

# 1 Timothy

By Phil Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2020-10-11

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1 Timothy 1:1-6:21

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## I. Background on why structure is critical to interpreting the book

One of the things that frustrated me when I was studying this book was how many liberals and conservatives have concluded that Paul was arguing in a random and haphazard fashion - that there is no direction or structure to the book of 1 Timothy. And I'm sorry, but I don't take a commentary very seriously when it can't show any flow to Paul's argument. A. T. Hanson said,

The Pastorals [and by pastorals he means 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus] are made up of a miscellaneous collection of material. They have no unifying theme; there is no development of thought.<sup>1</sup>

Jeffrey Reed more recently said, "the PE are, to put it bluntly, incoherent."<sup>2</sup>

That is an insult to the God who gave these Scriptures. Knowing how logical and ordered Paul has been in every book prior to this, anyone should be suspicious when people say that there is no structure. In fact, any time I see that claim, I wonder if the book is following one of the Hebrew structures that westerners tend to miss. And indeed, in this case it is. Skeptical as I am of claims to chiasms (and I am skeptical of 80% of the claims to chiasms out there), I have found that this whole book is yet another example of the Hebrew literary device known as chiasm - where there is an ABCDCBA kind of a structure, with the theme of the book being at the center, not at the beginning.

Thankfully, Ray Van Neste wrote a 354 page thesis on the intricately woven microstructures found throughout the book - many of which are small chiasms and other Hebrew structures.<sup>3</sup> They are beautiful. He didn't apply it to the whole book. But after he wrote that book, a couple of other authors have shown undeniable verbal and thematic parallels between the two halves of the book. Recently Joseph Norris<sup>4</sup> got 90% of the structure right, missing

1 A. T. Hanson, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 42.

2 *To Timothy or Not? A Discourse Analysis of 1 Timothy*, in S.E. Porter and D.A. Carson (eds.), *Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics\** (JSNTS 80; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 90-118.

3 For an incredibly in depth analysis of the ways all three pastoral epistles cohere and show intricate patterns, see Ray Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure in the Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 280, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* (London; New York: T & T Clark International, 2004).

4 For part 1, see <https://thepolisinstitute.com/heretics-in-the-latter-days-the-structure-of-1-timothy-part-i/> While I don't think that Norris has entirely nailed it, you can see the parallels in most of his outline.

only a couple of points. I won't belabor the fine points of argument, but the most recent studies have shown layer upon layer of intricately woven material - as we would expect from an inspired book. In addition to the overall chiasm that I have put on the back of your outlines, there is a clever alternation throughout the book of Paul addressing Timothy and his opponents, then specific church groups, then Timothy and his opponents, then specific church groups, and then Timothy and his opponents. And there is good reason for this alternation.

- 1:3–20—On Timothy and the Opponents
- 2:1–3:13—On Specific Church Groups
- 3:14–4:16—On Timothy and the Opponents
- 5:1–6:2—On Specific Church Groups
- 6:3–21—On Timothy and the Opponents

## **II. The heart of the book is the Great Apostasy (4:1-5)**

But I bring this up not to give you a boring lesson on structure, but simply to point out what the heart of the book is about. If you look at the chiasm on the back of your outline you will see that the heart of the book is the doctrine of the Great Apostasy - chapter 4:1-5.

### Chiastic Structure of 1 Timothy

By Phil Kayser – based upon the combined efforts of Van Neste, Norris, and others

- A 1:1-2 Greetings. Grace
- B 1:3-7 Timothy urged to guard against heresy
- C 1:8-11 The law and the Gospel
- D 1:12-17 Paul keeping the faith & doxology
- E 1:18-2:7 Fight the good fight
- F 2:8-15 Instructions to men and the women under their authority
- G 3:1-7 Elders in authority
- H 3:8-13 Concerning deacons and deacon's wives
- I 3:14-16 Instructions to Timothy as a pastor in God's Household
- J 4:1-5 Warnings about the Great Apostasy**
- I' 4:6-5:2 Instructions to Timothy as a pastor in God's Household
- H' 5:3-16 Concerning widows who serve with the deacons
- G' 5:17-25 Elders in authority
- F' 6:1-2a Instructions to masters and the servants under their authority
- E' 6:3-12a Fight the good fight
- D' 6:13-16 Timothy to keep the faith & doxology
- C' 6:17-19 Riches and the Gospel
- B' 6:20-21a Timothy urged to guard against heresy
- A' 6:21b Conclusion. Grace

And that Great Apostasy is then woven throughout the book and explains all the other doctrines. It explains why church discipline was absolute necessary for the health of the church in the first century. It explains why qualifications in leadership are so important. It explains why honoring authority structures within family and church are so important - Satan loves to attack anything that reflects God's authority. Satan is the master feminist, anarchist, and rebel. That Great Apostasy explains the critical importance of prayer and spiritual warfare, and why Law must never be pitted against Gospel or Gospel against Law. Satan and his demons are masters at deception and know how to subtly move a church away from its purpose in Christ.

So let me start by reading the heart of the book first because it explains so much of the rest of the book. Chapter 4:1-5.

1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times [these would be the last days of the Old Covenant] some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; 5 for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

Who was teaching these doctrines of demons? Well, that's one thing that both conservative and liberal commentators get right - they point out that in this case, it wasn't visitors from outside. It was the elders of Ephesus themselves who were teaching this false doctrine. The whole presbytery of Ephesus, which by this time had hundreds of house churches and hundreds of elders, was rife with bad elders.

### **III. The background of Acts 20 and the future of Revelation 2:1-7**

Of course, Paul had already prophesied that this would happen in Acts 20. And I would like you to turn there with me if you would. Acts 20 records Paul's meeting with all the elders of this presbytery in AD 54 - a decade before this book was written. And I want you to notice Paul's prophetic warning in verses 28-31.

Acts 20:28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. [Notice that the savage wolves would be from among you - in other words, from among you elders. Verse 30:] 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 Therefore watch, and remember

that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. Apparently some of elders had already gone rogue and needed to be disciplined. In chapter 1:20 he mentions two such elders who were already excommunicated by Paul when Paul had previously been with them. He mentions them as Hymenaeus and Alexander. Even after being disciplined, 2 Timothy 2:17 says that their influence continued to spread like gangrene. And there are hints that there were several more elders who needed to be dealt with. So this was a presbytery-wide problem.

But here is the encouraging thing: By AD 66, when the book of Revelation had been written, all of the heresies in this presbytery had been completely cleaned up and the only element that Jesus charges them with in that epistle is a lack of love; their love had grown cold. So it appears that this letter and 2 Timothy were very successful in stirring up the presbytery to deal with the heresies. Let me read two verses from Revelation 2 that shows how effective this epistle had been in bringing Reformation. In Revelation 2:2 Christ says,

“I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;

1 Timothy shows that they had previously been apathetic about their duty of discipline. But Paul and Timothy helped to turn that around. And the presbytery began disciplining heretic after heretic. There was a purge. In verse 6 of Revelation 2 Jesus says,

But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. That letter in Revelation to Ephesus was written within 1-3 years of 1 Timothy being written, depending on your dating of 1 Timothy.<sup>5</sup> So there must have been a whirlwind of activity that had happened as a result of this letter. But 1 Timothy 3:14-15 shows that the book did not just have a negative purpose. It was also designed as a church manual - to show the church how to function in a positive way. Paul says (and this is chapter 3:14-15),

1Tim. 3:14 These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; 15 but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

#### **IV. Overview of the book**

Well, with that background, let me give you an overview of the book. And I am going to take both parallel sections of the chiasm at the same time. And I think this will save us a lot of time.

5 Conservatives generally date 1 Timothy between 63-65 AD. I date it to late 64 or very early 65.

**A. The A sections - The pronouncements of grace (1:1-2 and 6:21b)**

And we'll start with the first two verses and the last verse - the A sections of the chiasm. I love the pronouncements of grace in Paul's epistles. And lest the heretics try to minimize Timothy as simply a fellow-elder, Paul calls him his true son in the faith. If you mess with Timothy, you are messing with this letter and with me.

**B. The B sections - Paul urges Timothy to guard against heresy (1:3-7 & 6:20-21a)**

The next part of the chiasm are Paul's two charges that Timothy guard against heresy. And right off the bat (even in verse 3) we have a controversy. Why is Timothy addressed rather than the church at large (as in other epistles)? And what authority does Timothy have anyway? He isn't an apostle. How is he able to deal with these kinds of problems? He's the pastor of a church, so what business does he have to be messing with other churches? Verse 3 says,

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine...

So in a nutshell, here is the issue that some puzzle over: "If there were hundreds of elders by this time, why did Paul address this responsibility to Timothy?" The Roman Catholics say, "Oh, that's easy. It's because Timothy was a bishop, and bishops had authority over an entire region, not simply over a local church." But there are many reasons to discount that answer. It's very unbiblical. I will just give you one proof.

Turn to Acts 20 again where Paul describes these very elders of Ephesus. And this was ten years earlier. In Acts 20:17 it says, "From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church." There were only elders there and all the elders of Ephesus were asked to come. Verse 18 says that they did come. Now look at verse 28. Still talking to these elders of the church of Ephesus he says, "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers [there is the word for bishop - ἐπίσκοπος], to shepherd [that's the word for pastor - to pastor] the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."

It is crystal clear that Paul used the terms elder, bishop, and pastor as synonymns for the same people. So, contrary to Roman Catholic doctrine, Timothy was not the only bishop at Ephesus. Each elder was one of the bishops or overseers of his local congregation. Rodney, Gary, and I are all bishops. That's just another way of saying that we are all overseers.

And by the way, the early church fathers disagreed with Roman Catholic episcopal ecclesiology too. Rome abandoned the catholic doctrine of ecclesiology just like they have abandoned so many other doctrines. Almost everybody agrees (even Roman Catholics concede this) that the early church knew of only two offices - bishops and deacons, or they were sometimes called elders and deacons. There is no evidence whatsoever of the hierarchical orders of many offices in the Roman Catholic church. Timothy was a fellow-elder and fellow-bishop with all the other elders or bishops of Ephesus. So even though the Romanists can't answer the question properly, the question still remains: "Why does Paul write to Timothy and not to the whole church?"

The modern mega-church model of Congregationalism will occasionally say that Timothy was the pastor who acted as the CEO of the church. But the passage we just read from Acts 20 shows that there was no distinction between elders and pastors and all elders were equal in authority.

At least one Charismatic Movement, Wagner, leader believes that Timothy had apostolic gifts and he was the apostle of the movement of house churches at Ephesus.<sup>[^7]</sup> But there is zero evidence of that. Paul was the apostolic leader responsible for Ephesus.

Some have suggested that Paul didn't trust the other elders and that he wrote to them through Timothy to make sure that they dealt with the problems. The problem with that view is that 1-2 years later in Revelation 2 we find that the majority of those elders were faithful and were zealous for cleansing the church, and had indeed tried the heretics. They were one of the few churches that was successful in arresting the Great Apostasy through church discipline. So if the majority were good elders, why did Paul write to Timothy and charge him with this business rather than writing to those elders?

The simplest answer is that Timothy was the moderator of the presbytery (or what Revelation 2 calls the "messenger of the church of Ephesus." A moderator spoke and wrote on behalf of presbytery and received letters on behalf of presbytery, and the moderator is addressed as if he represents presbytery. He has no more authority than other elders, other than the fact that he organizes the presbytery and makes sure that presbytery deals on their agenda with all the issues that they must, and he also acts as the messenger of that presbytery.

The earliest church history that we have indicates that Timothy planted

churches in Ephesus, became a pastor of one of those churches, and when a presbytery was formed, was elected to become the moderator of that presbytery until his death. He obeyed Paul's orders in verse 3. He didn't leave Ephesus, except for short trips. As a moderator he organized the business of the presbytery, spoke on behalf of presbytery, and was responsible to give messages to the Presbytery from the General Assembly (or in this case, from the apostle Paul). I think it fits all the evidence that we have and is a perfect answer. So to be clear, local elders of house churches in Ephesus were only overseers of that local church. In contrast, the moderator of the presbytery was the overseer or bishop representing the presbytery. It's simply presbyterian ecclesiology.

So what authority would such an overseer have? Only the authority of the Bible. The book is written as a message from Christ in verse 1, and Timothy acts on apostolic authority in verse 3 to charge people to teach no other doctrine...

No other doctrine than what? No other doctrine than the Scriptural doctrine that Paul had handed to him. And that this doctrine included the Old Testament law can be seen in verse 8: "But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully..." Like the Pharisees in the Gospels, whom Jesus had to correct because of their mishandling of the Old Testament, these teachers were not using the law of God correctly. They had come up with a mixture of Scripture and man-made ideas. So verse 4 says,

nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.

The Old Testament does not have fables and endless genealogies, but these Jewish teachers did. Verses 5-6 indicate that they were turning aside from the true faith, and verse 7 says, "desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm." So it was clear that they didn't understand the Old Testament properly and were not applying it properly. Theirs was not a Sola Scriptura ministry.

However, in verses 9-11 Paul showed how the detailed laws of the Old Testament (including civil laws) were good and completely compatible with the Gospel. But there was something about the teachings of the heretics that was not. So Paul charges Timothy to deal with heresy in the presbytery, and the parallel section in chapter 6 does the same.

**C. The C sections - The Gospel must be used compatibly with the law and with riches (1:8-11 & 6:17-19)**

The C sections are the only ones that could arguably not be totally parallel because the first C section deals with law and the second C section deals with rich people. But let me explain why they are parallel. The Judaizers were using the law in ways that undermined the Gospel in the first C section and the rich were using their riches in ways that undermined the Gospel in the second C section. But this was consistent with the Judaizer's theories of what pleased God. The Pharisees explicitly taught that if you were rich, God was obviously pleased with you. And if you kept their rules and regulations, God was obviously pleased with you. So the sections are indeed parallel. They highlight the false premises of what pleases God that the heretics were teaching.

In any case, both sections say that when the Gospel is rightly understood, the law is valuable (first C section) and when the Gospel is rightly understood and applied to riches, then those riches are valuable (second C section). But neither were blessings if they are used unlawfully or independently of the Gospel.

**D. The D sections - Keeping the faith mixed in with a doxology (1:12-17 & 6:13-16)**

The D sections deal with keeping the faith and are both followed by a beautiful doxological poem. Both Paul and Timothy stand before the other elders as examples of what it meant to keep the faith and to keep God-focused. Let me read both God-focused doxologies that stand in such opposition to the man-centered teaching of the apostates. Chapter 1:17 says,

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

The second D section (chapter 6:13-16) ends this way:

15b ...He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

**E. The E sections - Fight the good fight (1:18-2:7 & 6:3-12a)**

The issues become more critical the closer we get to the center of the chiasm. The E sections of the chiasm are a call to fight the good fight. Chapter 1:18 starts the first C section saying,

This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,  
And then he contrasts that good warfare with the shipwreck that some of the heretics have made of their lives.

And what is the way that we should wage this good warfare? Well, he says “by them” - by the inspired prophecies; by Scripture.

Chapter 2:1-7 adds another dimension to this spiritual warfare - prayer for kings and for others in the world of darkness.

But in the second E section in addition to once again saying, “Fight the good fight” (chapter 6:12), he adds that there must be the ability to engage in theological fighting - wars of words. Men should not be elders if they cannot wage battle verbally with heretics.

And Paul adds that these elders must be adept at waging war against their own flesh. He said that some of those elders hadn’t fought the good fight, but because of their greed had (as worded in verses 11-12)

pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.  
12 Fight the good fight of faith...

If we elders do not engage in spiritual warfare on all fronts (the world, the flesh, and the devil), we too can fall victim.

### ***F. F sections - members in authority and under authority (2:8-15 & 6:1-2a)***

But in the F sections Paul tackles some of the authority relationships that the heretics had undermined and sought to destroy. Apparently these heretics were advocating egalitarianism, anarchism, and throwing off of all authority. To this day this is a strategy of demons. Let me read that whole section beginning at verse 8. 2 Timothy 2:8.

1Tim. 2:8 I desire therefore that the men [that’s the word for males - that the males in contrast to females] pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; 9 in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, 10 but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. 11 Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. 12 And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. 15 Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

Since the false teachers were overthrowing authority structures in both

church and home, Paul addresses that same authority in both church and home. Apparently women were acting as pastors back then too - something Paul absolutely disapproves of. In fact, Paul says that the women were not even to speak or pray out loud in the gathered assembly. He prohibits women from teaching or exercising any kind of authority over men because both activities lead to the same destruction of role relationships. And he consistently applies that to leadership in prayer during the assembly.

He wants men and women to embrace their gender calling and not to wish they were something else. As Elizabeth Elliott worded the title of one of my wife's favorite books when she was growing up, *Let Me Be A Woman*. Women should say, "Let me be a woman." Elizabeth Elliott says that it is a woman's very womanhood that makes her able to do what no man can do. She should embrace her role. It makes her indispensable. It doesn't mean that there won't be some overlap of things both can do, but men and women should cherish what is unique to them. The moment she tries competing on the man's turf, the beauty of specialization and division of labor is lost. The glory of her womanhood is lost.

Let me comment on chapter 2:15 since many people have been puzzled by that verse. Basically what Paul is doing is that he has picked one example of a role relationship that is unique to a woman. He could have picked other examples, but he picks childbearing and says, "Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control." The part of salvation that this relates to is sanctification. When you embrace child-bearing, you are embracing obedience to God and sanctification. Child bearing is a godly activity - so long as the children (that's who the "they" refers to - so long as the children) continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control. Bearing children by itself is not enough - the children need to be raised in the fear and nurture of the Lord. We don't want to raise citizens of hell. We want to raise citizens of heaven. But honoring the authority structures and the gender distinctions and the differing role relationships was a big part of resisting the Great Apostasy in their day. Demons will do all they can to undermine true authority and true role relationships. The same demonic activities that resulted in the Great Apostasy are at work in America today. So that makes this book so relevant to the postmodern church of the 2020s.

In the second F section (chapter 6:1-2), Paul gives similar admonitions to the relationships between masters and indentured servants - bondservants. And Paul clearly upholds this authority relationship as well. But just as feminists slander Paul's views in the first F section, they slander Paul's views here as

well. They say that the word δοῦλοι really means “slaves,” and since no one believes in slavery any more, we shouldn’t have to believe in Paul’s statements about women. They rightly point out that the two are parallel, but they wrongly say that both should be jettisoned as not enlightened.

So let me respond to that. While it is true that δοῦλοι means “slave,” Biblical slaves were nothing like the American slaves or like pagan slaves. Most slaves in America were the result of kidnapping, which the law of God treated as a crime worthy of the death penalty. In contrast, the law of God provided for indentured servitude as a payment for debt, or crime, or in cases of war - for war reparations. It was a form of restitution. It was a limited kind of slavery and looked nothing like pagan slavery. That’s why some people will call them bondservants, or bondslaves, or indentured servants. But it was a part of God’s authority relationships built right into the law. Contrary to popular opinion, it has not passed away.

Of course, the Bible mandated that they be treated well. In fact, Galatians 4:1 points out that they need to be treated like family. It says, “Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all.” Well, if our young children do not differ at all from biblical slaves, then biblical slaves do not differ at all from our young children. That elevates the status of slaves and changes the definition of slave that Paul is talking about. That’s why the New King James prefers the translation bondservant. It’s totally different than what we tend to think of as slaves. They were paid in the sense that they were paying off a debt. But unlike pagan slaves, these slaves were part of the family. In fact, they were circumcised in the Old Testament and were baptized in the New Testament on the profession of faith of the father. All of Cornelius’ slaves were baptized along with his family. So were Lydia’s slaves. Slaves were to be treated as part of the family until their debt was paid. They could not be mistreated.

And I am giving this extended discourse because postmodern Christianity is constantly apologizing for the Bible and chopping big sections out of the Bible. Women pastors chop out everything Paul says about women by saying that Paul also spoke of slavery - and nobody believes in slavery, right? It’s a demonic attack on the Scripture. The law of God itself made this provision for indentured servitude and 1 Timothy 1:8 says, “we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully.” Just because early America did not use the law of slavery lawfully and perverted slavery in grossly unbiblical ways, does not mean that we can jettison the true Biblical doctrine of slavery or indentured servitude. As long as there are criminals who have to pay debts,

there will be slavery.

By the way, slavery is inevitable. America today has far more slaves than in any previous time in history - and these slaves live in the prisons of America. Those are slave camps. And the modern slavery is a twisted, demonic, and horrible perversion of slavery. There is nothing biblical or good about prisons; nothing. Just to illustrate - in modern America a person who burns down a building doesn't have to pay the victim. Instead, to add insult to injury, the victim has to pay taxes to house this person in prison for years. But make no mistake, that prisoner is a slave who has no choice of what he does during the day. Every minute of his day and night is dictated for him. He has no freedom. But his slavery is infinitely worse than Biblical slavery. It is more akin to the horrible slavery of the pagan world around Israel. And that's why God mandated that no runaway slave from foreigners could be returned to that foreigner. That's in the same law that made provisions for Israelite slavery. The law is not contradicting itself. It is not saying that Israelite slaves who ran away could not be returned to their masters. That is a perversion of the Scripture's teaching.

So the modern American slave is in a prison where he is disciplined by other evil men rather than being in a family where he can be disciplined by a good master. The modern prison-slave is released with no skills - unlike in the Bible where the Biblical slave was released after years of learning very useful skills. The modern prison-slave does not pay restitution to the victim he has robbed, whereas that was the whole point of the Biblical indentured servitude - to serve as a slave until the victim was paid off. The modern prison-slave is released from prison with no money - unlike the Biblical slave who was provided with enough money to start his own business. The modern prison slave has nothing but the clothes on his back when he gets out of prison and since no one wants to hire him, he ends up back in crime. The modern slavery of the penitentiary is vastly worse than any unfortunate slavery that the Bible required for criminals.

In any case, slaves in the Bible learned submission, patience, restitution, self-discipline, skills, saved up money, became future oriented, were disciplined out of their criminal ways (even if it took a beating), and once released from slavery after six years with some capital, they became productive citizens. The trajectory of Biblical slavery was toward freedom. It was a restorative punishment. It's a beautiful and beneficial and restorative form of criminal law. So don't apologize for the Old or the New Testament's references to slavery. It is nothing like American slavery of the past or American slavery of the present.

In any case, Paul insists in chapter 6:1 that when a bondsman dishonors his master, he is dishonoring God's name and blaspheming God's Word. Be careful of what you say about the Biblical doctrine of slavery or indentured servitude. If you support prisons rather than the Bible's form of restitution, you are blaspheming God's Word. Those are strong words, but given the context of the Great Apostasy, Paul and Timothy could not give an inch to the enemy. Nor can we today. If you throw out this doctrine, you concede the argument to the feminists that it is also OK to throw out everything Paul says about women being under authority. You can throw out Numbers 30.

Egalitarianism is rife in America. One of the most saddening things to happen in the last decade was to see Reconstructionist Radio going egalitarian. It is playing into the hands of the enemy. But any of us can fall into the errors that are being corrected in this book if we are not careful. This is a book that makes me fear and tremble and cling to God's grace and cling to God's Word. There but for the grace of God goes any of us.

### ***G. G sections - Elders in authority (3:1-7; 5:17-25)***

The G sections continue this discussion of authority, but do it in the context of elders honoring their office with good behavior and members honoring the office of elder. The closer we get to the heart of the book, the more critical the material becomes for resisting the Great Apostasy. And having good elders is one of those critical factors. It can't be forced, but it can certainly be prayed in. Let's read chapter 3:1-7.

1Tim. 3:1 This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; 3 not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; 4 one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence 5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); 6 not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

As Paul will show in the central section, some of the elders in Ephesus were not qualified to be elders or bishops. Let me read the second G section - chapter 5:17-25.

1Tim. 5:17 Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor [that word for honor is often translated as double salary], especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages." 19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. 20

Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear. So even though elders get double salary or more, they are also held to a higher standard and were publicly rebuked if they messed up at all. Verse 21:

1Tim. 5:21 I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality. 22 Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.

The ordination of officers is a serious matter and can involve those who ordain them in the sins of those errant elders. Again, we cannot easily put people into office. It's a serious matter to lay hands on someone. This is why when I was in the PCA I voted against so many elders being ordained. They were not qualified. It made people mad at me, but I believe I was being faithful to Christ. Verse 23:

1Tim. 5:23 No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.

Notice that it says a "little" wine - not lots of wine. Wine in moderation is good for your health according to both the Bible and the newest scientific studies. But it is always wine in moderation. Verse 24:

1Tim. 5:24 Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later. 25 Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.

Paul is explaining why some of these elders had appeared to be good in Acts 20, but why he had prophesied even back then that some of them would eventually fall away. Only God can see the heart, and presbyteries can err in their ordinations of men. But knowing that some men's sins are hidden will cause a presbytery to engage in more due diligence in their examinations. And I am very grateful for our presbytery's attempts to have solid examinations.

### ***H. H sections - The deacons office and those who help them (3:8-13 & 5:3-16)***

The two H sections deal with the deacon's office and those who assist the deacons.

By the way, I haven't mentioned this, but both elders and deacons are mandated to have wives and to have children and to have demonstrated that they are already managing their households well. Singles don't qualify. Newly married's don't qualify. Once again the word ἀνὴρ is used to make it crystal clear that women cannot hold the office. Both elders and deacons must be males, who are married, and who have children that are well

behaved.

But I do want to comment on the wives in the first section and the elderly women in the second H section because these women were critical to having well-rounded mercy ministries. The wives of deacons were very much involved in diaconal ministry. It would not do to have a male deacon visiting a widow or some other single woman in distress by himself. Heads would turn. There were women involved.

And since the wives of deacons are obvious, I want to comment on the elderly women who were paid (not welfare, but were paid) in the second H section (chapter 5:3-16). Verse 3 says, “Honor [that’s the same word for pay - honor] widows who are really widows.” Verse 9 says, “Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man.” What number? There is some kind of a roll of official servants that was made up of women. And I say servants because none of these widows was simply on a dole. They were expected to serve if they were being helped out financially. While the men led the diaconal ministries, the women served critical roles that the men simply could not serve. That is why chapter 5:3-16 lays down such stringent rules about what kind of women could be on the payroll and help the deacons minister to women. They had to have the same qualifications that the deacons’s wives did - plus a couple of others. If they weren’t the wives of the deacons, they had to have at least five qualifications: 1) they had to have good character, 2) they had to be widows, 3) they had to be at least 60 years of age, 4) they had to have been faithful to only one husband, 5) and they had to have had a long history of faithfully serving and engaging in hospitality and mercy ministries. Even the chiasmic structure shows that these women, though not having an office, were involved in deacon-type ministry under the authority of the male deacons.

### ***1. The I sections - instructions to an elder on how to engage faithfully as a pastor in God’s household (3:14-16 & 4:6-5:2)***

The I sections of the book give both positive and negative ministry responsibilities that Timothy and every elder have in the household of God. Though the Great Apostasy had made some of the house churches depart from the faith and much error had already been taught, Paul surprisingly gives a very upbeat description of the church as being the pillar and ground of the truth. God is still going to entrust the truth to that church. This is amazing. And there will never be a time when the church completely

abandons the truth. God has willed it to be this way. Beginning to read at verse 14:

1Tim. 3:14 These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; 15 but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

God has chosen to make the strength of His kingdom conquer the earth through the weakness of the church. They were going through the Great Apostasy, and yet Paul had still not abandoned the church because God would not abandon the church. He would cause the church to carry the Scriptures to the end of time.

And in the second I section, Paul calls Timothy to reject anything unscriptural in the slightest degree and to meditate on the Scriptures and to give himself entirely to them that his progress might be evident to all. There are other admonitions and praises and summaries of doctrine in those sections. But they are all colored by the battle that was placed before them in the heart of the book.

### ***J. The middle section - Warnings about the Great Apostasy (4:1-5)***

And I want to read the heart of the book one more time and highlight four things (and we will end with these). Chapter 4, beginning to read at verse 1.

1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; 5 for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

First, it is really foolish when Christians idealize the days of the apostles and want the church to go back to apostolic times. They have nostalgia for the good old days. Well, Paul will tell you that they weren't good old days; they were times of apostasy - the Great Apostasy. But they were also instructive because if the church could successfully get through the Great Apostasy, it can get through any lesser apostasy in the rest of history. That's what makes this book connected to Revelation 2 so encouraging. Don't fear the apostasy that you see all around us.

Second, people do depart from the faith. This is a warning. Just because we are Calvinists and believe in the perseverance of the saints does not mean we believe that people cannot apostatize. The perseverance of the saints is not

“once saved always saved - you’ve got a ticket to heaven and can live like the devil.” No. That is a perversion. Rather, the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints means that if you are truly regenerate, you will persevere, and if you don’t persevere, you were never regenerate in the first place.

There have been tares in the wheat field in all ages who look like good Christians, talk like good Christians, engage in pastoral ministry, yet have hearts that are not regenerate. This to me is astounding, and it stands as a warning to me. Never presume upon God’s grace. Cling to His grace. Cling to the cross. People do indeed depart from the faith. It proves that they never were true Christians in the first place, so 1 John 2:19 says this: “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.” So they were of us in the sense that they were part of the visible church. But they were not of us in the sense that they were never part of the invisible church.

And by the way, people have recently slandered Greg Bahnsen’s name by saying that he didn’t believe in the visible-invisible distinction in the church. Read his essay on baptism<sup>6</sup> and you will see that he clearly holds to this and other teachings that distinguish him from Auburn Avenue teaching.

Third, there is such a thing as doctrines of demons. And interestingly, those doctrines often don’t sound like doctrines of demons. They are so deceptively worded that they sound convincing to Christians. People will use Scripture and try to sound like they are evangelical, but it is demons who are motivating these doctrines to cause the church to deviate from its calling.

While he highlights a small handful of doctrines in these five verses, the rest of the book fills out the picture. The point is that what these elders were teaching was (perhaps unknown to them) from a source other than God. Demons had somehow used them. This book as a whole indicates that egalitarianism is a doctrine from the pit of hell. I don’t care how reformed or theonomic a person may claim to be, if he or she is a feminist, he or she has bought into a doctrine of demons. The modern Judaistic movement is a doctrine of demons. So is asceticism, Roman Catholic celibacy, mandated vegetarianism, dishonoring and failing to support the elderly, the BLM movements, and critical race theory. We must always be on guard against the doctrines of demons.

The fourth thing we see in this section is that when people teach lies long

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enough, their consciences become so seared that they no longer have feeling. They can no longer tell that they are out of accord with God's Word. They believe their own lies. This hardening of the conscience doesn't happen overnight, but when we ignore it long enough it becomes impossible for our consciences to be convicted any longer. It is a scary thing to have a seared conscience because anything is possible for you then.

I'll end with one of Paul's doxologies:

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Let's pray.

[^7] Wagner says, "Or take Timothy himself as another example. I believe I could make a case for describing Timothy as an apostle-evangelist or possibly an evangelist-apostle. Why do I say this? I have already given my reasons for concluding that Timothy was an apostle, a member of Paul's apostolic team. But I think he was also an evangelist, because Paul said to him, "Do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (2 Tim. 4:5). Presumably, Timothy's ministry was that of an evangelist, and I would assume he was recognized as having the office of evangelist as mentioned in the list from Ephesians 4:11 (emphasis mine): "apostles," "prophets," "evangelists," "pastors" and "teachers." The subject of hyphenated apostles is a relatively recent point of discussion among leaders of the New Apostolic Reformation, and some of us are still trying to get used to describing ourselves in these categories. For example, Bill Hamon sees himself as a prophet-apostle (not, by the way, an apostle-prophet). I would describe myself as a teacher-apostle. No one has ever confused me with a prophet, evangelist or pastor. I would think that John Kelly of the International Coalition of Apostles is an unhyphenated apostle. By this I do not mean that John does not prophesy or teach or evangelize or extend pastoral care, but I do mean that none of these would constitute an office on the level of the office of apostle that he has held for some time. It is also quite possible that a given apostle can be hyphenated as both vertical and horizontal. Lawrence Khong of Faith Community Baptist Church in Singapore, for example, serves as a vertical apostle in his own FCBC international apostolic network, but when he goes to Taiwan he ministers to churches across the board as a very influential horizontal apostle." C. Peter Wagner, *Apostles and Prophets: The Foundation of the Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2000), 52–53.