

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES: GOD'S DIRECTIVES FOR HIS UNDERSHEPHERDS

I. 1 Timothy: Basic Local Church Ministry

C. Heeding God's Personal Ministry Spiritual Warfare Commission (1 Timothy 1:18-20)

I. Introduction

- A. In view of reports of great needs and problems in various churches, much of which has been produced by Church leaders themselves, we view the Pastoral Epistles, handbooks on local pastoral ministry, for insight.
- B. 1 Timothy 1:18-20 directs those personally commissioned by the Lord to serve in a specific local church to fulfill their spiritual warfare commission (as follows):

II. Heeding God's Personal Ministry Spiritual Warfare Commission, 1 Timothy 1:18-20.

- A. At 1 Timothy 1:18a, Paul mentioned his commitment of "the charge" (KJV), "this *parangelian*" to Timothy, the same Greek word in 1 Timothy 1:5a and the same one used as a verb in 1 Timothy 1:3 and that means a "directive from an authoritative voice," U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 720-721; T. D. N. T., v. V, p. 763-765.
- B. Thus, just as Paul with apostolic authority had commissioned Timothy to instruct (KJV "charge") certain men not to teach heretical doctrines or pay attention to myths and endless genealogies in 1 Timothy 1:3, and just as Timothy's "commandment" (KJV; *parangelias*) for others in 1 Timothy 1:5 was to be love from a pure heart, a good conscience and an unhypocritical faith, so Paul was again referring to that commission in verse 18a.
- C. That commission for Timothy given by apostolic authority was to be accomplished in accord with the prophecies that had been made earlier by New Testament Church prophets regarding Timothy's genuine call to the pastoral ministry, his spiritual gifting to that end and thus to his fitness for that ministry, 1 Timothy 1:18b.
- D. Armed with such a commission and assurance of evidences of his calling and fitness for service, Timothy was to "war a good warfare" (KJV), literally, to "serve as a soldier" (*strateuo*) in an "expedition, campaign" (*strateia*), Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 777-778; 1 Timothy 1:18c. This campaign would cover the time period needed for Timothy's effort to see men cease teaching heretical beliefs and consistently expound Scripture so that they might produce in their hearers love from a pure heart, a good conscience and an unhypocritical faith. These goals take "great patience" (2 Timothy 4:2b NIV) to realize, so Paul's call in 1 Timothy 1:3a KJV that Timothy "abide still at Ephesus" implied a long-term pastorate!
- E. Timothy was to perform in this spiritual campaign with two key characteristics -- "faith and a good conscience," indispensable characteristics for any discipler facing continual angelic conflicts, 1 Timothy 1:19a.
- F. Paul warned Timothy against departing from faith and a good conscience, for some had rejected these things, experiencing shipwreck in their Christian faith as in the case of Hymenaeus and Alexander, 1 Timothy 1:19b-20a. Paul had thus used his apostolic authority to hand these men over to Satan to be afflicted by him that they might learn through being disciplined (*paideuo*, Ibid., p. 608-609) not to blaspheme, 1 Timothy 1:20b.

Lesson: Paul revealed that Timothy had received by apostolic authority a spiritual warfare commission as pastor at the Church of Ephesus that was accompanied by evidences of his true calling, gifting and qualifications for ministry. That commission directed that he engage in a spiritual military campaign, staying long-term at that Church he was assigned by God to charge men not to teach heresies or non-Bible-expositional teachings, but to expound God's Word to produce in his hearers love from a pure heart, a good conscience and an unhypocritical faith. Timothy was to complete this assignment by nurturing his own faith and conscience before the Lord, that he not forsake these things lest he make shipwreck of his faith and stand in need of God's severe discipline.

Application: This commission has extensive applications for pastors and all believers who disciple others (as follows): (1) Every spiritual discipler must be called and equipped by God to perform the task he is assigned to perform or he will not succeed in that calling. There must thus be clear evidence both to himself and to other credible and official witnesses around him that he is called and equipped that he not fail when the spiritual war he faces becomes intense! (2) Also, the spiritual leader who discipled must be committed to staying at his ministry assignment until the discipling task is completed. This generally implies long-term efforts, not bouncing from one assignment to the next in the Christian life. (3) The task involves directing others away from heresies and non-Bible-exposition teaching as he expounds Scripture, producing in his hearers love from a pure heart, a good conscience and an unhypocritical faith. (4) The spiritual leader will face angelic conflict in fulfilling this commission, so he must hold firmly to faith in God and His Word along with a good conscience lest rejecting these things lead to his making shipwreck of his own faith, resulting in God's severe discipline.