

Lesson Fifty-four

1st Timothy

Greeting (1:1-2)	Personal Encouragement and Exhortation	The Ministry	The Minister	Conclusion (6:21)
	Timothy's task Paul's testimony Gospel's trustworthiness	Men and women (2) (Prayer and submission) Elders and deacons (3) (Qualifications for leadership)	Seeing the importance of (4): Faithful teaching True godliness Sound doctrine Perseverance Paying attention to (5): Various age groups Elders Widows Wisdom Developing a new perspective toward (6): Masters and slaves Internals and externals Rich and poor Eternal vs. temporal	
	CHAPTER 1	CHAPTERS 2-3	CHAPTERS 4-6	
Emphasis	The work of ministry		The one who ministers	
Command	Be true!	Be wise!	Be strong and faithful!	
Theme	Leadership of the church, the household of God			
Key Verses	3:14-15			
Christ in 1 Timothy	Jesus is the Mediator between God and people, the ransom for all, who came in the flesh and was taken up in glory (2:5-6; 3:16).			

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Author: The apostle Paul is expressly mentioned as the author of this book. 1st Timothy is one of the three “Pastoral Epistles” that we find in the New Testament. The pastoral epistles are the books of 1st-2nd Timothy and the letter to Titus. These are called pastoral epistles because they were written to young men who were serving in pastoral roles, not to a congregation as a whole. Most believe they were some of the last things written by Paul shortly before he died and these letters therefore reflect the concerns that Paul wanted to address one last time.

The fact that they were written to individuals does not mean that they were not ever read to a congregation. The teachings contained within indicate that Paul intended for a larger audience to also read the letter. These letters are not just a handbook for preachers, but have a lot of information that would be of general interest to the church, both then and now.

Recipient: The recipient of the letter is identified as “Timothy, my true son in the faith.” Timothy was from the city of Lystra, in modern-day Turkey. His father was a Gentile and there is no evidence that he was a Christian. His mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois were both Jewish Christians who were well known in the early church for their “sincere faith” (Acts 16:1, 2 Timothy 1:5). Paul met Timothy when he came to Lystra on his first missionary journey. It is unknown whether Timothy was already a believer or whether Paul led him to Christ, but we do know that he was well versed in the Old Testament Scriptures thanks to his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 3:15). Paul was impressed with Timothy and took him on as an apprentice helper.

Timothy joined Paul on his second missionary journey. He was with Paul during his Roman imprisonment (Phil. 1:1, Col. 1:1). In fact, six of Paul’s letters include Timothy in the salutation. Paul assigned Timothy to go to Ephesus and to help the church there overcome the difficulties it was facing. The letter to Timothy was written to encourage him in the work he was doing in Ephesus.

Paul was so close to Timothy that his final message was a letter to his protégé asking him to come and visit him in his final days (2 Tim. 1:4, 4:9, 21). It is evident that he really did view Timothy as his own son.

Timothy may have been somewhat timid and passive by nature. Therefore, Paul's letters to him repeatedly spur him into action. He was not to let anything, even his relative youth, stand in the way of performing his duty as the supervising pastor of the church there in Ephesus.

TRAINING FOR GODLINESS

1 Timothy 4:7-8

In recent years, physical fitness has become big business. Every community has fitness centers which are filled with people working hard to achieve goals related to a fitness goal. Physical fitness is important, but it is not nearly as important as spiritual fitness. As Paul writes to his young friend in ministry, he challenges him, and us, to be more concerned with spiritual fitness than physical fitness. As we consider this passage, note three things it teaches us:

I. AN IMPERATIVE TO BE OBEYED

A. "Train yourself..." The Greek word translated "train" is *gumnazo* from which we get our English word "gymnasium." It refers to the strenuous, self-sacrificing training an athlete goes through. So as Paul mentions training one's self for godliness, he is not merely referring to the passive activity of sitting in a pew each week and listening to a preacher, but to actively working to strengthen our spiritual muscles.

B. Most of us don't think of spiritual fitness as being such an active responsibility. We tend to focus on spiritual growth that is easy and doesn't demand too much of us. Our focus, however, should be like that of an athlete training for a competition. We should spiritually "train" on good days and bad, when we feel good and when we don't feel good. Being a "strong" Christian doesn't come by osmosis. It is something we have to work toward.

II. AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

A. "Train yourself. . . ." Timothy certainly had several strong spiritual influences in his life. As already stated, his mother and his grandmother were strong believers. Now, he had no less than the Apostle Paul who would write the majority of the New Testament as his mentor. Yet, the responsibility for his spiritual growth rested with him and him alone. No one else could train for him.

B. In our society, everyone like to pass the blame if things are not the way they think they should be. However, if we are not where we should be spiritually, we have no one to blame but ourselves. Each of us has a Bible, each of us has the ability to pray, each of us has access to sources that can help us grow in our faith. We must take responsibility for our own spiritual growth.

III. AN INVALUABLE GOAL WORTH REACHING

A. People typically have goals when they begin physical training. They work out in order to lose weight or to compete in a race or some other competition. What is the goal for which we are training?

B. Jerry Bridges, in his book, "The Practice of Godliness," defined godliness as "a personal attitude toward God that results in actions that are pleasing to God." We might call this a devotion to God. Paul emphasizes the importance of this attitude or devotion toward God by reminding us that spiritual training only has benefits for this world: no matter how hard you work out, your body is still moving toward the grave. Godliness, however, has value both for this life and the life to come. Godliness benefits us now AND for all eternity.

So what is your level of spiritual fitness? And what are you doing to get stronger in Christ today?