

# OUR FAITH

## 1 & 2 TIMOTHY, TITUS

KENNETH SCHENCK



Indianapolis, Indiana

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# INTRODUCTION

The Pastoral Epistles in Paul's writings are 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. Timothy and Titus were pastors or shepherds of God's flock. They were also Paul's coworkers, apprentices in ministry, and children in the faith. Each brief letter is a last will and testament from the recipient's father in the faith.

Because they were written to pastors in ancient congregations, these letters are about how to pastor an ancient congregation. There are criteria for leadership in the church and instructions on the orderly administration of the family. In many respects, the early congregation was a kind of extended family, where people called each other brother and sister.

If order in the church family is one key concern of the Pastoral Letters, another is to protect the church from false teaching. The charismatic nature of the early church made it somewhat easy for false teaching to find its way into the churches. It soon became

important to establish boundaries for what teaching was truly of the Spirit and what was not.

Ephesians spoke of the foundation of the church being the apostles and prophets, with Jesus as the cornerstone (Eph. 2:20). But by the time the Pastoral Letters were written, simply to say that the church was founded on Jesus no longer fended off false teaching, because the church had many different “prophetic” interpretations of Jesus. The Pastoral Epistles spoke of Paul’s “deposit” of teaching as providing basic boundaries for good teaching.

Outside evangelical circles, most scholars believe the situation I’ve described best fits a period after Paul’s death. Most non-evangelical scholars think the Pastoral Epistles were written to speak Paul’s voice to a situation several decades after Paul had passed from the scene. Writing in the name of someone from the past was a known convention of the time, and deception was not necessarily involved.

However, most evangelical scholars maintain Paul’s literal (rather than figurative) authorship of the Pastoral Epistles. Accordingly, they see these issues arising much earlier in the first century, in the mid-60s. They usually see Paul writing the Pastoral Letters during a fourth missionary journey that took place after Paul’s appearance before Nero at the end of Acts.

This book presents six weeks of Bible studies, three covering 1 Timothy, two covering 2 Timothy, and one covering Titus. Each week of this book follows a particular theme relating to more than a chapter in one of these letters. Within each week, there are five days of reflection on the text, looking at a few verses each day. The aim of this book is to experience life transformation by studying the words of God revealed to the audiences of the Pastoral Epistles. The goal is to hear God speak to you through Scripture and then live faithfully to his Word through the power of the Holy Spirit.

WEEK 1

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## SOUND TEACHING

1 Timothy 1:1–2:15

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“Sound teaching agrees with the glorious gospel of the blessed God  
that has been trusted to me.”

— 1 TIMOTHY 1:11 CEB

# DAY 1

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## GREETING TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 1:1-3

### INTRODUCTION

As all of Paul's letters, 1 Timothy begins with a prescript or greeting, in which the sender (Paul) sent his greetings to the recipient (Timothy). He also typically wished grace and peace to the recipients, with the addition of mercy in this case.

### ENGAGE

Although 1 Timothy 1:1–2 follows Paul's typical prescript style, some features are unique. For example, this was the only time Paul identified himself in his greeting as an apostle by God's command. Certainly Paul made it clear elsewhere that he hardly had a choice but to preach the gospel (see 1 Cor. 9:16). First Timothy uniquely calls God our *Savior*, a word Paul did not use frequently outside the

Pastoral Letters and never in reference to God. The word was used more often by Luke and probably connected with the Roman way of talking about certain emperors, like Augustus, being saviors of the world. Paul, instead, identified Jesus as our hope.

## EXAMINE

In 1 Timothy 1:3, Paul indicated that he had left Timothy at Ephesus and moved on for Macedonia. He did not say whether he was still there. The most popular evangelical reconstruction of Paul's ministry sees Paul leaving Timothy at Ephesus on a fourth missionary journey. In this scenario, Paul was released just after the end of Acts and went on perhaps to minister in Spain as planned (see Rom. 15:24). Then perhaps he returned to visit Colossae (Philem. 22) and Philippi (Phil. 2:24). However, many Christians throughout the centuries have also wondered if Paul died just after Acts ends. If so, then we must either date 1 Timothy to the time of Acts 20:1, or consider this the setting pictured by a later, anonymous author.



## EXPLORE

Paul called Timothy his true child in the faith. Timothy was born to new life as a result of Paul’s ministry, and Paul had “raised” him like a parent might raise a child. He disciplined him and taught him what it meant to be a mature Christian, and he trained Timothy to be a minister of the gospel. Do you have any children in the faith? Some have a tendency to think of such children narrowly, as if only the act of birthing matters. With children in the faith, there is a time of nurturing (often years) before birth and there is a time of maturing thereafter. Do you have any “young children” whom you are nurturing toward maturity?

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“Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach.  
Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!”

— 1 CORINTHIANS 9:16

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## PRAYER

Father, I am your child and I ask you to make me a good parent of others in the faith, both before and after their births.