

## 1 Timothy Lesson 1 Articles

**1:4** False teachers in Ephesus probably emphasized lengthy genealogies, believing salvation was based on having a lineage that could be traced back to Abraham (Mt 3:9; Ti 3:9). The NT teaches that salvation requires sharing Abraham's faith whether or not one shares his bloodline (Rm 4). "Genealogies" may also be virtually synonymous with "myths," referring to legends about OT figures. Paul's command reflects his aversion toward stories fabricated for religious purposes, demonstrating his conviction that Scripture is based on history.<sup>1</sup>

The false teachers at Ephesus were ministering their own program, not a stewardship that God had given them. A steward's first responsibility is to be faithful to his master (1 Cor. 4:1–7). There were false teachers at Ephesus who were trying to make a name for themselves as teachers of the Law but who did not know what they were talking about. They had turned away from the truth of the Word and were listening to fables (myths, v. 4) and endless genealogies, raising more questions than they could answer. What a picture of some teachers today! Their "ministries" do not build up Christians or the local church, but instead foster arguments and divisions. In v. 5, Paul contrasts the false teachers and their ministry with that of the true steward of God's grace. The object of God's steward is to see people love one another with a love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. But these false teachers were promoting endless divisions and empty talk!

Paul explains to Timothy the significance of the Law. "God did not give the Law to save people," he points out, "but to show people how much they need to be saved." There must be a lawful use of the Law (see Rom. 7:16). In vv. 9–10, Paul lists the sinners who are convicted and condemned by the Law, and if you will compare this list with Ex. 20, you will see that practically all the Ten Commandments are included.

God had entrusted Paul and Timothy with a glorious Gospel, not a system of laws (2 Cor. 3–4). "Sound doctrine" (v. 10) literally means "healthy teaching," that is, teaching that promotes spiritual health. Our word "hygiene" comes from this Gk. word. Note 2 Tim. 1:13 and 4:3, as well as Titus 1:9, 13, and 2:1–2, 8. In 2 Tim. 2:17, Paul warns that false teachings eat "as a gangrene." (Dr. Luke must have appreciated Paul's many references to medical science!)<sup>2</sup>

Timothy has often been portrayed by writers and preachers as a vulnerable, timid young man. This is unfair; he was an ordinary person struggling with a very difficult situation. Like most of us, he would not have found confrontation easy, but Paul tells him that it was not only necessary but also the loving thing to do. The ideas brought in by the straying leaders created division and bitterness, while the truth that Paul had entrusted to Timothy promoted a loving atmosphere and helped people to live in a way that was pleasing to God.

Paul traces this love back to its source: 'a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith' (v. 5). In the Bible, 'the heart' describes who a person is on the inside. So, a pure heart describes someone who is cleansed from sin and transformed by God. 'A good conscience' is a sensitivity God gives, which enables a person to discern the difference between right and wrong. 'Sincere faith' describes a simple, unassuming trust in God. The new ideas had eroded these positive qualities and, if Timothy truly loved the people in the church in Ephesus, he would make a stand and bring them back to the truth.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (p. 1800). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament* (pp. 620–621). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>3</sup> Robinson, S. J. (2004). *Opening up 1 Timothy* (pp. 18–19). Leominster: Day One Publications.