



1 Timothy 1:1-7

We are starting a new sermon series this morning through 1 and 2 Timothy and I have titled the series, *Letters to a Shepherd*. Typically, these two books along with Titus and referred to as the Pastoral Epistles because Timothy and Titus, to whom Paul was writing, were functioning as pastors of churches in Ephesus and Crete. But “pastoral epistles” sounds a bit heavy, don’t you think? Of course an epistle is simply a letter, therefore, 1 and 2 Timothy would be letters to a pastor, but many of you are going to tune out for the next few months because you are not pastors and won’t see any relevance to your life.

THREE SPHERES OF SHEPHERDING



Therefore, I am not calling this series the Pastoral Epistles nor Letters to a Pastor but rather, Letters to a Shepherd for two primary reasons. First, a pastor is a shepherd. In 1 Peter, pastors are told to “shepherd the flock of God which is among you.” A shepherd leads the flock, feeds the flock and protects the flock. But did you know that you are also a shepherd?

But you say, “How can that be, I am certainly not a pastor or an elder?” Let me explain to you the three phases of shepherding. The first sphere of shepherding is yourself. Call it self-

leadership if you want, but your own spiritual growth is self-shepherding.

Some of you will be familiar with chapter three of 1 Timothy which is an extensive list of character qualities for an elder. Every year, our elder selection committee consults this list first before they start to look at potential elder candidates. These character traits are essential for an elder because if an elder cannot shepherd himself, how can he shepherd the church? All shepherding begins with yourself and we will see many, many applications to our lives in this series.

The second sphere of shepherding is your family. Remember, the role of a shepherd is to lead, feed and protect the flock and this is precisely the purpose of a family. Again, we see this requirement of elders in 1 Timothy. *He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?* (1 Tim. 3:4-5) The same is true of husbands, wives, moms and dads. If you cannot manage yourself well, you will not be able to shepherd your family effectively. Shepherding yourself is the training ground for shepherding your family and shepherding your family is the training ground for the third sphere.

The third sphere of shepherding is the church. This is especially the case for those who hold positions of leadership as a pastor or elder, but even this phase applies to everyone who has any involvement in a church beyond just showing up on Sunday mornings. Throughout this series we will see continual application to shepherding in all three spheres. Now, let's read the opening section of 1 Timothy.

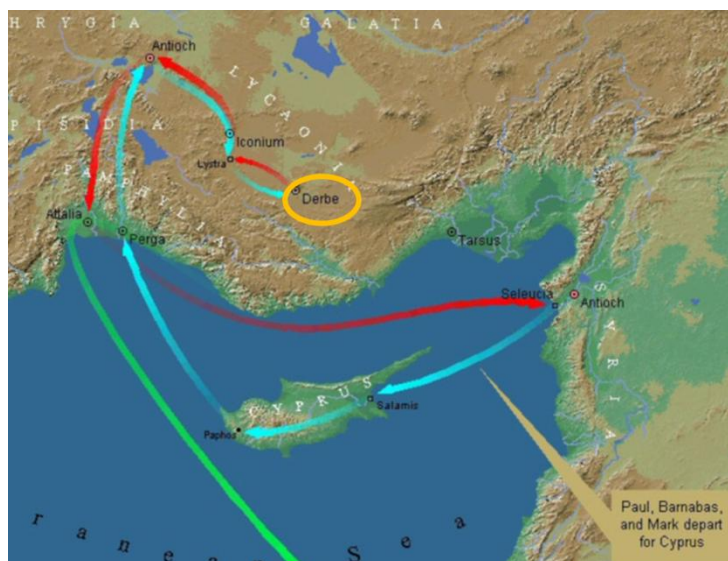
*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,
2 To Timothy, my true child in the faith:
Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.
3 As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, 4 nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith. 5 The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 6 Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, 7 desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.*

Paul wrote a total of thirteen letters which have become part of the New Testament and out of the thirteen, nine were written to churches and only four were addressed to individuals—and two of those four were to Timothy. We know quite a bit about the apostle Paul¹ and from studying through Acts we are a little familiar with Barnabas and Silas, but most of us know very little about Timothy. Everyone loves to hear a good testimony so let me describe Timothy's testimony—how he came to faith in Christ and how it changed his life.

Timothy's "testimony"

In verse two, Paul referred to Timothy² as *my true child in the faith*. In 1 Corinthians, Paul called Timothy *my beloved and faithful child in the Lord* (1 Co. 4:17). To see Timothy's testimony, we have to back to the book of Acts and Paul's first missionary journey.

Scripture	Date	Event
Acts 14	47-48	Paul preached gospel in the town where Timothy lived; Timothy's mother and grandmother were converted
Acts 16	49	Paul met Timothy on 2 nd missionary journey, invites him to come with him
Acts 28	60-62	Paul in prison in Rome, wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon
1 Timothy	63	Paul not in prison
Titus	64	Paul not in prison ³
2 Timothy	65	Paul in prison ⁴ in Rome and expects to die soon ⁵



On their first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas did not travel very far but they did take the gospel further than it had ever been. Timothy lived in the city of Lystra, Paul's last stop before making his way home.

Timothy was not converted by Paul's preaching in Lystra⁶, but Timothy's mother and grandmother did become believers—either right away or soon after. Timothy's father was "a Greek"⁷ and probably not a believer as Paul certainly would have mentioned this fact. Timothy was subsequently converted through the faith of his mother and grandmother. 2 Timothy

1:5—I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

If you were to read a description like this one in our modern day, you would assume that this process took several decades as the Christian faith was passed down from grandmother to mother to Timothy. But the whole thing only took one year. One year later Paul met Timothy and invited him on his church planting journey (Acts 16). Paul would have been about 50 years old.

Therefore, Timothy was probably a teenager when he first met Paul because he was still quite young when Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy. (1 Tim. 4.12—*Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.*) Timothy then, is like a NT Daniel. He was very young when he was called into ministry. Even as an almost brand new believer. There was something about Timothy that grabbed Paul's attention.

Last night I learned that Colin Kaepernick was drafted by the Chicago Cubs almost right of high school. We Packers fans are kind of wishing he would have taken that gig! But for every young boy who plays sports, this is their dream—to one day have a scout from a pro team come along, see us play and offer us a lucrative contract.

In the same way, Paul came along and “drafted” Timothy a church planting ministry.

There are two directions in which to apply this. First, are you the kind of person that someone might want to “draft” into a full time ministry? Are you seeking the Lord in such a way that your passion and character are things that others would like to have them join with? Second, do you have anyone in your life that would be considered a “Timothy”? are you mentoring anyone or helping them along in their spiritual journey?

	PAUL’S LETTERS	PEOPLE
1	Galatians (48)	<i>from</i> Paul (he did not know Timothy)
2	1 Thessalonians (50)	<i>from</i> Paul, Silas & Timothy
3	2 Thessalonians (50)	<i>from</i> Paul, Silas & Timothy
4	1 Corinthians (55)	<i>from</i> Paul & Sosthenes (Timothy)
5	2 Corinthians (56)	<i>from</i> Paul & Timothy
6	Romans (57)	<i>from</i> Paul (Timothy)
7	Ephesians (60-62)	<i>from</i> Paul (to Timothy?)
8	Philippians (60-62)	<i>from</i> Paul & Timothy
9	Colossians (60-62)	<i>from</i> Paul & Timothy
10	Philemon (60-62)	<i>from</i> Paul & Timothy
11	1 Timothy (63)	to Timothy
12	Titus (64)	<i>from</i> Paul
13	2 Timothy (65)	to Timothy

Timothy immediately began to accompany Paul and Silas on their second missionary journey. There are less than 30 references to Timothy in the NT but they tell us a lot about him. As you can see from this chart (above) of Paul’s thirteen letters, eight of them have Timothy’s name in the introduction and two more have his name in the body of the letter. Therefore, 10 of 13 of Paul’s letters mention Timothy and when the first one—Galatians—was written, Paul did not even know Timothy. But even more, there is great significance in Timothy’s name appearing in the introduction of these eight letters. Two of the letters are obviously addressed to Timothy, which I will mention in a moment, but the other six times he is mentioned, one or more of the following things were true.

- Timothy was with Paul, which meant he was working alongside and learning from Paul in all of these locations.
- Timothy probably served as the secretary or scribe in most cases
- Timothy may have co-authored 1 & 2 Thessalonians

Now let me explain the significance of Paul writing these two letters to Timothy. Did you catch where Timothy was residing when he received this letter? In verse three, Paul wrote, *As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus*. The importance of this fact cannot be overstated because Ephesus was such an important and strategic city. We know that Paul moved around constantly in his ministry and rarely stayed in one place for very long. When Paul was in Corinth, the Lord spoke to him and specifically told him to stay in Corinth for a while. Paul remained there teaching and training the church for a year and a half. This was longer by far than any other city—except one—Ephesus. Paul stayed a full three years in Ephesus. We are not told

why and there is nothing recorded from the Lord instructing Paul to stay that long, but the answer might lie in seven churches of Revelation.

Ephesus is listed in Revelation 1-2 along with six other churches and we know the importance of Jesus' words to these seven churches. What do you notice about the proximity of these six churches to Ephesus? Ephesus is centrally located to all six and most scholars firmly believe that



the church in Ephesus sent out church planters—other missionaries—to start these other six churches. Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to be their pastor and ultimately to be a sending church to plant more churches. Ephesus became a base for sending church planters in the same way that Antioch did when

they first sent Paul and Barnabus.⁸ Incidentally, this is the same strategy employed by most missionaries still to this day. Missionaries are sent out to preach the gospel and when converts are given, they immediately begin to gather them into local churches. Most of the missionaries our church supports operates the same way that Paul did two thousand years ago.

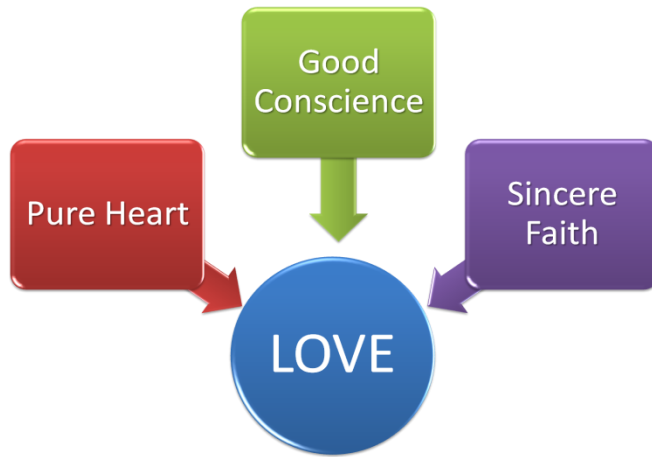
So that is Timothy's testimony. Even while Timothy was still a teenager, Paul saw that he was a man of high character and that he possessed a passion for the church and the spread of the gospel. In other words, Timothy was good at shepherding himself which made him suited to shepherd other people.

Timothy's presence in Ephesus was noteworthy as he would have been training new shepherds to plant churches in other cities but when Paul wrote this letter to him, Paul had other concerns as well. Timothy was urged to remain in Ephesus—*so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.*

We can pull several principles from this passage.

1. False teaching is dangerous even in small amounts. Only "certain people," not the whole church, were teaching this false doctrine⁹, yet Paul was very concerned about it. False teaching is like a cancer—even though it starts small, it can replicate itself and spread through the whole body, in this case, through the body of believers.
2. Elders have the authority to "command" false teaching¹⁰ to cease. This is the role, responsibility and right of an elder. A shepherd of a church cannot lead, feed and protect his flock if he cannot stop false teaching in its tracks.
3. Sound doctrine is a matter of stewardship. They should have been teaching "the stewardship¹¹ from God that is by faith." This phrase is a summary statement of the gospel, of all sound doctrine. Sound doctrine is a stewardship¹²—it is a responsibility to be cared for. In this sense, we care for and guard the sound doctrine.

But there are two meanings to this word stewardship. The word literally means the “house law” or the way the house or home is managed and run. We all have different rules about the way we run our own homes. For the most part, all of us probably run our homes in a similar way, but take something like watching TV. Some families don’t have a TV. This is the way they run their home. It’s their home stewardship. Other families have a TV but limit watching to certain programs and certain times of the day. For other families, the TV is a free for all that seems to be playing non-stop most of the day. Each family runs their home according to a set of standards. This is the stewardship of their home life. In the same way, sound doctrine set the rules and standards by which the house of God is run. There are certain things that you do or don’t do in a Christian community. So all of life then flows out of this stewardship of what God requires of us. But if you



don’t take care of sound doctrine, your flock is not protected, fed or led in the right direction. In this second meaning of stewardship, sound doctrine cares for and guards us in our Christian lives.

Paul summed up this stewardship of the Christian life in verse five. *The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.* All three of these help produce love and without them, love will be absent to some degree.

Can you see how all three overlap and work together? If your heart is impure, in what sense can you have a good conscience? If have a guilty conscience, in what sense do you possess a sincere faith? Each of these and all of these together requires that we be a whole person. We can’t act one way at church and around our Christian friends and then another way at school or somewhere else. Moreover, if my heart is impure, I cannot have genuine love for others. Even if I seem to be doing good deeds, the motives of my heart are saying something else. I am doing a good thing for the wrong motive which is therefore not an act of love. Kids and teens—how many times have you done this when your mom or dad asked you to do something? (big, long sigh...) Even if you proceed to do what they asked, the motives of your heart are all askew. Left alone to your own choice, you would probably choose not to listen.

You obtain a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith—not through a sinless life—but through a repentant life. 1 John 1:9 reads, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Every day I have an impurity of heart so every day I need repentance and confession. This is the breathing of the Christian life—breathe our sins and breathe in God’s forgiveness.

Finally, we learn about how the false teachers went astray. *Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law, without*

understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

In many ways, this is a frightening passage. What's scary to me is that these false teachers weren't always this way. They swerved away from these. The "these" he is referring to is a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith. This means that they were once practicing these things. Before they swerved away, they once were stewards of sound doctrine.

But there are two steps here. First, the false teachers "swerved" from the truth and then they "wandered away." Kellyn is in the driving part of her Driver's Ed. How many of you have driven with Mr. Ertl? That guy is amazing. He has trained at least two generations of Viroquans to drive. Obviously, when you drive down the road you need to keep from swerving all over the road. That's why there are lines on the road, right? Let's say that Mr. Ertl asked you to drive from the church parking lot to the Walmart parking lot. Swerving would be bad enough but wandering away would be like making a right turn onto Hwy 14 instead of a left turn.

No one ever wanders away from the truth overnight. Before a person ever wanders they start to swerve. Big compromises always start with little compromises. Big sins always start with little sins. You always swerve from the truth before you wander away from it. It's possible that some of you here this morning have started to swerve. You can't really tell from the outside, but inside you are starting to consider move away from the truth; to move away from the Lord. The certain people that Paul wrote about were all walking in the truth. If they had not been, they never could have wandered away.

I am primarily talking about self-shepherding but I think you will understand how your choices can affect your family and the church. We are not islands to ourselves but we are relationally linked to these other spheres. Therefore, if you know in your heart that you have begun to swerve from the truth, do something about it before you begin to wander away. Likewise, moms and dads, if you see your children doing what we might call swerving from the truth, catch them before they begin to wander. It is much easier to bring a person back to the lord before they have wandered away.

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January 13, 2013

¹ FYI—Paul always mentioned himself at the beginning of his letters. He called himself an apostle in 9 of his 13 letters (except 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Philippians and Philemon).

² All NT mentions of Timothy

[Acts 16:1](#) Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named [Timothy](#), the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek.

[Acts 16:3](#) Paul wanted [Timothy](#) to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

[Acts 17:14](#) Then the brothers immediately sent Paul off on his way to the sea, but Silas and [Timothy](#) remained there.

[Acts 17:15](#) Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens, and after receiving a command for Silas and [Timothy](#) to come to him as soon as possible, they departed.

[Acts 18:5](#) When Silas and [Timothy](#) arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus.

[Acts 19:22](#) And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, [Timothy](#) and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

[Acts 20:4](#) Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and [Timothy](#); and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus.

[Rom 16:21](#) [Timothy](#), my fellow worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

[1 Cor 4:17](#) That is why I sent you [Timothy](#), my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.

[1 Cor 16:10](#) When [Timothy](#) comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am.

[2 Cor 1:1](#) **Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and [Timothy](#) our brother,** To the church of God that is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia:

[2 Cor 1:19](#) For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and [Timothy](#) and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes.

[Phil 1:1](#) **Paul and [Timothy](#),** servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

[Phil 2:19](#) I hope in the Lord Jesus to send [Timothy](#) to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you.

[Phil 2:22](#) But you know [Timothy's](#) proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.

[Col 1:1](#) **Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and [Timothy](#) our brother,**

[1 Thess 1:1](#) **Paul, Silvanus, and [Timothy](#),** To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

[1 Thess 3:2](#) and we sent [Timothy](#), our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith,

[1 Thess 3:6](#) But now that [Timothy](#) has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you—

[2 Thess 1:1](#) **Paul, Silvanus, and [Timothy](#),** To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

[Philem 1](#) **Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and [Timothy](#)** our brother, To Philemon our beloved fellow worker

[Heb 13:23](#) You should know that our brother [Timothy](#) has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon.

³ Titus 3:12—*do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.*

⁴ 2 Tim. 2:9—*for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal.* Furthermore, it's a different winter than the one mentioned in Titus, probably one year later. 2 Tim. 4:21—*Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers.*

⁵ 2 Tim. 4:6—*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.*

⁶ Acts 14:20-21—*But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,*

⁷ Acts 16:3—*Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.*

⁸ This means that Paul had the “authority” to urge Timothy to minister in a specific location. So much for personal autonomy! ☺

⁹ a different doctrine. ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν (heterodidaskalein) = “to teach any different doctrine”

¹⁰ They were not merely teaching these things—they were “devoted” to them. They held them with passion, devotion and confidence (see v. 7).

¹¹ This stewardship is “by faith” as opposed to “desiring to be teachers of the law” (v. 7).

¹² οἰκονομίαν (oikonomian) oikos = house; nomos = law; i.e. the law of the house