

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1 Timothy 3

By Bob Young

[Note: it is suggested that the introductory material that precedes Chapter 1 be read again before beginning your own preparatory reading and analysis.]

CONTENT

The first part of this chapter lists three different types of ministry.

- Bishops (3:1-7)
- Deacons (3:8-10, 12-13)
- Women (3:11), with the primary possibilities being the widow's role (5:9-16) or deaconesses (compare Rom. 16:1)

The second part of the chapter explains Paul's desire to revisit Ephesus and the importance of advancing the work of the church and the message of the gospel (3:14-16).

Given the overall emphasis of the book on combatting false teachers, the chapter should be understood in the context of the false teachers' lifestyle and teachings.

STUDY HELPS

3:1. This is the second of five "faithful statement" sayings in the Pastorals Epistles.

The first class condition assumes truth. Thus the "if" can also be translated "when." Paul says that serving in church leadership (specifically as a bishop or overseer) is a good work. While one can understand the value and importance of leaders desiring to lead, this verse may not rise to the level of requirement or hard and fast rule.

"When someone aspires to or desires to serve as a bishop, the work he desires is good." Many faithful Christians have served when it would have been easier not to serve. Paul speaks more than once of his compulsion and Jesus spoke of the contrast between his human will and the will of the Father. One can imagine something like this: I would prefer not to serve, but I know there is a need and that God has put me here at this time, so I will serve. Is a person with such a humble spirit automatically disqualified from service? I think not.

The reference here is to bishops or overseers. I will use overseer to translate episkopos from this point onward in these study notes. It is interesting that the text does not use the term elder with reference to a church leader until chapter 5. Other passages make clear that the terms bishop/overseer, elder, and pastor refer to the same ministry (5:17; Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet 5:1-2; Titus 1:5, 7).

3:2. The phrase "husband of one wife" is difficult to interpret. Four basic possibilities have been advanced: (1) it is a reference forbidding polygamy, (2) it is a reference forbidding remarriage after divorce, (3) it prohibits a second marriage after the death of the first wife, and (4) it is a way of saying a man must be faithful and attentive to his wife. One can note the same concept applied to the widows (5:9) and should note that younger widows were urged to remarry (5:14).

3:2-7. It is worth noting that the church at Ephesus had elders as early as Paul's meeting in Acts 20:17. The date of the book of 1 Timothy, perhaps five years after Acts 20, suggests that the list here may be corrective. If problems had arisen from within the elders as Paul predicted in Acts

20, it may be that Timothy is charged with guiding the church in the selection of additional or new leaders.

3:8-10, 12-13. Deacons are not mentioned in 2 Timothy or Titus, but see Phil. 1:1 where it appears a defined group of servants existed. Some have seen the first deacons in Acts 6, but such is not clear in the text. The word deacon means servant or minister, the etymology of the word suggests menial service. The New Testament does not define the role and function of such specifically designated servants. The word suggests they are servants and not administrators.

The paragraph begins with the word “likewise,” thus we see a reference to a new group, distinct from the overseers of 3:1-7. The qualifications are not as extensive, but one notes some repetition.

3:9. The reference to the mystery of the faith has confounded some. If the word “mystery” is understood as the inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles in the church (Eph. 2:11-18; 3:1-6), then the importance of the reference lies in a willingness to serve everyone. This may be an example where a consistent translation of a specific Greek word serves better than seeking synonyms (see the NIV, “deep truths of the faith”).

3:10. The reference to prior testing or approval is also puzzling. If vv. 9-10 are understood together, the context is to prove their willingness to serve everyone with humility. Limiting the reference in this way seems helpful.

3:11. This one verse that seems to be inserted into the context of the deacons (references to the deacons continue in vv. 12-13) has been the source of no little trouble and speculation.

The verse begins with “likewise.” The Greek syntax thus suggests the introduction of a new group; the construction is parallel to v. 8 where a new group (deacons) is introduced. I conclude that v. 11 also introduces a new group of church servants. They are designated women. Some translations have wives, but this is a doubtful translation as explained below. The Greek does not have two different words for woman and wife. Other translations have deaconesses, but had Paul wanted to say deaconesses, the feminine form of the word he used in v. 8 was available. One must explain the “women.”

The early church had women in various servant roles. Women are described as servants in Rom 16:1 and Phil. 4:3. Paul addresses various women by name in Romans 16. Later in this letter (1 Timothy 5), Paul describes the widows—a special group of older women servants. One can easily imagine church ministry settings where a male deacon would be incapable of serving, or at least highly inappropriate. On the basis of v. 11, the qualifications for these female servants were similar to those for male servants. (Remember that we are talking about servants. Our contemporary understanding of this text too often focuses on authority.)

The possibility that this verse is a reference to the widows (5:3-16) has been largely overlooked. Against the possibility, one can argue that the group has not been introduced previously in 1 Timothy, but the recipients of the letter would have been well aware of the existence of the widows group. Paul was not instructing Timothy to organize a new group of servants. Thus, when Paul refers to the women, this could have been a normal understanding. The use of “widows” would not have been appropriate because not all widows were included. By using “women” as the parallel to “deacons” Paul refers to women servants, a group

apparently known to the Ephesian church. The church then would not have faced the same interpretative problem we face today.

Those added to the widow's roll were to be over 60 years old with no family. They had been wives of one husband, and remarriage was not anticipated. This marital status of the women would explain why Paul addresses the qualifications of the women servants, and then returns to the men servants with teachings that would not apply to the women.

Seeing in vs. 11 a reference to the women servants (widows) who are mentioned later in the context is natural. There is also evidence for female servants (deaconesses?) in post-biblical church literature. However, in parallel there are also references in post-biblical literature to regional bishops who had authority over a special area. The references to such bishops show how quickly the church moved away from the earlier practice. Is such also possible in the case of deaconesses? One may wish to understand v. 11 as a reference to various female servants. However, limiting the reference to the group of widows explains the construction of the paragraph (3:8-13), and why Paul then proceeds to the specific marital situation of the male servants.

It is very unlikely that this verse refers to deacons' wives or to bishops' wives. A reference to deacons' wives might explain the construction with v. 11 inserted in the paragraph focusing on deacons. It does not explain how or why one would connect v. 11 with the instructions concerning bishops (vv. 1-7). And, it is not clear why the deacons' wives would have such qualifications when there are none for the overseers' wives.

3:14-16. Paul desires to visit Timothy in Ephesus, but his timing is uncertain. Therefore he gives instructions concerning various aspects of the church (a possible second purpose of the letter). He charges Timothy with guiding the church, keeping in mind its importance in God's plan. The church is God's household, church of the living God, pillar and support of the truth.

The chapter concludes with what may be an early hymn, and was perhaps a profession of faith. Mystery is something previously hidden but now revealed. As noted earlier, mystery often refers to the inclusion of the Gentiles in the church, but the additional modifier "of godliness" suggests a different meaning here. (Godliness occurs frequently in the Pastorals.) Simply summarized, the text speaks of Jesus' Incarnation, the coming and presence of the Spirit, the fulfillment of the angels' longing (1 Pet 1:12), the proclamation of the gospel, the faith response of human beings, and Jesus' ascension (or perhaps Second Coming). It is possible to see these six truths are a summary of Jesus' life; it is also possible to apply them across the span of the history of the world since the first century.

BIBLE STUDY GUIDES: SEEKING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT

1 Timothy 4

By Bob Young

[Note: it is suggested that the introductory material that precedes Chapter 1 be read again before beginning your own preparatory reading and analysis.]

CONTENT

4:1-5, prediction of apostasy and false teachers

4:6-10, a good minister of Jesus

4:11-16, personal instructions for Timothy

STUDY HELPS

4:1-5. The later or last times may be future, before the second coming of Jesus, but chapter 1 and 4:7 suggest a present reality as well with the false teachers already at work. An apostasy is predicted, probably with ascetic elements. Various aspects of the false teaching are described: listening to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons (perhaps reflecting parallels to the previous reference to the Spirit); hypocritical liars with seared consciences; false teachings about marriage and foods. God has a good plan for his creation; the false teachings about marriage and foods may reflect misunderstandings of God's original provision in the Garden. The point is that all this is from God and that asceticism violates God's purpose.

4:6-10. Timothy is charged with correcting such false teaching (worldly fables). Correct teaching provides nourishment by words of faith and healthy doctrine. A key to successful Christian living is self-discipline that focuses on godliness more than physical fitness. In the reference to physical fitness, one may see another reference to asceticism. Godliness has value both here and hereafter.

Here is the third faithful saying: that the Christian mind is focused on God as the source of hope and salvation for all. Note God as Savior.

4:11-16. Timothy is to teach and prescribe (a term used of strict military orders) these things.

Timothy was a young man (probably meaning less than 35 years of age, possibly less than 40). The false teachers would point to such youth and inexperience as invalidating Timothy's teachings. Youth were not frequently placed in such positions of authority. This is the context. Timothy is to be an example in various areas, all of which have the possibility of showing maturity.

4:13. Paul again mentions his coming (see 3:14), and urges upon Timothy in the meanwhile three things: public reading of Scripture; preaching, teaching.

4:15. Timothy was to develop his gift; be diligent in these things, totally committed to them and absorbed by them, clearly an example to all. Timothy's responsibility in these areas did not place him above other Christians. A part of his responsibility at Ephesus was teaching and preaching that would bring salvation for him and his hearers. The verbs used in this section of text provide helpful understandings of the seriousness with which a Christian minister (and every Christian) should approach Christian life and service: be diligent, devote yourself, do not

be neglectful, practice, be absorbed, immerse yourself, keep a close watch, persist.

BIBLE STUDY GUIDES: SEEKING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT

1 Timothy 5

By Bob Young

[Note: it is suggested that the introductory material that precedes Chapter 1 be read again before beginning your own preparatory reading and analysis.]

CONTENT

5:1-2, duties toward the believers/members

5:3-16, special instructions about the widows

5:17-25, special instructions about the elders, plus personal references

[6:1-2, special instructions about slaves]

STUDY HELPS

While it is not easy to discern the historical setting of the book in every detail, it seems that the book should be understood through the teachings and actions of the false teachers, and Paul's desire that the church function smoothly. Here are some of the areas Paul touches. These seem to provide logical paragraphing.

5:1-2, healthy relationships with all members

5:3-16, matters related to the widows

5:17-25, matters related to the elders

6:1-2, matters related to slaves

6:3-10, matters related to false teachers

[These last two points will be treated in the Chapter 6 study, along with teachings concerning doctrine and wealth.]

5:1-2. Timothy is to establish healthy relationships with all members. Older men, older women, younger men, and younger women are mentioned. The word elder or older man is used in two senses in the context: one as a church leader (v. 17), the other as an older man (v. 1). Note the close relationship between chapter 5 and chapter 3. The elders of 5:17 are apparently the same group as the overseers or 3:1; the widows of 5:9 are likely the same group as the women in 3:11.

5:3-8. "Honor" in v. 3 and v. 17 may both denote a salary given by the church; this seems the best understanding in the context. Perhaps the church provided for needy widows, for widows who were servant helpers, and for certain elders.

The family of a widow had the first obligation to provide care and support. Some widows were neglected by their own families. The church has always cared for its members. The context is hard to determine—it may suggest that some widows were forced to turn to prostitution or were especially susceptible to exploitation by the false teachers. Timothy was to carefully teach these things so all would know and could be above reproach in such obligations. The Jews had invented ways to avoid this obligation (Mark 7), but Christians joyfully accept the opportunity and obligation to care for those of their family. To do otherwise is to act as an unbeliever.

5:9-16. Some widows were put on a roll, perhaps of female servants (see 3:11). Such were to be at least 60 years old and to have been the wife of one man, with a reputation for good works, with five specific good deeds listed. It appears that widows on the list would have been described by all of these five actions.

Some widows, younger widows, were not to be put on the list. It appears from the context that those on the list had committed (pledged) themselves to service and had made the decision not to remarry. This is not to disparage marriage (or remarriage for widows); this is to encourage a healthy practice of God's plan for marriage. The problem is not remarriage, but making a vow and not keeping it.

5:13. This appears to be a continuing reference to the younger widows in light of v. 14. The younger widows as they worked in daily ministry, care, and food distribution would interact with many persons. With the energy of youth, they might find it difficult to have enough to do to fill their days. Paul writes that such could be a temptation to idleness, gossiping and being busybodies. Therefore, he urges them to remarry, bear children, keep house, and live above criticism.

5:15. Perhaps Timothy had communicated to Paul some specific examples of the problems mentioned in v. 6 and v. 13. It is possible to understand vv. 15-16 as a unit, so that those who have turned aside to follow Satan (materialism) are those described in v. 16. Regardless, Christian families must fulfill their responsibility to older family members. The church will thus be able to help those who are truly widows and have no family on which to depend.

5:16. It is interesting that the best Greek texts limit this verse to Christian women. In the comment above, the application was made to Christian families. Are there points of connection by which these concluding verses would inform the instructions concerning the younger widows (the most obvious antecedent) or the instructions about widows generally?

5:17-22. "Elder" here seems to refer back to the overseers (3:1), on the basis of the verbs rule, preach, and teach. While ruling could refer to households, the context suggests that the service and activity of these touches the entire church. "Honor" can refer to esteem or to salary; the context suggests the latter. The citation from the Old Testament is from Deut. 25:4. That some elders were working in teaching and preaching may suggest that others were not. Not all leaders have the same gifts or talents. Elders in the New Testament is always plural, but what the actual practice might have been in a city with multiple house churches is unclear (an elder in each local house church, parallel to elders in Israel?).

5:19. The verb in this verse (present, middle, imperative) can suggest an action in process, which with the negative particle indicates an action to be stopped rather than continued. This may reflect some of the problems and accusations that were arising from the presence of the false teachers. This concept (two or three witnesses) is also taught in the Old Testament (Deut. 17:6).

5:20. This verse seems to refer also to the leaders. Those who continue in sin must be called out, and it must be "in the presence of all" so others will not practice sin. "In the presence of all" could refer to the church(es) or to the other elders. The Bible gives instructions in how to deal with sin and it is often observed that the rebuke should be as public as the knowledge of the sin. (See Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1-5; 1 Thess. 5:4; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; Tit. 3:10-11).

5:21. This admonition repeats the charge to Timothy, that he hold fast or guard the principles without partiality, applying the teachings equally to all. While the principle can obviously be applied to all, the context suggests continuing instructions about the elders.

5:22. This verse has three imperatives: do not lay hands too quickly; do not share the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin. In the context, the most obvious application has to do with naming and restoring elders. The wisdom of and reason for encouraging hesitation could be to identify correctly the false teachers. Share responsibility for sins of others suggests that too rapid affirmation could be seen as approval of the actions of others. Keep yourself pure likely refers to the context and not to general purity of life (see 5:23).

5:23. This verse seems to be parenthetical, an explanation that purity (mentioned in v. 22) does not demand abstinence, since Timothy must manage his stomach problems and illnesses. The culture of that day accepted wine drinking—whether added to water for purification, or as a beverage.

5:24-25. These verses resume the topic of 5:17-22, probably directly related to v. 22. False teaching is obvious by content and consequences. Nonetheless, some things related to the false teachers will remain hidden until judgment.

BIBLE STUDY GUIDES: SEEKING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT

1 Timothy 6

By Bob Young

[Note: it is suggested that the introductory material that precedes Chapter 1 be read again before beginning your own preparatory reading and analysis.]

CONTENT

6:1-2, about slaves

6:3-10, about false teachings and true riches

6:11-16, personal instructions to Timothy

6:17-19, about rich Christians

6:20-21, conclusion

STUDY HELPS

6:1-2. If the instructions of this section seem out of context, remember that instructions about slaves often followed similar instructions (Eph. 5-6; Col. 3; Tit. 2). These verses may also reflect some of the teachings of the false teachers about slaves and slavery.

Paul urges Timothy to teach and preach these truths.

6:3-10. Paul returns to the subject of 1:3-11. This is a common practice in concluding a letter. The false teachers were those who opposed or contradicted Paul's teachings. Thus their doctrines were false and different, did not agree with sound (healthy) words, and did not lead to godliness. Some of the characteristics of the teachings of the false teachers are repeated in these verses.

6:6-10. The value of godliness is clearest when accompanied by contentment—lack of pride and not being self-sufficient. The things of this world are only for this world. The riches of this world are temporal and a source of temptation, leading many away from the faith, to grief and destruction.

6:11-16. This is a rich section of text. The conclusion of the book is near. "Flee from these things" probably refers to vv. 3-10. Note four verbs. Timothy is admonished to flee; he is also told to pursue six things—righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, gentleness. He is admonished to fight and to take hold of eternal life, consistent with his calling and confession.

6:13-16. This is one sentence in Greek; the charge is reminiscent of the charge with which the book begins. The doxology of v. 15-16 may reflect an early Christian hymn.

6:17-19. It is easy to see these three verses as a separate paragraph dealing with another subgroup in the church, "the rich." It is also possible that these verses have some other connection to the context. The reference to riches reminds one of vv. 6-10. Perhaps "the rich" represent a final group about which Paul writes instructions, given the parallel construction. Regardless, Timothy is to instruct them to keep on doing good, to share, and to be generous. By so doing, they are storing up and preparing for the future and genuine life.

6:20-21. "O Timothy" is approximately parallel to "O man of God" (6:11). The final and closing admonition is to guard the treasure entrusted to him and to avoid the false teachings and false knowledge that move away from faith rather than closer to it. In the phrase "grace to you" the pronoun is plural, even though the letter is addressed to and named for an individual. This likely indicates that the letter was to be read and shared with the church. Plural endings are part of all of the Pastorals (2 Tim. 4:22; Tit. 3:15).