

# 1 TIMOTHY

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## Lesson 1

## Introduction

This lesson begins a study looking at the first of two personal letters that Paul sent Timothy in Ephesus. Both of Paul's letters to Timothy are to be distinguished from the letter that Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus titled "Ephesians," which is addressed separately.

Before we begin our study, we need to have a better understanding of the context, the setting, of the church at Ephesus; and—just as importantly—the man Timothy to whom Paul is writing. We will see that Timothy was much more than simply an evangelist in the city of Ephesus. We will find, for example, that he was not the pastor or the bishop of the church at Ephesus, but rather he was serving as Paul's on location representative, just as he had been in Corinth, Thessalonica, and Philippi.

It may surprise you to discover how much information the Bible contains about Timothy, his parents and grandmother, his upbringing, his relationship with Paul, and his work as an evangelical missionary all before becoming Paul's representative at Ephesus. It may also surprise you to discover how much we know about the city of Ephesus, its people, its false religions and pagan practices, and the number of well-known followers of Christ who worked there, in addition to Timothy and Paul, in establishing the church.

Ephesus became the center of false teaching within the new church, as predicted by Paul in Acts 20:17-18, 26-31. This would come as no surprise to anyone who knew that religious life in Ephesus was heavily focused on the black arts, magic, divination, demon control and the like; as highlighted in Acts 19:13-17.

I have been blessed to have visited the ruins at Ephesus; as they are some of the best in the region, in terms of showing you what the city must have looked like during Paul's visits and Timothy's ministry. Ephesus was originally a seaport; and it was well-known for its Temple of Artemis (one of the seven wonders of the ancient world), the iconic Library of Celsus (built well after Paul and Timothy's time), and a theater capable of holding 25,000 spectators. It was here in the synagogue and marketplace of Ephesus that Paul preached and witnessed daily. Traveling with Priscilla and Aquila, Paul was a bi-vocational evangelist—working as a tent-maker in order to support himself, and to keep critics from saying he was profiting from spreading the Gospel. (See Acts 18:1-2, for example.)

It is also believed that the Apostle John wrote his Gospel from Ephesus and remained there caring for Mary, Jesus' mother. When the Romans attempt at executing John by boiling him in oil failed, he was sent to the island of Patmos, just off the coast of Ephesus. It was on the Island of Patmos that many believe that he wrote the book of Revelation. Today, that shoreline has long since eroded due to heavy silting over time, and a visit to Ephesus now finds its location to be inland.

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***So, to get us started, let's see what we can learn from the Bible about Timothy, his family, and the church at Ephesus. Look up the following verses and jot down what you learn:***

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### 1. Acts 14:6-21

2. Acts 16:1, 3
3. 2 Timothy 1:5
4. 1 Timothy 1:18, and 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6 and 4:5
5. Acts 13:2
6. Acts 16:12 and Philippians 2:19-22
7. Philippians 1:1, 2:19; Colossians 1:1; and Philemon verse 1
8. Acts 17:14
9. 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 3:2; and 2 Thessalonians 1:1
10. Acts 19:22
11. 1 Corinthians 16:10-11; and 2 Corinthians 1:1
12. Romans 16:21
13. 1 Timothy 5:23
14. 2 Timothy 4:9-13, 21
15. Hebrews 13:23
16. 1 Timothy 3:16
17. 1 Timothy 1:3-4
18. Revelation 2:1-7
19. 1 Timothy 4:12

## 20. Acts 20:36-38

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As we can see from this brief introduction, Timothy was a young and enthusiastic evangelist who became very close to Paul, who was his mentor and "father" in the faith. Having bi-racial parents (again, his father was a Gentile and his mother a Jew), Timothy could speak from personal experience to everyone, whether Jew or Gentile.

Timothy was also fortunate to have both his mother and his grandmother as role-model believers. Paul also recognized their contributions to Timothy's spiritual growth.

Finally, it is evident that Timothy was far more than a servant in Ephesus. He worked with Paul at a large number of early churches, Philippi, Colossae, Berea, Thessalonica, Macedonia, Corinth, and Rome—as well as at the church at Ephesus. Accordingly, Paul would eventually assign him to watch over the church at Ephesus; and this role is explored more closely in our study of the Ephesian church and Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

I pray this study will open your eyes not only to the work that Paul and Timothy did across a large number of churches, but also to the related aspects that we can learn and apply today to our walk with Christ; and how He would have us help with sending out the Gospel message to our friends, neighbors, and family.

In Christ,

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