

1Timothy, Chapter One, Lesson Four

CONSCIENTIOUS EFFORT 1Timothy 1:18-20

STIMULATE

** With which attitude did Paul open our passage from last week? What attitude should accompany our daily walk with the Lord when we consider all that He has accomplished on our behalf?

Paul displayed his “attitude of gratitude” and so should we in everything we do; out of our loving, thankful hearts toward the Lord.

** How bad off was Paul before he was saved?

He was a “**blasphemer, persecutor and violent aggressor**” against Jesus Christ and any who believed on His name for salvation.

** Who was “**Christ’s Example**” in that study which showed us the openness of the gospel in its ability to save sinners?

The apostle Paul himself, in his murderous, sinful lifestyle. He could be saved, so anyone can be! We need to inform the lost around us that no matter what they have done, or how badly they might feel about themselves; if they will repent and call out to Christ for forgiveness, they too can be saved.

MOTIVATE

** We know that our gracious Lord Jesus Christ has called us to an abundant life of love, peace, joy, and communion with Him. The typical pattern of evangelism today will always stress those marvelous truths. But there is another side to the Christian life, which does not find its way into the gospel message being disseminated by the church today. The Christian life is also a warfare!

Christians enter a lifelong fight against the evil world system, Satan, and their own sinful human flesh. For us to be victorious in the midst of a corrupt world system, we are going to have to employ a “**Conscientious Effort**” everyday that we strive to live for Christ. It is to that same effort that Paul is going to call a young man named Timothy in our passage for today. Let’s read it together.

Read Passage (V.18-20)

Opening Prayer

Conscientious Effort

INVESTIGATE

V.18 ** Before we get into our passage, we need to establish the back drop of Satan’s attack upon the church; which is the body of Christ. Christians are constantly under attack, but from where does it come? What does it look like?

The answer comes in five forms:

1) Satan attacks the church by blinding the minds of unbelievers to the gospel, thereby keeping them away from the truth of God's Word.

cf. 2Corinthians 4:3-4

2) Satan attempts to devastate those who are already saved by trying to destroy their faith and trust in God, which would render them ineffective for the battle.

cf. Luke 22:31-32 and 1Peter 5:8

3) Satan attacks the church by attacking marriage and the family. His design is to divide and conquer, to pit husband against wife, children against parents. By attacking marriage and family, Satan weakens the overall testimony of the church.

cf. 1Corinthians 7:5, Colossians 3:19, Titus 2:3-5, Romans 1:28-30 and 2Timothy 3:2

4) Satan attacks the church through her leaders. If the leaders of the church are not above reproach, if they do not live out a "**Conscientious Effort**" each day they serve the Lord, they will "fall into reproach and the snare of the devil"(1Timothy 3:7).

When the shepherd is destroyed, the flock will scatter. cf. Matthew 26:31 (Zechariah 13:7)

5) Satan attacks the church through false religious systems. Liberal Christianity, the cults, world religions, and humanism are all constant forms of attack upon God's precious truth. cf. Acts 20:28-30 and Titus 1:10-11

** Understanding some of the warfare and what Satan's attack will look like, Paul issues a three-fold command to his son in the faith at the end of verse 18 and on into verse 19. What are the three components to Paul's command?

"...fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience..."

** We will look in detail at each component of Paul's command, but first; what does Paul do with his command back at the beginning of verse 18?

He entrusts it to Timothy. *Paratithemi* refers to committing something of value to another.

cf. 1Timothy 6:20 and 2Timothy 1:14

** What two reasons does Paul have for trusting Timothy with so serious a command?

First - Timothy was Paul's "son" in the faith. Paul knew his character and commitment to the word of God. cf. 1Timothy 1:2, 2Timothy 3:14-15, Philippians 2:22

Second - Paul knew what God had said about Timothy through "prophetic utterance". The apostles gave the church the doctrine of God (Acts 2:42), while the prophets within the church spoke of more practical matters at the divine direction of God Himself (Acts 21:10-11). cf. 1Timothy 4:14

** So let's look closer at Paul's command, what was the first thing he wanted Timothy to do?

"...fight the good fight..." Good is from *kalos*, meaning intrinsically good, noble, excellent, or virtuous. As Timothy took his stand for God's truth, he was to do so while maintaining spiritual integrity in his own heart. cf. 1Timothy 4:16, 6:12, Jude 1:3

** How does the first part of Paul's command to Timothy serve as a wake-up call for this young servant of Christ?

Timothy was placed there in Ephesus to “instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines”. His life was about to become a battlefield! Enemies of the cross and the very Word of God would rise up to try and defeat this godly young man, but he must make a “**Conscientious Effort**” in representing and defending the truth. cf. 1Timothy 4:12, Ephesians 6:12

V.19 ** What was the second part of Paul’s command?

“...keeping faith...” This faith is a reference to the Christian faith, the gospel, the Word of God. Keeping the faith means holding fast to that revealed truth. Timothy was to guard and proclaim God’s gospel of saving faith. cf. 1Timothy 4:13, 2 Timothy 4:1-2

** What else was Timothy to guard according to Paul’s command?

“...and a good conscience...” Make no mistake about it, a good conscience is the result of a pure life. Like his spiritual mentor, Timothy was to maintain a blameless conscience. cf. Acts 23:1, 24:16

** Did that mean that Paul was sinless, or that he was calling Timothy to be sinless?

No - that would be impossible! cf. 1John 1:8

** So, if we are all sinners, how do we “maintain” a clear or good conscience?

1) Strive to live obediently to what we know, while being completely dependent upon God’s grace and not our own ability. cf. 2Corinthians 1:12

2) Respond to the Holy Spirit’s conviction when we miss the mark of God’s holiness, because we have listened to our sinful flesh. cf. John 16:7-8, James 1:14, Romans 7:21

3) Repent and ask God for forgiveness, thanking Him for the clean heart that only He can create. cf. 1John 1:9, Psalm 51:10

** According to Paul, was everyone willing to accept this command as wise counsel from God through the apostle?

No - some had “rejected” it, to their own demise! While Paul was calling Timothy and other believers to making a “**Conscientious Effort**” in their walk with the Lord and battle for the truth, “some” chose to reject that calling.

** What impact did rejecting Godly counsel have upon their souls?

They had “...suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.” The faith they had proclaimed with their mouths did not stand the test of living for the truth. Wanting to be “teachers of the Law”, they developed lifestyles which denied the Master and caused their hope for salvation to be dashed upon the rocks of unbelief. cf. 2Peter 2:1-3, 2Timothy 3:5

** Does suffering shipwreck equal losing your salvation?

No - We are eternally secure in Christ. We can be disqualified from service, but we never lose the “eternal” life which Christ has purchased for us upon the cross of Calvary. cf. 1Corinthians 3:10-15, 1Corinthians 9:24-27, Colossians 3:3-4, 1John 5:11-12

V.20 ** Paul said that “some” have rejected the call to making a “**Conscientious Effort**” in our defense of the truth, he did not say that “many” have rejected it. Do we know any of these individuals by name?

Yes - “Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander...” These two may have been more than samples from the rejecting group, they may have been leaders within the group which rejected Paul’s teaching. cf. 2Timothy 2:16-17 (Hymenaeus mentioned again with Philetus)

** From the perspective of Paul’s day and the writing of this letter, would there ever come a time when “many” would reject the truth and turn their ears and hearts over to false teachers?

Absolutely, Paul warns Timothy in his second letter that the day will come when it is normal for people to not want to hear the truth. cf. 2Timothy 4:3-4

Jesus also predicted it! All see - Matthew 24:3-14

Now back in verse 20 of our passage:

** How did Paul deal with these two false teachers there in Ephesus, in his “**Conscientious Effort**” to defend the truth and protect God’s children from doctrinal error?

He delivered them both “over to Satan”. Paul removed these men from the fellowship of the saints. He removed them from the protection and insulation of God’s people and put them into Satan’s grasp so that their sinful hearts might experience the by-product of their actions. cf. 1Corinthians 5:9-13

** What did Paul hope these men might learn?

“...that they might be taught not to blaspheme.” Literally, to not speak against God. The word taught translates *paideuo* which refers to training through physical punishment. The physical consequences of their sin were to teach them to not blaspheme. Paul hoped for their repentance and return to the flock. cf. Matthew 18:15, Galatians 6:1

EXTRICATE

** What were the five forms of Satan’s attack upon the church, the body of Christ?

- 1) Satan attacks the church by blinding the minds of unbelievers to the gospel.
- 2) Satan attempts to devastate those who are already saved by trying to destroy their faith and trust in God.
- 3) Satan attacks the church by attacking marriage and the family.
- 4) Satan attacks the church through her leaders.
- 5) Satan attacks the church through false religious systems.

DELINEATE

** What were the three components of Paul’s command to Timothy which are designed to prepare us for making a “**Conscientious Effort**” in representing and defending the truth?

“...**fight the good fight**...” It is warfare!

“...**keeping faith**...” Guarding the truth!

“...**and a good conscience**...” Living in obedience!

EVALUATE

** Timothy had a huge job before him and history vindicates this man of god. Legend has it that Timothy continued to minister to the congregation in Ephesus and was martyred under the Roman emperor Domitian (81-96) or possibly Nerva (96-98) (Unger's Bible Dictionary, 1964, p. 1100). How about us, will history report that we made a “**Conscientious Effort**” to live in obedience to God’s truth and to defend it against the attack of false teachers?

Hopefully we are taking this seriously. We need to correct error and faithfully represent the truth of the gospel to all that the Lord brings across our path.

ACTIVATE

** Would you take a moment now and in the silence of your own heart, ask the Lord to prepare you for making a “**Conscientious Effort**” for the sake of His glory.

Closing prayer