

JULY 2013

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Anniversary

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# TODAY IN THE **Word**

A MINISTRY OF MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE

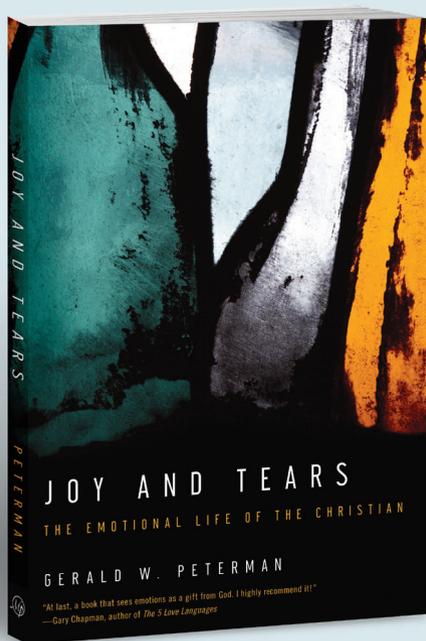
Do your best to  
present yourself  
to God as one  
approved.

I Timothy 2:15



1 and 2 Timothy:  
Sound Doctrine, Sound Living

As a recovering stoic, Dr. Gerald Peterman asks acute questions, such as why did God give us emotions?  
How are emotions supposed to help us?

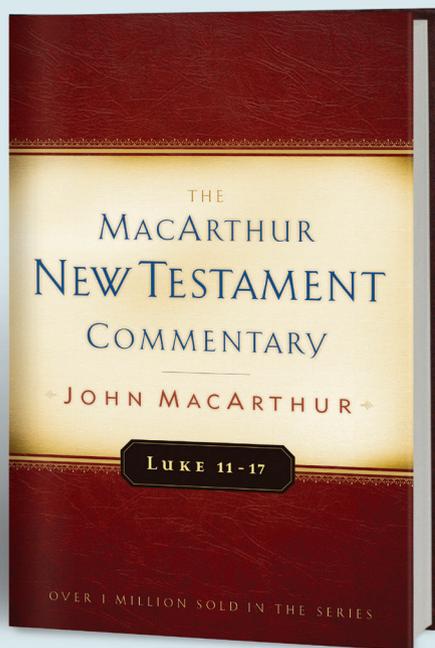


As Christians we are called to live a robust life of thought, action, and feeling. Dr. Peterman explores how Jesus, Paul and others used emotions to convey meaning.

**"AT LAST, A BOOK THAT SEES  
EMOTIONS AS A GIFT FROM GOD  
RATHER THAN A TOOL OF SATAN".**

-GARY CHAPMAN, AUTHOR OF *THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES*.

# THE MACARTHUR NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY



“Dr. MacArthur’s love for the Scripture and his many years of diligent study have resulted in a resource that is a great gift to the Body of Christ.”

- Nancy Leigh DeMoss, Author, *Revive Our Hearts* Radio Teacher

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# TODAY WITH PAUL NYQUIST

President of Moody Bible Institute

Investing in the Next Generation



The apostle Paul spent his final days imprisoned in a Roman jail. While awaiting his execution, he made the most of these days by writing one last letter to Timothy, his

spiritual son. In this letter, Paul models for us what it looks like to invest in the next generation of Christ-followers.

You see, Paul understood that God's plan for building Christ's church centers around making disciples, and Paul had committed a large part of his life to discipling this young leader named Timothy. Timothy joined Paul on his second and third missionary journeys. They shared life together, experiencing both the joy of ministry and the hardship of suffering for the gospel.

After Paul's third missionary journey, he instructed Timothy to stay in Ephesus and care for the church there. Paul's epistles to Timothy were meant to encourage this young leader in his service to Christ and His church. What a privilege we have to read these intimate, personal letters between Paul and his spiritual son.

Paul's last letter to Timothy shows us the closeness of their relationship. Paul begins 2 Timothy by referring to Timothy as "my dear son" (1:2). He reminds Timothy that he is constantly praying for him (1:3) and longs to see him (1:4). Paul's deep love and genuine concern for his disciple are obvious throughout his letters.

As a mentor, Paul gave Timothy specific guidance regarding shepherding the church in Ephesus, but he also disciplined Timothy in the fundamentals of following Jesus. In an earlier letter, he challenged Timothy, "Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called" (1 Tim. 6:12).

Paul invested in Timothy because he understood the critical need to pass on the torch, to leave a legacy that would continue for years to come. He was burdened to invest in leaders who would continue building Christ's church long after his death.

Today the church is over 2,000 years old, but there is still a critical need to pass on the torch. As the president of a Bible college and the father of four "Millennials," I am alarmed by the number of young people today who are migrating away from the church. The Barna Research Group recently reported that three out of every five young Christians are disconnecting from the church after age 15.

So let me ask you, who are you encouraging to "fight the good fight of the faith" (1 Tim. 6:12)? How are you investing in the next generation of Christ-followers? If you feel inadequate to disciple because of your past, let me remind you that Paul had a notoriously imperfect past.

May God rid us of our insecurities and develop in us a deep love and genuine concern for the young men and women that He has put in our lives for fruitful discipleship relationships.

# THEOLOGY MATTERS

by John Koessler



## Sound Doctrine

A popular ecumenical slogan during the first part of the twentieth century asserted, “Service unites, doctrine divides.” The New Testament church believed differently. Doctrine is really just another word for teaching. According to Acts 2:42, those who were part of the early church devoted themselves to the apostles’ doctrine.

The effect that doctrine has upon the church depends upon the nature of what is taught. False teaching promotes “controversial speculations” rather than advancing God’s work (1 Tim. 1:4). It also breeds envy and strife (1 Tim. 6:3). But false teaching leads to more than wrong thinking. Ultimately it produces wrong living (cf. 1 Tim. 1:10). Teaching that is sound (literally “healthy”) also produces soundness in faith, speech, and life (Titus 2:1–8).

It is necessary for the church to distance itself from those whose teaching does not conform to the truth. Believers should be on guard against false teaching and avoid false teachers (Rom. 16:17). Likewise, the church’s leaders, especially its pastors and teachers, have been charged with the responsibility of preserving and proclaiming the apostles’ doctrine. Paul urged the leaders of the church in Ephesus to keep watch over themselves and the flock (Acts 20:28). He warned them that the threat of false

doctrine would not come from outside the church but that false teachers would arise from within their own ranks (Acts 20:29).

False teaching is one of the characteristics of the last days (2 Tim. 3:1–8). Peter warned that these corrupt teachers will try to exploit the church for their own gain. They will damage the reputation of the church by their own corrupt behavior and by the depraved conduct of those who follow their example (2 Peter 1:2). These false teachers will call into question the church’s foundational teachings, like the doctrine of Christ’s Second Coming (2 Peter 3:1–4). This means that the closer we are to Christ’s return, the greater the threat the church faces from false doctrine and the more it needs sound teaching.

Sound teaching involves more than making theological statements about Christ and His work. It also includes teaching about the moral implications of these truths. Paul commanded Titus to “teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1). This included instruction about the way believers of every age and station in life should behave toward one another. Teaching about what constitutes right moral behavior is as much an element of sound doctrine as teaching about the deity of Christ or the cross. Doctrine, if it is sound, helps us to lead holy lives.

## For Further Study

To learn more about doctrine, read *A Survey of Bible Doctrine* by Charles Ryrie (Moody Publishers).

# FROM THE EDITORS

by Elena Mafter

The Roads We Travel



We are half way through the year on our Bible journey with *Today in the Word*. The half-way mark is a good place to look back at the road already taken and glimpse at what lies ahead. So far in 2013, we've walked through the story of Genesis together with the characters of this book, we've reviewed the foundations of our faith, we've experienced again the wisdom of Proverbs, we've studied prayer, temptation, and the fruit of the Spirit.

To commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *Today in the Word* we produced *The Best of Today in the Word, Volume Two*, a compilation of your twelve favorite issues through the years. The choice of the twelve issues was based on the reader survey in the November 2012 issue of *Today in the Word*. As a result of a drawing, we selected five winners of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary contest who received a commemorative gift from the *Today in the Word* team. And the winners are: Sam and Joy from Cleveland, Ohio; Barbara from Moundville, Alabama; Gaylord from Lisbon, Iowa; Bonita from Kent, Ohio; and Barb from Norwalk, Ohio. We want to thank everybody who participated in the survey!

In the months ahead, as we continue our journey through the Word of God, we'll delve into 2 Corinthians, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes. We'll also marvel at the Incarnation, we'll read about people who encountered Jesus, and we'll be surprised with grace even in

our disappointment with God. And every day on this journey we thank God for you, our readers. Truly, take the Word of God, add the people of God, and you have a wonderful community—a people who follow Jesus, and a people in the midst of whom He dwells.

It's a privilege for all of us here at Moody to be a part of the *Today in the Word* community! You've been with us all along the way—you've prayed with *Today in the Word* for Moody's ministries, you've generously supported our devotional, and you've encouraged us through your letters, phone calls, and e-mails. It is always amazing—and humbling—for us to hear and read your testimonies. Thank you! Here are some of them.

## From Our Readers

"I hope you people do know how much these [*Today in the Word*] booklets help readers. Especially me. *Today in the Word* has always been there for me."

—Linda (via phone call)

"Each month as you, editors of *Today in the Word*, have been writing about your 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, I have been thinking: I should write and congratulate you—AND me! For I am a 25-year reader! It seems inconceivable, even impossible, that I

*Continued on page 39*

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# TODAY IN THE **Word**

A MINISTRY OF MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE

## Sound Doctrine, Sound Living

After His resurrection, Jesus instructed the apostles to “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19). It was another new and surprising assignment from their Master, and these men from Galilee would soon participate in the spread of the gospel throughout the world. Our resurrected Lord says the same words to us today. The Great Commission is the same.

The apostle Paul took that task to heart, and his letters to Timothy—our study this month in *Today in the Word*—encapsulate the teaching on how to make a disciple and how to be one. In 1 and 2 Timothy, we’ll study what it means to be a true follower of Jesus, we’ll delve into Paul’s practical applications of Christian doctrine, and in the end we’ll come back to the simplicity of one word: *love*. By pondering Christian love, we’ll once again marvel at the paradox and the mystery of discipleship according to Jesus: “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35).

We hope this devotional will encourage you and help you grow as a disciple of Christ. We could not offer this issue of *Today in the Word* and thousands of others without your faithful support. We see Christian love revealed daily in your prayers and financial partnership with the ministry of Moody and *Today in the Word*. Thank you!

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## Introduction to the Epistle

Many biblical scholars believe that after the close of the book of Acts, the apostle Paul was released from prison and from about A.D. 62 to 68 went on a fourth missionary journey. The route of this journey can be pieced together from references in his later epistles. On this trip, Paul visited the wealthy port city of Ephesus, which he had also visited on his third missionary journey (Acts 19). He left Timothy there and went on to Macedonia, hoping to return soon (v. 3; 3:14). When he was delayed, he wrote in about A.D. 64 the letter of 1 Timothy to his “true son in the faith” back in Ephesus (v. 2).

The purpose of this epistle was to encourage Timothy to guard and live out the gospel. The true gospel was to be championed against false teachings that were then gaining adherents. Even more importantly, the gospel was to be lived

out by Timothy and the Ephesian believers as a witness to its truth and power. For these reasons, we’ve entitled this month’s book study of 1 and 2 Timothy . This month’s themes also include godliness, the profound responsibility of teaching and preaching, congregational life and leadership, and suffering for Christ.

To Timothy my  
true son in  
the faith.

1 Timothy 1:2

First Timothy is an epistle, a letter written by Paul to his younger ministry partner. It was not a private document, as we think of letters today, but rather was intended to be read aloud to the believers at Ephesus. Knowing this, Paul called Timothy his “true son in the faith” not only to reflect their close personal relationship, but also to remind listeners that Timothy ministered under the Apostle’s blessing and authority. Never one to miss an opportunity, Paul also used his greeting to exalt Christ, in whom we have the hope of salvation (v. 1).

### Apply the Word

*Hope* is a significant biblical term. It doesn’t mean “wish” or “dream,” as in American culture. It indicates a certainty that lies in the future. Our salvation in Christ was accomplished at the cross in the past (Heb. 10:10), but it is also being worked out in the present (Phil. 2:12) and will one day be completed (Phil. 1:6). We should be encouraged by this truth!

### Pray with Us

Moody prepares students for ministry in all areas of life, including music. Please pray for our undergraduate Music Department faculty—Ronald Denison, David Gauger, Xiangtang Hong, and Jae Hyeok Jang—and their ministry to students.

## Warning Against False Doctrine

One study found that traffic jams cost Americans about 3.5 billion hours per year, with the average urban commuter stuck in traffic about 46 hours per year. Los Angeles was the worst city at 93 hours per driver per year. The study also estimated that traffic jams increased 30 percent faster than roads could be built to solve the problem.

Getting tangled up in traffic is analogous to getting tangled up in false doctrine. A lot of energy is expended, but nobody gets anywhere. Right from the start of this epistle, Paul warned Timothy to be on guard and to stand against it for the sake of the church (vv. 3–4). As inferred from the letter, the false teaching seems to have involved a mix of legalism, asceticism, gnosticism (a despising of the physical or material world), and spiritualism (an unhealthy fascination with spiritual speculations and supernatural phenomena).

Such things promote  
controversial  
speculations rather  
than advancing  
God's work.

1 Timothy 1:4

The false teachers, despite their ignorance, were eager to teach others. Paul described them as obsessed with “myths and endless genealogies,” possibly referring to legends and numerology. Whatever the content, it was “meaningless talk” leading to a departure or wandering from God’s path (v. 6). What they did was not by faith and was harming God’s work. Timothy and the church were to be advancing God’s work by faith.

The motivation behind Paul’s command was love, not some kind of power struggle or an episode in church politics. The integrity of the gospel was at stake! For this reason, Timothy could not win at all costs; rather, he was instructed to oppose false teaching in a manner by which truth partnered with love. Paul’s standards were both correct knowledge of the gospel and fruitful results, that is, actions reflecting and empowered by the gospel.

### Apply the Word

Ancient Jewish texts like the Book of Jubilees fit Paul’s description of being preoccupied with myths and genealogies. A modern parallel is the Book of Mormon, which claims the status of Scripture but must be regarded as false teaching. The idea of a “Bible code” is another such error. We need to learn to discern cults, heresies, and false teachings in our own day!

### Pray with Us

As we continue to pray for Music Department, please add these music professors to your list: Jori Jennings, Brian Lee, Betty-Ann Lynerd, and Elizabeth Naegele. Praise God for the gift of music which they share with students.

## The Purposes of Sound Doctrine

A new edition of the King James Bible cuts out condemnations of homosexuality in order to eliminate what its editors say is “homophobic misrepresentation of God’s Word.” Dubbed the “Queen James Bible,” this edition specifically edits eight verses so that homosexuality is not called sexual immorality.

Clearly, the need for sound doctrine in our time is as great as it was in Timothy’s day! In contrast to the “controversial speculations” propagated by the false teachers, Paul highlighted the true nature of the law and the godly purpose of all sound doctrine. We know that doctrine is sound if it “conforms to the gospel,” that is, to the good news of redemption in Christ (v. 11).

What was the purpose of the law (vv. 9–10; cf. Romans 7)? It exposed sin for what it is—wickedness that contradicts God’s perfect

holiness. The law also helped to hold back or restrain the spread of evil. The list of vices in these verses includes homosexuality, lying, murder, dishonoring one’s parents, and slave trading. If “law” brings to our minds only rules and punishments, we haven’t grasped its moral dimensions. Only sound doctrine can genuinely teach us how to love God and our neighbor.

By implication, then, sound doctrine promotes righteousness in thought and deed. It includes correct beliefs about God and salvation as well as the

holy living out of God’s gift of salvation. Truth is not a passive formulation. It builds up, protects, and gives spiritual health and life to those who learn and follow it. Whereas false teaching swerves from God’s path into sin, sound doctrine enables us to live according to the law of love (Rom. 13:10).

We know that the law is good if one uses it properly.

1 Timothy 1:8

### Apply the Word

In addition to specific cults or heresies, Christians need to be on guard against false or skewed worldviews as well. Materialism holds that nothing exists beyond the physical realm. Relativism sees moral values not as absolutes or principles but as ever-changing customs. Hedonism views the pursuit of personal pleasure as a worthy purpose for human life.

### Pray with Us

Again, we focus our prayers on MBI music faculty: Gary Rownd, H. E. Singley, Terry Strandt, Cynthia Uitermarkt, and Un-Young Whang. Ask God to guide their service of equipping students for ministry and thank Him for bringing these professors to Moody.

## Sound Doctrine, the Gospel, and Paul's Testimony

New Testament scholar F. F. Bruce wrote: “The free grace of God which Paul proclaimed is free grace in more senses than one – free in the sense that it is sovereign and unfettered, free in the sense that it is held forth to men and women for their acceptance by faith alone, and free in the sense that it is the source and principle of their liberation from all kinds of inward and spiritual bondage, including the bondage of legalism and the bondage of moral anarchy.”

The grace of  
our Lord was  
poured out on me  
abundantly.

1 Timothy 1:14

Paul was a transformed and grateful recipient of God's grace. Before meeting Jesus on the Damascus road (see Acts 9), he had been “a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man” (v. 13). Now he was an apostle who had been entrusted with the gospel message. What caused this about-face? God's mercy, grace, faith, and love had been poured out on him abundantly. The Lord changed Paul's ignorance to knowledge and his un-

belief to belief. The blasphemer became a missionary; the persecutor became willing to endure suffering himself.

Before his conversion, Paul had opposed the gospel, but now he championed it. The expression “Here is a trustworthy saying” compares to the “verily, verily” or “truly, truly” used by Jesus in the Gospels (v. 15). It means that this is an important point—everyone listening should pay attention because the next statement carries particular weight and power. In this case, the phrase is almost creedal: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

Paul's life was a praise-filled testimony to this theological truth. He was an example of God's life-changing mercy and love, of the patience of Christ in turning enemies into friends and followers, and of a man intent on spiritual death transformed by the gift of eternal life.

### Apply the Word

This evening you might be planning to celebrate Independence Day with a picnic or fireworks. How about celebrating your spiritual freedom as well? If you've never trusted in Jesus and haven't yet accepted His transforming gift of eternal life, we urge you to do so today (John 3:16). No one is beyond the hope of the gospel—not Paul, and not you!

### Pray with Us

Concluding our prayers for Moody's Music Department, let's remember its office staff. Jordan Raikes, Christopher Wheeler, and Lauren Quiles work hard to coordinate all the student ensembles' summer tours, and we are grateful for their service.

## Sound Doctrine and Timothy's Ministry: Part 1

A recent Barna Group study ranked "America's Most Bible-Minded Cities." Based on interviews with more than 40,000 Americans, the study named the top spot as a tie among Knoxville, TN; Shreveport, LA; and Chattanooga, TN. In general, Southern cities were the most Bible-minded, with New England as the least Bible-minded region.

"Bible-mindedness" and Christ-centeredness are essential for sound doctrine. This was true for Paul, whose testimony we read yesterday, and it was true for Timothy. When Timothy joined the Apostle's ministry team during his second missionary journey, there had been a formal commissioning or laying on of hands by the elders at Lystra (see Acts 16:1–5; 2 Tim. 1:6). On this occasion, certain prophecies had been made regarding his calling and future ministry. We don't know exactly what these prophecies were, but Paul publicly reminded Timothy

of them in order to inspire and encourage him in the midst of a difficult situation in Ephesus.

Paul formally commanded Timothy to oppose the false teachers, but even an apostle's authority wouldn't make it easy.

Standing for truth is always a battle! To fight well would require "faith and a good conscience," that is, personal purity and holiness (v. 19).

Paul reminded Timothy of the consequences of false teaching. When a person rejects faith and godliness, they shipwreck their

lives, as Hymenaeus and Alexander had done. Alexander had opposed Paul's ministry (2 Tim. 4:14); Hymenaeus had taught lies concerning the resurrection (2 Tim. 2:17–18). As a result, these two men had been "handed over to Satan" or excommunicated. This is a last resort in church discipline and was intended to drive the rebels back to God (v. 20).

I am giving you  
this command in  
keeping with the  
prophecies once  
made about you.

1 Timothy 1:18

### Apply the Word

What does your church or denomination believe and practice with regard to church discipline? Study your church constitution or denominational policies and discuss this issue with a pastor or other church leader to make sure you understand. The goal is not punishing but rather restoring an erring brother or sister and maintaining the church's witness.

### Pray with Us

Ken Heulitt, chief financial officer, welcomes prayers of Moody friends, especially now, as the new fiscal year begins. Pray for God's provision for Moody's ministries and for us to be good stewards of all the resources.

## Congregational Worship, Prayer, and the Gospel

A classic medieval prayer for political leaders reads: “O God, almighty Father, King of kings and Lord of lords, grant that the hearts and minds of all who go out as leaders before us, the statesmen, the judges, the men of learning and the men of wealth, may be so filled with the love of thy laws and of that which is righteous and life-giving, that they may be worthy stewards of thy good and perfect gifts; through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Paul instructed the church to pray for those in authority, especially political leaders (vv. 1–2, 8). Considering that the cruel Emperor Nero was then in power, this was a remarkable command—ultimately Paul was asking the church to pray for the salvation of such people. If this emperor were to trust Christ, God would be glorified!

Political leaders are an example of “all people”—Paul was actually instruct-

ing the church to pray for everyone and especially for their salvation. As implied in the Great Commission, evangelistic prayer and witness are the responsibility and privilege of the church, which is why we are to “live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” (v. 2). This kind of gospel witness is driven by the teaching of sound doctrine, an emphasis we’ve seen throughout this epistle.

For there is one  
God and one  
mediator between  
God and mankind,  
the man  
Christ Jesus.

1 Timothy 2:5

God Himself desires all to be saved (vv. 3–4; cf. 2 Peter 3:9), though we know from Scripture that this won’t happen. Even so, salvation is His

plan, realized in Christ (vv. 5–7; cf. Matt. 20:28; Gal. 4:4–5). The incarnate Son of God made peace between God and humanity, offering Himself as a ransom or substitutionary sacrifice within His Father’s will. There is no other mediator, no other gospel, no other road to salvation.

### Apply the Word

A typical application of today’s reading is to pray for leaders. Another one might be to pray for unreached people groups. The Joshua Project website, [www.joshuaproject.net/index.php](http://www.joshuaproject.net/index.php), offers many resources in this regard, including maps, videos, and prayer cards. We encourage you to pray with God’s heart for all to hear the gospel.

### Pray with Us

As we continue to pray for Moody’s finances, please include the Investment Accounting staff in your time with God today: Daphne Hussey, Marilou Logan, Andrea Palmer-Reed, Marya Preston, Tonya Reed, and Rohan McLachlan.

## Congregational Worship and Women

In 1 Timothy, Paul seems to have in mind a type of person whom some refer to as the “new Roman woman.” At the time of this epistle, a social revolution was taking place in some women’s behavior. According to scholar Scot McKnight, these women wore “immodest, sexually provocative, and extravagant dress.” They were aggressive in public speaking and were associated with a religious cult that “despised marriage and childbearing and child-rearing.”

Given this background, it’s easier to understand Paul’s instructions concerning women’s behavior in congregational life (especially v. 15; cf. 1 Tim. 4:3). The church’s public witness means that men should avoid anger and disputing (v. 8). For the same reason, women are advised to worship with modesty and submission. They shouldn’t dress immodestly, expensively, or elaborately, that is, in ways suggesting pride or sexual

immorality. Instead, figuratively speaking, they should clothe themselves with good deeds (vv. 9–10). This is in contrast to the “new Roman woman” and to comparable cultural trends in our own day.

A foundational principle is submission (vv. 11–14). Some interpreters see this command specifically not to be like the “new Roman woman,” so that women learn at home instead of disrupting church services with questions or trying to teach before they were qualified. Paul, though, went beyond these meanings to a larger creation-centered principle. Modern sensibilities

bristle at the idea of submission, as if it contradicts our equality in Christ (Gal. 3:28). The church’s historical understanding, however, has been that women can learn and lead anywhere in the church, with the exception of the office of elder. Fully realized, the role of women would be a profound testimony.

Good deeds,  
appropriate for  
women who  
profess to  
worship God.

1 Timothy 2:10

### Apply the Word

You can study the issue of women in leadership and ministry for yourself. It’s all too easy to merely seek rationalizations for our own preferences or to worry about offending cultural opinions, so as you study, we encourage you to submit yourself to God’s Word. If possible, studying and discussing this issue with an older believer would also be beneficial.

### Pray with Us

Your prayers are vital for Moody’s Media ministries—Moody Radio and Moody Publishers. Our senior vice president of Media, Greg Thornton, welcomes your prayer support for his teams’ quest to use modern media for God’s glory.

## Congregational Leadership—Qualifications for Elder

Why are elders important? According to John Calvin: “It is no light matter to represent God’s Son, in such a great task as erecting and extending God’s Kingdom, in caring for the salvation of souls whom the Lord Himself has deigned to purchase with His own blood, and in ruling the Church which is God’s inheritance.”

As Paul continued to write on congregational worship, he next took up the qualifications for elders. The “noble task” (v. 1) of being an elder or “overseer” includes leading, preaching, teaching, and general pastoring or shepherding, which also means protecting the sheep from false doctrine.

Today’s passage lists sixteen qualifications for serving as an elder (vv. 2–7; cf. Titus 1:5–9). Some are positive general virtues, such as being self-controlled and hospitable. Others are stated negatively, such as not being quarrelsome.

Whoever aspires  
to be an overseer  
desires a  
noble task.

1 Timothy 3:1

Spiritual maturity is particularly key. Paul specifically stipulated that an elder not be a new convert, as this would present too strong a temptation to pride. Family leadership is also significant—an elder should be faithful to his wife, “manage his own family well and see that his children obey him” (v. 4). This is a kind of test case, as a man who cannot lead his own family should not be trying to help lead a church.

The final item on Paul’s list is a bit puzzling. How can elders expect to have “a good reputation with outsiders,” given that the world often doesn’t understand the life of faith? The phrase “devil’s trap” seems to indicate bondage to sin and especially to the sin of lying, including false teaching (v. 7; 2 Tim. 2:26). The idea here, then, is that an elder must stand for sound doctrine or truth in a loving and consistent manner that earns respect from outsiders. In short, he must walk the talk.

### Apply the Word

Did you know that practicing hospitality is one of the qualifications for eldership (v. 2)? Although this was an important cultural value in Bible times, it has been much neglected in our own day. After all, who has time? Bringing a dish to the church potluck is more manageable. Perhaps we need to rethink our priorities in order to make room for this biblical virtue!

### Pray with Us

As we keep praying for our Media ministries, please uphold Moody Publishers staff: Donielle Alicea, Brittany Biggs, Michele Forrider, and Cody Fraser. We thank God for their service of bringing to our readers the truth of God’s Word in print.

## Congregational Leadership—Qualifications for Deacons

The lyrics for one classic chorus pray: “Make me a servant, humble and meek; Lord, let me lift up those who are weak. And may the prayer of my heart always be: Make me a servant, make me a servant, make me a servant today.” Service or servanthood is a key theme in the Christian life and an important part of a deacon’s job description. The word *deacon* means “one who serves,” and the prototypes were probably the seven men chosen in Acts 6:1–7 to supervise food aid. Elders and deacons are the only two church offices described in the New Testament.

Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith.

1 Timothy 3:13

salvation in Christ, that is, the gospel. Like elders, deacons should be faithful in marriage and good leaders of their families.

According to some scholars, one difference between elders and deacons is that women can be deacons (v. 11), though some have interpreted this as a separate office of “deaconess.” This is possible because this leadership position does not involve authoritative teaching (1 Tim. 2:12–13); in fact, “able to teach” isn’t even one of the qualifications. (This did not preclude deacons from exercising a ministry of the Word; see Acts 6:8–10).

The requirements or qualifications for deacon are less stringent than for elder, and the responsibilities are less rigorous (vv. 8–9, 12). They still need to “keep hold of the deep truths of the faith,” that is, to know sound doctrine. The phrase “deep truths” is more literally translated “mystery” (ESV), meaning God’s plan of

Phoebe is a biblical example of a female deacon (Rom 16:1–2). Deacons should be tested, likely an examination or interview by the elders. When deacons serve well it strengthens their own faith as well as being useful to the body of Christ. To serve the church is to see God’s power and wisdom at work on a regular basis!

### Apply the Word

For church leaders, temptations are many. Satan often targets them—his strategy is often to go for the head! For these reasons, they need extra prayer. If you’re a church member, do you pray for your pastor, elders, deacons, supported missionaries, and church staff? If you’re a leader, do you have a team of people that you know are praying for you?

### Pray with Us

It’s our privilege to pray today for Moody Publishers team. René Hanebutt, James Hathaway, Spencer Jones, Roslyn Jordan, and Deborah Keiser seek new authors and audiences to proclaim a biblical worldview to our culture.

## Sound Doctrine, the Gospel, and the Church

A growing number of Americans—one in five overall and one in three among young people—report no religious affiliation. Sadly, this number is at an all-time high. News reports refer to them as the “nones,” a group numbering 46 million people. Another 13 million, six percent of the population, claim to be atheists or agnostics.

The gospel message and the church’s witness to it are sorely needed in today’s world! As Paul wrapped up this section, he mentioned again the occasion for the epistle—his delay in Macedonia and his hope to return to Ephesus soon. The overall purpose for his instructions in chapters 1 through 3 is to teach “how people ought to conduct themselves” as a church (v. 15). Why are these matters important? Why must there be an order to such things? For at least three reasons: First, the church is a “household” or a family. Families need

leadership and structure in order for relationships to flourish. Second, the church belongs to the “living God.” Ultimately, we are accountable to Him for our witness, our safekeeping of sound doctrine, and the appropriateness of our worship. Third, the church is charged with being “the pillar and foundation [or ‘buttress,’ in the ESV] of the truth.” That is, the church should be responsible to support, uphold, and guard the gospel truths with which it has been entrusted.

The church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

1 Timothy 3:15

Underlying these sacred responsibilities is the “mystery from which true godliness springs” (v. 16; cf. Col. 1:25–27). This verse is a creedal or poetic affirmation of Christ and His mission of redemption. This confession is what the false teachers in Ephesus had distorted and dishonored. Christ is the key to the church living up to its calling and to the truth and love that are at the heart of our witness.

### Apply the Word

If you wish, take a bit of extra time today to reflect on the first half of 1 Timothy, especially on Paul’s teachings regarding congregational worship. Have you arrived at any new insights so far in our month’s study? Which of these issues concern you the most in your own local church? What are some ways in which you can see yourself applying these teachings?

### Pray with Us

Holly Kisly, Natalie Myers, Randall Payleitner, and Barnabas Piper from Moody Publishers use the power of the printed word to reach thousands of readers. May God continue to guide them and bless their efforts.

## Sound Doctrine Versus the False Teachings of Legalism

Paul didn't identify the exact heresy he opposed in 1 Timothy, but false teaching has plagued the church for centuries. Irenaeus, a church father, wrote that leaders of one heresy "preached against marriage, thus setting aside the original creation of God, and indirectly blaming Him who made the male and female for the propagation of the human race. Some of those reckoned among them have also introduced abstinence from animal food, thus proving themselves ungrateful to God, who formed all things."

Marriage and food were also at issue in Ephesus. Having established key principles for congregational worship and church behavior, Paul returned to the problem of false teachers with which he opened this epistle (v. 1). From a larger spiritual perspective, the Holy Spirit has warned of false teachings, which originate with demons and lead people to apostasy. This is serious business!

These kinds of false teachings are spread by "hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared" (v. 2). This means that their moral sensibilities have been desensitized or anesthetized against wrongdoing, as compared to the "good conscience" of 1 Timothy 1:5. They have no genuine understanding of righteousness or holiness.

For everything  
God created  
is good.

1 Timothy 4:4

The false teachers in Ephesus taught against marriage and certain foods, reflecting a mix of legalism and gnosticism (v. 3). They apparently measured themselves by a standard

of self-denial and asceticism that became pride and self-righteousness. Even worse, their teachings and actions denied the goodness of God's material creation (v. 4; Gen. 1:31). Despite our fallenness and its consequences, His creation remains good because it is consecrated by the sanctifying gifts of prayer and the Word (v. 5). These blessings are to be enjoyed with thanksgiving.

### Apply the Word

With today's passage as background, think of some aspect of the created world that you can enjoy today as a gift from God. You can treat these physical or material pleasures as part of your daily worship and as consecrated dimensions of your pilgrimage, knowing that ultimately these are manifestations of God's love for us and examples of His grace.

### Pray with Us

Concluding our prayers for the Moody Publishers team, please express gratitude to God in prayer for the creativity and diligence that Christopher Reese, Paul Santhouse, Duane Sherman, and Zack Williamson bring to the workplace.

## Teaching Sound Doctrine As a Ministry Essential

“Americans revere the Bible,” one Gallup poll found, “but, by and large, they don’t read it.” Most Americans cannot name all ten of the Ten Commandments. Just half can name even one of the four Gospels. Only 37 percent of teenagers, given four options, can identify which quotation is from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.

Statistics like these highlight the need for sound doctrine and biblical teaching. Paul instructed Timothy to have nothing to do with “godless myths and old wives’ tales” such as the false teachings described in yesterday’s passage (v. 7). To stand against these distorted views of the created world is part of what it means to be “a good minister of Christ Jesus” and to pass on the solid, nourishing truths of the gospel (v. 6).

In order to do so, Timothy was to train in godliness. The metaphor here depicts an

athlete’s physical training—not the person who does an occasional workout, but a real world-class athlete. This kind of training is demanding and takes great discipline and dedication. As opposed to the false teachers who denied the goodness of marriage and certain foods, this is a true and more godly picture of self-denial. Plus spiritual training is better than physical training because it is of value now and into eternity.

Paul had lived his life on this principle, which is why he added, “This is a trustworthy saying.” This was the third time he had

used this phrase to emphasize certainty (v. 9; 1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1). The value of godliness and the importance of standing for truth and sound doctrine are what motivated Paul to “labor and strive” for the hope of the gospel (v. 10). Our God, after all, is a “living God,” the conqueror of death and giver of life!

For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things.

1 Timothy 4:8

### Apply the Word

Are you part of a local church? What about your prayer life? Are you growing in the spiritual disciplines? Are you cultivating godly friendships? Are you learning to be a more skilled and sensitive interpreter of God’s Word? Just as we’re aware of our physical health and fitness, so also should we be aware of our spiritual health and fitness.

### Pray with Us

Our students love God and His Word! Today, we invite you to uphold in prayer these men and women enrolled in all our education branches—Undergraduate, Seminary, and Distance Learning—on all Moody campuses: in Chicago, Plymouth, and Spokane.

## Sound Doctrine and Timothy's Ministry: Part 2

One third of Americans say they hate their jobs. Author Max Lucado responded: "Our Wednesdays matter to [God] as much as our Sundays. He blurs the secular and sacred. One stay-at-home mom keeps this sign over her kitchen sink: DIVINE TASKS PERFORMED HERE, DAILY. An executive hung this plaque in her office: MY DESK IS MY ALTAR. Both are correct."

In terms of career satisfaction, Timothy might have felt frustrated or discouraged. Though he had Paul's approval and command to "teach these things" (v. 11), he was opposed by false teachers and disrespected because of his relative youth. Timothy was likely in his mid-30s, young for a leader in that culture. The false teachers had made this a point of criticism in their debates. So with the Ephesians listening in, Paul gave Timothy a personal charge to "set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity" (v. 12).

Set an example for  
the believers.

1 Timothy 4:12

Timothy was to carry on with the teaching and preaching work for which he had been gifted and commissioned. This was a word of both encouragement and exhortation—encouragement against the stress of battling heresy, and exhortation to continue standing firm for sound doctrine. It was also a bracing reminder of "when the body of elders laid their hands on you" back in Lystra, at the start of his ministry (v. 14). In addition, it was a public, authoritative endorsement by the apostle Paul of his representative in Ephesus, Timothy.

If Timothy was diligent and faithful in his personal spiritual life, doctrine, and conduct of relationships, he would have a successful ministry (4:15–5:2). Although pastors live in glass houses—everyone would be keeping an eye on Timothy's progress—watchfulness, perseverance, and purity would win the day.

### Apply the Word

Max Lucado, quoted in today's illustration, said: "With God our work matters as much as our worship. Indeed, work can be worship . . . Take Christ to work with you. Invite Him to superintend your nine-to-five." You may not be a pastor battling heresy, but you can still be a faithful witness doing the work God has for you at this place and time in your life.

### Pray with Us

Dr. John Jelinek, academic dean of Moody Theological Seminary, welcomes your prayers as he and his teams seek to expand the reach of the seminary and increase student population. It's your prayers and support that make it possible!

## Congregational Relationships—Caring for Widows

Why did Paul devote such an extended passage to the care of widows? Because in that society, widows were extremely vulnerable. They held low social status and had relatively few individual rights or freedoms of their own (apart from male relatives). They were often poor, and there were no government services or social safety nets for them.

Under those circumstances, the church could have a witness by functioning as a caring community that took responsibility for the well being of all its members, including the most vulnerable ones (cf. James 1:27). But it wasn't to render financial assistance without asking questions. Did the widow have extended family? If so, they needed to take responsibility and provide for her (vv. 4, 8). Was she truly in need or did she have money? If the latter, then she could presumably support herself (vv. 3, 5, 16). What about her character? She should be a virtuous

woman, with a strong moral and spiritual reputation, as proved by good deeds including childrearing and hospitality (vv. 6, 9–10). How old was she? The minimum age was 60 (v. 9).

The verb “enroll” (ESV) and the existence of a “list” may suggest that qualified widows had some kind of official status in the church (vv. 9, 11). This might be compared to the Nazirite vow (see Numbers 6) or to the activities of the prophetess Anna (Luke 2:36–37). Perhaps, as suggested in the description of verse 5 and the warning of verse 12, they formally pledged to devote themselves to ministries of prayer and service. If less mature younger widows joined this group, they took an unwise risk of breaking their commitment and thus wasting church resources. Rather than sliding into idleness and gossip and hurting the church's witness, they should get married.

Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need.

1 Timothy 5:3

### Apply the Word

Caring for widows and orphans remains important, but Pastor Kent Hughes has suggested that “single mother” is another parallel category in our day. Social services provide for some needs, but single mothers still tend to bear disproportionately severe financial and other burdens as they work and raise children. The church can and should help these women.

### Pray with Us

As we continue to focus our prayers on Moody Theological Seminary, please include our Chicago campus administrative team who works closely with Dr. Jelinek: Randall Dattoli and Daniel Snoek.

# Question and Answer

By Mike Kellogg, Moody Radio Host



**What do you think about Christian's watching R-rated movies?**



I think that Christians should stay away from most of the R-rated films. Watching these films can destroy our personal sensitivity to sin. Years ago we used to tell believers they are better off if they stay out of theatres altogether. But today that's almost a moot point since television and DVDs have brought many of those films directly into the home—and directly to children who watch them. Today Christian radio and television stations even offer reviews of films that Christians might find appropriate for both their families and their values. In some ways this is quite a change of direction, from no movies at all to movies that pass muster.

But the truth is, the Christian life has always been about choices. Is there anything wrong with staying away from movies completely? Absolutely not, especially if watching movies is something that you have always considered questionable, if not sinful. If your conscience is bothered by watching movies, then you should not feel compelled to go along with the crowd. If the subject matter of television and movies goes beyond what you're comfortable with, shut them down. If television or movies are a stumbling block for you, walk away from them. Your convictions are commendable.



**My sister worships the devil. She's never been a good judge of character and surrounds herself with evil people. I don't want my children near these people. We didn't go to her birthday party because those people were there. She makes me so angry because she has openly rejected God. But I still want her to be saved. I've invited her to church, but she won't go. I don't know what to do.**



The fact that you personally don't want to reject her and that you want her to be saved are good things. The fact that you don't want your children around evil people makes you a good mother. You say your sister worships the devil, and, while shocking to some of us, it is very much happening in this world. M. Scott Peck, in his book *People of the Lie*, recognized even before he was a Christian that there are indeed evil people who do evil things. Jesus warned of people just like that, that they are murderers and liars just like their father, Satan himself. Protect your children from the evil ones. But at the same time as a mature believer allow yourself to continue to be a lighthouse of gospel truth to these "evil ones." Keep reminding yourself that He who is in us is greater than he who is in this world (1 John 4:4).

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**Will we recognize our loved ones when we enter heaven?**



As an ordained minister, I'm often asked this question at memorial services that I officiate. I tell people that I believe they will see their loved ones in heaven. I think all of us want to believe we will see those who have gone on before us when we get to eternity. When Jesus told the story of the rich man and Lazarus, he said that these men recognized each other. The rich man asked Lazarus, a godly man, to go and witness to his brothers (Luke 16:19–31). While the story may or may not be about real people, Jesus depicted these people in the story as recognizable to each other after dying. When people die they don't come back and fill us in on what life after death was like, and anything that doesn't come as directly from the Word of God is just speculation. My feeling, with that being said, is that when we get to heaven, we will recognize each other and rejoice. I don't think that when we get through those pearly gates we will know less than what we know at this very moment. We will definitely know more!



**I've been trying to live my life as a Christian in such a way as to please God. I tithe regularly. I rarely miss church. I do my best to be a good husband and dad. But right now, I'm out of work and collecting unemployment, and I just feel that**

**God doesn't seem to respond to my efforts at doing good.**



I have to tell you, friend, many times we look at Old Testament biblical promises and claim them for ourselves when it might not be appropriate for us to do so. Often God was trying to show the people of Israel and their neighbors how He was their God, and because they were His, He had blessed them. But if you look at those promises and to whom they were made, you realize that some of these promises to the people of Israel are not things we can rip out of context and apply to our lives today.

One promise we can claim is this: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you [believers] will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). You see, God promises that He will not abandon us, nor will He cast us aside. We can expect trouble to come our way. I know one family that was able to amass much wealth, which they used for others. Then in the recent economic downturn they lost all of it . . . and now God has restored it back to them. God didn't abandon them, and He didn't abandon you. He says to all of us, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Heb. 13:5). As Scripture says, "God is not human, that He should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?" (Num. 23:19). You can count on God. Don't lean on circumstances—lean on Him in the circumstances.

## Congregational Relationships—Honoring Leaders

First Timothy 5:18 is significant in the history of the biblical canon. Paul quoted two verses here. The first was Deuteronomy 25:4; the second was Luke 10:7, from the passage where Jesus sent out the 72. Scholars disagree about whether the oral tradition would have been written down this early, but whether his sources were oral or written, Paul treated New Testament content as equal to the Old Testament. Both are inspired Scripture!

The point of both verses, and of today's reading as a whole, is that the church is to respect and honor its leaders—elders who preach and teach are in fact worthy of “double honor” (v. 17). Concretely, this means a pastor has a right to make a living from his work, that is, he should be paid fair or better wages (v. 18). In addition, accusations against a church leader should not be quickly believed but carefully investigated (v. 19). He said/she said rumors are to be dismissed; only

The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor.

1 Timothy 5:17

confirmed eyewitness accounts are to be considered. Human jealousy and Satanic strategy make leaders a prime target, and Paul wanted to protect against that.

With double honor comes double accountability (v. 20). If an accusation is proved, a leader's discipline should be public, as a warning to the body of Christ. Paul formally charged Timothy to “keep these instructions without partiality” (v. 21).

Given all that's at stake, the church should not be too quick to commission someone for ministry (v. 22). Today, these instructions are applied in many denominations by means of a council that examines a person for ordination. While such councils often last a single day, they are the culmination of a long process. That's good, because as Paul commented, the quality of a life always eventually reveals itself (vv. 24–25).

### Apply the Word

The last two verses of 1 Timothy 5 can be a check-point for us all, not just leaders. One day, the quality of our deeds and lives will come to light and be fully known. Sins may appear to trail behind bad people, but they will catch up. Similarly, all good deeds will one day be openly recognized by the Lord. Does knowing this change the way you live today?

### Pray with Us

As you pray today, please mention our Student Services team on the Plymouth, Michigan, campus of Moody Theological Seminary. Ask the Lord to bless Nicole Johnson and Paul Wilson in their day-to-day ministry to the students.

## Congregational Relationships—Respecting Social Order

Tragically, in the history of the church, today's reading has sometimes been taken as support for slavery. By misreading these verses, segments of the American church were complicit in the brutal system of chattel slavery that flourished in the United States.

Correctly interpreting the Word of God reveals the foundational theological truth that we are “all one in Christ Jesus,” including slave and free (Gal. 3:28). Paul urged Christian slaves to put off the “yoke” and obtain their freedom if they could (1 Cor. 7:21–23). He had condemned slave trading earlier in this very epistle (1:10). We should note, though, that Roman slaves had it better than American slaves—so much better that the *ESV* chooses to translate the word “bondservant.” Roman slaves could own property, for example. And people of any ethnic group might have been slaves, as opposed to the racist underpinnings of American slavery.

You are all one in  
Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:28

If we're all equal at the foot of the cross, as the saying goes, why did Paul command slaves to respect their masters? In this case, a matter of legitimate social justice still needed to be subservient to the witness of the gospel. If slaves respected their masters, especially when both were

Christians, then outsiders would have no reason to slander God's name or the gospel message (v. 1). Getting a reputation for rebelliousness could distract and detract from the church's purpose. On the contrary, a believing slave who served his brother

with godly love would be a shining example of the difference Christ makes in a person's life (v. 2).

The Roman social order by no means received a free pass. Elsewhere Paul taught that Christian masters should be devoted to their slaves' welfare, a responsibility that went beyond and even reversed the social hierarchy (Eph. 6:5–9).

### Apply the Word

A parallel for Paul's instructions could be the inadequately-paying jobs in the worldwide service economy—the way some companies treat their employees may present a challenge to a Christian! For hard-working Christian employees, the message is to do your best work. For Christian employers, how do you treat those who depend on you for income?

### Pray with Us

Please lift up to God in prayer all the tasks that Dr. Paul Nyquist oversees as president of Moody Bible Institute. May the Lord grant him strength, wisdom, and insight as he guides Moody into the fulfillment of our global vision.

## Sound Doctrine Versus the Love of Money

One of the problems in Willa Cather's novel *Death Comes for the Archbishop* is a corrupt priest named Father Martínez. He's a charismatic leader, but in the narrative he uses his power and influence to benefit himself. He extorts money from his congregation, cheats Native Americans out of their land, overindulges in food, womanizes, and generally lacks integrity.

Paul warned against such false "shepherds" whose main goal is to fleece their flocks. How can they be identified? In multiple ways, including the content of their teaching, their motivations, and the results of their actions. A teacher who doesn't uphold the gospel and who promotes ideas or activities that undermine Christian witness is false and must be opposed. Such people are conceited and ignorant—they have been "robbed" of the truth (v. 5). As we've already seen, they have an "unhealthy in-

terest in controversies and quarrels" (v. 4; 1:4, 6). Conflict follows in their wake.

They are also greedy for financial gain. From the sale of indulgences in the Middle Ages to prosperity theology today, the love of money has been the root of all kinds of evil (v. 10). Wealth must be recognized as a significant temptation away from godliness, in that love of money competes with love of God and neighbor.

The love of money  
is a root of all kinds  
of evil.

1 Timothy 6:10

The spiritual antidote is "godliness with contentment" (vv. 6–8; Phil. 4:11–13). Material acquisition is essentially irrelevant to our spiritual journeys. From this perspective, contentment is simple, as we should be satisfied with our basic needs met. This is an issue of the heart not of the bank account. How attached are we to our "stuff"? A false teacher is easily recognized because his heart is not in the right place.

### Apply the Word

A good follow-up is to do additional Bible study on how greed can lead us astray. Scripture offers many narratives, including those of Achan (Joshua 7), Ahab (1 Kings 21), and Solomon. Where did they go wrong? How did they rationalize their wrongdoing? How can we learn from their mistakes? How can we redefine what "treasure" truly is?

### Pray with Us

We are thankful for the ministry of Moody Radio! Today, please pray for the staff of Moody Radio Quad Cities located in East Moline, Illinois: Ken Brooks, Jason Crosby, Deborah Gustafson, John Johnson, and Austin Martin.

## Sound Doctrine and the Pursuit of Righteousness

“Immortal, invisible, God only wise, in light inaccessible hid from our eyes. Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days, Almighty, victorious—Thy great name we praise.” So begins a classic hymn based on 1 Timothy 1:17, adding: “To all life Thou givest—to both great and small; in all life Thou livest—the true life of all. Thy wisdom so boundless, Thy mercy so free, eternal Thy goodness, for naught changeth thee.”

This hymn, like the burst of praise at the close of today’s passage, powerfully reminds us of our extraordinary God (vv. 15–16). In the end, Paul reminded Timothy, this is the One whom ministry and sound doctrine are all about. Paul’s charge is for Timothy to “flee from all this,” meaning the greed, contentiousness, and other characteristics of false teachers he had described (v. 11). Running away isn’t enough, though: he must run to something as well—namely, the six virtues listed. Not coincidentally, each of these

qualities plays a role in standing against false doctrine. Righteousness and godliness oppose the sin following from false teaching; faith and love contradict the self-centeredness motivating false teachers. Endurance is what it takes to stand for truth, and gentleness is the virtue that wins the day.

Pursue  
righteousness,  
godliness, faith, love,  
endurance and  
gentleness.

1 Timothy 6:11

Changing the metaphor from athletics to war, Paul lastly charged Timothy to “Fight the good fight” and again reminded him of his original calling and commissioning (v. 12). This charge is formalized or solemnized

“in the sight of God . . . and of Christ Jesus,” to whom they will both ultimately be accountable (v. 13). Finally, their ministry is fully contextualized within a doxology that anticipates Christ’s Second Coming as the climax of God’s redemptive plan (v. 14; Rev. 17:14). In light of this, false teachers are impotent gnats, about whom there’s no need to be anxious. Timothy wasn’t fighting this battle alone!

### Apply the Word

In order to pursue godliness and fight for sound doctrine, what Timothy needed was a vision of God. That’s what we need too! Read and meditate on Ezekiel 1 and 2. In these chapters, God revealed Himself to an exiled priest and called him to a breathtaking prophetic ministry. Let this vision described in Scripture permeate your day.

### Pray with Us

Would you support in prayer the service of Dr. Junias Venugopal, provost and dean of education? With the changing landscape and demands of modern education, your prayers are vital for Moody schools and for Dr. Venugopal’s ministry.

## Concluding Exhortations

Writer and philosopher Stephen Cave said about death: “We try to avoid the worst, to keep going one way or another, yet we must live in the knowledge that it is futile—that ultimately, the worst thing that can possibly happen will happen. That all our projects and all our dreams—everything we’re striving for—one day it will all be over.”

That’s true, apart from God, but He has made available true life in Christ. Our Lord has conquered death, and because He lives we also will live (John 14:19; 2 Tim. 2:11). This gospel message of true life and guaranteed hope was at the heart of Paul’s ministry and writings.

Before wrapping up 1 Timothy, Paul returned momentarily to the topic of rich believers (vv. 17–19), following up on warnings from earlier in the chapter (vv. 6–10) with a more positive exhortation about appropriate Christian uses for wealth. How

can rich believers live according to godly priorities? First, they should see their wealth as an opportunity to resist the temptation of pride and practice humility. Money may provide status in the world, but the church should be different. Second, they should put their hope or confidence not in their money but in God. He is our real source of security. Third, they should do good deeds, thereby earning superior “riches.” Fourth, they should be generous and willing to share.

Concluding the epistle, Paul reminded Timothy once more of his two most important ministry responsibilities, which are two sides of the same coin: to guard the truth and to oppose false teaching (vv. 20–21). The gospel is a sacred trust, of which he was a steward. In questions of true and false doctrine, Christian faith is at stake, both for individual believers and for the collective witness of the church.

Guard what has  
been entrusted to  
your care.

1 Timothy 6:20

### Apply the Word

Rich or not, we, too, should put our hope and confidence in God. He is our faithful Provider. Money and the means of getting it are temporal and uncertain, while He is certain. Are we putting our faith in our bank account, our job, our IRA, our insurance plans, or anything that is not God? It’s easy to do, but such an attitude does not honor Him.

### Pray with Us

Let’s pray for the Moody Aviation flight instructors in Spokane, Washington: Jay Bigley, James Conrad, and Ian Kerrigan. May they exalt Christ in every aspect of their ministry to students.

## Introduction to the Epistle

Henry Alford is known for a nineteenth-century commentary on the Greek New Testament. He also edited the poems of John Donne and preached sermon series at churches including Canterbury Cathedral. He's best known as the author of the great thanksgiving hymn, "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come."

Thankfulness and commitment were hallmarks of the apostle Paul's life. So it's no surprise to find these themes right from the start in his second epistle to Timothy (v. 3). This epistle is also a "farewell discourse," a public address delivered

by a person on the verge of death. Paul wrote 2 Timothy in about A.D. 67 from a Roman dungeon, awaiting martyrdom during a time of persecution under emperor Nero (v. 1; 4:6–8). Though his actual death is not recorded in Scripture, the evidence points strongly in the direction of Paul being martyred shortly after this letter was written.

To Timothy, my  
dear son.

2 Timothy 1:2

One study Bible explains that this literary form includes "the speaker's announcement of his imminent departure, directives to keep God's commandments, predictions of what will happen after the speaker's departure, words of comfort and instruction for the benefit of those who will survive the speaker, and appeals to the addressees to remember what the speaker has taught." Other biblical examples of "farewell discourses" include Deuteronomy (Moses), Joshua 23 and 24 (Joshua), and John 14 through 16 (Jesus).

The main theme of this letter is that Timothy and all believers should be faithful to the gospel and carry forward its witness, despite suffering. Paul's tone in this letter, though, is more urgent and personal (vv. 2, 4). He called Timothy his "dear son" and expressed his longing to see his friend and ministry partner once more before he died.

### Apply the Word

One commentary relevant to this month's study is by Philip Graham Ryken. You might also be interested in by Walter L. Liefeld in the NIV Application Commentary series. Or check out CCEL.org: you can enter a Scripture passage, select a type of resource, and click on free materials from throughout church history.

### Pray with Us

Steven Mogck, executive vice president and chief operating officer, oversees Moody's operations and infrastructure maintenance and development. Your prayers will be an encouragement in his many responsibilities.

## Paul and Timothy As Ministers of the Gospel

Prenatal care for pregnant women can have a beneficial effect on their children's future educational achievements. Researchers found that children whose mothers were given iron and folic acid supplements during pregnancy "were smarter, more organized, and had better fine motor skills than children whose mothers did not get them." Iron deficiency, affecting two billion people, is the most common nutritional problem in the world.

Both physical and spiritual nutrition are important in children's lives. In today's reading, Paul encouraged Timothy by reminding him of his godly family heritage (v. 5). He was originally from Lystra, in modern-day Turkey. His father was Greek and his mother was a Jewish Christian (Acts 16:1). In fact, his grandmother was also a Christian, making Timothy a third-generation believer. He likewise had a strong heritage in ministry as a member of Paul's team.

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

2 Timothy 1:7

His commissioning was like a spark that needed to be fanned into flame—that is, his gift of preaching and teaching needed practice and growth (v. 6; 1 Tim. 4:14).

In this, Timothy could follow the example of his mentor (vv. 7–14). The Holy Spirit had called them both to a bold ministry characterized by "power, love and self-discipline." There's no shame in "suffering for the gospel," as persecution is only to be expected. It may be that the false teachers in Ephesus had been using Paul's imprisonment to try to bring shame to his friends. The glorious gospel

is not, however, deterred by opposition. The story of God's choice, purpose, and grace in His plan of redemption continues on even if one "herald" is imprisoned. This "good deposit" of gospel witness and sound doctrine is what Timothy must guard with the help of the Holy Spirit. Paul had staked his life on this truth!

### Apply the Word

Today's passage challenges our cultural assumptions. Paul's confidence and sense of worth were rooted not in his own status or abilities or achievements, but in the faithfulness of God, the salvation of Christ Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit. "God with us" is also "God in us," giving us confidence and hope rooted in eternal realities.

### Pray with Us

It's our privilege to pray for the staff of the Campus Post Office, Anthony Harper, Michael Lathrop, and Jenny Matthews. We ask the Father that they would feel His presence with them every day and would have strength and perseverance for every task.

## Paul's Situation of "Suffering for the Gospel"

Pastor Behnam Irani is in prison for the gospel. His health is failing, he's been tortured, and his family fears he will die in jail. Yet at Christmas last year, he wrote to his fellow Iranian believers: "Despite the pressures and difficulties in prison, I am pleased to share, what is like a fountain, my Christian joy with you. .

. . . Even if I were to be sentenced to many years behind bars for the salvation of one of you, there would never be any complaint."

At the time he wrote 2 Timothy, Paul was imprisoned in a Roman dungeon probably awaiting martyrdom. When a person is facing death we often see his true character. And we see here a man who knows the truth, has lived it out, and remains passionately willing to stake the soundness of his life on the soundness of his doctrine.

The physical and emotional suffering remained real, however, and not all of it was

caused by the Roman Empire's persecution. Paul endured loneliness and longed to see his friend Timothy again. He had also suffered from the desertion of two other friends or ministry partners (v. 15). Nothing more is known of the two men named here.

I know whom I  
have believed.

2 Timothy 1:12

Onesiphorus was a contrasting example and an encouragement to Paul (vv. 16–18). A resident of Ephesus (4:19), he had sought out Paul on a trip to Rome. Perhaps he had come specifically to see the Apostle on a visit like

that of Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25). Once Onesiphorus located the hard-to-find, high-security prisoner, he ministered to his physical, emotional, and spiritual needs at what must have been some personal risk. Paul felt refreshed and prayed God would reward him. It may be that Onesiphorus was the one who carried this very epistle back to Timothy in Ephesus.

### Apply the Word

Visiting prisoners is a good deed encouraged in Scripture. Specifically, in the parable of the sheep and the goats, both groups are told that visiting or not visiting the prisoner was the same as visiting or not visiting Christ (Matt. 25:36, 43). When Onesiphorus encouraged and refreshed Paul in prison, it was as if he did it for Christ Himself. The same is true for us!

### Pray with Us

As we continue to keep our Campus Post Office in our prayers, please add Victor Perez, Richard Tatina, and Samuel Ramos to your prayer list. Pray for their spiritual growth and peace as they praise God in the workplace.

## Charge to Be Strong, Work Hard, and Train Others

In her very first marathon, Norwegian runner Grete Waitz set a world record. Though she held a world record in the 3,000 meters, she had never run a marathon before. When she crossed the finish line first in the 1978 New York City Marathon, no one knew who she was. Over time, she won nine New York City Marathons, a mark no one has matched.

Grete Waitz is the kind of athlete Paul had in mind in today's reading. To illustrate his charge to Timothy, he used the images of a soldier, a runner, and a farmer. The charge itself is the central theme of the book: "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (v. 1). Whether facing false doctrine or persecution, Timothy, too, should stake his life on the gospel! This could best be done in Ephesus by training teachers of sound doctrine who would join Timothy in opposing false teachers (v. 2).

Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 2:3

The three illustrations or analogies show the road of suffering, service, endurance, and faithfulness that Paul and Timothy had chosen to walk. The picture of a soldier emphasizes purposefulness (vv. 3–4). A soldier endures whatever is necessary to accomplish the mission. He's not distracted by "civilian affairs" but remains single-mindedly focused on obedience. The picture of a runner emphasizes victory (v. 5). An athlete trains and competes with all-out dedication in order to earn the prize (1 Cor. 9:24–27). To do so, she must compete within the rules, again in-

dicating submission to authority. To know and to follow the rules of a sport are equivalent to sound doctrine and sound living in the Christian life. The picture of a farmer emphasizes the harvest (v. 6). A farmer works tirelessly to care for his crops, trusts in natural growth processes, and reaps the reward.

### Apply the Word

The images of a soldier, athlete, and farmer are found throughout Scripture. These pictures are both literal and figurative—for example, King David was a soldier, and Christians are urged to put on the armor of God (Eph. 6:10–17). Choose one of these three images for additional Bible study. Spiritually, what does it mean to be a soldier, athlete, or farmer?

### Pray with Us

Would you pray for the ministry of Jim Elliott, vice president of Stewardship at Moody? Ask for God's protection during Jim's many travels to meet Moody donors and for His guidance in working for the kingdom.

## Charge to Remain Faithful to the Gospel

Last year, China's Communist government began implementing a new plan for wiping out unregistered house churches. As a result, according to a report by China Aid, Christians there experienced a significant increase in suffering. There were some 42 percent more incidents of persecution compared to 2011, and 372 percent more compared to 2006.

Believers in many countries today are being tortured and imprisoned for their faith, as Paul was. But they know, as Paul did, that "God's word is not chained" (v. 9). The heart of God's Word is the gospel—Jesus Christ and His resurrection, the revelation and fulfillment of God's plan of redemption (v. 8). The reference to David reminds us of God's promise of a suffering Messiah who would be the King of kings.

Paul had staked his life on the gospel, and though he wrote from prison, the gospel was going forth nonetheless.

He trusted God to bring fruit from his ministry. Our Lord and His incredible plan of salvation were the source of Paul's strength to endure and to continue to love God's people on the road to glory (v. 10). He expressed this foundational truth, the hope driving his life and ministry, through what appear to be early Christian hymn lyrics (vv. 11–13). These are prefaced with a rhetorical marker of significance and reliability we've seen three times already this month: "Here is a trustworthy saying" (1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9).

These hymn lyrics are structured as a series of if/then conditionals. If we die, then we live—expectations are overturned. If we endure, then we reign—hopes are fulfilled. If we disown, then we'll be disowned—it's our choice (Matt. 10:32–33). If we are faithless, he remains faithful—God's will is sovereign (Rom. 3:3–4). This is rock-solid encouragement!

God's word is  
not chained.

2 Timothy 2:9

### Apply the Word

Prayer is one vital way in which we can support our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ around the globe. To find out more about what's going on in China, mentioned in today's introduction, we encourage you to visit the China Aid website, [www.chinaaid.org](http://www.chinaaid.org). You'll find news, videos, and many ways to pray and get involved.

### Pray with Us

Our Chicago campus Library is a valuable resource for our ministries. Please keep in prayer Amy Fields, Melissa Hozey, Lorilee Johnson, Amy Koehler, and James Preston who provide students, faculty, and staff with all the necessary materials.

## Charge to “Avoid Godless Chatter”

When the Anti-Mine Network recently visited a school in Uganda to teach children how to recognize bombs left over from decades of war, they were aghast to find one being used as a school bell. Not knowing what it was, teachers had been banging on it with stones to signal it was time for classes to begin. It could have exploded at any time!

“Godless chatter” may sound like no big deal, but Paul treated it like a bomb waiting to go off. The core truths of the gospel on which he had just reflected should instead be the focus of Timothy’s calling and ministry. That was not the case with certain false teachers in Ephesus, whom Paul had also instructed Timothy to oppose in his first letter. Quarrels and controversies were in fact the hallmarks of their false teaching. Several years later, they were apparently still around, including one named Hymenaeus (1 Tim. 1:20; 6:4–5).

These ungodly false teachers specifically taught that the resurrection of the dead had already taken place (vv. 17–18). Perhaps they said something like modern liberal theologians—that Jesus’ resurrection was only figurative or spiritual, not literal and physical, as Christ promised and Paul taught (1 Cor. 15). Whatever they were saying, they had departed from the truth and were spreading false doctrine like a disease through the body of Christ.

While God’s truth and our salvation are impervious to heretical attacks (v. 19), the church and its witness need defending. This is best done through the accurate and committed preaching and teaching of God’s Word (v. 15). People like Timothy, who choose to pursue a life of holiness, can be used by God for this and other good works (vv. 20–21).

Do your best to  
present yourself  
to God as one  
approved.

2 Timothy 2:15

### Apply the Word

If we cleanse ourselves, that is, pursue holiness and righteousness, then we’ll be spiritually ready to do “any good work” (v. 21). God can use us in any way He pleases, for any ministry, as a channel of His blessings to others. What a joy to be so “useful to the Master”! Where and how to begin? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you.

### Pray with Us

Include in your prayers Computer Support staff on our Chicago campus: James Anderson, Rich McNeill, Michael Paniak, and Steven Takushi. We thank God for blessing Moody with modern technology and for the people who use it for His glory.

## Charge to Gently Oppose False Teachers

A church in north London is growing—but it’s a “church” for atheists and religious nonbelievers. They meet on Sunday mornings to “have a bit of community spirit but without the religion aspect,” as one participant put it. During the service, they might, for example, sing a pop song, hear a science lecture, or read from a literary classic. Whatever they do, it’s all merely human knowledge.

False teachings come in many shapes and sizes! In today’s passage Paul continued to exhort Timothy to oppose false doctrine, and he reminded him that the best way to do so is to pursue godliness (v. 22; 1 Tim. 4:12; 6:11). Perhaps the “evil desires of youth”—Timothy was likely in his 30s, young to be a leader in that culture—included an inclination to get caught up in “foolish and stupid arguments” (v. 23). In any case, he was not to give in to such temptations. As

Opponents must be gently instructed.

2 Timothy 2:25

a leader, he had a heightened responsibility to live differently. Sound living is the best defense of sound doctrine, just as sound doctrine is the best foundation for sound living.

In essence, Paul told Timothy to kill them with kindness (vv. 24–26). Opposing false teaching with good teaching might sound like a conflict, but Paul framed this as a battle that should unfold differently. If Timothy felt any resentment, which would be only natural after years of wrangling, he should instead see this as the perfect situation to return good for evil (Rom. 12:14–21). Kindness and gentleness would be the keys to getting the false teachers, even now, to repent and return to Christ. By God’s power, they could still move from error to truth, from sin to righteousness, and from being the devil’s captives to celebrating freedom in Christ.

### Apply the Word

First Timothy 2:22 encourages us to “pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” The Christian life is not meant to be lived alone. We cannot pursue godliness only as individuals. We need to seek it alongside others in a local church (Heb. 10:24–25). Sound doctrine and sound living require community!

### Pray with Us

Elizabeth Brown, vice president and general counsel, leads a group of highly trained legal professionals whose expertise is very important for Moody’s ministries. Today, please join us in prayer for this team.

## Charge to Be on Guard Against Sins of the “Last Days”

When opposing Moses and his message to let God’s people go, the magicians of Egypt found initial success (Exodus 7–9). They, too, were able to turn their rods into snakes and water into blood, as well as to conjure up frogs. From the fourth plague of gnats onward, however, they were clearly outmatched by God’s power. In the end, God freed His people from bondage!

Just as surely as those magicians, wrote Paul, false teachers will be exposed and fail (vv. 8–9). In the meantime, during the “last days,” we can expect “terrible times” (v. 1). The “last days” can be read the same as “later times” (1 Tim. 4:1), that is, as the period of time between the first and second comings of Christ (Heb. 1:1–2; 1 Peter 1:20). Like Paul and Timothy, we, too, live during this time in history. We, too, live in a period in which people love many things ahead of God, including themselves, money, and pleasure

(vv. 2–5). They embrace sins such as pride, greed, anger, and dishonesty, and reject virtues such as love, forgiveness, and self-control.

How does such a lifestyle qualify even as a “form” of godliness? Thinking again about the false teachers in Ephesus, they claimed to know God, yet were empty of His truth and power. Sound doctrine and sound living require godly discernment. Many things will try to masquerade as holiness.

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days.

2 Timothy 3:1

As mentioned, the false teachers might appear to have limited success, but their days were numbered (vv. 6–9). They wouldn’t get far—truth would win out. While they might victimize some “gullible women”—perhaps the “new Roman women” described on July 7—their irrational folly in opposing God’s truth would inevitably be uncovered and collapse.

### Apply the Word

For more than two millennia, Christian believers have waited for the Second Coming. The cry of our hearts is “Maranatha” or “Come, Lord!” (1 Cor. 16:22). The NIV text note reveals that “Maranatha” reproduces an Aramaic expression used by early Christians to express their strong desire for Christ to return. Let “Maranatha” be our prayer today!

### Pray with Us

Please bring before the Lord the ministry of Dr. Thomas Shaw, VP of Student Services at Moody’s Chicago campus. He leads several departments that provide key services to students during all the time of their study, and he will be grateful for your prayers.

## Charge to Stand Upon the Word's Inspired Power

In the early twentieth century, Frederick Kenyon carefully studied the manuscript history of biblical texts. An Oxford graduate, British Museum director, ancient languages scholar, and archaeologist, Kenyon concluded that the documentary evidence was excellent: "The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true Word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation."

Teaching sound doctrine means holding true to God's Word. Just as false teachers will be disproved by the outcomes of their lives, so also Paul and Timothy were proved by the outcomes of theirs (vv. 10–11). The Ephesians who were listening as this epistle was read aloud knew very well Paul's character, teaching, and way of life, including all that he had endured and was even then suffering for the sake of the

gospel. In fact, he warned, "everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" while evildoers "will go from bad to worse" (vv. 12–13). Knowing that suffering can be an indication of righteous living and that false teachers inevitably self-destruct are a powerful pair of encouraging words!

All Scripture is  
God-breathed.

2 Timothy 3:16

Timothy had already seen "the proof of the pudding" in the lives of Paul and his mother and grandmother (vv. 14–15; 1:5). By holding true to God's Word in faith, he, too, would gain the wisdom he needed for ministry and leadership.

God's Word is, after all, inspired or "God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (vv. 16–17; 2:15). The doctrine of inspiration undergirds the authority and perfection of Scripture. "The word of our God endures forever" (Isa. 40:8).

### Apply the Word

Paul said that faithful Christians can expect persecution and suffering. This may not sound encouraging, but it means we're following in the footsteps of Jesus. He told His disciples, "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. . . . If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. . . . They will treat you this way because of my name" (John 15:18–21).

### Pray with Us

Our Digital Media team—Christopher Burdick, Courtney Gaines, Adam Grandy, Ryan McConaughay, and David Quigley—communicates Moody's message and content over the Internet. Today, please uphold their work in prayer.

## Final Charge to Preach the Word Despite Obstacles

Theologian J. I. Packer wrote stirringly of the centrality of Scripture: It “is held to be divinely inspired and authoritative, true and trustworthy, informative and imperative, life-imparting and strength-supplying to the human heart, and to be given to the church to be preached, taught, expounded, applied, absorbed, digested and appealed to as arbiter whenever questions of faith and life, belief and behavior, spiritual wisdom and spiritual welfare, break surface among the saints.”

Preach the word.

2 Timothy 4:2

This is the same as Paul’s attitude in his final charge to Timothy. The tone of this charge is quite formal and serious (v. 1). It is made “in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus,” who are the final and perfect judges of all we do. It is also made “in view of his appearing and his kingdom,” that is, in the context of Christ’s Second Coming.

The content of Paul’s charge is straightforward—“preach the word” (v. 2). Obedience to this command does not depend on convenience or circumstances. It is to be done at all times, whether people’s ears and hearts are in season or out of season. It is also to be done with care and diligence in all ways. Preaching and teaching might be positive or encouraging, but it might also be negative or rebuking. The point is to be prepared.

There was and would continue to be opposition to Timothy’s obedience to this charge, but he should remain faithful to his calling. Paul had already warned that the “last days” are sinful times (3:1). In such times, truth is extremely unpopular. As with prosperity theology in our own day, people try to bend the truth to fit their own desires, and willfully choose to listen to teachings that “say what their itching ears want to hear” (v. 3).

### Apply the Word

We should live in light of eternity and our relationship with God (v. 1). Instead we become preoccupied with circumstances and temporal concerns, whereas sound doctrine that leads to sound living should transcend such things and aim for much more. As you reflect on your own life these days, where do your heart and mind tend to dwell: on things above or below?

### Pray with Us

Dr. James Spencer, dean of Moody Distance Learning, requests your prayers for MDL as it brings Moody education to our students wherever they are. Pray that staff and students will have a renewed passion for knowing, loving, and serving Christ.

## Paul's Situation of Being "Poured Out Like a Drink Offering"

The Roman centurion Marcellus, a new convert to Christianity in A.D. 298, had to make a choice. Would he celebrate Emperor Maximian's birthday? It involved sacrifices to the gods and worship of the emperor. He decided: No. He proclaimed, "I serve Jesus Christ the Eternal King." For his stand, he was imprisoned and executed.

Tradition says that Paul also was martyred for his faith. Writing 2 Timothy from a Roman dungeon, the Apostle knew his time was near. He chose three images to put his life in perspective (vv. 6–7). The first is of a drink offering. Typically, this was about a liter of wine poured out alongside the main offering. That's how Paul viewed his life—as an act of worship, a living sacrifice poured out alongside the once-for-all sacrifice of his Savior. The second picture is of a fight, nearly over; and the third image is of a race, almost finished. Together

I have fought the  
good fight, I have  
finished the race,  
I have kept  
the faith.

2 Timothy 4:7

these are images of worship, faithfulness, commitment, and endurance.

The Apostle also put his future in perspective (v. 8). Death was not an end, only a departure. He looked forward to being with Christ and to receiving along with others a reward for faithfulness.

Concluding the letter, Paul struck a personal note (vv. 9–18). He felt lonely and hoped Timothy would be able to visit him before he died. He took a Christ-like attitude and for-

gave those who had deserted him at his initial legal hearing (Luke 23:34). God had given him the words to say (see Matt. 10:18–20). As previously, he rejoiced that his chains had served to advance the gospel. This time, though, Paul knew his release would be to God's "heavenly kingdom," and he praised Him that the day was coming soon.

### Apply the Word

One can easily imagine today's verse as an epitaph that Paul wrote for himself. An epitaph is an inscription on a tombstone, words that try to sum up what a life was about. What epitaph would you write for yourself? Or what epitaph would you like to be able to write at the end of your life? What choices are you making to get there?

### Pray with Us

Today, thank the Lord in prayer for the service of Andrew Carlson, Joseph Kessinger, and Paul Walker from Network and System Support, as they maintain and develop Moody's computer systems on our Chicago campus.

## Concluding Remarks

Imagine holding in your hands an original published copy of the American national anthem by Francis Scott Key, “The Star-Spangled Banner.” There are just eleven copies known to be still in existence, and one was recently put up for auction in Manhattan. At the time, it was valued at between \$200,000 and \$300,000.

If you find this idea exciting, now consider what you’re doing at this very moment—holding in your hands an original letter from God himself! While 1 and 2 Timothy were epistles from Paul to Timothy and the church at Ephesus, the Bible may be considered a letter from God to His people.

In the last few verses of 2 Timothy, Paul wrote of three friends. First, he greeted Priscilla and Aquila, fellow tentmakers and ministry partners whom he had met in Corinth (v. 19). They had traveled with Paul but stayed on in Ephesus (Acts 18:19), where they remained min-

istering alongside Timothy. Second, Paul said Erastus had stayed in Corinth. He is elsewhere identified as that “city’s director of public works” (v. 20a; Rom. 16:23). Archaeology in Corinth has turned up a stone with a Latin inscription stating that Erastus paid to pave a square—a possible confirmation of this individual. Third, Paul mentioned that he had left Trophimus, another member of his extended ministry team, sick in Miletus (v. 20b). He had brought Trophimus, who was Ephesian, with him to Jerusalem, where he had

been at the center of a misunderstanding and a riot (Acts 21:27–36).

After making one more request for Timothy to visit (v. 21), Paul offered a closing benediction that showed both the personal and public nature of an epistle (v. 22). “Your spirit” is singular, so this was a blessing for Timothy, while “you all” is plural, making it a benediction for the entire Ephesian church.

The Lord be with  
your spirit. Grace  
be with you all.

2 Timothy 4:22

### Apply the Word

Psalm 119:11 reminds us of the importance of Scripture memorization: “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.” Is this spiritual discipline a regular part of your life? Choose your favorite verse from 1 or 2 Timothy to memorize. If you’re looking for a more substantial challenge, why not pick your favorite chapter?

### Pray with Us

We hope you’ve been encouraged and challenged by this month’s study from 1 and 2 Timothy. Let us thank the Lord for the sure foundation of His Word and ask Him to help us live out our Christian faith day by day.

have read this booklet every day for 25 years. But let me say it this way: I am very sure I have read *Today in the Word* every day. I don't recall ever missing a day! And I have in my possession a whole lot of the marked-up copies I have read. When *Today in the Word* first began, I was sent the first 3 issues. That was the beginning of my 6 a.m. daily voyage with the Lord—my Bible, my prayer list, and *Today in the Word*. Continued good health and many blessings to *Today in the Word* and all who participate in its publishing!”

— Evelyn, GA

“Thank you so much for the time, effort, and study that you put into each issue of *Today in the Word*! For me, a busy mom, it really helps that each day is new and not some reading plan that I can get behind on or fail at! As a Moody alumna, I'm also proud that this is such a quality Moody publication.”

— Michelle (via e-mail)

“My husband and I have rejoiced this month reading ‘Foundations of Our Faith.’ It has been a time of renewing and blessing, a time of deepening love for our Lord Jesus.”

— Cheryl (via e-mail)

“Thank you so much for access to your devotional on my iPhone. I'm usually very busy, but this gives me an opportunity to have quiet time

whenever I can, allowing me to grow closer to the Lord. I praise God for your faithfulness and commitment to His Word! God bless you and your families.”

— Marie (via e-mail)

“Thank you for putting out every month a great Bible closeness with God. Keep up the good work.”

— Trish, IA

“After many years of receiving *Today in the Word*, I feel I must write and thank the group who puts this publication together. It came into my life many years ago, and it has been a necessity to read for my walk in the day. It has given me courage to face the days I'd rather not face. As I near the end of my sojourn on earth, I have complete joy knowing my future will be with the Lord. God has been so good to me all my life. All I can say to your group is Thank You!”

— Shirley, TN

“I'm thinking about people who walk with God and help me keep going in Jesus way day after day. These wonderful people are you, from *Today in the Word*. I really appreciate the wisdom and the heart of each one who makes this devotional possible month after month, sharing your knowledge, connecting lives to the purpose of Jesus Christ, and growing in faith, hope, and love.”

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“A compelling novel whose characters will dwell  
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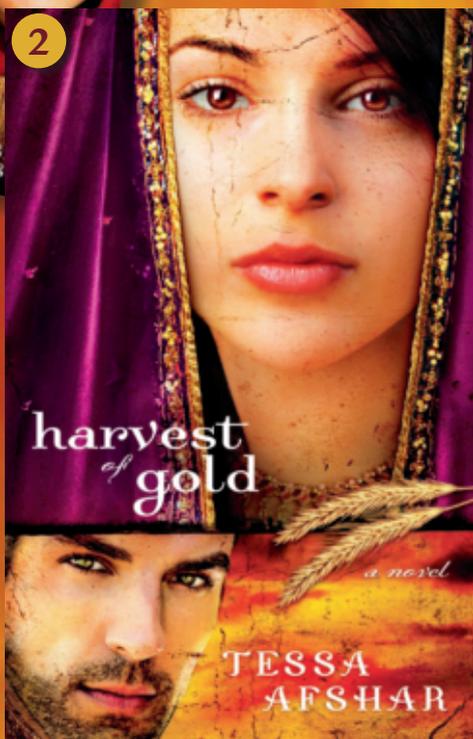
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1



# harvest of gold

2



Darius remains skeptical that his Jewish wife is the right choice for him, particularly when Sarah conspires with her cousin Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Will the journey there help Darius to see the hand of God at work in his life and even in his marriage to Sarah?

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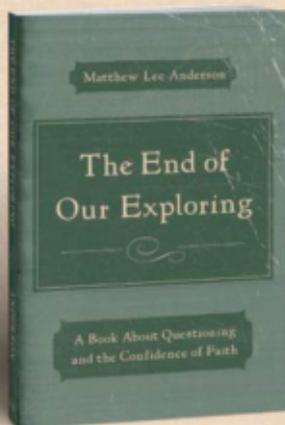
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