

Leadership & character: 1 Timothy Gospel godliness and dangers

Read the letter all through.

- How do you feel about this letter? What is the overall tone and impact?
- What themes did you notice?

2 prayers – 1:17; 6:15-16

Charge - 1:18-19; 5:21; 6:13

- Grace – 1:2; 6:21
- Godliness = Jesus, his incarnation, gospel, resurrection, ascension
3:15-16
2:2-3; 4:6-8; 6:3-8; 6:11-12
- 3 x trustworthy sayings - 1:15; 3:1; 4:9
 - Simultaneously a sinner (in myself) & righteous (in Christ) & making progress (4:15)
- 3 x God our Saviour – 1:1; 2:3; 4:10
- Future hope – 1:1; 4:1, 8; 5:5; 6:14, 19
- Life – 1:16; 4:8; 6:12, 13, 19

Dangers: 4:16

Wandering from faith and a good conscience - 1:3-7, 18-20; 3:9; 4:1-5; 6:9-10; 6:20-21

Satan – 1:20; 2:14; 3:6; 4:1; 5:15; 6:10

- Doctrine – 1:8-11
 - Law as mirror and sword; Pharisee and tax collector
- Life – 3:2-10; 5:5-15
 - Desires – 1:5; 3:3, 8; 5:6, 11; 6:4, 9-10 – watch your heart

Pastoral Ministry: 1 Timothy
Aim, means and shape of church ministry

Aim

Church = Buttress of Truth – 3:15

Truth – 2:4, 7; 4:2-4; 6:5

Trust/deposit – 1:11; 6:20

Means

Sound/healthy doctrine → godliness / unhealthy doctrine → ungodliness – 1:10-11; 6:3-4

Charge, remind, teach – 1:3; 4:6, 11, 13; 6:2, 17

Pastor teacher – 3:2

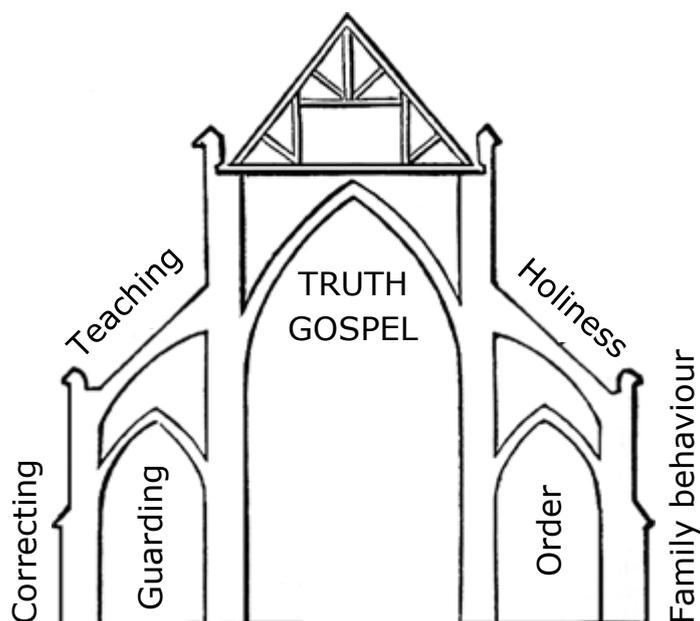
Shape

Household – 3:5, 15

2:1-15; 5:1-2

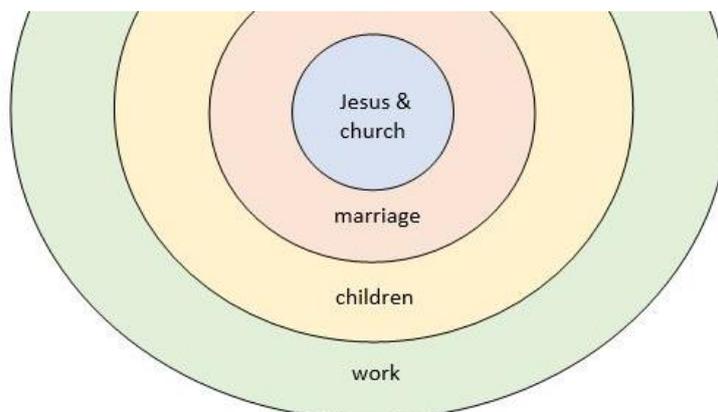
This shape/form/order is part of being the buttress

So there are two ways in which the church upholds the truth of the gospel: 1. Preaching; 2. Living



Pastoral ministry and 'calling' (1 Timothy 3:1-13)

- What do we think about pastors or missionaries claiming to be called by God?
- What might be some of the danger of using this terminology?
 - Sacred/secular divide, hierarchy, pride
 - Unquestionable, subjective
 - Must be obeyed, disobedient to withdraw from pastoral ministry
- Where would you place pastoral ministry on the diagram below? Where would most pastors place it?



How do you know you have a pastoral ministry gift?

1 Timothy 3:1-7

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| • Desire | • Family |
| • Gender ¹ | • Spiritual maturity |
| • Character | • Respectable in community |
| • Ability to teach | • Recognised by the church |

Other helpful resources:

- [Christopher Ash, How do I know if Preaching is for Me?](#)
- [More emphasis on The Call or less?](#)
- [The target diagram \(Jesus, marriage, children, work\)](#)
- Michael Bennett, *Do you feel called by God?* – [review by Ben Pfahlert](#)

¹ This is the most controversial criteria. The assumption here is clearly that the leader of the church will be a man. In the previous chapter Paul has said that a woman is not to teach or exercise authority over a man within the church and he roots this in the Creation order of Adam and Eve. Furthermore there seems to be a parallel between the family/household (headed by a husband/father)

and the church family/household (cf. 1 Tim. 3:4,15). Counter-arguments are made that this is all cultural or related to their specific church context. Certainly we need to assert women's complete equality before God and the importance of women's ministry in the church (e.g. 1 Cor. 11, Titus 2, Rom. 16). But we need to ensure that our final authority is the Scriptures not our culture or experience.

Gospel Living – Sacred versus Secular;
Fasting & the spiritual disciplines (1 Tim. 4:1-5)

Read 1 Timothy 4:1-5

- How do we normally think about sacred and secular? E.g. in relation to spaces, times, jobs, activities
- What seems to have been going on in 1st century Ephesus?
- What is the tone of Paul's language here? Is it surprising to us that he is so strong on this issue?
- What can be "holy" according to this passage? How?
- How does this passage challenge our thinking on the 'spiritual disciplines' and what true spirituality looks like?
- How might we be tempted to have a super-spiritual, [Gnostic](#), attitude towards the physical world, food and sleep?

Further reading:

- [Martin Luther on 'sacred' and 'secular'](#)
- [John Piper, 'A brief theology of sleep'](#)
- Tim Chester, *The Everyday Gospel: A theology of washing the dishes*

The importance of administration, wise management and good organisational culture (1 Timothy 5:3-6:2)

5:3-16

- Importance of the family under the New Covenant
 - godliness, good works include child raising, normal support system
 - don't create unnecessary structures or undermine family
 - encourage marriage (cf. 4:1-5)
- Enrolment of widows
 - Serious commitment to take on as if family – very specific, high responsibility
 - Concept of the 'deserving' – good works testifying that they are genuine believers within the household of faith
 - Cf. Anna in Luke 2:36-38
 - Not wanting to bind young women or create a convent – realistic, not super-spiritual
 - Church focused on a few very vulnerable and isolated people within their fellowship – concern that the church is *not over-burdened* by bottom-less needs in church and community and distracted from primary task – cf. Acts 6:1-7

5:17-6:2

- Notice:
 - Practical, earthy wisdom which is realistic about the world and the human heart
 - Nothing super-spiritual here. The church is not to be run in a *completely* different way to the 'secular' world. There is still need for wages, tribunals, medicine, common sense.
 - Church discipline
 - How different is verse 19-21 to how things normally happen in churches when there is some sort of immorality or fall on the part of leaders?

There is a *huge* need in our churches and Christian organisations for good administration of resources, focused leadership and wise management, impartial well-applied employment policies, and robust practical godly practices in dealing with relationships and conflicts.

Further reading:

- [Bruce Burgess, 'The hope of biblical peacemaking as a response to the challenge of conflict', *The Briefing*](#)
- [Bob Thune, 'Gospel preaching isn't enough', TGC](#)
- [Matt Perman, 'Management in light of the supremacy of God', WBN](#)

Tithing and gospel giving
(Malachi 3; 1 Timothy 6:3-20; 2 Corinthians 8-9)

- What is the teaching we are hearing on tithing and giving?
- What are the questions that we have or people in our churches have about tithes and giving?

3 Tithes:

1. Numbers 18:21-32
2. Deuteronomy 14:22-27
3. Deuteronomy 14:28-29

Offerings:

- Regular offerings tied into the sacrificial system – e.g. Numbers 28-29
- Firstfruits – Lev. 23:9-14 – of grain on entry to the Land
- Freewill offerings – at time of the tabernacle construction (Ex. 35-36), sacrificial (Lev. 22)
- Portions for the Levites - Exod. 29:27, 28; Lev. 7:14

Malachi 3:6-12

- Which tithe and which offerings?
- Notice the echoes of the curses and blessings of Deuteronomy (esp. Deut. 28:10-12?)
- What is our relationship under the New Covenant to the Law and the curses and blessings?²

2 Corinthians 8-9

- Who is the giving from and to here?
- How is it motivated? How is it not motivated?

1 Timothy 5:17-18

- How are pastors and preachers to be supported?

1 Timothy 6:3-20

- How does this challenge prosperity gospel preaching?
- How are we encouraged to give?

² On blessings and curses see [here](#).

To tithe or not to tithe: that is not the question

It seems that tithing is so embedded in church culture here that even when you go through all the arguments why it no longer applies to Christians, the question still gets asked, 'So what about tithes?' or 'So should we still give our tithes?' It is as if the categories of tithes and offerings are so wired into our brains (like the categories male/female, up/down) that it is impossible to conceptualise the practice of giving without them.

But what if we could soak ourselves in the New Testament to the point that it starts to change our questions from ones about tithing to ones like:

- How can I use all my resources, all my energies, my whole life in the service of Christ and for the advancing of his gospel?
- How does the love of Christ and the joy of the gospel make me want to give, even desperate to give, like the Macedonians?
- How can I be setting free my pastor and church leaders to be focused on the ministry of the word and prayer?
- What are the gospel needs, mission needs, in my context and throughout the body of church? How can I be a partner in the gospel like the Philippians?
- What practical needs are there in my local church and also in the church throughout the country and throughout the world? What would it look like for me to remember my persecuted brothers as if I was in chains with them?

Further reading:

In terms of the specific issue of tithing there are two articles by Andreas Kostenberger and his PhD student David Croteau:

1. ["Will a Man Rob God?" \(Malachi 3:8\): A Study of Tithing in the Old and New Testaments](#)
2. [Reconstructing a Biblical Model for Giving: A Discussion of Relevant Systematic Issues and New Testament Principles](#)

David Croteau's PhD dissertation, which covers much of the same ground, is [here](#). The gist is that:

- a) it is impossible to fulfil the tithe today (and nobody actually does);
- b) the institutions connected to the tithe (temple, priesthood, land) have been fulfilled in Christ;
- c) the NT doesn't reinstate the tithe but instead emphasises gospel-driven giving for gospel ministry.