

OVERVIEW: Book of 1 Timothy (NIV based)

ANALYSIS:

-- This is a general analysis of how Paul dealt with church problems in 1 Timothy.

The problem situation:

-- An examination of background information on 1 Timothy reveals that Timothy had replaced Paul in the ministry of establishing, directing, organizing, and supervising the churches in the geographical area around Ephesus (Hiebert p.10). The approaching end of the apostolic period, in which the apostles handled church matters, along with the increasing number of local churches created a need for authoritative instructions on church order, creed, and discipline (Scofield p.1259; Unger p.1288). Timothy (and other future church leaders) needed explicit authorization to exercise authority and guidance concerning public worship, selection of church officers, and overseeing the spiritual affairs of churches (Hiebert p.12). Of particular and repeated concern and urgency throughout the Book of 1 Timothy is the teaching of false doctrines that was occurring within the church.

Summary of contents:

-- Paul's first letter to Timothy is mainly composed of instructions and guidelines pertaining to church order and affairs (ex. v.2:9). A striking feature within this book is the numerous direct orders that are given to pastor Timothy pertaining to taking assertive actions and even issuing commands, especially in regard to directly confronting and immediately stopping the teaching of false doctrines within the church. Paul lays out qualifications for church officers (ex. vv.3:1-12) and describes Biblical conduct (ex. vv.4:6-8), work (ex. v.5:3), and warnings (ex. v.4:16) which are applicable to a good minister. He touches on the role of women in churches (ex. vv.2:9-15) and gives advice (ex. v.5:1) as well as strong exhortation (ex. v.5:21). Paul states his authority (ex. v.2:7) and expounds some doctrine (ex. v.2:5) when appropriate.

Paul's method of dealing with church problems:

-- Upon analysis of Paul's methods of problem correction, there becomes obvious many aspects which are common to all of his letters: exhorting, reminding, explaining, instructing, advising, teaching doctrine, warning, encouraging, expressing concern and love, and establishing authority. Paul humbly displays his own attitudes and behavior as an example for believers to follow, but directly exposes lies / falsehoods / sin while counter-punching with God's truth. Paul does not sidestep or gloss-over church problems, nor does he minimize their destructive potential. He courageously confronts them head-on and rebukes (when necessary) those who are causing the problems. But, the basic foundation to all of Paul's correction aspects is his use of focusing on God's truth, His Word, the Holy Spirit, and the person of Jesus Christ. This is the source of power behind Paul's writings and ministry, and the accomplishments through Paul of correcting church problems.

-- When all of these aspects are pieced together, they become a general model or guide for the church and its leaders to follow in order to keep themselves "without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Timothy 6:14).

Works Cited:

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Unger, Merrill F. *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1988.

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File name: 1Timothy-BookOverview.____ (.htm, .doc, .pdf)

Translation used: NIV, quoted or referred to in various places within this document

Source: www.BelieverAssist.com

Updated: January 29, 2018