

Paul's Epistles to Individuals

Lesson 21 – 2 Timothy 3:10-12, 14-17

I. Timothy Followed Paul (vs. 10-12)

Paul now draws a contrast between those who are characterized by the ungodly qualities previously discussed and Timothy, who followed Paul's teaching and conduct (v. 10). The KJV here says, "*carefully followed my doctrine*". Neither translation carries the weight found in the original Greek wherein the word used is "*parekoloutheesás*", which literally means "to follow near, trace out, attend or conform to". Timothy not only knew Paul's teaching but he followed it completely.

A. *Paul's Teaching is From Christ*

We are to be reminded that Paul's doctrine is Christ's doctrine. In **1 Cor. 11:1**, Paul said, "*Be imitators of me, just as I am also of Christ*". He further stated in **Gal. 1:11-12** that what he taught he received in a revelation from Jesus Christ. Other relevant scriptures:

- **1 Corinthians 2:10-13,16** – Paul preached the mystery of Christ as revealed to him.
- **1 Corinthians 14:37** – Paul taught the commands of the Lord.
- **1 Thessalonians 2:13** – Paul taught the Word of God, not the word of men.
- **2 Peter 3:15,16** – The apostle Peter classified Paul's epistles as "Scripture." Peter here confirms Paul's claim to be an inspired author of God's word.
- The teachings of Paul came from the same source as did those of Jesus and of the other apostles. Therefore, they were equally as authoritative (**Ephesians 3:3-5; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; Romans 1:15-16; 15:15-19; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Acts 13:12; 16:32; 1 Cor. 11:23; 2 Corinthians 5:20; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 5:27**).

B. *Timothy Lived Accordingly*

- Manner of Life – Paul's life was dedicated to Christ and Timothy followed that example (**Gal. 2:20**).
- Purpose – Paul and Timothy knew the purpose of their life, to teach and benefit others in the cause of Christ (**Phili. 1:21-26**).
- Faith – Paul lived according to his faith and was therefore equipped to resist the influences of the world (**Eph. 6:16**).
- Longsuffering – Timothy had witnessed Paul's patience more than once and was instructed to continue using it in his work (**1 Tim. 4:2**).
- Charity – Here the word is "agape", the love that always does what is right (**1 Cor. 13**) and is the kind of love God has for mankind (**John 3:16**).
- Patience – In many ways synonymous with longsuffering, the idea is never surrendering to the desire to abandon an effort or principle. A component of love (**1 Cor. 13:4**), it is many times listed as a quality expected of Christians (**Rom. 2:4; 9:22; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 4:2; Heb. 6:12**).

C. *Persecutions (v. 11-12)*

In **2 Cor. 11:21-33**, Paul illustrates his commitment by enumerating his persecutions and trials. Timothy had been loyal to Paul though these trials and was called to suffer with him in the cause of Christ (**2 Tim. 1:8**). Paul had been abandoned by most (**2 Tim. 1:15**) in these hard times but he reiterates that Godly living will result in persecutions (v. 12) because the world hates those who live according to God (**John 15:19**) because of the absolute incompatibility (**James 4:4**).

II. The Scriptures are the Defense (vs. 14-17)

While those who will teach and live according to false doctrines will continue to get worse (v. 13), Timothy will continue in the truth of the gospel, being convinced of it and trusting its source (v. 14). Timothy knows the authority by which Paul preaches (see notes from 1A above). To be convinced of these things is to live accordingly, testing what is heard (**Acts 17:11**) and holding fast to the truth (**1 Thes. 5:21**).

A. Timothy Had Known Since His Youth (v. 15)

Since his childhood, Timothy had been taught by his mother and grandmother (**2 Tim. 1:5**) from the sacred writings. This refers to the Old Testament since the New Testament was not yet written in his youth. These writings were “able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”. These scriptures were described by Paul to the Galatians as a “schoolmaster” or “tutor to bring us to Christ” (**Gal. 3:24**). The OT prophecies, promises and types lead to the inescapable conclusion that Jesus is the fulfillment and obedience to His gospel is necessary for salvation (**Gal. 3:25-29**).

B. Scripture is Profitable (v. 16)

These verses are commonly quoted, and rightly so. Here we are reminded that “all” scripture is “inspired”. The “all” here is certainly not everything asserted by modern men to have been intended as a part of the Biblical record, but only to those actually recognized and utilized over time as being inspired. Some modern commentators suggest a number of unsubstantiated writings should have been included in the Bible but there is usually a motive afoot to discredit its validity. Timothy and Paul knew what “all” meant and we should too. To be “inspired” is to be “God-breathed”. The Greek is “theopneustos”. The idea is clearly to acknowledge God as the source. So we are not to pick and choose which scriptures to believe because they all are authoritative and from God (**Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Rev. 22:18-19**). These have been written and preserved so that we might believe (**Acts 20:30**). Therefore it is profitable for:

- Teaching – Everything that needs to be taught regarding God is found herein. No external sources are required and are prohibited (**1 Tim. 6:1-3**).
- Reproof – Jesus said “it is written” numerous times including his rebuke of the devil (**Matt. 4**) as well as the merchants in the Temple (**Luke 19:46**). Paul refuted Ananias using scripture (**Acts 23:5**) while also quoted OT scripture many times.
- Correction – In Titus, Paul describes the elder as being able to “exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict” (**Tit. 1:9**). Timothy’s very purpose for remaining in Ephesus was to use God’s word to instruct men not to teach strange doctrines (**1 Tim. 1:3**).
- Instruction in Righteousness – How to live a righteous life is a main theme of the Bible. Jesus taught much in the Sermon on the Mount (**Matt. 5, 6, and 7**) and Paul told Timothy to teach others to “do good and be rich in good works” (**1 Tim. 6:18**).

C. To Equip the Man of God (v. 17)

Here the word “perfect” does not mean to be sinless but instead means to be complete. The Bible is all that is required to equip a person to serve God and teach others. It is all-sufficient in the purpose for which it was written. If it is in the Bible, it is a good work. If it is not in the Bible, it is not. Therefore, the man of God is to cling to that truth and nothing else. All things done are to be done in the name (with the authority) of God (**Col. 3:17**). To claim and do otherwise is sin (**Matt. 7:21-23**).