



GOD'S HOUSEHOLD

The Blueprint of The Church in Paul's First Letter to Timothy

DISCUSSION GUIDE

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STUDY APPROACH

1. UNDERSTAND THE PASSAGE

As we read, share and discuss God's word, what is the truth he wants us to know, understand and obey?

2. THINK IT THROUGH

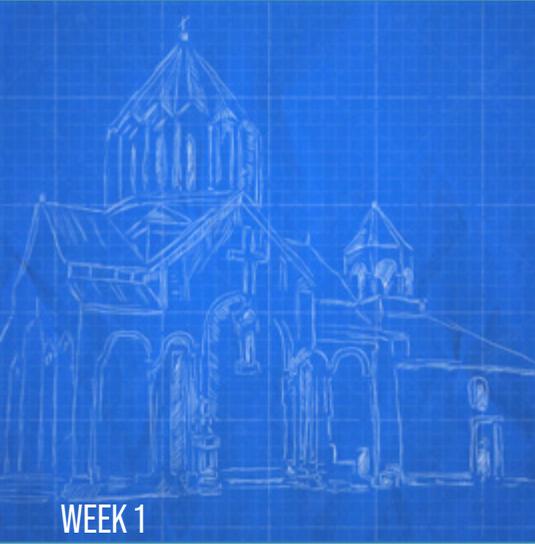
Once we have discovered the truth from God's word we need to massage it into our lives so that it becomes understandable and usable.

3. LIVE IT OUT

Having come to understand the truth and how it applies to life, it leaves us asking how we stack up. How does the reality of your life and thoughts and actions compare with the truth you've discovered? We need to ask each other the hard questions to graciously encourage us to live more fully for Christ.

4. PRAYER

Each study closes with us engaging with God to express our dependence on him to enable us to live in the light of his truth.



WEEK 1

GODLINESS

1 TIMOTHY 3:14-16

CONTEXT

The letter at this stage has come to a considerable distance. It began with a clear statement of its occasion: A charge to Timothy to stay in Ephesus to oppose some false teachers and their errors, including a digression by way of personal testimony illustrating the truth of the Gospel (chapter 1). In chapters 2 and 3, Paul moves through several concerns that reflect some of the disorders in the church, which had surfaced in their gatherings for worship (chapter 2) and in the lives of some of the church leaders (chap. 3). He now concludes this section of the letter with a further statement of its purpose. The church must give heed to what Paul as written because it alone has been entrusted with the truth (v. 15). This new section that Paul is addressing now runs through to chapter 4. The references to Paul's impending visit to Ephesus at 3:14 and 4:13 bind this section together.

Read: 3:14-4:5

UNDERSTAND THE PASSAGE

1. What is the problem when you come across someone who holds particular views which have no impact on their life at all?
2. How would you justify the claim that 3:15 is of central importance in 1 Timothy?
3. In what ways is the church described at 3:15?
4. In what ways is the church the pillar and foundation of the truth? 3:15 How is this compatible with Ephesians 2:19-22?
5. What connection does 3:16 have with 3:15 and 4:1-5?

THINK IT THROUGH

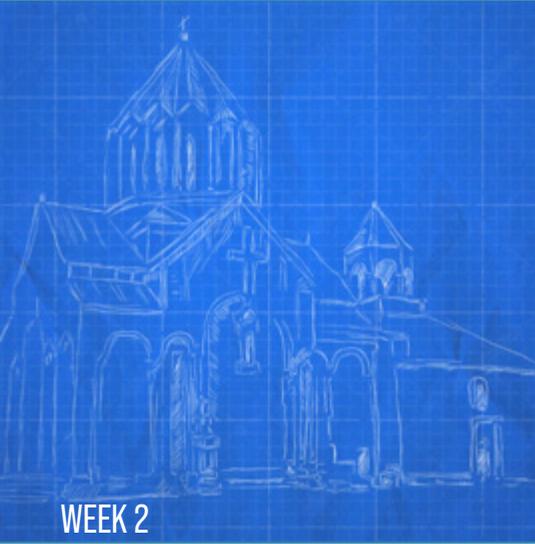
1. To what extent do we reserve different behavior for 'church' as compared to the home or work? (3:15).
2. What examples of godly behavior have you seen which make the truth of the gospel more favorably received within a community? (3:15)

LIVE IT OUT

1. How can we encourage each other to live godly lives within God's household?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer focusing on what the Holy Spirit has brought to your heart and mind through this study



WEEK 2

COUNTERFEIT CHRISTIANITY

1 TIMOTHY 1:1-11

CONTEXT

The letter begins with the standard form of salutation found in almost all the letters from the Greco-Roman period. Ancient letters began with the name of the writer, followed by the addressee and a greeting. Paul introduced himself regularly as an apostle of Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Romans), especially in those letters where his authority was in question or what he was about to address needed the weight of apostolic authority. In more personal letters his self-designation is “servant” (Philippians) or “prisoner” (Philemon). So why then does he use the designation “apostle” when he is writing to a longtime companion and son in the faith? This is because he is writing to Timothy with the full expectation that that the church in Ephesus will overhear. The errors being spread in the church call for Timothy’s strong action, action based

on Paul’s apostolic authority. The source of Paul’s authority is God our Savior and Christ Jesus our hope. Paul begins the letter in a way that is uncharacteristic of him – without the standard thanksgiving. Of his letters, only Galatians lacks the thanksgiving. The pressing issue in this letter is people teaching false or different doctrines, perhaps these people were part of the church as Paul had warned in Acts 20:29,30). He writes as an apostle under the command of the Lord Jesus Christ (1:1) he writes to Timothy (1:2) whom he had led to a personal faith in Christ (Acts 16:1). The false teaching must be opposed (1:3) and the truth must be guarded (6:20). The following passage focuses on the problems which Paul discerned at Ephesus.

Read: 1:1-11

UNDERSTAND THE PASSAGE

1. What happens over the course of time if there is no maintenance on a house?
2. What is likely to happen to the church community if there is similar inattention by the leaders to the needs of the church family?
3. What was the main problem facing the church at Ephesus? (1:3)
4. What was being taught in the church? (1:3, 4, 7)
5. What were the results of this teaching which Paul highlights in 1:4, 6; 6:20?
6. In what ways would this teaching lead to people wandering from the faith? (1:6; 6:21)
7. According to Paul, what should be the central aim or goal of the Christian life? (1:4,5)
8. What is the overall message of 1 Timothy bearing in mind the instructions to Timothy at 1:3; 6:20?

THINK IT THROUGH

1. In what sort of situations is it possible that the contemporary church might fall into these errors?
2. How would you know if any of the hallmarks identified at 1:4, 6; 6:20 were evident in our own teaching or behavior?
3. How should Paul's aim in 1:5 affect the way we live as Christians?
4. What is the best way to guard the gospel (6:20) in our situation?

LIVE IT OUT

1. How can we avoid the dangers highlighted by Paul in this passage?
2. How could the central aim of showing love be more evident in our lives?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer focusing on what the Holy Spirit has brought to your heart and mind through this study



WEEK 3

THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL

1 TIMOTHY 1:12-20

CONTEXT

The Apostle Paul has been dealing with the law and sin; he shows how the law is helpful in pointing out sin and its depth. In 1:10 he shows that God's good law equates to sound or healthy doctrine which conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God (1:11). In other words, there is no contradiction between the standard of behavior expected in the Old and the New Testament. A life conforming to the gospel will conform to God's law and this is the foundation for Paul's later teaching on aspects of Christian lifestyle (e.g. faithfulness in marriage 3:2, 12; 5:9). In summary, Paul spends time contrasting the false teachers' wrong use of the law with its correct usage, in such a way as to show that the law exposes sin and reveals a lifestyle that is not in conformity to a life transformed by the gospel. By mentioning the gospel in 1:11, Paul then makes a transition to talking about his

own experience of receiving the gospel to being entrusted with it.

Read: 1:8-20

UNDERSTAND THE PASSAGE

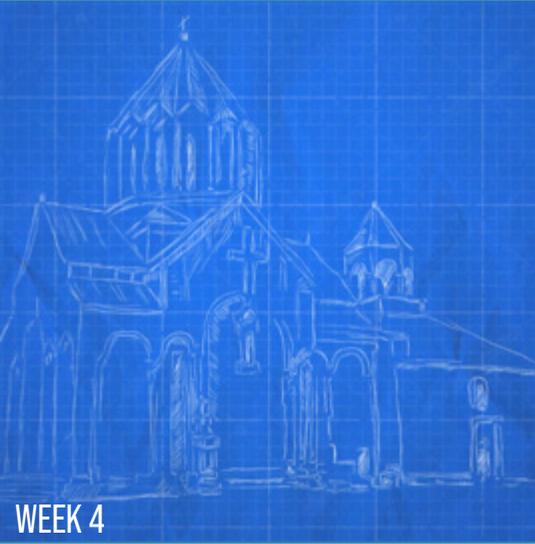
1. What are the precautions which can be made for a ship to avoid a shipwreck?
2. What would amount to a proper use of the law according to Paul? (1:8)
3. What effect should the law have on the people described in 1:9, 10?
4. In what ways does he describe how Jesus dealt with him in 1:12-16?
5. Why does Paul include 1:17 in this passage?
6. Why does Paul think it necessary to talk of the need for 'fighting the good fight'? (1:18). What might it involve? (1:19,20)

THINK IT THROUGH

1. Are there any sins within this list which we deem more acceptable, or even not as sinful at all? (1:8-11).
2. How should the clear focus of Christ in 1:15 shape the agenda of the church?
3. In what ways has Christ shown you mercy, grace and patience?
4. To what extent is it still important for Christian leaders to fight the good fight? (1:18:20)

LIVE IT OUT

1. How can we find ways of keeping our focus on Christ and His amazing grace?
2. How can we enable our churches to avoid shipwreck in our generation?



WEEK 4

PRAYER

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-7

CONTEXT

The first section of 1 Timothy begins and ends with a charge to Timothy to deal with the false teachers who had appeared in the church at Ephesus. Paul in addressing these controversies in Ephesus, he shares his own experience of the Gospel and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (1:12-16) which stands in contrast to the teaching of these other teachers who focused on the law (1:7; 4:3) and which had led to various controversies (1:4; 6:3-5). In this next section which runs from 2:1 all the way to 3:13, Paul is now seeking to instruct Timothy in terms of how he wants to see the church at Ephesus re-shaped, with a renewed focus on the gospel and godly living, as a contrast to legalism and ungodliness evident in these other ministries. This section will include material about the centrality of the gospel (2:1-7) and the vital importance of godliness not only for church members

(2:8-15) but also particularly for those engaged in church leadership (3:1-13)

Read: 2:1-7

UNDERSTAND THE PASSAGE

1. Why in the context of 1 Timothy, is it striking that Paul wants the Ephesians to pray for all people? (2:1)
2. What do you think lies behind Paul's reasoning when he encourages them to pray for rulers? (2:2)
3. What are we told about God in these verses and why is this significant? (2:3-4)
4. Why does Paul stress the 'oneness' of God and the fact that there is only one mediator? (2:5-6)
5. What is meant by a ransom payment and what is its effect? (2:6)
6. How does Paul view his own ministry and to what extent does 2:7 apply to church as a whole?

THINK IT THROUGH

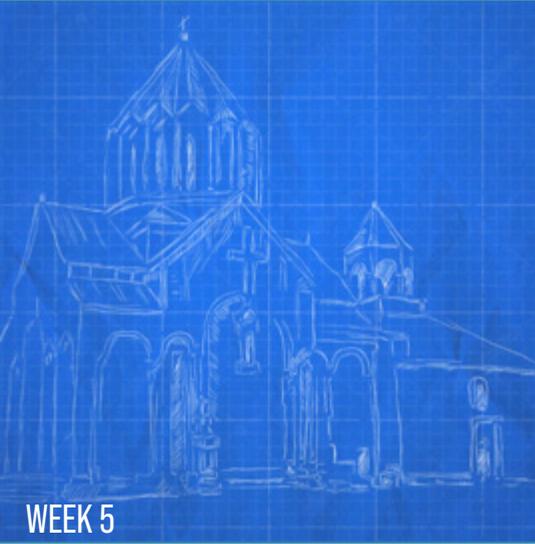
1. How should this passage challenge the way we pray? (2:1, 2)
2. How should understanding what pleases God shape our lives? (2:3, 4)
3. How should the fact that Christ gave himself as a ransom for us shape our lives? (2:5, 6)
4. In what ways should this passage encourage us to see the gospel preached? (2:7)

LIVE IT OUT

1. How can we pray more faithfully for the gospel to advance?
2. How can we encourage each other to have more of a gospel focus in our lives?

CONTEXT OF 2:1 - 3:16

First Timothy 2-3 stresses how the gospel message should impact Christian living and leadership. The gospel of grace has indelibly marked Paul's own life (1:12-17), and Paul now explains how this gospel should shape believers' prayers, priorities, and relationships (2:1-15). He then presents a vision for a church leadership comprised of godly overseers and deacons (3:1-13). First Timothy's key verses are 3:14-16. Paul writes to Timothy this letter so that "you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God." The Church proclaims and protects the truth, "the mystery of godliness." This mystery is God's hidden plan that has been made known through Jesus' incarnation, death, resurrection, and exaltation. The church believes and proclaims this glorious gospel truth and shows its transformational power through godly living. This section (1 Timothy 2:1-3:16), Paul explains how the gospel of Jesus Christ transforms the lives of men, women, overseers, and deacons in God's household, the church.



WEEK 5

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

1 TIMOTHY 2:8-15

UNDERSTAND THE PASSAGE

1. In 2:8-15, Paul stresses that God's people should pursue unity, order, and good works when they gather for worship. What practices and attitudes should Christian men pursue or avoid (v. 8)?
2. How does the above relate to the qualifications for overseers (3:1-7)?
3. What actions should Christian women pursue or avoid (2:9-12)? Why does this matter? Compare this list to the description of widows in 5:9-10.
4. What reasons does Paul give for not permitting a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man in the church (2:12-14)?

THINK IT THROUGH

1. Read Galatians 3:28. How does this verse put to the rest any notion that

Christianity makes men superior to women?

2. Read Luke 8:2-3. How did Jesus give honor to women during his earthly ministry?
3. Verses to consider: Mark 5:25-34; Luke 10:38-42; 13:11-13; John 4:1-30

LIVE IT OUT

1. What godly woman (or women) has God used in your life to help you grow in the faith? How can you show appreciation this week for that spiritual investment?
2. What criticism can a church expect if it preaches and enacts the principles taught in this passage?

For further study, see the following passages:

Genesis 3:1-7; Mark 16:9; Acts 13:1; 18:26; Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 7:25-40; 1 Corinthians 12:28; 15:21-22; Ephesians 4:11; Titus 2:3-4



WEEK 6

ELDERS & DEACONS

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

CONTEXT

Paul's purpose in writing this letter was to instruct Timothy regarding the church (vv. 14-15). Of primary importance is that its leaders be qualified to teach and that they set an example for the flock. There's clearly an inseparable link between the spiritual quality of a congregation and the godliness of its leaders. Not surprisingly, church leadership is a major focus of teaching in the New Testament. This passage (3:1-13) delineates those qualifications for pastors (elders) and deacons. The qualifications given by the Spirit stand in sharp contrast to the unqualified leaders that had assumed positions in the church at Ephesus.

UNDERSTAND THE PASSAGE

1. What qualities should be present in the lives of the elders who lead the church? (verses to consider: Phil. 3:17;

2 Tim 2:15, 24; Titus 1:6-9)

2. What actions or character flaws disqualify one from being a leader in the church? (verses to consider: Matt 6:24-25; Titus 1:7)
3. What is a deacon and what is expected of one?
4. What requirements were set for women serving in the church?

THINK IT THROUGH

1. Read 1 Peter 5:1-3. What added insights does this passage reveal about the right motives for those who lead God's church? (verses to consider: 2 Cor. 4:1-7; 1 Thess. 1:5)
2. Read Mark 10:42-45. How did Jesus radically redefine leadership?

LIVE IT OUT

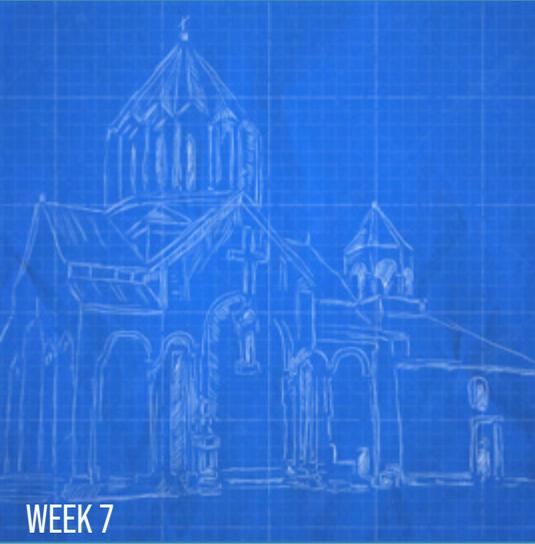
1. As you read through the list of leadership qualities found in chapter 3, which positive one (s) would you like to see more in your life? What negative traits do you need to put behind you?
2. What are some specific acts of service you could perform in your church this next week?

For further study, see the following passages:

1 Samuel 13:14; Psalm 119:11; Proverbs 6:32-33; 13:24; Isaiah 28:7; Ezekiel 22:30; Matthew 5:31-32

CONTEXT (**FOR 4:1-5 AND 4:6-16**)

1 Timothy 3:14 begins a new section of the epistle which stands at the center of the entire letter. It runs from 3:14 through to 4:16. It is held together by the two references at 3:14 and 4:13 where Paul specifically speaks about his desire to join Timothy in Ephesus, whilst at the same time providing instructions about how Timothy is to act in this interim period. Within this pivotal section, all the major themes of the letter are laid out once again. Paul clearly sets out his aim in writing, which is to promote godly living as a means for the advance of the gospel (3:14-16), to resist the assault of the false teachers (4:1-5) and to encourage Timothy in his leadership through a focus on godly living, a commitment to the truth and a concern for salvation (4:6-16). Timothy himself is to be a model in his own ministry of defending and confirming the gospel.



behavior for 'church' as compared to the home or at work? (3:15)

2. Where are the areas where we might be tempted to reject God's creation?
3. How evident is it that we are thankful to God for His good gifts in creation?

LIVE IT OUT

1. How can we encourage each other to live godly lives within God's household?
2. How can we encourage each other not to separate creation and redemption in the way we live?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer focusing on what the Holy Spirit has brought to your heart and mind through this study

APOSTASY

1 TIMOTHY 4:1-5

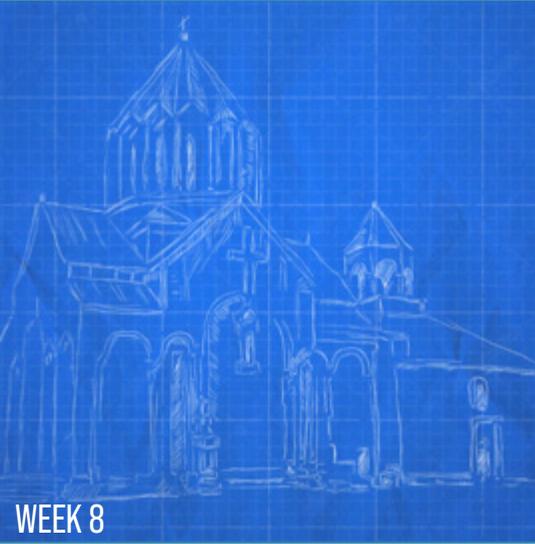
Read: 4:1-5 (including 3:14-15)

UNDERSTAND THE PASSAGE

1. How would you justify the claim that 3:15 is of central importance in 1 Timothy?
2. In what ways is the church described in 3:15?
3. In what ways is the church the pillar and buttress (foundation) of the truth? How is this compatible with Ephesians 2:19-22?
4. What connection does 3:16 have with 3:15 and 4:1-5?
5. Why does the sort of false teaching described in 4:3 gain a foothold in the church from time to time?
6. What is Paul's response to such false teaching as described in 4:3-5?

THINK IT THROUGH

1. To what extent do we reserve different



WEEK 8

reflect the priorities of 4:13 look like in practice?

3. How can we enable and support our church leaders in fulfilling 4:15, 16?
4. To what extent should some of the instructions within this passage apply to all believers?

LIVE IT OUT?

1. How can we encourage each other and especially our church leaders to make the progress referred to at 4:15?
2. What aspects of your belief and behavior do you need to watch out for at present?

THE MARKS OF A SERVANT

1 TIMOTHY 4:6-16

UNDERSTAND THE PASSAGE

1. What is the essential diet of a good servant of Christ Jesus? (4:6,7)
2. Why is training in godliness of such value? (4:7,8)
3. Why does Paul include this trustworthy saying at this point in the passage? (4:9, 10)
4. In what ways does the list in 4:12 reflect some of the qualities in 3:2ff and to what extent does it provide a contrast with the behavior of the false teachers at Ephesus?
5. Why is Paul so keen to ensure the priority of teaching God's Word within the life of the church leader? (4:13, 14)

THINK IT THROUGH

1. How can we ensure that the church leaders have their souls properly nourished?
2. What would a ministry seeking to



WEEK 9

HOUSE RULES

1 TIMOTHY 5:1-16

CONTEXT:

The central section of the epistle (3:14-4:16) has closed on the climatic note of Timothy's role in salvation. Although Paul continues to instruct Timothy directly in the following verses, this material relates to matters within the church family at Ephesus as opposed to matters relating specifically to the conduct of Timothy's own ministry. There is a transition at 5:1,2 which links direct instruction to Timothy concerning his own behavior whilst setting up the agenda for the rest of the section down to 6:2. Clearly before Paul returns to the overriding problem of the presence of false teachers, which will dominate the final section (6:3-21), there were further matters at Ephesus that needed to be resolved which all related to the relationship within the church family.

UNDERSTAND THE PASSAGE

1. In practical terms how does Paul want

church members to relate to each other? (5:1,2)

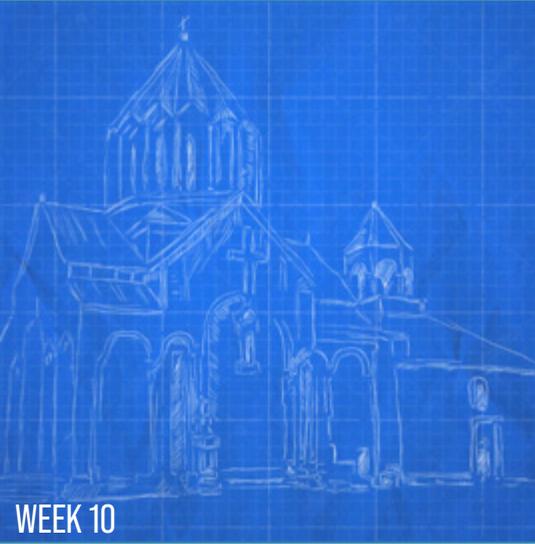
2. From the passage, what defines whether a widow is really in need? (5:3, 5, 9, 10)
3. Why do you think Paul uses such strong language at 5:4,8 concerning the failure to assist a widow?
4. Is there anything surprising about Paul's list in 5:9, 10?
5. Can you reconstruct what might have been happening in 5:11,12?
6. Overall, what does Paul want to see in the church at Ephesus (5:13-16)?

THINK IT THROUGH

1. How could your church become more of a genuine family?
2. Why do you think that for many of us the instructions about families caring for their elderly in 5:4, 8,16 strike an uncomfortable note and what should we seek to do about it?
3. How can we honor the role of bringing up children more within our church family? (5:10,14)
4. Why is Paul so concerned for the reputation of the church?

LIVE IT OUT

1. In what ways could we care for people in real need within our church family? (5:10,14)
2. What sort of behavior would enhance the reputation of the church within our community?



WEEK 10

THE BURDEN OF LEADERSHIP

1 TIMOTHY 5:17 – 25, *6:2

CONTEXT:

The whole section 5:1-6:2 develops the main thrust of 3:15 and the call for godly living – conduct worthy of those living in the household of God. Such godly living is to be worked out on the basis of viewing all relationships within the church as in a family setting (5:1,2), in order that the church may begin to function properly as a church family. The previous passage dealt with the problem of the lack of care for widows within the church family and now Paul proceeds to consider two other areas of tension within the fellowship relating to elders in the church and masters in the workplace. Paul's aim is to enable each of these relationships to be considered from the angle of family relationships and his concern is that members should show honor and respect to each other. These are important roles that need to be performed both in the church and in the workplace but they are to be viewed within the basic guidelines concerning how a Christian

family is to function in a manner pleasing to God.

UNDERSTAND THE PASSAGE

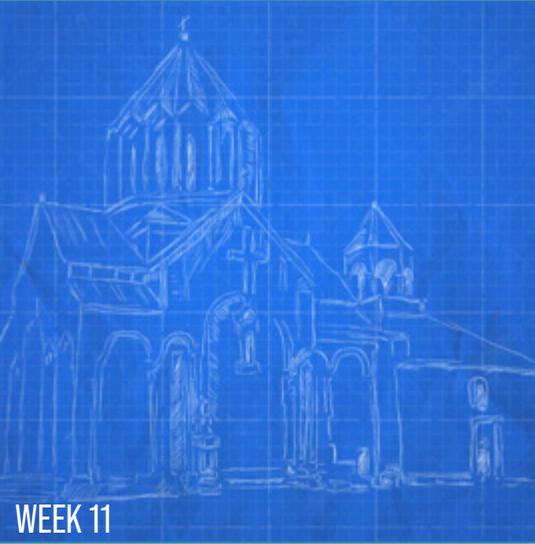
1. What do you think is meant by 'double honor' in 5:17, 18?
2. What are the dangers Paul highlights in relation to disciplining church leaders? (5:19-21)
3. What are the dangers Paul highlights in relation to appointing church leaders? (5:22-25)
4. How does verse 23 relate to verse 22 in the light of the false teaching at 4:3?
5. Why might it be tempting not to work hard for a non-Christian boss (6:1)? ...or for a Christian boss (6:2)?
6. What would be the effect of not working hard in both these situations? (6:1, 2)

THINK IT THROUGH

1. In what ways do you honor or support your church leaders?
2. In the light of 5:19-21, what principles should your church use if a leader needed discipling?
3. In the light of 5:22-25, what principles should your church use in the appointment of leaders at all levels within the fellowship?
4. What principles are transferable from the master/slave relationship to modern employment practices?

LIVE IT OUT

1. How can we enable the reputation of the gospel to be enhanced within our community?
2. How can we encourage each other to be faithful in the workplace as Christians?



WEEK 11

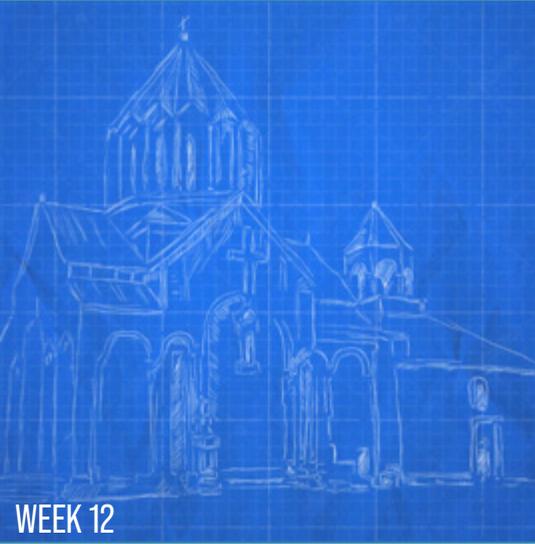
HONOUR YOUR MASTERS

1 TIMOTHY 6:1-2

1. What is Paul's main motivation in instructing slaves according to verse 1, and why is this crucial for this important and sensitive issue?
2. Do you tend to treat Christian employers better or worse than non-Christian employers? If worse, how might verse 2 change your mindset in this area?
3. In light of the emotions attached to the issue of slavery, what kind of attitude should characterize our conversations about this issue?
4. Have you heard anyone criticize the Bible for what it says about slavery? What concerns have you had when you read what the Bible says about slavery?
5. How have Christian societies in the past used the Bible to justify slavery?
6. How was the African slave trade, as practised in Europe & the USA in the 18th & 19th century different from the

- slavery in Old Testament Israel or in New Testament Rome?
7. What is the difference between regulating a less-than-ideal situation, such as slavery or divorce, and condoning it?
8. How do the various forms of slavery violate the principle that all people have equal dignity before God?
9. In what specific ways can you honor your employer this week? How might that glorify God and advance the gospel?
10. How does our understanding of slavery help us appreciate what Jesus did for us? How does it help us understand our proper response?

Adapted from 'Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Timothy' by Daniel Akin, David Platt & Tony Merida



WEEK 12

MONEY

1 TIMOTHY 6:1-10

As we come to Paul's final section of the epistle (6:3-21) we see him returning to his opening theme. Just as he started his opening section with a description of the false teachers (1:3ff) so he does the same at 6:3ff using the same terminology. In the intervening material Paul has sought to refocus the church in Ephesus towards the priorities of the advance of the gospel and the necessity of godliness amongst both the church in Ephesus towards the priorities of the advance of the gospel and the necessity of godliness amongst both church members and church leaders (2:1-3:13). At the center of the letter he has sought to clarify Timothy's role in enabling these priorities to be set through his own personal example and public ministry (3:14-4:16). Following this, he has once again returned to consider some of the issues that need addressing in the Ephesian church so that it could operate as a church as a church family, honoring one another (5:1-6:2). Now Paul returns to his opening theme which had caused him to write in the first place, which concerns

how to address the problem of false teachers.

UNDERSTAND THE PASSAGE

1. In what ways do we see people around us, and ourselves, ensnared by riches or the desires for wealth?
2. Why is the action of 6:3 described as being conceited or arrogant? (6:3,4)
3. How is it possible for people to be robbed of the truth and what are the consequences? (6:4, 5)
4. What is the secret of genuine Christian contentment? (6:6-8)
5. How do verses 9 and 10 explain, in differing but similar ways, what happens when contentment is lacking? (6:9,10).
6. What sort of things in 1 Timothy cause people to wander from the faith? (see 1:6; 4:1f; 5:15; 6:10; 6:21)
7. What is the 'great gain' of 6:6 and what is the corresponding 'great loss' described in 6:9, 10?

THINK IT THROUGH

1. How is it best to deal with friction within the church when it develops? (6:3-5)
2. What are the marks which show whether a Christian is truly content? (6:6-8)
3. Describe some of the traps which people fall into when they want to get rich. (6:9)
4. In what ways have you observed the love of money being ruinous for someone's faith in Christ? (6:10)

LIVE IT OUT

1. How can we encourage each other to be more content and avoid a love of money?
2. What are the things which will help us not to wander from the faith?



appearing of Christ shape the way you live? (6:13-16)

3. What do you think might be involved for you in storing up treasures for the coming age? (6:12-19).
4. In your experience, what are the reasons why some people do wander from the faith? (6:20, 21)

LIVE IT OUT

1. How could the certainty of future appearing of Christ shape my behavior and decisions this week?
2. How can we encourage each other to be sort of people described in 6:18?

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

1 TIMOTHY 6:11-21

UNDERSTAND THE PASSAGE

1. What should Timothy flee from and what should he be pursuing and why? (6:11)
2. What is involved in fighting the good fight of the faith and how should it be done? (6:11, 12)
3. What encouragements does Paul give to Timothy in this struggle? (6:12-16)
4. What are the dangers for those who are rich? (6:17)
5. How are we to store up genuine riches? (6:18, 19)
6. What will guarding what was entrusted to Timothy mean in practice and why is it so important? (6:20-21)

THINK IT THROUGH

1. What are the warning signs that a minister is not fulfilling Paul's call in 6:11, 12?
2. To what extent should the future