

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES: GOD'S DIRECTIVES FOR HIS UNDERSHEPHERDS

I. 1 Timothy: Basic Local Church Ministry

B. Asserting God's Truth On Grace Versus Legalism

(1 Timothy 1:8-17)

I. Introduction

- A. In view of reports of great needs and problems in various churches, much of which has been produced by errant Church leaders, we view the Pastoral Epistles, handbooks on local pastoral ministry, for insight.
- B. 1 Timothy 1:8-17 directs us to assert God's truth on the huge issue of grace versus legalism, a timeless, invaluable lesson throughout the history of the Church (as follows):

II. Asserting God's Truth On Grace Versus Legalism, 1 Timothy 1:8-17.

- A. Paul explained the importance of teaching on grace versus legalism for Church leaders, 1 Timothy 1:8-17:
 1. After critiquing teachers who desire to be teachers of the Law as not understanding what they say or the things about which they make confident assertions (1 Timothy 1:7 ESV), "Paul wanted to be sure that he was not . . . disparaging the Law," but show "that the Law is good provided it is used properly," 1 Timothy 1:8 NIV; Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 732.
 2. Paul then explained how the Mosaic Law was not meant "for one who had already recognized his sin and turned to Christ," for "(t)hat person is no longer under the Law but should now walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:13-26). The Law is intended for those who remain unconvinced of their sin," Ibid. (Romans 3:19)
 3. Paul gave "examples which seem to be intentionally based on the Ten Commandments (cf. Ex. 20:3-10)":
 - a. He began "with three pairs corresponding to the *first* table of the Decalogue dealing with offenses against God: (1) lawbreakers and rebels, (2) the ungodly and sinful, (3) the unholy (*anosiois*, "not devout"; cf. *hosious* in 1 Tim. 2:8) and irreligious (*bebelios*, "profane"; cf. 4:7; 6:20; 2 Tim. 2:16)," Ibid.
 - b. "Paul then listed violators of the first five commandments of the *second* table of the Decalogue: those who kill their fathers and mothers represent the ultimate violation of the fifth commandment, and murderers the sixth. Adulterers and perverts pertain to the seventh commandment, which was generally broadly interpreted to include all forms of sexual sin. Slave traders may correspond to the eighth commandment since kidnapping was viewed as the ultimate act of stealing (Ex. 21:16; Deut. 24:7.) Liars and perjurers clearly pertain to the ninth commandment" with "(o)nly the 10th commandment ("You shall not covet")" being excluded from Paul's list, "but cf. Rom. 7:7," Ibid.
 4. However, where the Law could only condemn the sinner (Romans 3:19-20), Paul rejoiced that the glorious Gospel of God committed to his trust of faith in Christ saved the sinner from God's condemnation when he trusted in Christ and was pronounced righteous by God, 1 Timothy 1:11 with Romans 3:21-28.
 5. Paul then gave a personal testimony of God's grace in his own experience, 1 Timothy 1:12-15:
 - a. He told of his gracious positioning by the Lord as an Apostle though he had been a great sinner that had wickedly persecuted believers in Christ, 1 Timothy 1:12-13 with Acts 7:58-8:3; 9:1.
 - b. Nevertheless, since Paul had sinned in ignorance in unbelief, though he was the chief of sinners, he obtained mercy to be saved and positioned in Christ to be an apostle in the Church through God's abundant grace in the sphere of faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, 1 Timothy 1:14-15.
 6. The apostle explained that God then made him, the chief of sinners, a trophy of encouragement to other sinners as to what God both could and would do for anyone else who repented and trusted in Christ for salvation, a fact that caused Paul to break out in a doxology of praise to the Lord, 1 Timothy 1:16-17.
- B. This teaching on grace versus legalism has huge application to Church leaders throughout Church History:
 1. Though in Paul's era, "legalism" usually involved teaching or practicing observance of the Mosaic Law to please God in the futile power of the sin nature, "legalism" today includes efforts to keep **any man-made rule** or **even a Biblical directive**, **BUT** in the **futile power** of the **sin nature**, Col. 2:20-22; Rom. 7:15-20.
 2. Instead, we are to rely on God the Holy Spirit to live out the directives of God's Word, Romans 8:3-4.

Lesson: Paul taught that heeding the Mosaic Law in the power of the sin nature violated God's intent in giving the Law to convict lost men of their inability to live up to God's righteousness, all so they might trust in Christ to be saved. The Law was thus given to convict the unsaved, and believers are to obey God's Word in the Spirit's power.

Application: May we pastors and teachers avoid any and all teachings of "legalism," the keeping of either God's Law or man's rules by means of the sin nature, but instead teach reliance on the Holy Spirit to heed God's Word.