



# The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V22 N8 February 23, 2020

## DEAR TIMOTHY

“Steering Clear of Spiritual Shipwreck”

1 Timothy 1:12-20

### THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

#### Faithfulness

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

*“Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.”*

Proverbs 3:3-4



How can we avoid spiritual shipwreck?

*Integrity* is a difficult word to define. It's more than mere *honesty* (cf., Mt 22:16), more than just moral *uprightness* (Tit 2:7-8), even more than virtuous *character* (1Ti 3:2). It seems to me that “integrity” can be more easily defined *negatively* than *positively*. Things that are *flawed* lack integrity; take a cup with a crack in it, for example, or a smart phone with an unresponsive touch screen. Things that are *incomplete* lack integrity; take a deck of cards with no aces, for example, or a book with chapters missing. Finally, things that are *inconsistent* lack integrity; take a physician who smokes cigarettes, for example, or an obese fitness instructor.

Paul urged Timothy to remain in Ephesus to command certain teachers, who had no integrity, to stop teaching nonsense. They lacked integrity because they were personally *flawed*; they were not ministering out of “love” because they had abandoned “a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (v. 5) from which love emanates. They lacked integrity because their teaching was *incomplete*; it had no meaningful content. It amounted to nothing more than “meaningless talk,” resulting from a wrongheaded devotion to Jewish “myths and endless genealogies” that promoted “controversial speculation rather than advancing God’s work” (v. 4). Instead, they should have been teaching “sound doctrine that conforms to the gospel” (v. 10). Finally, they lacked integrity because they were *inconsistent*. They pawned themselves off as respected teachers of the law, but ironically, they did not know what they were talking about (v. 7). They were blindly overconfident, while using the law “unlawfully” as a tool for transforming the righteous rather than “lawfully” as a tool for

convicting the unrighteous.

Paul doesn’t use a specific word for *integrity* in 1 Timothy 1:3-20, but he does refer to its specific sense when he reminds Timothy of the prophecies made about him, so that by recalling them Timothy might “fight the battle well,” that is, carry out the apostle’s command regarding false teachers, while “holding on to faith and a good conscience,” that is, while maintaining his integrity.

On the one hand, drifting away from faith and from a clear conscience is easy; it happens. The one leads to the other. On the other, teaching the Bible is demanding because interpreting the Bible is demanding. Serious questions may go unanswered along the way and doubts surrounding the Bible may accumulate slowly over time, and as the doubts accumulate, some pastors and teachers wake up to find themselves teaching what they no longer believe, leaving them to act like Christians only for the cameras, only to meet the expectations of their parishioners. Doubts coupled with the doubters’ necessarily disingenuous lifestyles leave them between a rock and a hard place. Because they can’t give up their livelihoods, they hold on and continue teaching long after giving up faith and a good conscience. Some turn to an easier message to escape—one focused on self-improvement, prosperity, or social issues. No wonder James says, “Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly” (3:1). What’s more, pastor/teachers aren’t the only ones who must guard their integrity. Believers in general must be careful to hold on to faith and a good conscience, too, in order to avoid spiritual shipwreck.



## EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

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12 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. 13 Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. 14 The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst. 16 But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. 17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

18 Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well, 19 holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith. 20 Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle “strength” in v. 12.
- Box “that” indicating *reason* in v. 12 (cf., ESV).
- Circle “trustworthy” in v. 12.
- Underline “blasphemer,” “persecutor,” and “violent man” in v. 13.
- Box “because” indicating *reason* in v. 13.
- Circle “ignorance” in v. 13.
- Bracket “grace,” “faith,” and “love” in v. 14.
- Highlight v. 15.
- Box “but” indicating *contrast* in v. 16.
- Box “so that” indicating *purpose* in vv. 16, 18.
- Underline “the worst of sinners” in v. 16.
- Circle “prophecies” in v. 18.
- Bracket “faith and a good conscience” in v. 19.
- Circle “Hymenaeus” and “Alexander” in v. 20.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, “This text is about \_\_\_\_\_.”



## DIG DEEPER

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Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. The Lord gave Paul strength. What kind of strength, when was it given, and has it been given to us, too?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Identify the “service” to which Paul was appointed (cf., Ac 9:15).
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Why does Paul call himself a blasphemer (cf., Ac 26:9-11)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Paul likes literary *trilogies*. Identify the corresponding ones in verses 13 and 14.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Paul wasn’t the very worst sinner ever, was he? Explain.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. For what *reason* was Paul, the worst of sinners, shown mercy?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Put what prompted Paul’s *doxology* in your own words.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Explain the relationship of “faith” and “a good conscience” to *integrity*.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. Paul handed Hymenaeus and Alexander over to Satan. How so?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. **Discussion:** Talk about what “suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith” means and whether believers today can suffer it.

### Commentary On The Text

A close reading of 1 Timothy 1:3-20 reveals Paul's use of a literary device called *inclusio*, which points to the unity of the chapter. One commentator observes: "The interplay of vocabulary between the opening and closing verses of this chapter is striking. Paul calls Timothy 'my son' in verses 2 and 18. In verse 3 he tells Timothy what to command (*parangello*) the false teachers; in verse 18 Paul uses the noun form of the same verb (*parangelia*, translated 'instruction'), but this time he commands Timothy himself. In verse 3 Paul mentions his prior urging of Timothy to stay at Ephesus; in verse 18 he mentions prior 'prophecies' about Timothy. The apostle does not mean prophecies related to Ephesus; rather, he wants Timothy's ministry there to be consistent with the prophecies made about him as well as with Paul's urgings. These prophecies pertain somehow to the fight he will wage there, something not mentioned in the earlier section. The next words, 'faith and a good conscience' (v. 19), pick up, in reverse order, 'a good conscience and a sincere faith' from verse 5 (see comments there). The structure of the phrases that follow (though not all the words in them) are also similar: 'Some have wandered away from these' (v. 6) and 'some have rejected these' (v. 19). Finally, verse 7 refers to some of the heretics without naming them, while verse 20 cites two heretics by name. There is, therefore, something of a long, complex *inclusio* in these two sections, marking out chapter 1 as a literary unity" (Walter L. Liefeld, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 77).

Paul's customary thanksgiving usually follows the salutation in his epistles, but in the case of 1 Timothy, he has inserted a statement regarding his purpose for leaving Timothy in Ephesus between them (vv. 3-7). Then following the thanksgiving (vv. 12-17), he returns to his command to Timothy first given in verse 3 (vv. 18-20). So why the digression? Apparently, Paul wanted to encourage Timothy by reminding him that God's grace is sufficient. It strengthened Paul, who was once "a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man" (v. 13), for his task, and it will do the same for Timothy (vv. 18-19).

Paul begins by thanking Christ Jesus for his conversion and calling (v. 12). Three interrelated things happened when he was saved on his way

to Damascus (Ac 9:1-22). The Lord strengthened him for his future ministry, referring to an initial equipping or gifting for service, the Lord demonstrated his confidence in him, recognizing that he would be faithful, and the Lord commissioned him to take the gospel to the Gentiles.

Paul continues by magnifying the immense patience of his Savior (vv. 13-16). For although he had been a *blasphemer*, a *persecutor*, and a *violent man*, the Lord's *grace*, *faith* and *love* had overflowed to him (vv. 13-14). No wonder he then confirms that the saying recorded in verse 15 is trustworthy: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost" (ESV). His personal testimony is evidence of that.

Paul ends by explaining the reason behind the Lord's extraordinary display of mercy to him, namely, to "display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life" (v. 16). One commentator explains: "In vv 13-15 Paul is acting out his role as a living example of God's patience and mercy, a role assigned to him at his conversion as v 16 says" (William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 46, *Pastoral Epistles*, 57).

Finally, the apostle erupts in praise to God as he often does in his letters (see Ro 11:33-36; 16:25-27; Eph 3:20-21; 1Ti 6:15-16). Here he is amazed that God would, in his mercy and grace, stoop to save a sinner such as himself. In the words of one commentator: "It is a doxology honoring God as (1) the King, (2) beyond the limitation of time, (3) incapable of dying, (4) invisible, and (5) existing alone as God" (Liefeld, 73).

The chapter concludes where it began — with Paul's command to Timothy to stop false teachers from spreading their nonsense. To succeed he is to remember the encouraging prophecies made about him and to hold on to faith and a good conscience. In a nutshell: "He should be careful. The same traps that ensnared the opponents are also present for him, and he is therefore to concentrate on remaining faithful and keep his conscience clear. *He must maintain his spiritual integrity*" (William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 46, *Pastoral Epistles*, 72, italics added). Otherwise, he will wind up like Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom Paul disciplined by excommunicating them from the church.

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## Word Studies/Notes

v. 12 **strength**      “This strengthening is not a daily empowering but refers to his initial call to the ministry and the gifts he received that enabled him to perform his apostolic tasks . . . Paul is implicitly arguing that just as his own calling was sufficient for his task, so also Timothy’s is equal for this task . . . Paul is thinking back to the Damascus-road experience when he received his commission to carry out his task (Acts 9:5). This provides a parallel to vv 18-20, where Paul refers both to Timothy’s call into the ministry and to his gifts. In both of their calls, it is God who empowers them for their tasks” (William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 46, *Pastoral Epistles*, 49, 50).

v. 12 **trustworthy**      Cf., “because he judged me faithful” (ESV). “Paul is probably saying that God knew that he would be trustworthy in the future and therefore appointed him to service in the present. Paul’s faithfulness was a potential yet to be realized. Chrysostom adds that Paul’s subsequent faithfulness was only possible because of God’s empowerment, citing 1 Cor 15:10 and Phil 2:13 (‘Homily 2’; NPNF 13:417)” (Mounce, 51).

v. 13 **blasphemer . . .**      “As a ‘blasphemer’ Paul had denied Christ by word and deed and attempted to force others to do the same (Acts 26:11). As a persecutor Paul hunted down Christians like wild animals (Acts 22:4, 7). As a ‘violent man’ Paul acted like a ‘bully’” (Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, NAC, 73).

v. 13 **ignorance**      “Paul had not opposed Jesus Christ and His church because he wanted to dishonor God. Paul believed he was serving God by persecuting Christians. He was mistaken about who Jesus Christ was. ‘For this reason’ God had ‘mercy’ on him. The Old Covenant also distinguished between unwitting and purposeful sinning (cf. Lev. 22:14; Num. 15:22-31; Rom. 10:3; 2 Tim. 1:3)” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 1 Timothy,” 2020 ed., 26, [planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1timothy.pdf](http://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1timothy.pdf)).

v. 14 **grace, faith, love**      “‘Grace’ provided his salvation, ‘faith’ appropriated it, and ‘love’ applied it” (Ralph Earle, “1 Timothy,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 11:354). “The triad of grace, faith, and love offsets the triad of sins in v 13a and is reminiscent of the triad in 1:5. It also counters any possible misconception arising from v 13a that Paul thought he deserved salvation” (Mounce, 53).

v. 15 **trustworthy**      “The passage introduces the first of five sections in the Pastorals that contain the term ‘trustworthy’ saying. The passages in which the formula appears are 1 Tim 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Titus 3:8. All five of the passages contain the statement ‘Here is a trustworthy saying.’ Two passages (here and in 1 Tim 4:9) contain also an added phrase that says the statement ‘deserves full acceptance’” (Lea and Griffin, 75).

v. 15 **worst of sinners**      “His use of the term ‘worst’ (*prōtos*), literally *first*, does not merely suggest the idea of first in order but the concept of the most prominent or leading. Paul sincerely saw himself as the leading sinner among candidates for the dubious honor” (Lea and Griffin, 74). “Perhaps the apostle meant that he was the ‘foremost’ sinner – in the sense that his sin of aggressively tearing down the work that God was building up – was the worst kind of sin” (Constable, 28-29).

v. 18 **prophecies**      “Sometime in the past, someone had given ‘prophecies’ concerning Timothy’s effectiveness as a servant of Christ (4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6; cf. Acts 13:2). We have no definite record of *who* gave them, *when*, or *where*, unless it was at Timothy’s ordination (4:14), but Paul referred to them here to motivate Timothy to carry on. Perhaps Paul and or Silas, who were both prophets, had given these prophecies (cf. Acts 13:1; 15:32)” (Constable, 30).

v. 20 **Hymenaeus and**      “‘Handing someone over to Satan’ may mean that Satan is given permission to inflict some illness or disability on the evildoer (cf. Job 2:6). It may picture life outside the fellowship of the church as being in the realm and control of Satan’s sphere (cf. 1 Cor. 5:5). Or it may mean both. Thus, to deliver these men to Satan could mean that Paul had removed them from the church’s fellowship, and placed them in Satan’s realm where they would experience his malice (cf. Acts 5:1-11; 13:11)” (Constable, 33).

### Other Texts to Consider

#### Acts 26:9-11

“I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the Lord’s people in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. I was so obsessed with persecuting them that I even hunted them down in foreign cities.”



## APPLY THE TEXT

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### CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

In light of the Lord's matchless grace to you, hold on to faith and a good conscience, namely, your spiritual integrity, as you serve him, so that you might avoid spiritual shipwreck.

### CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



## 3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



## FAMILY TALK

In our text this week, Paul encourages young Timothy to “fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience” (1 Tim 1:18-19). Do you consider faith worth fighting for? For example, do you feel your quiet time with the Lord is worth protecting? Should Sunday church attendance be a priority for your family? I’m a child of the 80’s, so I remember when Sunday was off limits to everything from sports activities to buying a new dishwasher. Scheduling a birthday party or T-Ball game on Wednesday nights or Sunday mornings was unheard of. Today, not so much. I remember last year talking to a family who had a sports tournament scheduled on Easter. You know, Easter, the day millions around the globe celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I’ve heard a countless number of times, “Sunday is my only day off,” or “Sunday is my only day to sleep in.” The world tells us church isn’t worth waking up early for, that we can meet God in our own back yard. Even less mature Christians might place a low priority on church involvement or connection. Let me encourage you, this faith is worth fighting for! It’s worth it to learn more about Christ and what He has planned for your life. It’s worth it to connect with other believers so that you can sharpen each other. It’s worth it to lay a gospel foundation so your children can stand firm when faced with difficulty. We are praying for you this week!

### What Does The Bible Say?

Read 1 Timothy 1:12-20

1. For what did Paul thank Christ? Why did Paul need this?
2. Why did Christ come into the world?
3. Why was it important for Timothy to follow Paul’s instructions (v 19)?

### What Do You Think?

Why did Paul need strength?  
When do you need strength?

### What Do You Do?

Fight for your faith! Set your alarm for the same time each day and set aside 15 minutes for God – 5 minutes each to read the Bible, pray, and worship in song.

## CORE COMPETENCY: Faithfulness

I am loyal to God and others, so they know they can count on me.

## MEMORY VERSE: Galatians 6:9

*Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

## KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: [kids@wearecentral.org](mailto:kids@wearecentral.org)

- \_\_\_\_\_ I completed my Bible Study
- \_\_\_\_\_ I memorized this week’s verse
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought my Bible to church
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought a friend



CHILD’S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

GRADE \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

# OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

## CENTRAL BELIEFS

**Authority of the Bible** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)  
*I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.*

**Church** (Ephesians 4:15-16)  
*I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.*

**Eternity** (John 14:1-4)  
*I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.*

**The Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:9)  
*I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.*

**Humanity** (John 3:16)  
*I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.*

**Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)  
*I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.*

**Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 1:1-4)  
*I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.*

**Life Purpose** (Acts 20:24)  
*I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.*

**Personal God** (Psalm 121:1-2)  
*I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.*

**Salvation by Grace** (Ephesians 2:8-9)  
*I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.*



## CENTRAL VIRTUES

**Love** (1 John 4:10-12)  
*I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.*

**Joy** (John 15:11)  
*I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.*

**Peace** (Philippians 4:6-7)  
*I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.*

**Patience** (Proverbs 14:29)  
*I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.*

**Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15)  
*I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others*

**Faithfulness** (Proverbs 3:3-4)  
*I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.*

**Gentleness** (Philippians 4:5)  
*I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.*

**Self-Control** (Titus 2:11-13)  
*I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.*

**Grace** (Colossians 3:13)  
*I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.*

**Hope** (1 Peter 1:3-5)  
*I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.*

**Humility** (Philippians 2:3-4)  
*I choose to esteem others above myself.*



## CENTRAL PRACTICES

**Bible Study** (Hebrews 4:12)  
*I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Biblical Community** (Acts 2:44-47)  
*I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.*

**Compassion** (Psalm 82:3-4)  
*I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.*

**Disciple-Making** (2 Timothy 2:2)  
*I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.*

**Evangelism** (Acts 1:8)  
*I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.*

**Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)  
*I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.*

**Prayer** (Psalm 66:16-20)  
*I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Single-Mindedness** (Matthew 6:33)  
*I focus on God and His priorities for my life.*

**Spiritual Gifts** (Romans 12:4-6)  
*I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.*

**Worship** (Psalm 95:1-7)  
*I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.*

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