

1 Timothy

Paul writes to Timothy, a young pastor, who is facing a heavy burden of responsibility in the church at Ephesus. The task is challenging. False doctrine must be erased, public worship safeguarded, and mature leadership developed. In addition to the conduct of the church, Paul talks pointedly about the conduct of the minister. Timothy is instructed to guard his youthfulness. He must be careful to avoid false teachers and greedy motives. As a man of God, Paul encourages Timothy to pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness.

INTRODUCTION

Paul wrote this letter as a leadership manual so that Timothy would have effective guidance in his responsibilities during Paul's absence in Macedonia (1 Timothy 3:14-15). Paul wanted to encourage his young assistant to become an example to others, exercise his spiritual gifts, and "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:12). Timothy's personal and public life must be beyond reproach, and he must know how to deal with matters of false teaching, organization, discipline, proclaiming Scriptures, poverty and wealth, and the role of various groups. He was instructed to refute error (1 Timothy 1:7-11; 6:3-5) and to teach truth (1 Timothy 4:13-16; 6:2, 17-18).

AUTHOR

Since the early 19th century, the Pastoral Epistles have been attacked more than any other Pauline Epistles on the issue of authenticity. The similarity of these epistles requires that they be treated as a unit in terms of authorship because they stand or fall together.

The external evidence solidly supports the conservative position that Paul wrote the letters to Timothy and Titus. Postapostolic Church fathers and historians allude to them as Paul's writings. Only Romans and 1 Corinthians have better evidence among the Pauline epistles.

The Greek title for this letter is *Pros Timotheon A*, the "First to Timothy." Timothy means "honoring God" or "honored by God," and probably was given to him by his mother Eunice.

DATE & SETTING

The authorship of the pastoral epistles requires Paul's release from his Roman imprisonment (Acts 28), the continuation of his missionary endeavors, and his imprisonment for a second time in Rome. Unfortunately, the order of events can only be reconstructed from hints, because there is no concurrent history paralleling Acts to Paul's last years.

It is widely accepted that Paul wrote 1 Timothy from Macedonia in A.D. 62 or 63 while Timothy was serving as his representative in Ephesus and perhaps in other churches in the province of Asia.