



Guard the gospel

1&2 TIMOTHY

by Phillip Jensen

1&2 Timothy For You

If you are reading *1&2 Timothy For You* alongside this Good Book Guide, here is how the studies in this booklet link to the chapters of *1&2 Timothy For You*:

Study One → Ch 1-2	Study Five → Ch 8-9
Study Two → Ch 3-4	Study Six → Ch 9-10
Study Three → Ch 5-6	Study Seven → Ch 11
Study Four → Ch 7	

Find out more about *1&2 Timothy For You* at:
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Guard the gospel

The Good Book Guide to 1&2 Timothy

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ISBN: 9781784980191

Printed in India

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Introduction: Good Book Guides

Every Bible-study group is different—yours may take place in a church building, in a home or in a cafe, on a train, over a leisurely mid-morning coffee or squashed into a 30-minute lunch break. Your group may include new Christians, mature Christians, non-Christians, mums and tots, students, businessmen or teens. That's why we've designed these *Good Book Guides* to be flexible for use in many different situations.

Our aim in each session is to uncover the meaning of a passage, and see how it fits into the “big picture” of the Bible. But that can never be the end. We also need to appropriately apply what we have discovered to our lives. Let's take a look at what is included:

- ↔ **Talkabout:** Most groups need to “break the ice” at the beginning of a session, and here's the question that will do that. It's designed to get people talking around a subject that will be covered in the course of the Bible study.
- ↓ **Investigate:** The Bible text for each session is broken up into manageable chunks, with questions that aim to help you understand what the passage is about. The **Leader's Guide** contains **guidance for questions**, and sometimes ☑ additional “follow-up” questions.
- ⋮ **Explore more (optional):** These questions will help you connect what you have learned to other parts of the Bible, so you can begin to fit it all together like a jig-saw; or occasionally look at a part of the passage that's not dealt with in detail in the main study.
- **Apply:** As you go through a Bible study, you'll keep coming across **apply** sections. These are questions to get the group discussing what the Bible teaching means in practice for you and your church. ☑ **Getting personal** is an opportunity for you to think, plan and pray about the changes that you personally may need to make as a result of what you have learned.
- ↑ **Pray:** We want to encourage prayer that is rooted in God's word—in line with his concerns, purposes and promises. So each session ends with an opportunity to review the truths and challenges highlighted by the Bible study, and turn them into prayers of request and thanksgiving.

The **Leader's Guide** and introduction provide historical background information, explanations of the Bible texts for each session, ideas for **optional extra** activities, and guidance on how best to help people uncover the truths of God's word.

Why study 1&2 Timothy?

The two letters Paul wrote to his protégé Timothy were inspired by God for our learning. As he talks to his closest colleague, these letters give us a deep insight into the thinking of the great missionary apostle to the nations.

Nowhere can we get closer to Paul's mind than when he's talking to his true child in the faith, Timothy. While the two men were often separated, as they were when Paul wrote our letters, they also travelled together and spent time with each other (2 Corinthians 1:1; Colossians 1:1). And their closeness is nowhere more evident than in 2 Timothy, when Paul is coming to the end of his missionary endeavours and wishes to pass the baton on to his "son".

Yet these letters were not for Timothy alone—they reveal God's plan for our lives as well. Paul wrote 1 Timothy with a consciousness of a wider audience than that one man; and even the more private 2 Timothy contains the apostle's teaching, to be handed down to others who will in turn teach still others (2 Timothy 2:2).

The context of 1 and 2 Timothy is the Christian mission. Christianity is missionary at heart. Jesus himself was on a mission, sent by his Father and "came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15).

All Christians are missionaries. A missionary is not somebody who travels overseas. The essence is not the travel but the purpose-directed life of taking the gospel to others. To be a disciple of Jesus is to be a missionary.

1 and 2 Timothy are classic examples of missionary letters. In 1 Timothy Paul tells Timothy how to conduct himself in Paul's temporary absence (1 Timothy 3:14). In 2 Timothy Paul tells Timothy how to succeed him in the mission after he has gone (2 Timothy 4:1-8).

Because all Christians are engaged in the mission of Christ, the letters of the great missionary apostle, Paul, are obviously important to us. In particular his advice and instructions to his closest colleague are invaluable in framing our own lives as missionaries, as we seek, like Timothy, to guard the gospel.

1

1 Timothy 1:1-17

CHRIST CAME TO SAVE



talk about

1. Imagine writing to a younger Christian living in a different country. Think of three things you might want to tell them.



investigate

▶ Read 1 Timothy 1:1-7

2. How does Paul describe a) himself (v 1) and b) Timothy (v 2)?

DICTIONARY

Apostle (v 1): "apostle" means "sent". The apostles were sent by Jesus to continue his mission to save sinners.
Doctrine (v 3): teaching.
Genealogy (v 4): line of descent from an ancestor.

- What does this tell you about these two men?

3. What does Paul want Timothy to do (v 3-4)?

- How does this compare with the reason Paul writes his letter?
See 1 Timothy 3:14-15.

 **apply**

4. Increasingly today, any opinion that may divide or even cause any offence in society is silenced. But Paul says the aim of his charge to Timothy is *love* (v 5). So how can we lovingly challenge false teaching when we come across it?

5. Paul warns Timothy about “vain discussion” when people are without any real understanding of what’s being said (v 7). It’s good to ask questions as we discuss the Bible with others, but how can we avoid it becoming pointless discussion?



getting personal

When are you particularly tempted to get involved with vain discussions (either directly with others or online)?

How can you avoid getting into such situations?



investigate

Read 1 Timothy 1:8-17

6. Paul says that the law is good (v 8). Who is the law *not* for (v 9)?

DICTIONARY

Blasphemer (v 13): someone who speaks in an evil way about God.

7. Verses 9-10 list the reasons why a lawless world needs the law. This list largely follows the pattern of the Ten Commandments, but it uses strong and extreme examples for each of them. Fill in the gaps in this table:

The Ten Commandments (from Exodus 20)	Examples of lawless behaviour from 1 Timothy 1:9-19
No other gods (v 3)	
No idols (v 4-6)	Sinners (v 9)
No blasphemy (v 7)	
Keep the rest day holy (v 8-11)	
Honour parents (v 12)	
No killing (v 13)	
No adultery (v 14)	The sexually immoral (v 10)
No stealing (v 15)	
No false witness (v 16)	
No coveting (v 17)	(Not included in ch 1, but Paul does address greed in 1 Timothy 6:9-10.)



explore more

Paul says that the law is good (v 8). How would you answer these two wrong views of the law?

We don't need the law because we have the Spirit. (See Galatians 5:16.)

We don't need the law because we are justified by grace. (See Galatians 5:13-14.)

8. How does Paul describe himself in verses 13 and 15?

- Why was such a view crucial for him then, and for us now, in order to receive the gospel (v 15)?

9. Twice in verses 12-16, Paul says that he “received mercy”. What reason does he give each time?

- Verse 13:

- Verse 16:



- Is this what you expected? Why/why not?

10. When Paul was still known as Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:1-2), he didn't believe in Jesus and he hated those who followed him. How did Jesus change Saul (v 14)?



getting personal

Paul received mercy because of Christ's "perfect patience" (v 16). Looking back at your own life, how was Jesus patient with you before you came to faith? Or, if you can't remember a time when you didn't love and follow Jesus, how has he patiently enabled you to grow in your love for him?

Think of someone who doesn't yet know Jesus. Pray that Jesus will patiently bring them to himself. Pray that you will play your part in sharing his gospel with them.



apply

11. List two people you want to share the gospel with. In each case, do you think they need to receive mercy because of ignorance (they genuinely believe that their views on Jesus are correct) or defiance (having heard the gospel, they choose to turn their backs on God)?



12. For each person named in question 11, write down one thing you will do this week to help them move on in their understanding or to challenge them in their defiance.



pray

“To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (1 Timothy 1:17)

Take each section of verse 17 in turn and use it to praise and thank God.

