An Overview Of The Book Of 1 Timothy

The Historical Background To The First Letter To Timothy:

After Paul was acquitted and released from his first Roman imprisonment in April A.D. 62, Paul made his first post-imprisonment missionary journey back to the East. During that journey Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to oversee the church there as Paul's representative.

The Writer Of The First Letter To Timothy:

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by virtue of the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope," 1 Timothy 1:1

The Recipient Of The First Letter To Timothy:

"To Timothy *my* true son in the faith," 1 Timothy 1:2.

Timothy was the son of a Jewish mother, who had become a Christian believer, and of a Greek father. Timothy's home was in Lystra in the Roman province of Galatia in what is now Turkey (see Acts 16:1). He was well spoken of by the Christians in Lystra and the neighboring city of Iconium (see Acts 16:2). When Paul revisited the church in Lystra on his second missionary journey, he wanted this young man of sincere faith to accompany him on his mission travels as his co-worker (see Acts 16:3). Paul circumcised Timothy as a matter of Christian liberty to avoid offending the Jews in that area where they would be doing mission work, for the Jews there knew Timothy's father was a Greek.

In his letters Paul wrote of Timothy with love and respect. He called him his son whom he loved and who was faithful in the Lord (see 1 Corinthians 4:17). Paul said Timothy had a genuine spirit like his own He said Timothy was a co-worker who was concerned about the welfare of the Christians and their churches, who sought the interests of Christ Jesus, and who was of proven worth in furthering the gospel like a child serving his father (see Philippians 2:19-22). Paul called Timothy his true son in the faith (see 1 Timothy 1:2). In instructing Timothy for his pastoral ministry Paul addressed him as "my son" (see 1 Timothy 1:18).

Timothy became a close associate of Paul. He was with Paul during much of Paul's second and third missionary journey's. Six of Paul's letters bear Timothy's name with Paul's in the opening greeting--2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon.

Timothy joined Paul on Paul's second missionary journey and traveled with him through the cities in which Paul had established congregations on his first missionary journey. Paul's purpose in revisiting those churches was to deliver the decrees of the apostolic council in Jerusalem that assured the Jewish and Gentile Christians that they were saved by the grace of Jesus and faith alone without following the laws of Moses (see Acts 16:1-5). Timothy then traveled with Paul through Asia to Troas, where Paul was given a vision of a man in Macedonia who called him to cross over the Aegean Sea to do mission work there in Europe. From Troas Timothy traveled with Paul, Silas, and Luke to Macedonia and the city of Philippi. There he assisted Paul and the others in establishing the church of the Philippians. Either Timothy remained with Luke in Philippi for a short time, or he journeyed with Paul and Silas over the Egnatian Way to Thessalonica. In any case, after Paul left Thessalonica and went to Berea, when Paul pressed on from Berea to Athens Timothy was left with Silas to continue the ministry in Berea (see Acts 17:14). Following Paul's instructions to rejoin him (see Acts 17:5), Timothy did join Paul in Corinth (see Acts 18:1, 5). There he assisted Paul in the gospel ministry to establish the church of Corinth. From Corinth Paul sent Timothy to Thessalonica as his personal agent to strengthen and encourage the Thessalonian Christians who were being severely persecuted (see 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5). Afterwards Timothy returned to Corinth to report the good news of the Thessalonians' faith and love (see 1 Thessalonians 3:6). At the conclusion of Paul's second missionary journey it seems likely that Timothy might have gone with Paul who returned to the church of Antioch in Syria to report on his mission efforts.

Timothy was then with Paul on his third missionary journey, most of which was spent in the city of Ephesus on the west coast of Asia Minor. This is clear from Acts 19:22. When trouble arose in the church of Corinth, Paul sent Timothy from Ephesus to Corinth as his agent to address the problems there (see 1 Corinthians 4:17). Near the end of the third mission journey Paul again sent Timothy as his agent from Ephesus back to the churches in Macedonia--Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea--before Paul himself returned to those churches and then proceeded to Corinth where he spent three months (see Acts 20:1,2). It

is thought that from Corinth Paul wrote his letter to the Romans. Timothy was with Paul when Paul wrote his letter to the Romans. This is certain because Paul included in that letter a greeting from Timothy (see Romans 16:21).

At the end of Paul's third missionary journey Timothy accompanied Paul and others when they carried the collection from the Gentile churches to the church in Jerusalem (see Acts 20:3,4). It would appear, then, that Timothy was there in Jerusalem when Paul was taken into Roman custody. Timothy was also with Paul during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome and when Paul wrote from there his prison epistles to the Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, and to Philemon. After Paul was released from his imprisonment in Rome, Paul left Timothy in charge of the church of Ephesus (see 1 Timothy 1:3). Paul wrote his First Letter to Timothy in the fall of A.D. 63 from Philippi to Timothy who was in Ephesus.

Paul was martyred in Rome in A.D. 68. In his Second Letter to Timothy shortly before his martyrdom Paul asked Timothy to come to him in Rome, for he longed to see Timothy once more (see 2 Timothy 1:4; 4:9, 21).

The Scriptures tell us nothing more about Timothy and his ministerial activities. The only bit of information given about Timothy is in Hebrews 13:23. The writer stated Timothy had been released. Where, when, or why Timothy was imprisoned is not stated. In any case, the writer of the Book of Hebrews was waiting for Timothy to join him, so together they could visit the Jewish Christians to whom he had written.

Date Of The First Letter To Timothy:

The fall of A.D. 63.

Where The First Letter To Timothy Was Written:

In Macedonia, likely in Philippi

Purpose Of The First Letter To Timothy:

1. To instruct Timothy to oppose the false doctrines that Paul had personally urged him to oppose while they were together in Ephesus (see 1 Timothy 1:3).

2. To give Timothy the instructions needed to fight the good fight of faith (see 1 Timothy 1:18, 19).

3. To teach Timothy how how the pastoral ministry should be conducted (see 1 Timothy 3:14-6:19).

Theme:

Fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 1:18, 19; 6:12).

1 Timothy

Part 1: Greeting 1 Timothy 1:1,2

1 ¶ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by virtue of the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope;
¶ 2 To Timothy *my* true son in the faith:
¶ Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Part 2: Timothy, Oppose the False Teachers in Ephesus
1 Timothy 1:3-11

¶ 3 I urged you,[1] when I proceeded into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus, in order that you may command
certain men not to teach different things,
4 nor pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which cause useless speculations rather than an
administration for God[2], which is by faith.
5 Now the goal of our[3] instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a faith without
hypocrisy,
6 which things some men departed from and turned away to empty talk,
7 desiring to be teachers of the law, although they do not understand either what they are saying or about
the things they are asserting confidently.
¶ 8 Now we know that the law is good if someone uses it lawfully,
9 knowing this, that *the* law is not laid down for a righteous person but for lawless and undisciplined
persons, for godless and sinful *persons*, for unholy and worldly *persons*, for those who kill their fathers and
mothers, for murders,
10 fornicators, homosexuals, slave traders, liars, perjurers, and whatever else[4] is opposed to sound doctrine,
11 according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I myself have been entrusted.

Part 3: Timothy, Fight the Good Fight 1 Timothy 1:12-20

A. Paul Thanks God for His Grace and Mercy 1 Timothy 1:12-14

¶ 12 I give thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord who strengthened me, because he considered me faithful, when
he appointed me into his service,
13 even though I was formerly a blasphemer and persecutor and violent *man*. But I was shown mercy,
because I acted in unbelief while being ignorant.
14 And the grace of our Lord was present in great abundance with faith and love, which are in Christ Jesus.

B. Paul Declares the Trustworthy Gospel that Deserves Full Acceptance 1 Timothy 1:15-17

15 This[5] statement is trustworthy and worthy of full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save
sinners; of whom I myself am foremost.
16 But I was shown mercy for this reason, that Christ Jesus may demonstrate in me as the foremost all his[6]
patience, as an example for those who are going to place faith upon him for eternal life.
17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

C. Paul Urges Timothy to Fight the Good Fight 1 Timothy 1:18-20

¶ 18 I am committing this charge to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the previous prophecies to
you, that by them you may fight the good fight,
19 while holding fast faith and a good conscience, which some by pushing *them* aside shipwrecked their
faith,[7]
20 among[8] whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, in order that they
may be taught not to blaspheme.

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[1] Lit. just as I urged you
[2] Lit. of God
[3] Lit. the
[4] Lit. if anything other
[5] Lit. the
[6] Lit. the
[7] Lit. suffered shipwreck with respect to the faith
[8] Lit. of whom

Part 4: Instructions for the Congregation's Worship Life
1 Timothy 2:1-3:16

A. Instructions on Praying 1 Timothy 2:1-7

2 ¶ I urge, then, first of all, that entreaties, prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings keep being made in behalf of all people,
2 in behalf of kings and all who are in positions of authority, in order that we may live a tranquil and quiet everyday life in all godliness and holiness.
3 This is good and pleasing in the sight of God our Savior,
4 who wants all people to be saved and to come to a correct knowledge of the truth.
5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and human beings – *the* man Christ Jesus,
6 who gave himself as a ransom in behalf of all *people*, the testimony *given* at its own proper time,
7 for which I myself was appointed a preacher and an apostle – I am telling the truth, I am not lying – a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

B. Instructions for the Men and Women in the Congregation 1 Timothy 2:8-15

¶ 8 Therefore I intend the men to do the praying in every place, lifting up holy hands without anger and inner questioning.
¶ 9 Likewise, *I intend* women to be adorning themselves in respectable clothing with modesty and decency, not in braided hair and gold or pearls or expensive clothing,
10 rather, what is fitting for women professing reverence for God – *adorning themselves* by means of good works.
11 Let a woman learn in silence in all submission.
12 And I do not permit a woman to be teaching, or to be exercising authority over, a man, but rather to be in silence.
13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve;
14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman, by being utterly deceived, has come *to be* in transgression.
15 But women[9] will be saved through the bearing of children, if they continue in faith and love and holiness with decency.

C. Required Qualifications for Pastors and Overseers of the Congregation 1 Timothy 3:1-7

3 ¶ This[10] statement is trustworthy: If a man aspires to the position of overseer, he desires a praiseworthy occupation.
2 Therefore the overseer must be beyond reproach, a husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,
3 not given to drunkenness, not a bruiser, but rather gentle, peaceable, not a lover of money,
4 who presides over his own family well, keeping *his* children in subjection with all dignity;
5 (Now if a man does not know *how* to preside over his own household, how will he *be able to* take care of the church of God?)
6 and not a new convert, so he may not become conceited and fall into the condemnation of the devil.
7 And he must also have a good reputation with[11] those outside *of the church*, so he may not fall into disgrace and the snare of the devil.

D. Required Qualifications for Lay Leaders and Deacons of the Congregation 1 Timothy 3:8-13

¶ 8 Likewise, deacons *must be* men worthy of respect, not double-tongued, not being addicted to much wine, not fond of dishonest gain,
9 *but* holding fast the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
10 And these men, let them be tested first, then if they are blameless, let them serve.

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[9] Lit. she
[10] Lit. the
[11] Lit. he must have a good testimony from those outside

11 Likewise, women must be worthy of respect, not slanderous *gossips*, temperate, trustworthy in everything.
12 Let deacons be husbands of one wife, presiding well over their children and their own families.
13 For those who serve well obtain an excellent standing for themselves and great boldness in faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Part 5: Instructions for the Pastor's Ministry in the Congregation 1 Timothy 3:14-6:19

A. Paul Writes to Teach Timothy How the Pastoral Ministry Should Be Conducted 1 Timothy 3:14-16

¶ 14 I am writing these things to you, while hoping to come to you shortly.
15 But if I am delayed, *I am writing these things* that you may know how you must conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.
16 And confessedly great is the mystery of godliness:
Who was revealed in flesh,
Was declared righteous in spirit,
Was seen by angels,
Was preached in nations,
Was believed in the world,
Was taken up in glory.

B. Apostasy Will Occur in Connection with the Coming of False Teachers 1 Timothy 4:1-5

4 ¶ Now the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will desert the faith, following deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,
2 by means of the hypocrisy of liars, who have been seared in their own conscience as with a red-hot branding iron,
3 forbidding *people* to marry, and *demanding them* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving[12] by those who believe and have come to know the truth.
4 Because every created thing of God is excellent, and nothing *is to be* thrown away *as unclean* if it is received with thanksgiving,
5 for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

C. Instructions for Being a Good Pastor 1 Timothy 4:6-16

¶ 6 By submitting these things to the brothers you will be an excellent servant of Christ Jesus, as being nourished in the words of the faith and of the excellent doctrine that you have been following faithfully.
7 And shun again and again the godless and old-womanish myths. Rather keep exercising yourself *vigorously* for the goal of godliness.
8 For physical exercise is beneficial for a short time, but godliness is beneficial for all things, because it holds promise for the present life and for the *life* to come.
9 This[13] statement is trustworthy and worthy of full acceptance.
10 For we strive and struggle for this, because we have set our hope upon the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of the believers.
¶ 11 Always command and teach these things.
12 Let no one look down on your youth, but rather be a model for believers in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.
13 Until I come, continue to occupy yourself with the *public* reading *of Scripture*, with the exhortation, with the teaching.
14 Keep from being careless of the spiritual gift within you, which was given to you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the elders.

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[12] Lit. for receiving with thanksgiving
[13] Lit. the

15 Customarily attend to these things carefully, being *occupied* in these things, so that your progress may be apparent to everyone.
16 Always pay attention to yourself and to the doctrine; continue to persist in them; for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you.

D. Instructions for Ministering to All the People in the Congregation
1 Timothy 5:1-6:19

5 ¶ Do not rebuke an older man harshly, rather keep appealing to him as a father, to younger men as brothers,
2 to older women as mothers, to younger women as sisters in all purity.
¶ 3 Continue to honor widows who *are* truly widows.
4 But if a certain widow has children or grandchildren, let them learn to show godliness first to their own family and to continue to repay their parents by taking care of them,[14] for this is pleasing in the sight of God.
5 But the woman[15] *who is* truly a widow, and who has been left alone, has set her hope upon God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day.
6 But the woman who lives for thoroughly enjoying herself[16] is dead while she lives.
7 And keep on declaring these things, so they may be beyond reproach.
8 But if anyone does not take care of his own *relatives*, and especially the members of his family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.
9 Let a widow be registered on a list, if she is not less than sixty years old, *having been* a wife of one husband,
10 being commended for admirable deeds – if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality, if she has washed the feet of the saints, if she has helped those who were afflicted, if she has devoted herself to every good deed.
11 But shun again and again the younger widows. For whenever they feel the impulses of sexual desire contrary to Christ, they want to marry,
12 bringing about condemnation *on themselves*, because they set aside their[17] first faith.
13 And at the same time they learn *to be* lazy, going about from house to house, and not only *being* lazy but also *being* silly gossips and busybodies, saying things that should not *be said*.
14 Therefore I intend the younger widows to be getting married, bearing children, keeping house, *and* not giving even one opportunity to the adversary for slander.
15 For already some have turned away after Satan.
16 If any woman who is a believer has widows *in her care*, let her help them, and let the church not be burdened, in order that it may help those who *are* truly widows.
¶ 17 Let those elders who preside over *church matters* well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard in preaching[18] and teaching.
18 For the Scripture says, "DO NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE IT IS THRESHING,"[19] and, "The worker is worthy of his wages."
19 Do not customarily accept an accusation against an elder, except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.
20 Those who continue to sin in the presence of all, continue to discipline in the presence of all, so that the rest may indeed have a fear *of sinning*.
21 I charge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus and the chosen angels, that you follow these instructions[20] without discrimination, doing nothing according to partiality.

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[14] Lit. continue to give back recompenses to the parents
[15] The word "woman" is added because the preceding article "the" is feminine; likewise v.6
[16] The meaning of the Greek word is "to live in excessive comfort, indulgently, luxuriously, wantonness"
[17] Lit. the
[18] Lit. in word
[19] Dt.25:4
[20] Lit. things

22 Do not begin to lay hands on anyone hastily, and by doing so begin to share[21] in the sins belonging to another; always keep yourself holy.
23 No longer drink only water, but begin to make use of a little wine for the sake of your[22] stomach and your frequent illnesses.
24 The sins of some people are known to all, going before *them* into judgment, but indeed *the sins* of others follow after *them*.
25 Likewise, the admirable deeds are also known to all, and the deeds[23] that are otherwise cannot be concealed.

6 ¶ As many slaves as are under the yoke *of slavery,* let them begin to regard their own masters worthy of all respect, in order that the name of God and his[24] doctrine may not be slandered.
2 And let those *slaves* who have believers for masters stop despising *them*, because they are brothers; rather let them serve *their masters as slaves* more than ever, because their masters[25] are believers and beloved *brothers*, who devote themselves to doing what is good. Keep on teaching and urging these things.
¶ 3 If anyone keeps on teaching heretical doctrine and does not come to correct teachings, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine in accordance with godliness,
4 he is conceited, understanding nothing, rather having a sick fondness in controversies and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive talk, suspicions, maliciousness,
5 mutual irritations of men who have been corrupted *in* mind and have been defrauded of the truth, considering godliness to be a means of gain.
6 Now godliness with contentment is a means of great gain.
7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot carry anything out *of the world either*.
8 But having food and clothing, we will be content with these.
9 Now those who intend to become rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction.
10 For the love of money is the root of all evils, which some by striving for *it* have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.
¶ 11 But as for you, O man of God, flee these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patient endurance, gentleness.
12 Keep fighting the good fight of faith; take hold of eternal life, into which you were called, and you confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.
13 I charge you in the presence of God who gives life to all things and Christ Jesus who testified the good confession in the presence of Pontius Pilate –
14 you keep this[26] commandment without blemish, beyond reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,
15 which *appearing* God[27] will show in his own time[28] -- the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,
16 who alone possesses immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one of mankind has seen or can see; to him be everlasting honor and power. Amen.
¶ 17 Customarily command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty and not to set their hope upon the uncertainty of wealth, but rather upon God who richly supplies all things to us for *our* enjoyment.
18 *Customarily command them* to do good, to be rich in admirable deeds, to be generous, willing to share what they have,
19 storing up for themselves an excellent foundation for the future *age*, in order that they may take hold of what is really life.

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[21] Lit. and do not begin to share
[22] Lit. the
[23] Lit. things
[24] Lit. the
[25] Lit. they
[26] Lit. the
[27] Lit. he
[28] Lit. times

Part 6: Conclusion 1 Timothy 6:20, 21

¶ 20 O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding godless chatter and objections over[29] what is falsely called knowledge,
21 which some have professed and departed from[30] the faith.
¶ Grace be with you all.[31]

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[29] Lit. of

[30] Lit. concerning

[31] The word “all” is included because the Greek word “you” is plural.