


JULY-SEPTEMBER 1993

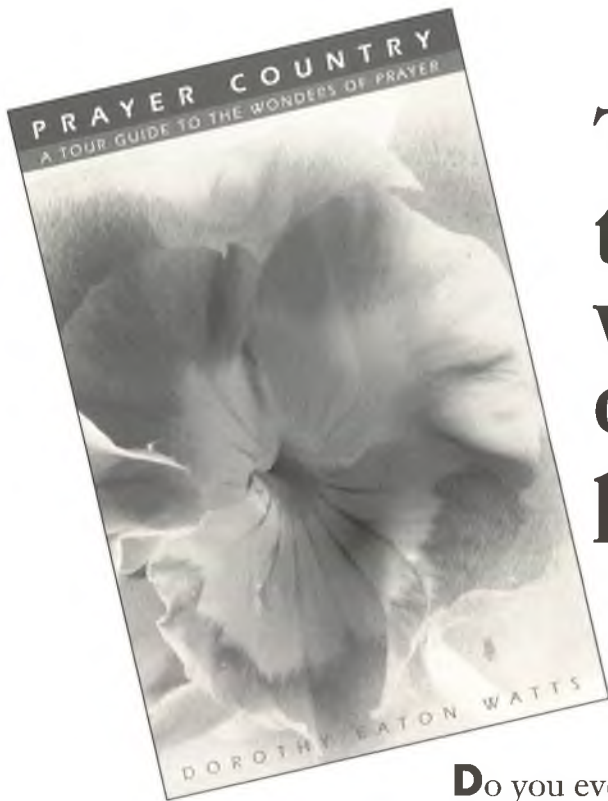
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# TIMOTHY & TITUS GET WITH THE PROGRAM

JULY — SEPTEMBER 1993

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# TIMOTHY & TITUS GET WITH THE PROGRAM



## Contents & Contributors

- 1 The Comfort in a Simple Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **8**  
**Hong Kong Adventist College, Kowloon, Hong Kong**  
*Campus Editor:* Ernest Toh  
*Contributors:*  
 Chak Yun Chuen      Dana Latchmi Powmesamy      Charles H. Tidwell, Jr.  
 Emil G. Fernando      Patrick Lew      Ernest Toh
- 2 Solving Church Problems** \_\_\_\_\_ **16**  
**Seventh-day Adventist Churches, Boise and Nampa, Idaho**  
*Editor:* Luan Miller  
*Contributors:*  
 Sandy Johnson      Luan Miller      Jerry D. Thomas  
 Tim Lale      Glen Robinson      Mark A. Winchester
- 3 Ignorance Is Not Bliss** \_\_\_\_\_ **24**  
**Seventh-day Adventist Churches, Suburban Maryland and Virginia**  
*Editor:* Gary B. Swanson  
*Contributors:*  
 Michèle Beach      Patricia Humphrey      Charles Mills  
 Curt Dewees      Evert McDowell      Gary Patterson
- 4 A Woman's Place . . .** \_\_\_\_\_ **32**
- 5 The Price of Leadership** \_\_\_\_\_ **40**  
**Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama**  
*Campus Editor:* Bernard W. Benn  
*Contributors:*  
 Sylvia Barnes      Robyn R. Jackson      David T. Person, II  
 Bernard W. Benn      Roland L. McKenzie      Agniel Samson  
 Sammy R. Browne      Victoria Joiner Miller      Emmanuel Saunders  
 Lela M. Gooding      Anthonye Earle Perkins      Mervyn A. Warren
- 6 Beware the Pantry Police!** \_\_\_\_\_ **48**  
**Kettering College of Medical Arts, Kettering, Ohio**  
*Campus Editor:* David Evans  
*Contributors:*  
 Brian Christenson      Robert L. Dunn      Hearly G. Mayr  
 Randy Daniel      David Evans      Dan Stevens

- 7 The Backbone of the Church** \_\_\_\_\_ **56**  
**Howard University, Washington, D.C.**  
*Campus Editor:* Lyndrey A. Niles  
*Contributors:*  
 Delbert Baker                      Kenrick H. Jones                      Ruth Rhone  
 Anesther O. Henry-Shaw              Bill G. Neely                      Yvette Weir  
 Wilma A. Hosten
- 8 Row, Row, Row Your Boat** \_\_\_\_\_ **64**
- 9 Gentleness as a Weapon** \_\_\_\_\_ **72**  
**Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington**  
*Campus Editor:* John C. Cress  
*Contributors:*  
 Kellie Bond                      Henning Guldhammer                      Pedrito U. Maynard-  
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 Reimer                      Bruce C. Johanson                      Andrew Woodruff  
 Meaghan Cutting                      Michael Zbaraschuk
- 10 The Cretan in All of Us** \_\_\_\_\_ **80**
- 11 Incredible Credibility** \_\_\_\_\_ **88**  
**Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists,**  
**Collegedale, Tennessee**  
*Campus Editor:* Ken Rogers  
*Contributors:*  
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 B. J. Boles                      Byron Corbett                      Ken Rogers  
 Leslie Brooks                      Jeffrey Gang                      Sabine Vatel  
 Alex Bryan                      Stan Hobbs
- 12 Feeling Peculiar?** \_\_\_\_\_ **96**  
**Florida Hospital SDA Church, Orlando, Florida**  
*Campus Editor:* Melody Lowe  
*Contributors:*  
 Michael Fulbright                      Danny B. Howell                      Patti Smedley  
 Randy Haffner                      Amy Shultz                      Rick Stevens
- 13 One Last Grace Note** \_\_\_\_\_ **104**  
**Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia**  
*Campus Editors:* Robert K. McIver  
*Contributors:*  
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## This Quarter's Photographers



Raj Sadanala and Angie Holdsworth collaborated in the illustrative photographs that grace this quarter's issue of CQ. Raj is a prephysical therapy student at Columbia Union College who also works in the office of food-supported development for ADRA International at the General Conference. Angie is associate editor of *Liberty Alert* and circulation manager for *Liberty* magazine at the North American Division. All of the models in this quarter's illustrations are young adults who work at the world headquarters of the General Conference.



# Getting the Most Out of CQ

## Facts You Should Know

CQ is based on the conviction that the Word of God offers transforming power and that group study is one important way to tap into that power. CQ's purpose is to provide Seventh-day Adventist young adults with a resource for devotional study on mutual topics, which can then be discussed each week in Sabbath School. Many who use the adult quarterly find that because CQ deals with the same topics as the adult quarterly, it enriches lesson study and discussion as a supplemental aid.

Adventist young-adult groups work together in producing this quarterly. More than 200 individuals contribute to CQ each year. The wide variety—and occasional repetition—of the content reflects the great diversity of its contributors around the world as they respond creatively and individually to the subject.

Circulation of CQ is about 35,000.

## Pointers for Study

1. Through prayer, open your mind to the Holy Spirit's guidance as you study.

2. The Bible passage on which each week's lesson is based appears in bold type in the "Introduction" (Sunday's portion of the lesson). Read this entire passage in conjunction with the quarterly introduction to give you an overview of the lesson.

3. The Bible passage for the week is divided into sections on the "Logos" pages (Monday's portion of the lesson). When studying this section, carefully reread the Bible passages indicated in the bold headings before reading the comments beneath the heading.

4. Read the remainder of the sections for the week with the perspective you have gained from your own study of the biblical passage.

5. Keep in mind the purposes of each section of the quarterly:

**"Introduction"** (Sunday) is designed to stimulate your interest and focus your thinking on the week's theme.

**"Logos"** (Monday), as described above, is a guide for direct study of the Bible passage for the week.

**"Testimony"** (Tuesday) presents Ellen White's perspective on the lesson theme.

**"Evidence"** (Wednesday) approaches issues raised by the lesson from a historical, scientific, philosophical, or theological perspective. It is likely to be the most scholarly article of the week.

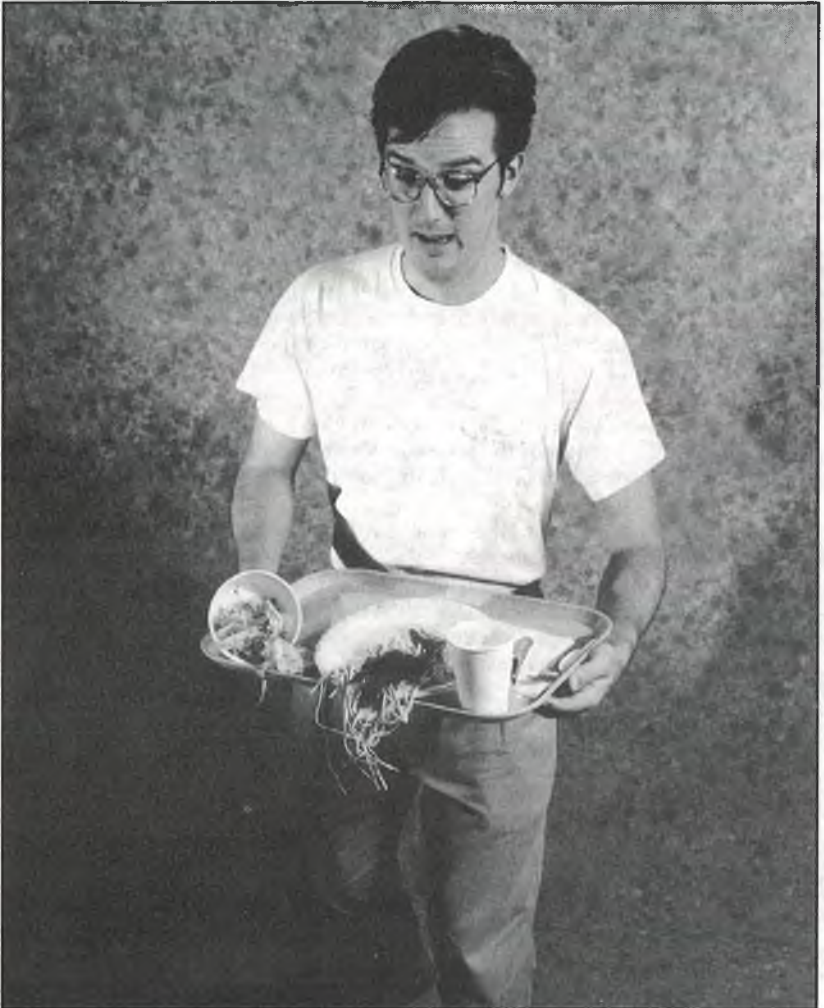
**"How-To"** (Thursday) discusses what the abstractions in the lesson mean for day-to-day living.

**"Opinion"** (Friday), a personal viewpoint on the lesson, is meant to encourage further thought and discussion.

## CQ and the Church

CQ is the General Conference-approved quarterly for the collegiate/young-adult age group. It upholds the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. *However, its contents should not be regarded as official pronouncements of the church.*

# THE COMFORT IN A SIMPLE ADDRESS



**“Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Tim. 1:2).**



# Grace, Disgrace, Ungraceful

## INTRODUCTION

**Scripture: 1 Tim. 1:1, 2; Titus 1:4**

“There goes ‘Grace’!”

A nicely arranged food tray, full of savory goodies, seemed fixed in midair. The suspense was shattered with a frisbeelike toss of bread slices, spaghetti, salad a la Thousand Island dressing, milk, and dessert flying everywhere. Poor Kevin. He felt like slithering out of the cafeteria with the jello cubes.

Kevin was a good guy, amiable, clean cut, pleasant to be with. Unfortunately he was also one of those people who seemed all thumbs and two left feet. Despite his best attempts, others looked for opportunities to needle his klutziness. It doesn't take long for complexes and quirks to sprout under such conditions.

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### **The suspense was shattered with a frisbeelike toss of bread slices and salad a la Thousand Island dressing.**

---

In Paul's greetings to Timothy and Titus, we find a much different understanding of *grace*. “Grace” is a garnish with “mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Jesus Christ” (1 Tim. 1:2; cf Titus 1:4), rather than a derisive comment for clumsiness. But blunders and mishaps, and the accompanying frustrations—certainly of larger portions—were part of a menu that Paul was used to. He hadn't gained acceptance overnight (Acts 9:13f, 21-23). For Paul, “grace” is the transforming power for unwieldy circumstances. Circumstances aren't removed, but abilities are sparked and attitudes are reshaped (Eph. 4:7; Phil. 4:11-13). And “grace” is the favor that God links with faith as part of His remedy for sin-plagued humanity (Eph. 2:8).

Rejection and suffering were intimate companions of the apostle, yet God's grace braced him, despite his faults, with true composure in affliction (2 Cor. 11:16-30). It was Paul's hope that Timothy and Titus would find grace for their own clumsy moments, as well as for helping people with “Kevin-sized” pains. The world and the church are brimming with Kevins, in need of grace to cover their awkwardness in human relations, and to end the awkwardness of sin.

God's grace is sufficient and effective for all today as much as it was in Paul's greeting to his sons in the faith (1 Tim. 1:2; cf Titus 1:4). And in our present world and church, a rich blend of cultures, ages, and human experience—fertile grounds for misunderstanding—God's grace is equally indispensable.

His grace may not spare us from accidentally tipping our food trays, but it will help us minister to those hurting from circumstances of disgrace and ungraceful episodes like Kevin's.

---

*By Patrick Lew, chaplain, dean of men, and a religion instructor at Hong Kong Adventist College, Kowloon, Hong Kong.*

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## True Children

### LOGOS

#### 1 Tim. 1:2

The letters from Paul to Timothy and Titus, commonly referred to as the Pastoral Epistles, are of special interest because they are among those few letters in the New Testament written to individuals. The primary message in both letters is Paul's deep concern for the duties of a church leader in coping with dissent over false teachings within the church and with the process of organizing church work—hence the title, “Pastoral Epistles.” But intrinsic to the letters is a personal element that makes these letters significant not only to the original recipients, Timothy and Titus, but to the church today.

In this week's study, we concentrate on what might be considered a peripheral part of the letters, the salutation. Although Paul's counsel on how to treat heresy and how to organize a church—as well as the duties of church leaders and members—is central to the focus of study this quarter, the salutation is significant for providing an underlying concept of unity, both personal and spiritual. This sense of unity is essential in coping with the potential for division that was found in the multicultural Christian church of Paul's time, as well as in our church today.

The salutation, as was typical in the early church period, is made up of three parts: the sender's name and authority, the recipient of the letter, and a brief greeting and blessing.

Paul begins by identifying himself: “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope” (1 Tim. 1:1, RSV). Besides signing his name, Paul is showing his authority as an apostle. However, this is not done to intimidate either the individual who receives the letter or the church that would be likely to read it. In stating his authority, Paul is sharing his power as an apostle with Timothy in the sense that it gives greater weight to the instructions found in the letter. Although the letter is addressed to an individual, it was probably also meant to be read publicly to the church. The authority of Paul would aid Timothy, as the leader of the church in Ephesus, in the directions and instruction he gives to the church. Paul also makes it clear, since he was not one of the 12 disciples, that his authority as an apostle is by the *command* of God.

The recipients of the letter are Timothy and Titus. Both were church leaders, the equivalent of a church pastor today. Both had been important companions and co-workers with Paul. Timothy, now the leader of the church in Ephesus, had been Paul's companion on several of his journeys, notably the last trips to Jerusalem and Rome. Titus, the leader of the church in Crete, had been Paul's envoy to Corinth and had been instrumental in settling the disputes that had divided the church as seen in the two Epistles to the Corinthians.

But a key element in the address to both Timothy and Titus is the phrase added to the name, “my true son” (NIV). Paul uses this phrase to indicate his intimate connection with both of his former companions and co-workers. “True” is here used in the sense of genuine or legitimate. Paul emphasizes that their relationship, including their faith and their religious experience, cannot be questioned. He also used the Greek term for son or “child” in the intimate rather than the impersonal

sense. He clearly considered them his legitimate children. Although Timothy would have been more readily accepted into either the Jewish or the Christian community, Titus's standing would have been questioned, particularly by those of a Jewish background. Timothy was one of Paul's early converts. His father was gentile and his mother Jewish. Although Titus was a convert from a pagan family, however, Paul shows no distinction between gentile or Jew and instead emphasizes the equality of both. This is more than Christian equality; it is expressed as genuine kinship. Paul sees his converts as his children. Although there is no blood relationship, Paul refers to both as his "true" children.

The blessing that concludes the salutation reinforces this equality of believers. When Paul writes "Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord" (1 Tim. 1:2, NIV), he is invoking both Greek and Jewish greetings and blessings. The Greek word *chairein*, meaning "greeting," echoes the common Christian greeting of *charis*, meaning "grace." Peace, or *shalom*, is the common Jewish greeting. Paul here combines Greek, Jewish, and Christian together showing, even in a simple salutation, the oneness that should characterize true Christianity.

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## **Paul combines, even in a simple salutation, the oneness that should characterize true Christianity.**

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The significance of the salutation is more than identification. Paul is reinforcing the principle found in Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (RSV). Particularly in letters that do so much to establish a church hierarchy with a chain of command from apostle to pastor to elder to deacon, Paul could have readily emphasized his authority. Instead, he promotes family identity. The ideal relationship is, not leader to follower, but father to son, parent to child. Paul's salutation emphasizes the genuine legitimacy of that kinship.

Today's church needs to understand and practice this principle of true Christian family. To avoid the friction, the misunderstandings, and the frustrations that can arise from leader-dominated organizations, we need to realize that we work together as family, as fathers and mothers with sons and daughters. When we have this oneness, then we are all true children.

### **REACT**

1. Why does it sometimes seem difficult to maintain feelings of Christian family in your home church?
2. What can one person do to help maintain feelings of Christian family in the face of such counterinfluences as large congregations, discipline, and apathy?
3. In your own words explain the "comfort in a simple address," referred to in the title to this week's lesson.

---

*By Charles H. Tidwell, Jr., professor of English and the academic dean at Hong Kong Adventist College, Kowloon, Hong Kong.*

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# Shivered to Atoms

## TESTIMONY

**Key Text: John 17:23**

Our school, though small, has students and faculty from 15 countries. Because of our ethnic diversity, there is always a chance for tension and conflict. It was the same in the apostolic church. Furthermore, while culturally diverse, the community illustrated the “complete unity” (John 17:23, NIV) that Jesus prayed for. Because of this bond, Paul (a Jew) was able to love Timothy (Jew-Greek) and Titus (Greek) as “son[s] in the faith” (1 Tim. 1:4).

“The solemn work in which we are engaged demands of us a strong, united effort under divine leadership.”<sup>1</sup> “Let the Lord take possession of the mind and mold it as the clay is molded in the hands of the potter, and these differences will not exist. Look to Jesus, brethren; copy His manners and spirit.”<sup>2</sup>

---

**“There is no person, no nation, that is perfect in every habit and thought.”**

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“There is no person, no nation, that is perfect in every habit and thought. One must learn of another. Therefore God wants the different nationalities to mingle together, to be one in judgment, one in purpose. Then the union that there is in Christ will be exemplified. . . . The same spirit that dwells in one will dwell in the other—Christ in them, the hope of glory. I warn you, brethren and sisters, not to build up a wall of partition between different nationalities. On the contrary, seek to break it down wherever it exists. We should endeavor to bring all into the harmony that there is in Jesus, laboring for the one object, the salvation of our fellow men.”<sup>3</sup>

Only when our goal is the same as that of Christ’s will our prejudices and cultural hang-ups disappear. “Christian is to be united with Christian, church with church, the human instrumentality cooperating with the divine, every agency subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all combined in giving to the world the good tidings of the grace of God.”<sup>4</sup>

This, then, is the secret to the successful dispersion of the gospel. “Workers for Christ are to strive for unity. We are the children of the same family, and have one heavenly Father.”<sup>5</sup>

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1. *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 485.

2. *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 181.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 180, 181.

4. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 96.

5. *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 502.

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By Dana Latchmi Powmesamy, a religion student at Hong Kong Adventist College, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

## Circumcision: The Bigger Issue

### EVIDENCE

**Key Text: Gal. 3:26-28**

“Timothy my true son in the faith” (1 Tim. 1:2, NIV) and “Titus, my true son in our common faith” (Titus 1:4), Paul wrote affectionately. Simple addresses, yet these brought comfort and assurance to both recipients and also confirmed Paul’s stand on an issue that threatened to split Gentile from Jewish Christians.

The flourishing mission with the Gentiles and the expanding Christian church was of tremendous encouragement and pride to the Antioch church (Syrian), the “mother-church” of Gentile Christians that rivaled the Jerusalem church itself. But then, at this moment of high spirits, men from Judea visited Antioch and arrogantly spat, “Unless you [Gentile Christians] are circumcised . . . you cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1).

Circumcision was just part of a bigger issue: the ethics of the church. There was yet no New Testament to the new converts; no wonder Jewish Christians worried about the morality of fellow Gentile brothers and sisters. These Jewish Christians wished to safeguard Jewish tradition-based ethics.

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### **Paul accepted uncircumcised Titus as a Christian, but had Timothy circumcised.**

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The council at Jerusalem reached a solution (Acts 15:22ff), but the problem persisted. The Judaizers still saw Christianity as a Jewish religion; they insisted that Gentile Christians abide by some ceremonial rites, especially circumcision. Indeed, Paul addressed this worrisome matter in his letters to Timothy and Titus. Paul left Timothy at Ephesus to “command certain men not to teach false doctrines” (1 Tim. 1:3, 4) and Titus at Crete to refute the “rebellious people, . . . especially those of the circumcision group” (Titus 1:9, 10).

Paul accepted uncircumcised Titus as a Christian, but had Timothy, a half Jew who was acquainted with the Scriptures from childhood, circumcised. Do we see inconsistency here? Not at all. Paul’s stand is firm: man is justified by faith alone. He clearly refutes the Judaizers in his letter to the Galatians (see chapter 3); “there is neither Jew nor Greek”; it is through faith alone that all are “sons of God” (Gal. 3:26-28). Paul had Timothy circumcised because of Timothy’s background and for the sake of Timothy’s work with the Jews (Acts 16:3). This was not inconsistent, for with Paul the gospel always had priority.

### **REACT**

In what ways should becoming a Christian affect one’s cultural practices?

---

*By Ernest Toh, assistant to the registrar and history instructor at Hong Kong Adventist College, Kowloon, Hong Kong.*

## For Greetings' Sake

### HOW-TO

Key Text: 2 Cor. 5:14

“Happy Sabbath!” Her quiet dignity startled me. Never had I heard this greeting before. The Filipina in the lift smiled. A fellow believer! I had not noticed her before; yet she recognized me!

“Nice day, isn’t it?” I fumbled. Hers was just a greeting, but it said volumes. It told of buoyant steps on dreary days, of answered prayers and little victories, of sharpened perspectives, of “loving and lovable” witnessing through a lonely week—it told of vibrant Christian experience.

Salutations were as normal in Paul’s times as they are in ours, be they “Ayoubowan” (Sinhalese), “Jo San” (Cantonese), a nod, or a “Hi.” Yet Paul’s special greetings blend Christian meaning with custom, common courtesy with the soul of the gospel: grace, mercy, and peace. How efficient!

How may a greeting make the gospel attractive to the nonbeliever, inspirational to the believer, and eyebrow lifting to the shoulder-rubber? The secret lies in the motivation of conduct, the constraining love of Christ.

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### Salutations were as normal in Paul’s times as they are in ours.

---

**1. Be thick-skinned.** Too often we defend our feelings and reputations, filing every imagined slight and supposed wrong. We cannot afford to allow behind-our-back-ers to upset our unity with God’s Spirit (1 Peter 2:20). Apologize first (Matt. 5:23, 24). Are the differences among us important in eternity’s beam?

**2. Be open-faced.** “Everything that Christians do should be as transparent as the sunlight.”\* When self is central, no real Christian growth can occur. Self-seeking camouflages real motives, promotes destructive drives, and brings us inner dissatisfaction. Ridding ourselves of self is unnatural; we need the grace of God in abundant measure. Make peace our environment.

**3. Be fleet-footed.** Be ready to recount how God has led you, remembering He has a thousand ways to care when you have no way (Ps. 84:11). With grace so abundant, refuse to judge another, whatever the circumstances (Matt. 7:1, 2).

Think of a personalized Christian greeting that also reflects your faith in and your experience with your Lord. Now share your exuberance with all you meet. Begin with your greeting.

“Happy Sabbath to you too.”

---

\* *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 68.

---

By Emil G. Fernando, associate professor of English and registrar at Hong Kong Adventist College, Kowloon, Hong Kong.



# The Secret of Timothy's Success

## OPINION

**Key Text: Prov. 22:6**

"The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall."<sup>1</sup>

I see my church in a stupor for lack of strong youthful leadership. The gospel commission can be better fulfilled if the latter rain of God's Spirit fills men of noble character. Jesus' second coming and the end of this sin-filled world is in part dependent on the gospel's reaching all the world.

But noble character is not accidental. Neither was Timothy's missionary journeys with Paul. Something in Timothy's life helped him become God's able servant.

---

## I see my church in a stupor for lack of strong youthful leadership.

---

"From a child, Timothy knew the Scriptures, and his knowledge was a safeguard to him against the evil influences surrounding him and the temptation to choose pleasure and selfish gratification before duty. Such a safeguard all our children need, and it should be a part of the work of parents and of Christ's ambassadors to see that the children are properly instructed in the word of God."<sup>2</sup> Paul himself was persuaded of the influence of Mother Eunice and Grandmother Lois on Timothy's faith (2 Tim. 1:5).

The potential for leadership is in every young person. Paul encouraged Timothy: "Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12, RSV). Strength of character comes more naturally through quality time spent with younger ones, an education unique in itself.

## REACT

1. How may preschool or early-school children be guided in faith with both parents working? With parents deeply involved in church-related activities?

2. What part can families play in promoting inclinations toward spirituality or church-related careers in the youth of the church?

3. How can older workers develop younger leaders?

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1. *Education*, p. 57.

2. *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 398.

---

*By Chak Yun Chuen, a senior theology student at Hong Kong Adventist College, Kowloon, Hong Kong.*

# SOLVING CHURCH PROBLEMS



**“The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith” (1 Tim. 1:5, RSV).**

## Tim's Struggle

### INTRODUCTION

**Scripture: 1 Tim. 1:3-11**

Tim sighed as he shuffled home from the dock. Paul was on the boat headed for Macedonia. Tim felt alone—alone and lonely. Why had he agreed to stay at Ephesus? Could he really help these Christians understand the gospel and the law? How would he convince them how meaningless their genealogy and old myths were? Tim wasn't at all sure he had what it would take to keep these Ephesians on the right track.

He knew the truth—had known it for as long as he could remember. His mother and grandmother had made sure of that. But it hadn't really been *his* truth until he had joined Paul. Paul's life and ministry had shown Tim what Christ's life and death were all about. Now Tim loved the gospel as dearly as Paul did.

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### **Most of them listened a few minutes, then waved his words away like dandelion puffs in the wind.**

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Tim didn't enjoy preaching. Or teaching. Or even praying in public. He did those things. But he much preferred studying the Scriptures, doing research, and helping Paul put sermons together. But here he was, assigned to reach a church that had gotten messed up and torn apart by false doctrines. Tim hated confrontation. He sighed again.

Tim tossed and turned and prayed most of the night. Already he missed Paul. Paul was his teacher, counselor, mentor, and his best friend.

For the next several days Tim called at homes and shops. Some of the Christians welcomed him and eagerly renewed their commitment to Christ. Most of them listened a few minutes, then waved his words away like dandelion puffs in the wind. He worked long and hard on his Sabbath sermon, praying his presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ would turn the tide of dissension beating against the Ephesus Christians. But at the potluck after church two of the elders got into a hot argument. Tim wished he had stayed in bed that Sabbath morning.

By Monday morning he had decided to take the next boat out of Ephesus and catch up with Paul. Then the letter arrived. How did Paul know he was having such a struggle? And how could he have known it so soon? That man knew him better than he knew himself.

Tim read the letter over and over. Paul trusted him to do this work. Maybe God did too. Tim tossed and turned and prayed most of the night. By morning's light he knew he couldn't do it. But he also knew that God could. And God would—through him.

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*By Sandy Johnson, editorial assistant, Primary Treasure and Our Little Friend, Pacific Press Publishing Association, Nampa, Idaho.*

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# You Are in Charge

## LOGOS

### 1 Tim. 1:3-11

You are finally home after that long business trip. A stack of mail greets you. In the first envelope, you find a letter from your former pastor. After a few reassuring words, he gets to the point. He is gone, you are in charge, and your church has big problems!

#### Problem One

*"As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer" (1 Tim. 1:3, NIV).*

It seems someone in the Ephesian church was playing fast and loose with the truth. Apparently these people were concerned with "myths and endless genealogies." In Timothy's day, myths were a big thing. Every big question could be answered with a long, fabricated story about some ancient god and his heroic deeds.

Even among Jewish Christians there were problems. Much of Jewish teaching was based on myths and allegories. These entertaining stories were very popular but did very little to encourage growth as Christians. A lot of people were sitting around talking about unimportant things instead of concentrating on the truth of the Bible and what it should mean in their lives.

Worse than that, these storytellers were stirring up controversy that kept the church from doing God's work. People were more interested in arguing for their own point of view than in actually spreading the news of God's love to others or allowing it to change their own hearts.

Sound familiar?

#### Problem Two

*"They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm" (1 Tim. 1:7).*

These teachers do not know what they are talking about because they have wandered from the truth they learned from Paul. In Paul's day, and in ours, people stray from obedience in one of two directions. Some, like the Pharisees, are more concerned with law keeping than anything else and lose sight of the truth that obedience to the law is a demonstration of love to God and to other people. Others, more concerned with love and faith, feel released from having to keep the law.

Like Timothy, we can find ourselves caught between two arguing groups, while the rest of us listen. Nothing is being done to help Christians grow or to attract others to Jesus. Attendance dwindles because people's needs are not being met. They are not being inspired to know Jesus better, to follow Him more closely, to share Him with others.

It is your church. How are you going to solve these problems? Thankfully, Paul doesn't just point out the problems to Timothy. He offers solutions.

## Solution One

*“The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Tim. 1:5, NIV).*

The bottom line of Christianity is love, self-sacrificing love. From where does this love come?

**From a pure heart.** A pure heart is one that Jesus has cleaned and filled with selflessness. There is no room for petty pride exhibited in our ability to out-argue a fellow member. And no room for jealousy of another’s position, or for desire for power. A pure heart does not delude itself about its own value. It finds its value at Jesus’ feet.

**From a good conscience.** Televangelist Jimmy Swaggart strongly condemned immorality in his TV ministry, yet it seemed to have a hold on him in his private life. Many times a person condemns most strongly in others the very sins that he knows himself to be guilty of. Christians who have a good conscience do not need to attack the beliefs and actions of others to feel good about themselves.

**From a sincere faith.** A person with a sincere faith honestly wants to know what is right, and then wants to know what should be done about it. That person studies to find the truth and then to be able to spread the good news of the truth to others.

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## People were more interested in arguing than in actually spreading the news of God’s love. Sound familiar?

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## Solution Two

*“We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that law is made not for good men but for lawbreakers” (1 Tim. 1:8, 9).*

Whatever else the false doctrine in Ephesus taught, it led people to use the law improperly. Paul reaffirms that good Christians don’t misuse the law. The purpose of the law is to lead people to Jesus, and they have found Him. They live according to the law because they are full of His love and want to be like Him.

Paul’s long list of lawbreakers (see verses 9, 10) need the law because they have not yet seen the price sin is costing them and their desperate need of rescue. He tells Timothy that the solution to this problem with the teachers of the law is to go back to the gospel as he preached it to them. Maybe it seemed too simple. Maybe just accepting what Jesus did for humanity and following in His steps didn’t seem like enough. We have a natural tendency to want to save ourselves.

In this letter Paul tells Timothy and us to solve these problems by turning with pure hearts, good consciences, and sincere faith to the simple truth of the gospel: Jesus died to save us and He will change us into His image if we will follow Him.

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*By Jerry D. Thomas, assistant book editor at Pacific Press Publishing Association, Nampa, Idaho.*

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## Blinded by New Light

### TESTIMONY

**Key Text: 2 Tim. 2:24, 25**

About 10 years ago, my wife and I had the pleasure of being members of a 150-member church in Illinois. In our two years there, we invested ourselves wholeheartedly in our local congregation. Despite losing our pastor to another church, the members decided to conduct an open house that further united church members and got others interested in what was happening. The church began to grow.

But eventually my wife and I said a tearful goodbye to our congregation and moved to San Diego. On a recent business trip to that area, I returned to spend a Sabbath with my former congregation. I discovered, however, that the church family had dwindled to about 30 members. A faction within the church had focused on differences among members, magnifying them until they chased members out of the church. Their “new light” on perfection left no room for compassion. Yet they defended their position by freely quoting from the Spirit of Prophecy.

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### Their “new light” on perfection left no room for compassion.

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Ellen White does talk about promoting order within the congregation, and she writes about the spirit in which it should be presented: “Though we have an individual work and an individual responsibility before God, we are not to follow our own independent judgment, regardless of the opinions and feelings of our brethren; for this course would lead to disorder in the church. It is the duty of ministers to respect the judgment of their brethren; but their relations to one another, as well as the doctrines they teach, should be brought to the test of the law and the testimony; then, if hearts are teachable, there will be no divisions among us.”\*

The law of which Paul writes in 1 Timothy 1 encompasses much more than the Ten Commandments. It is the law of love, as well. It is only the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ that brings unity to our congregations, that motivates us to do the task before us, that inspires us to speak to our non-Adventist friends about the joys of being a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. Those who bring confusion, anger, and dissension to a congregation are false teachers.

### REACT

How should a congregation respond to “new light”?

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\* *Testimony to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 30.

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By Glen Robinson, associate editor of *Listen* magazine, Pacific Press Publishing Association, Nampa, Idaho.



# Hit Me With Haggada

## EVIDENCE

**Key Text: 1 Tim. 1:4**

If you enjoy a lot of good old, knock-down, mind-stretching, intellectually jolting biblical discussion, you should have lived among Jewish scholars during the period in which the New Testament was written. Jewish rabbis were engaged in an exegetical exercise on the Old Testament called Midrash—a search for new knowledge by “logical deduction, combination of related passages, and allegorical interpretation.”<sup>1</sup>

The part of the Midrash that dealt with historical events, literary expression, and doctrine (but not the law) was called Haggada, or Haggadic Midrash. It was an exegetical free-for-all, employing “symbol, allegory, fable, and parable, . . . almost any means by which a lasting impression could be made on the hearer.”<sup>2</sup>

It produced stories based on mere hints in the Old Testament. From the genealogical lists, inferences were often drawn in which rabbis took off on flights of imagination. Haggada blossomed into the synagogues’ major mode of exegesis.

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## Haggadic Midrash was an exegetical free-for-all.

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If Paul was released from his imprisonment in Rome and then wrote 1 Timothy, as many scholars believe, then the “myths and endless genealogies” he warns against were very likely Jewish Haggada. E. F. Scott writes, “The word ‘genealogy’ was often used in the sense of mythical history, and this would seem to be its meaning” in 1 Timothy 1:4.<sup>3</sup> The genealogies were not long lists, but were fictitious stories that could be spun out endlessly.

Jews in the Ephesian church probably had a strong synagogue background. In debate they would no doubt want to use Haggadic material, which Jews considered sacred. But because Haggada was unrelated to the gospel message, it promised to promote endless futile argument, to the detriment of the believers’ faith in and work for God. The men Paul said had “turned to meaningless talk” were ignoring the foundation of the gospel—love from “a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Tim. 1:5, NIV)—but wanted to be known as “teachers of the law” (verse 7). If they were allowed to drag the Ephesian church into controversy, the church’s unity and its witness would be snuffed out.

## REACT

1. What issues get us off track in church study today?
2. Which social and theological issues obscure the gospel?

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1. *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 97.

2. *Ibid.*

3. E. F. Scott, *The Pastoral Epistles* (New York: Harper and Bros.), p. 8.

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By Tim Lale, who helps lead the Salt Company, a young-adult group at the Boise Central (Idaho) Church.

## Beware Buzzwords

### HOW-TO

**Key Text:** 1 Tim. 1:6, 7

I work a lot with computers, so people often assume I know what I'm talking about when I throw around terms like *format* or *multi-tasking*. But when true experts begin discoursing on UAEs and power programming, my eyes glaze over. It's amazing how you can fool people by using buzzwords. It's also dangerous. If asked to demonstrate power programming, I'd be in trouble.

It's easy to do the same thing with religion, especially if, like me, you've been raised in the Adventist Church. We know all the buzzwords, all the right answers. We speak confidently of the third angel's message, quoting all the appropriate texts. But somewhere along the line, has it become "meaningless talk"?

Knowing the right answers can't take the place of a growing relationship with Christ. Here are some ways you can live it.

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### **Outline your beliefs and resultant actions using the principles of management by objective.**

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1. **Make your religion come alive by sharing it.** I was casually explaining to my hairstylist some of my beliefs as an Adventist Christian. The scissors stopped, and I glanced up to see her looking at me in the mirror. "That makes so much sense," she said. "It's so logical, but I just never realized it before." Focus your faith by joining an outreach group. This could be anything from a musical group to a branch Sabbath School to a foreign-missions project.

2. **Ask God to wake you up.** "And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed" (Rom. 13:11). It's a lot easier to talk about the needs and problems of the church than to become personally involved, but we have so much to gain. As Paul points out, Christ's coming grows nearer every day.

3. **Make the Christian faith yours in a way that uniquely reflects who you are.** If you're a musician, compose a piece of music showcasing your relationship with God. If you have a business-administration personality, write an outline stating your beliefs and resultant actions using the principles of management by objective. For earthier types, plant a prayer garden using plants mentioned in the Bible.

### **REACT**

1. Why is it dangerous to talk about something for which we have no real experience? What are some of the situations in which we find ourselves?

2. What are some situations in which words might not be the best witness?

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By Luan Miller, a freelance writer from Nampa, Idaho.

# It Fits!

## OPINION

**Key Text: John 8:31, 32**

In our culture we have become pluralistic in our thinking. We are encouraged to be open-minded, to consider one view as valid as another. Since there are no absolutes, right and wrong become relative terms. That's true (absolutely). Based on the situation, it is for the individual to decide his or her own interests.

Enter the God of the Bible. He claims to be absolute and unchanging in character. Furthermore, His kingdom is supposedly established and maintained by clear, unwavering principles. How does this God fit into our world?

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**I have found the Bible to be so accurate that it is easier to accept by faith that which is not as clear to me.**

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What the Bible says about people, about good and evil, and about relationships fits. It provides me a basis to understand why I experience hurt and pain. It tells me about myself and my needs. It tells me of a God who created me for a purpose, each individual having great value because of His image in us. It exposes the selfish and destructive ways I relate with others, but it also provides a way to be delivered from those ways. The Bible points not just to a set of principles to live by, but to a Person who showed us how and what we were created to be. It declares His desire to have a saving relationship with us (that's *why* we were created). The Bible contains principles for "abundant life," to experience the greatest happiness and to protect us from those choices that would invade that life. It gives perspective for times of pain and suffering so that even in overwhelming circumstances, our hearts can be free and secure.

I have found the Bible to be so accurate about my world that it is easier to accept by faith that which is not as clear to me. The security I have found in my walk with God has given me a confidence based on the clear teachings of the Bible—about God and how He operates. I have also found that truth is up to any test or challenge made of it. When someone challenges something I believe, it's a chance to reestablish or reaffirm that truth—and at times to recognize that my understanding needs to stretch.

## REACT

1. How do you react when your beliefs are challenged?
2. Have you experienced the freedom Jesus talked of, or does it seem more like wishful thinking?

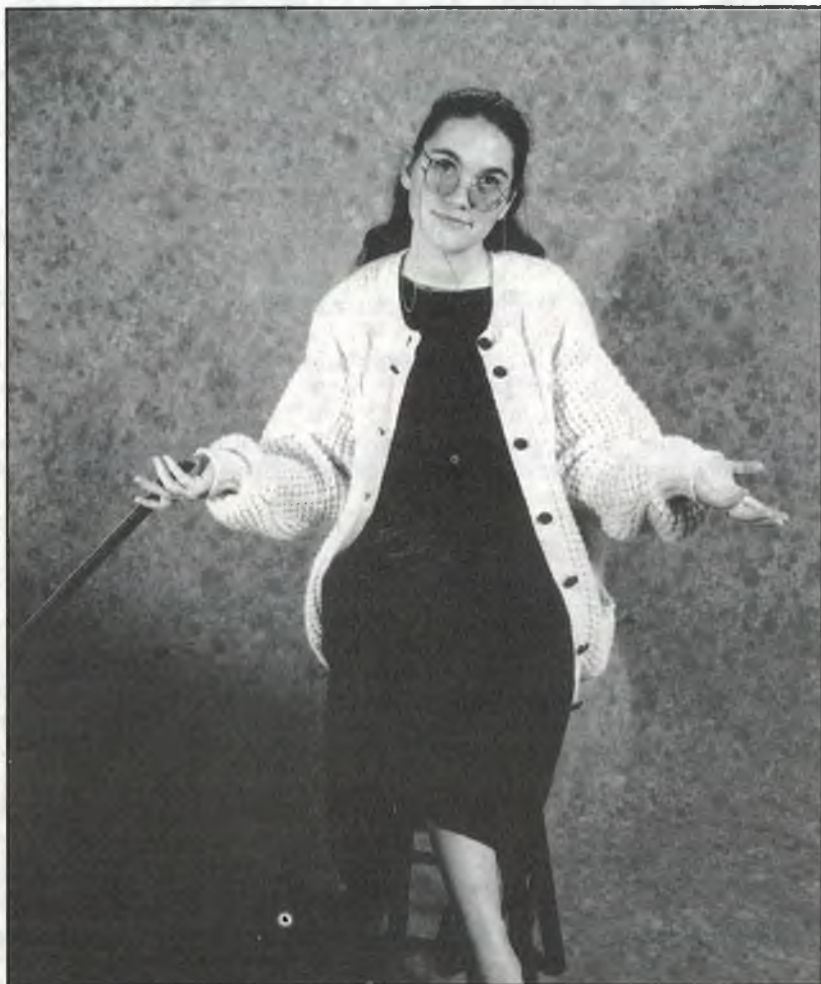
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*By Mark A. Winchester, assistant designer for books and advertising at Pacific Press Publishing Association, Nampa, Idaho.*

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# IGNORANCE IS NOT BLISS



**“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Tim. 1:15).**

# A Letter of Encouragement to Sandy

## INTRODUCTION

Scripture: 1 Tim. 1:12-20

*"No one challenges me," I answered. "You'll do exactly as I say: take the gum out of your mouth!"*

*She slowly blew a large opaque pink bubble, her eyes glaring straight through me. "Well, why don't you just continue your bullying; I'm outta here." With that the sullen teenager left the room.*

*Humiliated, I threw out more commands to the class. I argued with every insolent remark. I was determined to subordinate them because I was right. Instead, they controlled me. I was the brunt of sexual innuendos and ridicule.*

"Sandy, in response to your letter, I look back at my student teaching. I was ready to demonstrate the art of teaching to the world. But I was ignorant about teaching. Then my supervisor became my mentor and showed me what being a true teacher meant. She trusted me; she believed in me; she displayed tremendous patience with me. I finally swallowed my arrogance and learned to rely on my mentor's strength and experience. She offered me a job, entrusted me to her service, gave me a task to do, and empowered me to do it.

## **"You'll do exactly as I say: take the gum out of your mouth!"**

"Sandy, you may be feeling intimidated at the prospect of 150 lusty teenagers refusing to learn. I know that you are wondering whether you have the stuff that real teachers are made of. Look at it this way: If someone can turn an ignorant fool with no special gift for teaching into a supervising teacher who has inspired others, then God can surely empower you.

"You may find spit wads on the board. You may lack concrete illustrations to clarify a concept. Your thoughtful discussion questions may elicit only snickers and blank stares. You may even want to wring a student's neck—I threw an eraser at a kid's head once—but you will succeed if you arm yourself with a faith that will pull you through even at the worst times and a good conscience because you live by what you teach. (Look up 1 Tim. 1:18, 19.)

"In your letter you wonder whether you have 'the gift.' Sandy, the gift is yours for the asking. 'Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. . . . If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault' (James 1:2, 3, 5, NIV).

"Remembering my weaknesses keeps me humble and encouraged. I hope this letter encourages you. I entrust this task to you. God will give you the strength." Signed Henry.

*By Michèle Beach, chairperson of the English department at Takoma Academy, Takoma Park, Maryland.*

## Two Ways to Be Lost

### LOGOS

#### Eph. 5:8-17

Many years ago there was a popular song that espoused the idea that “it pays to be ignorant.” The thesis was that the ignorant had no responsibility for their own actions. After all, how could you blame someone who did not know any better? Suggest that idea to the friends and family of Stephen, who was stoned to death as a result of the “ignorance” of Saul, and see how well they like it.

Yet here it is. Paul (formerly Saul) says of his life of violence and blasphemy that “I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief” (1 Tim. 1:13, NIV). How do we deal with that? Wouldn’t the extension of that line of reasoning be that we would be better off remaining ignorant so that we would not be responsible for our sins?

And what about someone who does wrong when he knows better? Is it then impossible to receive this same “grace of our Lord poured out abundantly”? What about Peter, who lied vehemently in denying the Lord, when he had been specifically warned about this only hours earlier? Surely grace was poured out abundantly on him on more than one occasion, even though he knew better.

No, there is no difference in forgiveness. It is the same for both. And there is no difference in sin. It is destructive for both. The law of the land makes it clear. Ignorance is no excuse. If you are arrested for speeding, you are guilty, whether you knew the speed limit or not, because it is your duty to know the speed limit if you are going to drive.

Likewise it is your duty to know the laws of life if you are going to live. Ignorance is no excuse. Driving off a washed-out bridge leaves you just as dead whether you knew it was gone or not. In December 1964 the bridge on Interstate 84 over the John Day River in Oregon washed out in a flash flood. Before warning barricades could be put in place, some unwarned travelers plunged to their deaths through the broken span.

Shortly after this tragedy, two drunks were heard to boast that they could drive fast enough to jump the broken span. No one took them seriously, but they tried it. Speeding at an incredible rate, they broke through the warning barriers and hurdled themselves through space. They lodged into the structure of the next support posts some 60 feet below the road surface, just as dead as those who were ignorant of the broken span.

Perhaps these examples are too severe and dramatic. One I like better is the summary of yet another losing effort on the part of Charlie Brown and the Peanuts ball team. Looking about with dismay, Charlie Brown says, “How can we lose when we’re so sincere?” Sadly, Charlie, sincerity is not what counts. One can be sincerely ignorant and yet reap the results of sin.

Sin destroys. And the resultant destruction is the same whether you know about it in advance or not. The warnings of God are given, not so that *He* will have an excuse to kill you if you don’t obey, but because He knows that *sin* will kill you if you do not turn to Him for salvation. Saul was on the road to destruction, and his ignorance would not save him.



What, then, does Paul mean by this example of sinning in ignorance? He clarifies it in verse 16 and spares us from illogical conclusions about ignorance. He says, "I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life" (1 Tim. 1:16).

Far from an appeal for the advantages of ignorance, Paul is rather making the case for enlightenment so that others might be spared the tragedies he experienced on the path to destruction. This becomes clearly evident in his instruction to Timothy, given with the intent "that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience" (1 Tim. 1:18, 19).

And what happened to those who did not follow this counsel? They "shipwrecked their faith." How God will judge is up to Him. It is true that God graciously is attempting to rectify this ignorance matter while looking the other way when we display our gross ignorance. But grace is no excuse for ignorance. It is the nature of sin that it will destroy whether we know about it or not. God's—and Paul's—intent is not to make an excuse for ignorance, but rather to spare us from its ravages.

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## **Two drunks were heard to boast that they could drive fast enough to jump the broken span.**

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Unfortunately our concept of God's judgments is all too often built around the idea that He is looking for sinners whom He can destroy. In fact, it is quite the opposite. He is looking for sinners He can save. As Paul states, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (verse 15). And it is not just in some by-and-by heaven or judgment where this salvific effect is to occur. It is here and now in triumph over those ignorant ways of sin, which are destroying those whom God loves and those for whom Jesus died.

"And now you know," Paul seems to say. "Ignorance is not bliss. And like me, you don't have to remain in the folly of sinful destruction any longer."

### **REACT**

1. What role does "enlightenment" about sin play in a Christian's life?
2. How can Paul claim to have been ignorant of knowing what was right when he had had access to so much Scripture in his education?
3. Explain Paul's statement that "I was shown mercy because I acted in . . . unbelief" (1 Tim. 1:13, NIV).

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*By Gary Patterson, administrative assistant to the president of the North American Division, Silver Spring, Maryland.*

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## The Demoniac Missionaries

### TESTIMONY

**Key Text: Matt. 8:28-34**

If you're ever tempted to believe that God cannot possibly use you in His service, think about the miraculous change that God brought about in the lives of the demoniacs of Gergesa. Once healed, they became some of Jesus' best witnesses. Surely, if He could use them, He can use you and me.

"Meanwhile a marvelous change had come over the demoniacs. Light had shone into their minds. Their eyes beamed with intelligence. The countenances, so long deformed into the image of Satan, became suddenly mild, the blood-stained hands were quiet, and with glad voices the men praised God for their deliverance. . . .

"As Jesus was about to enter the boat, they kept close to His side, knelt at His feet, and begged Him to keep them near Him, where they might ever listen to His words. But Jesus bade them go home and tell what great things the Lord had done for them.

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### **"Not one sermon from His lips had ever fallen upon their ears."**

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"Here was a work for them to do—to go to a heathen home, and tell of the blessing they had received from Jesus. . . . Not only did they tell their own households and neighbors about Jesus, but they went throughout Decapolis, everywhere declaring His power to save, and describing how He had freed them from the demons. . . .

"The two restored demoniacs were the first missionaries whom Christ sent to preach the gospel in the region of Decapolis. For a few moments only these men had been privileged to hear the teachings of Christ. Not one sermon from His lips had ever fallen upon their ears. They could not instruct the people as the disciples, who had been daily with Christ, were able to do. But they bore in their own persons the evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. They could tell what they knew; what they themselves had seen, and heard, and felt of the power of Christ. This is what everyone can do whose heart has been touched by the grace of God. John, the beloved disciple, wrote: 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.' 1 John 1:1-3. As witnesses for Christ, we are to tell what we know, what we ourselves have seen and heard and felt."\*

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\* *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 338-340.

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*By Patricia Humphrey, a freelance writer living in Rapidan, Virginia.*

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# Saddam Hussein and Me

## EVIDENCE

**Key Text: 1 Tim. 1:14**

Today I learned that an academy friend of mine recently died of complications to the AIDS virus. Julie, as I will call her, would probably have been surprised at my use of the term *friend*. In truth, she was just a classmate. As I remember, she was always ready to laugh and was in constant search of fun. Whereas, I was always in search of piety and had difficulty relating to those whom I judged to lack this quality. And so we never really became friends. The loss was mine.

After the initial shock of hearing the news washed over me, my first thought was *How did she get it?* So typically, here I was ready to make one last judgment. Does how she got the disease really make any difference? Is it a matter of one way she deserved to die of AIDS and the other she didn't? And just who am I to judge?

When I knew Julie, I was too quick to pass moral judgment. Unlike Paul, I didn't attack others with brutal violence. The word used by Paul here (verse 13) indicates arrogant sadism, someone who inflicts pain for the joy of it—Saddam Hussein types. No, my attacks were much more subtle; they attacked self-worth with the unspoken judgment of "you are not good enough." And so we never really became friends.

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## **My first thought was *How did Julie get AIDS?***

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But there is good news for me, for Julie, for Paul, for everyone. "The grace of our Lord overflowed" (verse 14, RSV). What a beautiful picture this is! I look at the wrongs of my life—but the grace of our Lord overflowed. I remember the pain and the hurt I have caused—but the grace of our Lord overflowed. I see with sorrow the good not done—but the grace of our Lord overflowed! God's mercy is enough to cover all wrongs. His grace and forgiveness are more than enough for all.

And so I think of Julie and I realize that the only thing that matters is that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (verse 15, RSV)—people like me, people like Julie, people like Paul. This has been the lesson that has taken me so long to learn. God's grace makes no distinction; it is available to all. And indeed, He seems to have a preference for sinners, even the chief sinners like me.

## **REACT**

1. What would be my first reaction to hearing that an acquaintance has AIDS?
2. What can be done to avoid the regrets expressed by today's author?

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*By Evert McDowell, an MBA student at American University in Washington, D.C.*

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# The Impossible Challenge

## HOW-TO

**Key Text: 1 Tim. 1:18, 19**

Taking to heart the apostle's instructions in today's key text may not be easy, but it is possible if you're willing to work at it. Here's how.

**1. Fighting the "Good" Fight.** Can a fight be good? Sure. Christ won a long, drawn-out battle with Satan. That was good. But don't think doing battle is a warm and cozy activity. The good fight means standing up for what you know to be right. Strategies for fighting the good fight include:

- a. Constant communication with your Leader (prayer).
- b. Spiritual teamwork with your worldwide army (church attendance).
- c. Ongoing training in battle plans (Bible study).
- d. Daily drills to strengthen your mind, body, and soul (witnessing).

## Holding on to faith in human beings can set you up for a terrible fall.

**2. Hold on to Faith.** Holding on to faith in human beings can set you up for a terrible fall. Jesus Christ is the only being worthy of holding our faith. Holding on to faith in Christ takes effort, especially when no one else seems to be bothering. But it can be done. Here's how.

- a. Learn about Him. You will uncover His love in the pages of your Bible.
- b. Fall in love with Him. It is easy, once you have done the above.
- c. Place your faith in Him. Christ will not, cannot, let you down.
- d. Share Him with others. This is the most powerful method of holding on to faith.

With your faith energized by understanding, holding on to it will not be work. It will be automatic.

**3. Keep a Good Conscience.** A bad conscience lets you do whatever you want. It sleeps while you lie or cheat or take God's name in vain or covet or break the Sabbath. A good conscience burns like a fire when you do those things. That's when God steps in. He puts out the fire with His love, brushes the ashes from your heart, and says gently, "Don't do that anymore, OK?" A good conscience:

- a. Doesn't miss a beat. Even little evils set it off.
- b. Can't be shut down as long as you are willing to keep it in operation.
- c. Rewards you with happy feelings when you do something right for a change.
- d. Is the voice of God in your life.

OK, Paul. I get the message! With God's help I can keep your instructions. Thanks for the challenge. I'll go on fighting, holding, and keeping until Jesus comes. Then I'll take a long, long, vacation, one that will last for eternity.

*By Charles Mills, who owns and operates Christian Communications, a media-production service in Hagerstown, Maryland.*

## To Thine Own Self Be True?

### OPINION

**Key Text: 1 Tim. 1:18, 19**

Why does Paul write his letter of advice to Timothy?

In the first place, Paul is older and wiser than Timothy. He has been out there in the real world. He knows the spiritual battles Timothy is going to face.

Also, we can tell that Paul cares a great deal for his young friend and colleague. In the introduction Paul writes “to Timothy my true son in the faith.” Again, in verse 18, Paul says, “Timothy, my son.” Paul is writing because he is very concerned for his “adopted son.”

In Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* Polonius offers last-minute advice to his son, Laertes. Like Timothy, Laertes is about to leave on an important mission. And like Paul, Polonius offers a long list of advice.

After instructing Laertes to listen more than he talks, to be loyal to his friends, to dress for success, and not to borrow or lend money, Polonius concludes with one of Shakespeare’s most quoted lines: “This above all: to thine own self be true.”

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### **There is a fundamental difference between Polonius’s advice to his son and what Paul is saying to Timothy.**

That is certainly good advice, but there is a fundamental difference between Polonius’s advice to his son and what Paul is saying to Timothy. While Polonius was mainly concerned with how to get ahead in business and politics, Paul is worried about Timothy’s eternal life. Paul knows that the Christian faith, if not guarded and grounded in the truth, can be betrayed. He has seen it happen before: “Some have rejected these [truths] and so have shipwrecked their faith,” Paul says in 1 Timothy 1:19 (NIV).

Paul urges Timothy to be true to the faith—that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (verse 15). If Timothy will just stand firm, he won’t be swept away by false knowledge and become shipwrecked by confusion.

I think if Paul were to rewrite Shakespeare’s famous lines, he might change them just a little bit:

“This above all: to our own *faith* be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.”

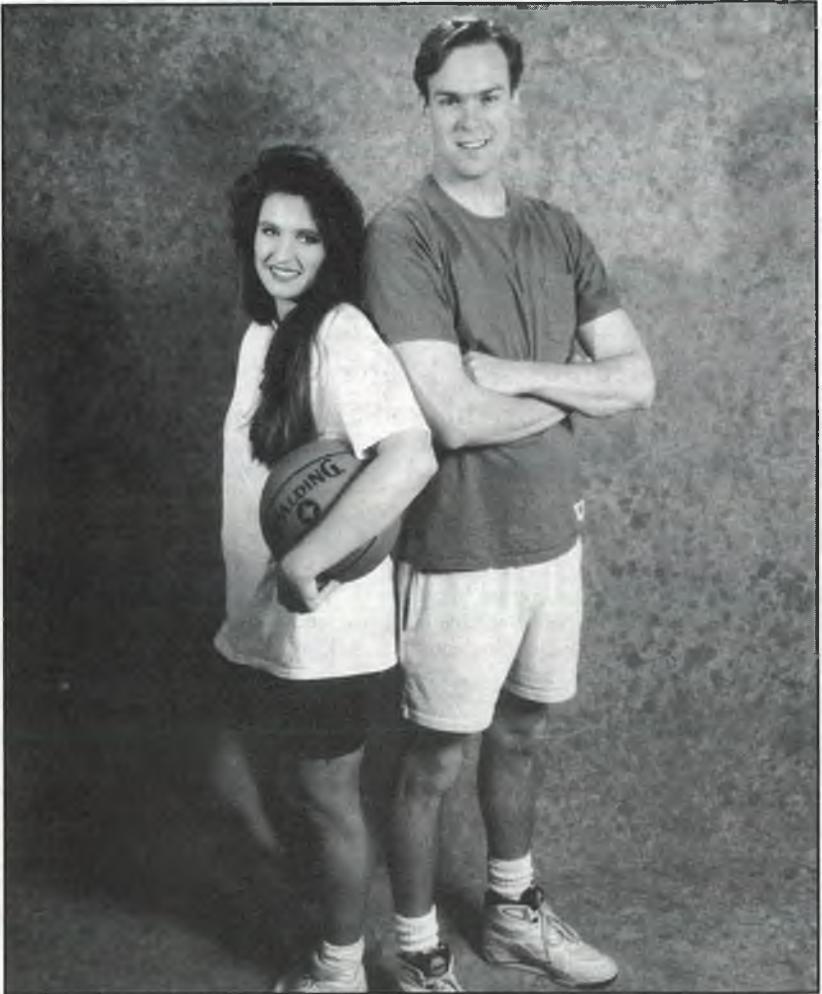
### REACT

1. Do I personally know anyone who has “shipwrecked” his or her faith?
2. Why did this happen?
3. What can I do to help people who have shipwrecked their faith?

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*By Curt Dewees, a freelance writer living in Silver Spring, Maryland.*

# A WOMAN'S PLACE . . .



**“I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting” (1 Tim. 2:8).**



# No Room for Hotshots

## INTRODUCTION

Scripture: 1 Tim. 2

The game is nearly over. Only a few seconds remain on the clock. The home team is down by two points. One basket could tie the game, if only they can make it down the court in time.

One of the players panics. He grabs the ball and plunges as fast as possible toward the goal. Ignoring his teammates completely, he goes up—and is absolutely blocked by the visitor's huge guards. Had he assessed the situation, he would have seen two other players on his team wide open who could have easily made the shot. He ignored the coach, everyone else on the team, acted alone, and lost the game.

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**He ignored the coach, everyone else on the team, acted alone, and lost the game.**

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One can see how the church can easily be compared to any sports team. With our pastors as coaches and the members as the players, we can see how our roles as members are important to the game plan. The entire team must follow the game plan set before us by our "Heavenly Coach." If not, we will surely lose the game.

First Corinthians 12:12 says, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." The church is one unit with many parts. Some parts are diametrically opposed to others, but are essentially one unit. The one unit cannot work without all of the parts performing their tasks faithfully, and most important, *together*.

So it is in marriage. Husbands and wives must become "team players." Each must consider the other member of the team in making decisions that affect the marriage, because in marriage there is no room for a "hotshot." God has outlined a divine "game plan" for marriage in Ephesians 5:21-33. By listening to the instructions of our "Heavenly Coach," we can truly become team players.

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*By Victoria Joiner Miller, program director for Oakwood College radio, WOCG-FM, Huntsville, Alabama.*

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# Paul's View of Women

## LOGOS

### 1 Tim. 2:11-15

Partly because of misinterpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11-15, some people have accused Paul of hatred for or distrust of women. This passage poses serious problems of interpretation. Consequently a fair treatment of Paul's intention requires that we try to decipher the cryptic language of this text. Most of the confusion comes from three aspects: women's submissive silence, Eve's seduction, and salvation through childbearing.

#### 1. Women's submissive silence (verses 11, 12)

Paul commands women twice "to be in silence." Between these two orders, he outlines the correct attitude the sisters should observe in relation to the didactic ministry of the church. He does so by indicating:

1. What women should do: they should *learn* in an attitude of silence.
2. What women should not do: engage in teaching activities or exert authority over men.

Are these verses of absolute application? Is their scope universal? In the case of an affirmative answer, are not they in contradiction with other specific statements of the Bible?

#### 2. Eve's seduction (verses 13, 14)

To justify the injunctions of verses 11 and 12, Paul presents two arguments: the sequence of Creation (verse 13); and Eve's role in the Fall (verse 14).

#### 3. Salvation through childbearing (verse 15)

Paul's statement that women "shall be saved in childbearing" seems to attribute a salvific virtue to motherhood. Would Paul, the champion of salvation through faith, preach a different means of salvation for women?

To avoid the kind of tensions presented above, it is imperative to follow three hermeneutical principles: those of analogy, setting, and "contextualization."

The principle of analogy requires the Bible's interpreters to make sure their understanding of a difficult passage is harmonious with clearer statements on the same topic found elsewhere in the Scriptures. Both the Old and New Testaments testify of women's role in didactic ministry and administrative positions. Some were prophetesses (didactic ministry). One was a judge (administrative position). Women were the first preachers of the post-resurrection gospel. In 1 Corinthians, Paul himself gives some guidelines concerning women's teaching ministry and liturgical offices (11:1-16). Besides, Galatians 3:28 capsulizes Paul's basic principle regarding women's status in the church. Consequently 1 Timothy's recommendation concerning women's silence in church service can neither have an absolute application nor be of universal scope. Paul had certainly some special reasons to speak such a language, as we shall see later.

The problem of salvation through childbearing also demands the application of the principle of analogy. Paul is clear that salvation is a gift from God and that

only through faith can it become a reality. The problem derives from the use of the Greek preposition *dia*. Some interpreters see *dia* as indicative of a condition necessary to salvation. But *dia* can also have a “tropical use.”<sup>1</sup> One possible translation would be: “She shall be saved though in childbearing.”

*Is there nowadays any behavior that is appropriate in some segments of the church while unacceptable in others?*

The principle of setting deals with the spatial, the temporal, and/or the social contexts of a passage. Such a principle invites us to read the pastoral letters in the light of the “other teachings” (1 Tim. 1:3) some people were preaching in Ephesus. Paul calls them “endless myths about genealogies.”<sup>2</sup> We have here some features of a doctrinal trend that will become a full-fledged heresy during the second century. Scholars have identified this heresy as the Gnostic speculations.

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## **The Gnostics believed that Eve was created first and that she taught Adam to eat from the tree of knowledge.**

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The Gnostics believed that Eve was created first. “Thought of Light” and “Mother of Life,” she taught Adam to eat from the tree of knowledge. That act opened his eyes to perfection and saved him from the “impotence to know.”<sup>3</sup> Seduced by her superior mind and her physical charms, Adam fell into the sin of procreation. Such an evil perpetuates the dispersal of Light.

Because of those speculations, some Gnostics prohibited marriage and child-bearing. On the other hand, they valued the role of women as teachers of wisdom and salvation. The basis for that practice was a “four-way pun”<sup>4</sup> which plays on the Aramaic words for “Eve,” “serpent,” “life,” and “to teach.”

*How should we face speculations that jeopardize the unity of the church?*

The principle of contextualization requires adaptation to time and circumstances. Paul recognizes the equality of men and women “in Christ,” but to face the challenge of the Ephesian doctors, he excludes women from the teaching ministry and administrative offices. Besides, he refutes the false teachers’ assumption by stressing the biblical sequence of Creation: Adam first, Eve second. He also emphasizes Eve’s role in the Fall. Rejecting the heretics’ condemnation of marriage and childbearing, he points out that salvation is not hindered by motherhood as long as women remain faithful to their Christian calling.

*What is the best way to live up to our Christian calling in the midst of challenging situations?*

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1. See Thayer’s *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1985), p. 132. He gives one striking example: Romans 4:11, in which *dia* is best translated “though”: “. . . all them that believe, *though* (*dia*) they be not circumcised.”

2. Translation from Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Letters: A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), p. 15.

3. Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, second edition (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), p. 204.

4. Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Random House, 1979), p. 30.

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*By Agniel Samson, professor of biblical languages and New Testament studies at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.*

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## Pretty Is as Pretty Does

### TESTIMONY

**Key Text: 1 Tim. 2:9, 10, RSV**

It is often said that “you have only one chance to make a first impression.” Your attire plays an important role in another’s immediate perception of your character. Ellen White states: “A person’s character is judged by his style of dress. A refined taste, a cultivated mind, will be revealed in the choice of simple and appropriate attire.”<sup>1</sup>

She further insists that “simplicity of dress will make a sensible woman appear to the best advantage. . . . The one who is simple and unpretending in her dress and in her manners shows that she understands that a true woman is characterized by moral worth.”<sup>2</sup>

Speaking of the connection of attire to spirituality, Mrs. White says: “A disposition in you to dress according to the fashion, and to wear lace and gold and artificials for display, will not recommend to others your religion or the truth that you profess.”<sup>3</sup>

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**“Those who are inclined to look into the mirror to admire themselves, have little inclination to look into the law of God, the great moral mirror.”**

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She states further that “those who are inclined to look into the mirror to admire themselves, have little inclination to look into the law of God, the great moral mirror.”<sup>4</sup>

She urges Christians to “follow Christ, and conform their dress to God’s word. They should shun extremes. They should humbly pursue a straight-forward course, irrespective of applause or of censure, and should cling to the right because of its own merits.”<sup>5</sup>

### REACT

1. How can attire have a negative effect on an individual?
2. What should be our attitude (as Christ sees it) when we choose our clothing, and when confronted by the reactions of others?

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1. *Education*, p. 248.

2. *Messages to Young People*, p. 353.

3. *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 376.

4. *Messages to Young People*, p. 360.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 350.

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*By Anthonye Earle Perkins, a communication major at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.*

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## Casting the First Stone

### EVIDENCE

**Key Text: 1 Tim. 2:15**

During the 1970s and 1980s women, struggling with the backlash of male dominance, saw the apostle Paul as a direct contributor to the view of female subservience. However, had Paul's writing been closely examined, these women may not have been as vehement in their denunciation of the apostle.

Paul wrote to Timothy regarding what he considered the correct mode of worship for promoting order and decorum. The apostle's admonitions should be understood in light of cultural practices at the time and in light of his own regard for the ministry of women.

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### **Jewish tradition exonerated the male who participated in adultery and ordered that the female be stoned.**

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Women were regarded by the Jews as less worthy than men. One day Jesus stopped to rest by Jacob's well in Samaria. His disciples had gone into the city to buy food. When a woman came to the well, Jesus engaged her in conversation. The record says that the disciples were surprised when they returned to find Jesus talking to a woman (John 4:27). Another evidence of the low esteem in which women were held is recorded in John 8:3-11. The woman caught in adultery was charged with the crime. According to Mosaic law, male and female participating in such activity should be stoned. But Jewish tradition exonerated the male and ordered that the female be stoned.

When cultural attitudes would grant credence to the demeaning of one human being by another, Paul's injunction to Timothy about women not teaching in public or dominating men appears tame. God works within a culture to bring His principles into operation in the life of believers.

Paul acknowledged women as collaborators in the gospel (Phil. 4:2, 3); as good and of wholesome example (2 Tim. 1:5); as saints—church officers (Rom. 16:1, 2); as Christian city-dwellers (Rom. 16:15). Paul's respect for women hinges on his acknowledged call by Jesus. He himself admonishes the church to follow him to the degree that he has followed Christ. As a follower of Jesus, Paul had to be respectful to women to the same degree that Jesus was. Begging the question? No. In dealing with the Absolute, the Christ, no begging the question exists.

Finally, Paul asserts that the woman "will be saved through motherhood"—saved through the birth of the Christ-Child (1 Tim. 2:15, NEB margin). The requirements for salvation for the female are the same as those for the male; "if only women continue in faith, love, and holiness, with a sober mind" (verse 15). "There is no such thing as . . . male and female; for you are all one person in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

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*By Sylvia Barnes, professor of English at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.*

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# The Power of the Secret Place

## HOW-TO

**Key Text: 1 Tim. 2:8**

These are uncertain times. These are anxious times. These are difficult times. It is easy to become dizzy with perplexity, to feel overwhelmed by a numbing sense of helplessness and futility. In times like these, prayer is a sure refuge. The apostle Paul admonishes us to “pray every where.” To overcome the anger, fear, and skepticism of our age we must pray everywhere:

**1. In Our Personal “Secret Place” (Ps. 91:1).** The place and the time must be relatively free from interruption. It should be a quiet, pleasant place. In such a place one may boldly open the heart to the One who truly understands our grief because He has experienced “the feeling of our infirmities” (Heb. 4:15). And He is totally trustworthy. The secret place is the foundation of a powerful spiritual life.

**2. In Our Home With Our Family.** The business of life should not be permitted to crowd out family prayer. Each member of the family may be assigned a different focus for his/her prayer. The members should hold hands during prayer. This will add feelings of closeness, unity, and love, which are the bases of family stability.

## Pray for superiors, colleagues, and subordinates.

**3. In Our Workplace.** Anxiety produced by the unstable work environments of our contemporary society makes this an imperative. Instead of a coffee break, take a prayer break. One may do this in the privacy of an office or restroom. Pray for superiors, colleagues, and subordinates. Pray prior to a meeting that may involve conflict. Pray for God to make you an effective witness of His love, justice, and mercy. Ask the Lord to help you be a greater asset to your employer.

**4. In School.** Whether you attend a denominational or a secular school, you must pray for divine wisdom in pursuing your studies. Find a prayer companion and a quiet spot away from the traffic of campus life. Pray for each other’s future plans. Pray for an unshakable integrity in all your undertakings.

**5. In Church.** Corporate prayer is a necessity in these last days (Heb. 10:25). The Christian needs the encouragement of brothers and sisters who, despite the many distractions of our age, yearn for the city “whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10). Prayers in church should emphasize the mercy, compassion, and faithfulness of our heavenly Father.

## REACT

Are there any places or circumstances in which prayer may be inappropriate? Why?

*By Roland L. McKenzie, chairperson of the education department at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.*



# Marriage: A Ceremonial Toy?

## OPINION

**Key Text: Eph. 5:31**

In Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, when Faustus requests of the devil a wife, Mephistopheles tells him:

Marriage is but a ceremonial toy:

And if thou lovest me, think no more of it.

The devil would have all men believe that marriage is no more than a ceremonial toy, a social gesture. The statistics on broken marriages can clearly indicate the extent to which the devil has been successful. Marriage is a sacrament like baptism or ordination. The ceremony is intended to be an outward demonstration of an inward commitment or resolution. The baptismal ceremony is a public demonstration of an inward resolve to die to the world and to follow Christ. The marriage ceremony is a public demonstration that two people have resolved and vowed to forsake all others and cling to each other until death separates them. The ceremonies are important because they serve as a witness of the resolution or commitment, but without the holy commitment baptism or marriage is but a ceremonial toy.

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## To some people marriage is bridesmaids, groomsmen, lighted candles, and wedding cake.

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To some people marriage is bridesmaids, groomsmen, lighted candles, wedding cake, and varying degrees of pomp and circumstance. To others marriage is the repeating of some phrases frozen in time or some more modern delicately coined phrases. But marriage is more than the ceremony. It is the linking of two hearts for time and eternity, and there is no easy way out. Once the commitment has been made, it is incumbent upon the parties to work hard to make their marriage succeed. They should not be intimidated by couples who say that they have been married for 40 years and cannot remember one occasion when a hurtful word escaped the lips of either of them. Nor should they be discouraged by couples who say that they knew the marriage couldn't work after only a few weeks.

Christian marriages have many advantages. One advantage is that when two people love the Lord they usually can work their problems out, because their ultimate goal or destination is the same. Marriage is not a ceremonial toy—it is a holy adventure undertaken together by two people seeking the kingdom.

## REACT

1. What are the advantages that Christian marriages enjoy?
2. What temptations, if any, are unique in Christian marriages?

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*By Bernard W. Benn, chairperson of the English department at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.*

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# THE PRICE OF LEADERSHIP



**“I am writing these instructions to you so that, if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:14, 15, RSV).**

# Do What You Say

## INTRODUCTION

Scripture: 1 Tim. 3

One verse of a religious folk song in which various church members attempt to define the nature of true godliness—"religion"—introduces a preacher who declares:

I know I got religion,  
 Know I was called to preach;  
 It ain't your business what I do;  
 Just practice what I preach.

A chorus of earnest "no's" rebuffs the preacher. But the audience could have been spared the didacticism, since the broad satire speaks for itself: we take for granted that practicing should precede preaching; we take for granted that true godliness precludes discrepancies between practice and profession; and we believe that anyone called to preach is called also to practice.

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### **Those who seek and attain positions of authority must transcend the bite of satire.**

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Through the centuries many spiritual authorities, by rejecting the moral obligations of their high calling, have invited satire and sarcasm from keen observers. Infinitely patient and gentle with sinners and children and Nicodemuses willing to listen, the Lord Jesus nevertheless did not mince words as He castigated Israel's "whited sepulchres" and "blind guides." Centuries later, as Christianity's leaders outdid the Pharisees, England's great medieval poet, Geoffrey Chaucer, immortally satirized the rampant corruption through sketches of various worldly, self-indulgent, degenerate clerics among his Canterbury pilgrims.

Those who seek and attain positions of authority must transcend the bite of satire. Chaucer portrays one such minister, the "poor parson." With a favorite adage, "If gold rust what will iron do?" this parish priest tirelessly holds up before his parishioners impeccable standards of virtue and piety, convinced that a defiled shepherd cannot nurture clean sheep. From the gospel, he says, he has learned to be a noble example to his flock. The parson has obviously taken to heart Paul's admonitions to his beloved young bishop.

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*By Lela M. Gooding, associate professor of English at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.*

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## Job Descriptions for the Church

### LOGOS

#### 1 Tim. 3:13

On the portals of the U.S. Post Office Building in Washington, D.C., are inscribed these words:

The messenger of sympathy and love,  
 Servant of parted friends,  
 Consoler of the lonely,  
 Bond of the scattered family,  
 Enlarger of common life,  
 Instrument of trade and industry,  
 Promoter of mutual acquaintance of peace and  
 of good will among men and nations.

The flavor of such words takes us back nearly two thousand years, when the Christian church reached out its hands for improved organization and leadership. Nowhere does the Bible announce the managerial "job description" so clearly and simply as when Paul writes to Pastor Timothy in 1 Timothy 3.

When the apostle Paul remarks in verse 1 that the function of a "bishop" (KJV) is a good function and proceeds to describe desired qualities of that leader, he uses the word *episkopos*. Because later on in Titus 1:5-9 Paul discusses this function again by employing interchangeably *episkopos* and *presbuteros* ("elder"), it appears that both words refer to the same person or function and might best be understood as "overseer" (NIV) or "leader" (NEB). Although "elder" is another frequent translation, we must avoid limiting the application of Paul's leadership characteristics to any one church office that happens to bear that label and, rather, apply his inspired advice to all church offices.

For example, the persons functioning as "deacons" (*diakonos*, verse 8) are obviously serving in a different church capacity from that of the two previous officers mentioned above; nevertheless, Paul says "likewise" deacons too are to possess and reflect the same kind of appropriate leadership qualities. *Deacon*, incidentally, means "servant" and reminds us of their origin in Acts 6. The apostles who were overseers of the church in Jerusalem had insufficient time to take care of the material needs of the poorer members, such as the widows. Therefore, one of their first acts of leadership was to appoint seven deacons to care for more material needs while the apostles themselves could spend more time preaching the Word.

Some 15 specific qualifications are listed for church leadership in the early verses of 1 Timothy 3, NIV, namely: "above reproach," "husband of but one wife," "temperate," "self-controlled," "respectable," "hospitable," "able to teach," "not given to much wine," "not violent," "gentle," "not quarrelsome," "not a lover of money," "manage[s] his own family well," "not . . . a recent convert," and "a good reputation" in the community and outside world. Quite a bit of grist for the mill, is it not? The standard is high and from a human point of view may appear unreachable, but the grace of God remains the sufficient enabling to fulfill His will for the church and ultimately the eternal kingdom.

Verse 13 rather summarizes the church leadership job description by promising that those who serve well in their assigned duties are gaining (present tense) for themselves “an excellent standing” (“a good degree,” KJV). The noun *bathmos* (found only here in the New Testament) means literally “a step” and metaphorically “standing” or “rank” and might refer to good standing, respect, and appreciation both in the eyes of the church and in God’s sight.

Finally, the desired process and result of spiritual church duties by leaders is that they can go about their responsibilities on a high note of singing with the Christian church of all ages those poetic lines of verse 16, believed to have been a liturgical hymn of Paul’s day and certainly a paean of praise for all time on the “mystery of godliness.”

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## **The apostles in Jerusalem had insufficient time to take care of the material needs of the poorer members.**

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### **REACT**

1. To what extent do modern-day job descriptions for church offices match those of the apostolic church?
2. What is the role of discipline in the fulfillment of church offices?
3. How did church growth affect the organization of the apostolic church?
4. How should the modern-day church deal with international influences of church growth?

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*By Mervyn A. Warren, chairperson of religion at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.*

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## Qualified to Lead

### TESTIMONY

**Key Text: 1 Tim. 3:2-12**

In 1 Timothy 3, Paul outlines the qualifications of a church leader. He admonishes Timothy to be sober, diligent, and beyond reproach. Ellen White amplifies these qualifications and points out that church leadership is not a responsibility to be taken lightly; rather leadership is a solemn responsibility that takes cleanness of heart and a “holy zeal.”

“Solemn are the responsibilities resting upon those who are called to act as leaders in the church of God on earth.” “What the church needs in these days of peril is an army of workers who, like Paul, have educated themselves for usefulness, who have a deep experience in the things of God, and who are filled with earnestness and zeal. Sanctified, self-sacrificing men are needed; men who will not shun trial and responsibility; men who are brave and true; men in whose hearts Christ is formed ‘the hope of glory,’ and who with lips touched with holy fire will ‘preach the word.’”<sup>1</sup>

“It is discipline of spirit, cleanness of heart and thought, that is needed [in church leaders]. . . . They should shun every appearance of evil.”<sup>2</sup>

### **“The Lord will not entrust the burden for His flock to unqualified individuals.”**

Ellen White also tells us that “The same devotion, the same consecration, the same subjection to the claims of the word of God, that were manifest in Christ, must be seen in His servants.”<sup>3</sup>

She further points out that God wants church leaders “who can be depended upon; who will ever be found on the right side in times of danger; who will faithfully war against the enemy. . . . In order to prosper, every church must have men [and women] upon whom it can rely in times of peril, men who are as true as steel, unselfish men, who have the interest of God’s cause lying nearer their hearts.”<sup>4</sup>

### **REACT**

1. How are these guidelines for leadership relevant to us today?
2. What are some other qualities that you consider necessary for today’s leaders?

1. *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 92, 507.

2. *Gospel Workers*, pp. 126, 129.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

4. *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 637.

*By Robyn R. Jackson, senior language arts education major at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.*



## Moral Trendsetters

### EVIDENCE

**Key Text: Exod. 32:1**

In this short analysis of this week's lesson, we will try to focus on two thoughts suggested by the key text of our lesson: (1) "if I am delayed," and (2) "how one ought to behave."

Empirical evidence suggests a very close relationship between delay and our behavior patterns. As human beings we tend to become lax when we have to wait. In many cases the lowering of standards often follows as our guards are lowered and our expectations or dreams remain unfulfilled.

During the first century of the Roman Empire, the fledgling Christian church was despised by supporters of the political status quo. The result was a long period of extreme persecution beginning with Nero (A.D. 64-68) and reaching its peak between 303 and 311 under Emperor Diocletian. But even worse, doctrinal and cultural divisions disturbed the ranks of the church. Sensitive to these problems, Paul feared that any delay on his part to meet regularly with the brethren might further weaken the Christian community that he was in the process of molding.

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### **We are living in an age when deviant behavior is equated with civil and constitutional rights.**

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This situation was not unique to the first-century church. The remnant church today is faced with a similar scenario as it waits for the return of Christ. "How we ought to behave" was Paul's deep concern for the first-century Christians, as well as for us today. Just a cursory examination shows that the morals and ethical norms on our campuses and churches are becoming rather blurred and dangerously close to those of the world.

We are living in an age when deviant behavior of the most abhorrent form is equated with civil and constitutional rights. To wait is no longer a positive societal virtue, and deferred satisfaction with its ultimate benefits is forced to give way to the more sentimental appeal "If it feels good, do it." One wonders whether there are any absolutes left or standards to be maintained.

While we wait, we are not to allow the deteriorating values of our society to be the agenda in our churches and college campuses. Instead, our young people should be the moral trendsetters. This was what Paul was so concerned about in his day and ours.

### **REACT**

How should a Christian respond to the anomaly of deviant behavior that is protected by constitutional rights?

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*By Emmanuel Saunders, chair of department of history and political science, Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.*

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## “Losing My Religion”

### HOW-TO

**Key Text:** 1 Tim. 3:1-12

As I read the first phrase in 1 Timothy 3:2, “A bishop then must be blameless,” I thought of the hit song “Losing My Religion,” performed by supergroup R.E.M. from Athens, Georgia. “That’s me in the corner, that’s me in the spotlight, losing my religion . . .” Hearing lead singer Michael Stipe intone this phrase over and over, I was struck by the irony of being “in the spotlight”—a position of leadership, if you will—and “losing my religion”—diminishing perspective, deteriorating strength, not living up to the exacting standards of leadership.

Leadership is difficult, and it has become increasingly challenging to find those leaders who resemble the moral portrait painted by Paul. Leadership requires more than is humanly possible, but God’s strength is made perfect in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). Here are some points for us nonleaders to remember that will make us more sympathetic and understanding toward our leaders:

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### “That’s me in the corner, that’s me in the spotlight, losing my religion.”

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#### 1. Leaders are fully subject to their humanity (Ps. 51:5; 1 John 1:8).

Being in the spotlight, holding a position of leadership, is demanding and also very fulfilling for the ego. It leads to high visibility, which seems to be very compelling for the viewers and the viewed. This high level of visibility leads to power and control, two intoxicating substances, easily abused.

#### 2. Leaders need God’s forgiveness and cleansing (Ps. 51:7-10; 1 John 1:9)

Losing one’s religion, for my purpose, extends beyond the meaning implied by R.E.M. It refers to the struggle between light and dark, good and evil, Christ and Satan. Leadership in the church demands demonstrating a measurable level of compliance to God’s will and call. Yet leaders fall prey to the same sinful inclinations that we nonleaders do, periodically to our collective chagrin. Unfortunately, from time to time, we do discover the once-hidden flaws, the dark secrets, the cloaked improprieties, the sin of our preachers, teachers, and administrators. I believe that Satan and his hordes seek out God’s appointed leadership with a vengeance.

### REACT

1. How should we view our leaders in the context of their humanity and our humanity?
2. How should we respond to weak, overtly sinful, despotic leaders?

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*By David T. Person, II, manager of WOCG-FM and host of a talk show at NPR affiliate WLRH-FM in Huntsville, Alabama.*

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## Shame in the Christian Church

### OPINION

**Key Text: 1 Sam. 2:25**

History repeats itself in very graphic terms. One would think that with these “multitudes of witnesses,” we would not repeat the errors of those who have gone before us.

What is happening to the leaders of churches in our time happened to Eli, the high priest of Israel. In the execution of his office, Eli exhibited poor judgment—he only lamely rebuked and sat idly by as his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, robbed God’s people and committed inconceivable evils. Justice was visited on Eli and his sons.

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**One would think that with these “multitudes of witnesses,” we would not repeat the errors of those who have gone before us.**

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Paul’s admonition to Timothy about the character and deportment of the leaders of the church is now even more apt than before. We have been witnesses to the abuses of the leaders of the churches. The shame and reproach that has characterized the Christian church during the past five years is ample testimony to what some men in high-profile church positions have brought on the church of God. They have conducted God’s business as if it were their own—they have cheated the “widows” of their mites and amassed great wealth for themselves; some have become depraved in following prostitutes; some have been jailed for milking their followers dry of their hard-earned livelihood.

What Paul says is not to be misunderstood as being something entirely exclusive. In fact, the same conditions under which the leaders of the church have to function apply to all of us. We are all priests in the household of God. What Paul admonishes the church leader to do is what is enjoined on you and me. Both you and I have roles to play in the work of saving others, but how effective we are is largely dependent on following Paul’s advice. We must be true to God, to others, and to ourselves. Otherwise, we will win others into the kingdom and find ourselves keeping company with all those who are condemned to everlasting damnation.

### **REACT**

1. How should the Christian respond to inappropriate or immoral behavior by church leadership?
2. How should a Christian respond to unbelievers’ criticism of inappropriate or immoral behavior by church leadership?

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*By Sammy R. Browne, assistant professor in English at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.*

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# BEWARE THE PANTRY POLICE!



**“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12).**

## Staff Infection

### INTRODUCTION

Scripture: 1 Tim. 4:12

A young man who wanted to know truth heard of a great and wise old guru who lived on top of a mountain. After a long and arduous climb, he found the guru sitting in a cave holding a long wooden staff. He cried, "Oh, great guru, teach me truth."

"Are you ready for your first lesson?" asked the guru.

"Yes, I am ready to learn."

The guru took his staff and beat the seeker from head to foot, inflicting many bruises and injuries. When he was done, the guru said, "Your first lesson is over. Come back tomorrow for your next lesson."

The seeker hobbled back down the mountain, wondering why the old man had beaten him so, but the next day he returned, heading painfully back up the mountain. When he was once again face to face with the guru, he was asked, "Are you ready for your second lesson?"

"Yes, O great and wise guru. Teach me truth." Whereupon the old man set to with the staff and beat him again.

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### **"Stop! Don't hit me anymore! Why have you continued beating me every day?"**

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This continued for several days until one day, just as the guru raised his staff to commence another lesson, the seeker held up his bruised arm and yelled, "Stop! Don't hit me anymore! Why have you continued beating me every day?"

The guru lowered the staff and asked, "Why did you let me?"

The answer varies for each person, but the process is the same: we continue to listen to people who tell us things or do things to us that are wrong, erroneous, or just plain stupid, but we don't stop until we decide that the consequences are too painful. For some people that seems to be never. But God calls us to examine carefully why we stay in certain relationships, why we listen to people who don't have our best interests at heart, why we continue to watch and send money to silver-tongued evangelist-demagogues. One clue: We don't find our own identity as children of God until we learn to think for ourselves. "Respect yourself as a child of God" is the message of 1 Timothy 4:12.

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*By David Evans, chaplain and counselor at Kettering College of Medical Arts, Kettering, Ohio.*

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# The Brand of Slaves

## LOGOS

1 Tim. 4:12

### Beware of False Teachings (read verses 1-5)

Paul begins his counsel by referring to the authority of the Holy Spirit—through Paul (or other prophets). This Spirit says expressly that in later times some will fall away and abandon the faith. The actual time of this occurrence, whether in Paul’s day or just prior to the Second Advent, is debated. It may be that Paul’s concern about the lying, deceitful spirits and devilish doctrines should be considered more seriously. The radical teachers of these doctrines feigned the truth and became self-deluded. Their conscience being “seared” may mean they have literally burned away their sensitivity to discern right from wrong. It may be that they are no longer able to feel guilt and could be thought of as sociopathic. Some think this phrase refers to Satan’s hot iron leaving an indelible mark as a brand marking them as slaves.

Two false teachings are mentioned. “They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods” (verse 3, NIV). This fanatical concept crept into the first-century church through the influence of Gnostics, who taught an idealistic view of life that says the material world is evil; only the spirit is good. All physical pleasure is sin. Holiness is identified with denial of the body’s desires. Only spiritual life is good. The desire to be redeemed from the body of flesh prompted many earnest Christians to renounce marriage because of the sexual gratification that would be experienced, and to abstain from certain foods that were thought to satisfy certain cravings. They thought that to allow indulgence in the physical appetite bound them to the material world of sin. These false teachers overlooked that food and marriage were created by God, were established as normal and good, and were intended to be enjoyed in a healthy, happy, balanced life so long as considerations were given to God’s intentions.

### The Right Focus (read verses 6-10)

To be a good minister, or “servant,” as the Greek word *diakonos* indicates, Paul offers counsel in two related areas. The first has to do with the focus of the personal study habits of the young preacher. He is to feed continually on the truths of Scripture, which produce faith. This exposure to the writings produces sound thinking and a faith experience in the power and wisdom of God. On the other hand, a servant of God should not dwell on the secular and profane that may be groundless, godless, absurd, and useless myth.

Instead, Paul admonishes Timothy to “train yourself to be godly” (verse 7). The word for train is *gumnaze*, from which we get the word *gymnasium*. Physical training does have value and is important. Good health contributes to well-being and is a gift to be enjoyed. When the body is healthy and the mind alert, the spirit is also capable of response and growth. However, physical development alone has a temporary and limiting effect on life on earth. In comparison, then, the spiritual exercise would be more highly esteemed, since it transcends the present life and affects that which is eternal, and therefore should have supreme regard. As we enjoy a vital connection to the Life-giver, we are given a capacity to live forever.



## **Pastoral Duties (read verses 11-16)**

Timothy was urged to conduct himself in such a way that no one would look down on him condescendingly because of his young age. The word for *youth* is *neotes*, which was used for those in the military years extending to age 40. Timothy was likely about 30 years old at this writing. He is urged to be an example to the elderly during the time when age was respected for its wisdom and the elderly were the authority figures. Timothy would be in a position over them, and that could be awkward, especially if he was timid by nature and not used to asserting himself. He was to be an example in speech, in everyday living, in love (agape), in faith, and in purity. Not only should he be careful about his outward life, but also in his inner thoughts and feelings. Truth is best seen lived out in the personality and character of redeemed people.

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## **The desire to be redeemed from the body of flesh prompted many earnest Christians to renounce marriage.**

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Timothy was advised not to neglect his “special gift.” He was not to be careless with the “charisma” or the gift of free grace, which was an extraordinary endowment from the Holy Spirit. Persevere, Paul said. Be absorbed in your pastoral duties, but periodically stop for self-evaluation to determine your personal progress. Stay self-aware of your needs in the process so that you keep yourself on track. It is too easy to get so caught up in the problems of others that it leads you astray to discouragement, to doubt, and maybe to burnout. Neglecting yourself can be destructive. This is a concept we do not often hear emphasized in our spiritual journey.

### **REACT**

1. How do Paul’s comments about later times describe conditions throughout subsequent history?
2. How should we understand the true place and purpose of sexuality in marriage?
3. How should a Christian view physical desires?
4. How might we use food and diet in ways much as did the deceiving radicals of Paul’s time?
5. How is the discussion of foods in Timothy different from Paul’s comments about food offered to idols in 1 Corinthians 8?
6. How can a Christian follow the admonition to “train yourself to be godly” without resorting to a concept of righteousness by works?

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*By Robert L. Dunn, professor of religion at Kettering College of Medical Arts, Kettering, Ohio.*

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# God's Youthful Prophet

## TESTIMONY

**Key Text: Jer. 1:5**

It wasn't out of luck that God elected Jeremiah to be one of His greatest prophets. God emphasized to Jeremiah that even before he had been conceived he already had a holy mission to all nations. God has always been on the outlook for young people to share the testimony of Jesus.

The Bible clearly says that Jeremiah was still a young lad. He even described himself as a child who was afraid to go into the world and declare the message that God had given to him. But God did not let him get away with such an excuse, because He told Jeremiah that He would be giving him the proper words to say and that He would be by his side.

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## God did not choose one of the priests who had worked in the temple for many years.

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Interestingly enough, God did not choose one of the priests who had worked in the temple for many years. What a job for a young man to do and what a way for God to prove His point. God had set His eyes on a naive and carefree child.

Now the big question is: "Who will fill their [elders] places? . . . We can but look anxiously upon the youth of today as those who must take these burdens, and upon whom responsibilities must fall."<sup>1</sup> We have been clearly told that we are the future of our church and that we must be the main carriers of the light.

The Lord also encourages us to be both youthful and at the same time an example for others in all that we do, and that is in word, conversation, charity, spirit, faith, and purity (see 1 Tim. 4:12). It is our mission as Christians to fulfill our duty, regardless of the circumstance and environment in which we find ourselves.

"Christ is calling for volunteers to enlist under His standard, and bear the banner of the cross before the world. . . . Young men [and women], press to the front, and identify yourselves as laborers together with Christ, taking up the work where He left it, to carry it on to its completion."<sup>2</sup>

Enough time has been spent in rationalizing with the Lord about the things that we can't do. We must now get up and do more than just bear the cross of Jesus. We must bear the cross *for* Jesus!

## REACT

How will I respond to God's calling to rescue someone from apostasy?

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1. *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 536.

2. *Messages to Young People*, pp. 24, 25.

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*By Hearly G. Mayr, a second-year pre-med student at Kettering College, Kettering, Ohio.*

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## What's Your Example Quotient?

### EVIDENCE

**Key Text: 1 Tim. 4:12**

Occasionally we hear in church the lament “Where are our young people? Where are the leaders of tomorrow?” On the other hand, upstanding young adults are champing at the bit to provide energetic leadership in their churches but are not given the opportunity. So they involve themselves in other organizations, where they are appreciated. They want to be active, and the church says it needs them, but it’s not working. What’s wrong here, anyway?

In most cases the fault lies in both camps. The church has not been very good at giving leadership to young people or at trusting them once they receive the responsibility for a task. Smiles of pride are passed around whenever they present a program up front or do some project in the church or community, but church leaders usually think that young people must be entertained to keep them in the church rather than employed in service and leadership.

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### **Church leaders usually think that young people must be entertained to keep them in the church.**

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This is frustrating to young leaders. No doubt Timothy bemoaned the resistance to his leadership from older people who considered him a little “wet behind the ears” in experience and wisdom.

So Paul instructed him as to the best way to overcome such criticism: be an example! Let your actions speak in your behalf; show in your deportment a wisdom that is beyond your years. Become a pattern that both young and old will do well to copy.

Admittedly, young people do not often focus their activities upon this goal. Life—with its pursuit of happiness and success—is more often on their mind. Getting an education, preparing for a career, finding a significant other, these are the usual pursuits for them. But if they really want to be taken seriously in the role of leadership, they are going to have to make being an example a higher priority. It’s the only way older people can learn to trust them.

Paul advised example-givers to watch five areas of life: (1) the message and manner of their speaking, (2) their deportment and goals in everyday living, (3) their unselfish caring for others, (4) their unswerving faith in God, and (5) their spotless record since conversion.

Look around in your church at the young people who are entrusted with leadership, and you will probably notice that they are doing pretty well in these five areas. If God is calling you to service and leadership, or if you have felt your leadership on shaky ground, make every effort to improve your example quotient. It may take time for the church to notice, but you’ll never regret the effort.

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*By Dan Stevens, associate pastor in charge of young adults and education at the Kettering SDA Church, Kettering, Ohio.*

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## Our Knaves of Gnostic Lineage

### HOW-TO

**Key Text:** Gal. 5:13

We've got more than our share of ascetics in the Adventist Church. Those knaves of Gnostic lineage, monastic-minded pantry police who abandon the faith believe that the material pleasures that "God created [as] good" must be avoided. The Gnostics were "hypocritical liars" (1 Tim. 4:2, NIV), however, who had forsaken the truth of God's good creation.

After warning Timothy about the demonic-led ascetics who live in the "later times," Paul tells Timothy how to enjoy, but not abuse, the material gifts of God. Here's how:

**1. Thankfully consecrate your meals to God (read verses 3-5).** Those who "know the truth" about what God has created to be "received with thanksgiving" do not need to be overly concerned about their diet. When we know and follow the truth, we are liberated from prosecution by the pantry police. Asceticism is a devilishly appealing façade. It appears to offer the reward of godliness and a

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### We do not all of a sudden become spiritual Arnold Schwarzeneggers.

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disciplined lifestyle; it delivers a hellish bondage that the ascetic probably doesn't even realize exists. None of us can in our own strength ever do enough to make ourselves acceptable to God. In our condemnation of asceticism, however, we must watch our "life and doctrine closely" and not abuse our freedom (see verse 16, NIV).

**2. Share your perspective (read verses 6-10, 11-16).** Timothy, the junior pastor, was encouraged by his mentor, Paul, to share the truth with fellow believers. Our challenge as Christians is to be "an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity" (verse 12). This exemplary living comes only as we "put our hope in the living God" (verse 10). We cannot live the way we are called to live unless we trust God to work in us.

**3. Avoid "marmish" myths by spiritual exercise (read verses 6-10).** The process of growth that God is working in us happens in the gymnasium of life. Timothy is to go into spiritual training. The process of growth, therefore, requires a concerted effort on our part; we do not all of a sudden become spiritual Arnold Schwarzeneggers.

The myths of old marms and the asceticism of demons are contested in the gymnasium of spiritual exercise. By reading God's Word, sharing our ideas with others, praying together, introspectively reflecting on our actions and attitudes, and persevering in our faith, we are developing spiritual strength that holds "promise for both the present life and the life to come" (verse 8). That's the good life!

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*By Randy Daniel, staff assistant to United States Congressman Tony Hall, Dayton, Ohio.*

## Time to Lower Our Standards

### OPINION

**Key Texts: Mark 7:6-9; Luke 11:42**

It is interesting to note what type of false teachers Paul is concerned about in the fourth chapter of Timothy. Often we tend to think of false teachers as those liberals who undermine basic truths. But among those of concern to Paul were some who were promoting apparently very high standards. Was he coming down on conservatives in the group?

Jesus' most antagonistic opponents were religious leaders promoting detailed standards. If Jesus had tried to accommodate the most conservative of the Jewish leaders, what would Christianity look like today?

In protecting the integrity of our faith, we often try to guard against so-called liberal views. But should we not also maintain our guard against the conservative wing? How many times have church decisions been based on placating the most conservative element within the church? Does that partially account for churches that are perceived as so strict and rigid that young adults are repulsed?

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### **Christ frequently violated contemporary religious standards.**

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In examining how Christ dealt with the church leaders of His day, we often find Him rejecting many long-honored rules and regulations. But the fascinating aspect of His opposition is that He was actually calling for a much *more* demanding way of life. He may have freed men and women from burdensome restrictions, but He asked far more from them. In rejecting the man-made rules, He returned people to the principles, which required more attention and effort.

Christ frequently violated contemporary religious standards. However, He replaced them with less specific—but more challenging—ways of living. If He were to walk visibly among us today, I can imagine His chastising those who criticize a young lady wearing earrings. But He would simultaneously remind us to let simplicity mark our *entire* lifestyle, not merely avoid certain ornamental purchases. It is far easier for us to avoid some trivial jewelry than to forgo the best cars we can afford or the biggest houses that our salaries can buy.

Am I suggesting that we lower our standards? Possibly, but only if we raise our principles at the same time. Imagine that we were to forget judging each other on the details but, instead, ask God to help us truly incorporate His radical teachings into our lives. Perhaps then we might become the loving and appealing people that He wants us to be.

### **REACT**

1. What are some of the formal or informal rules of the church that bother me?
2. What principles might they have been based upon?

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*By Brian Christenson, a systems consultant at Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio.*

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# THE BACKBONE OF THE CHURCH



**“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).**



# Strategies for a Supple Spine

## INTRODUCTION

**Scripture: 1 Tim. 5:1-16**

For years I ran and jumped, twisted, turned, and bent with ease. As a relatively fit young man, I enjoyed mobility and flexibility.

Then it happened.

Out of the blue, my back began hurting, and I mean hurting. I could hardly walk. I couldn't bend and was in constant pain. Now, with my backbone working improperly from years of stress and strain, I could do, literally, nothing.

The *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines the spinal column as "the columnar assemblage of articulated vertebrae extending from the cranium to the coccyx or the end of the tail, encasing the spinal cord and forming the supporting axis of the body; the backbone."

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## The church's spinal cord consists of its programs and activities.

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In a similar way vibrant, young church members perform a supporting role. I would define this special group of individuals as a columnar assemblage of diverse, vibrant, and active persons, extending to and from all the areas of the globe, encasing the spinal cord and forming the supporting axis of the church.

The church's spinal cord consists of its programs and activities, one of the most important of which is caring for the needy, in general, the elderly and fatherless specifically. As the backbone we must play a key role in protecting and supporting these valuable individuals.

However, the church's back has aches and pains. For my back pain, I went to the chiropractor. He explained that my spinal column was out of alignment, applying discomforting pressure on the nerve endings connected to the spinal cord. He prescribed weekly chiropractic adjustments to realign my backbone.

The church's backbone needs the same type of adjusting. Selfishness applies discomforting pressure on the elderly and fatherless. Many times the backbone does not perform its job properly and is subjected to improper use and technique by church members. As young people, we are often so caught up in our lives that we forget to look after those who have paved the way for us.

In 1 Timothy 5:1-16, Paul prescribes the much-needed adjustment. He gives Timothy, the church leader, a course of treatment to use in dealing with the elderly and widows.

As the backbone of the church, we must support those who are in need. To move freely, we must make our routine adjustments when our back begins to ache. Without a supple spine, we can do nothing.

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*By Bill G. Neely, a junior majoring in print journalism at Howard University, Washington, D.C.*

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# Leadership With Feelings

## LOGOS

### 1 Tim. 5:1-16

This age is characterized by groups and counter groups, interests and counter-interests. Leaders and communicators must be aware of these issues. First Timothy 5:16 speaks to leadership in a manner sensitive to these situations. As a result, it has a wealth of information for both pastors and members. Paul provides insights on such topics as corporate compassion, individual industry, organizational order, and institutional impartiality. It is a compact treatise on leadership and positive interpersonal relations.

Paul believes that an organization has a responsibility to look out for its members. When he applies this principle in 1 Timothy 5, he is not suggesting that the local church congregation be fallible or naive. He does, however, urge the church to help its needy and unfortunate.

Providing assistance and serving others was also the identifying characteristic of the ministry of Christ, who literally lived to serve others. Even His death was an act of serving humanity. In the Epistle to Timothy, Paul creatively applies the concept of caring and impartial service to the organizational aspects of the church. This theme of compassionate and intelligent service marks all of 1 Timothy and chapter 5 in particular. The following insights will be most helpful when the reader compares them in various Bible translations:

#### **Respectful Administration (verses 1, 2)**

Paul cautions Timothy to respect the groups represented in the church. Despite how correct younger people's views may be, it is incumbent that they treat their elders with deference. A younger person's duty to reprove or correct an older person should be done with tact, care, and humility.

#### **Balanced Assistance (verses 3, 4)**

Congregations and leaders have a responsibility to respect and materially assist widows. It is not enough just to "feel bad" about the plight of a particular group in the church. Something must be done to help (see Matt. 5:4, 5 and James 1:27). Equally, the needy are obligated to help themselves.

#### **Service Administration (verses 5-8)**

According to Paul a widow in the early church is one who has the total good of the believers and Christ in mind. She is not a burden, but an asset to the body of Christ. Even so, if she has relatives or family members who are in a materially sound position, they should be the primary source of aid (see verse 4 and Exod. 20:12). Paul observes that even unbelievers do this. Christian faith does not lessen family obligations (see John 19:25-27).

#### **Objective Standards (verses 9-13)**

Paul establishes criteria for the types of widow whom the church should support. Age, marital circumstance, character, reputation, spirituality, and practical godliness are his requirements. Not only does Paul admonish family members to

carry their fair share, he also establishes a selective list for the church to follow in the process. The widow whom Paul says the church should help has already earned her pay in that she has done or is diligently doing the work of a deaconess, Bible worker, or local missionary.

### **Counsel for Young Widows (verses 14-18)**

Rather than exclude the younger group of widows with no options, Paul makes many suggestions. He notes that they should once again consider marriage, parenting, home economics, etc. At any rate, he feels that they should avoid the temptations and pitfalls that often accompany this role. Paul's final point on the subject is a reiteration of his earlier counsel. Regardless of the church's responsibility to assist those who are needy, the immediate family has the primary responsibility.

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## **Paul believes that an organization has a responsibility to look out for its members.**

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The positive interpersonal principles of 1 Timothy 5:1-16 apply to all areas of life as viewed from three broad perspectives. Paul focuses on attitudes, articulations, and actions of the leaders and members in Timothy's congregation. These principles have equal relevance to believers today. The following 12 principles speak to Adventist congregations around the globe:

### **Attitudes**

1. **Respect:** Exercise deliberate and mutual respect when dealing with the various groups in the church (verses 1-3).
2. **Tact:** Adapt your message for the group you are addressing (verses 1, 2).
3. **Innovation:** Creatively seek to change or improve your situation within God's will (verse 14).
4. **Watchfulness:** Don't let circumstances of life cause you to make wrong decisions (verse 15).

### **Articulations**

5. **Communication:** Resolve problems through adaptive, compassionate communication (verses 1, 2).
6. **Consistency:** Establish a good reputation through positive, consistent words and deeds (verse 10).
7. **Discipline:** Administer discipline fairly and caringly (compare Eph. 4:15 with verses 1, 2).
8. **Proclamation:** Proclaim and explain standards (verse 7).

### **Actions**

9. **Responsibility:** Be responsible for those who are less able (verses 3, 4, 7-9, 16).
10. **Self-reliance:** Justify assistance by doing your best (verses 5-10).
11. **Organization:** Enforce objective and impartial rules (verses 9-13).
12. **Love:** Demonstrate selfless love with compassion, flexibility, and firmness (verses 1-16).

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*By Delbert Baker, former editor of Message Magazine and a doctoral student at Howard University, Washington, D.C.*

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# Hearts as Cold as Stone

## TESTIMONY

**Key Text:** 1 Tim. 5:4

The apostle Paul enjoins the young to accept the responsibility to care for their aged relatives. In fact he regards this duty as a debt that children owe to their parents and grandparents. He says, "But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God" (1 Tim. 5:4, NIV).

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## Caring for the aged is a privilege that will bring satisfaction and joy.

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Ellen White agrees with Paul: "Parents are entitled to a degree of love and respect which is due to no other person. . . . The fifth commandment requires children not only to yield respect, submission, and obedience to their parents, but also to give them love and tenderness, to lighten their cares, to guard their reputation, and to succor and comfort them in old age." She says also: "The matter of caring for our aged brethren and sisters who have no homes is constantly being urged. What can be done for them? . . . It is not best to establish institutions for the care of the aged, that they may be in a company together. Nor should they be sent away from home to receive care. Let the members of every family minister to their own relatives. When this is not possible, the work belongs to the church, and it should be accepted both as a duty and as a privilege. All who have Christ's spirit will regard the feeble and aged with special respect and tenderness."<sup>2</sup>

Ellen White also contends that caring for the aged is a privilege that will bring satisfaction and joy. "Those whose hearts are filled with love will regard the privilege of smoothing the passage to the grave for their parents an inestimable privilege. They will rejoice that they had a part in bringing comfort and peace to the last days of their loved parents. To do otherwise than this, to deny to the helpless aged ones the kindly ministrations of sons and daughters, would fill the soul with remorse, the days with regret, if our hearts were not hardened and cold as a stone."<sup>3</sup>

## REACT

How could you begin today to pay your debt to the elderly?

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1. *The Adventist Home*, p. 293.

2. *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 272.

3. *The Adventist Home*, pp. 363, 364.

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*By Wilma A. Hosten, associate director of the office of admissions, Howard University, Washington, D.C.*

## What to Do About Young Widows?

### EVIDENCE

**Key Text: 1 Tim. 5:3, 11**

A custom in the early Christian church was to care for its widows, spiritually and materially. Indeed, we are told that deacons were ordained to carry out this responsibility (Acts 6:1-4). Individual families should take care of their widows, thus easing the burden of the church. The church's help should be extended to older widows who have lived holy lives and whose social contribution to the church was invaluable. Regarding the younger ones, Paul's advice comes in the form of a recommendation: the church should not help them.

How practical is Paul's advice today? For Paul 60 was the age at which a widow would qualify for the church's help. Paul was implying that above this age, the chances of her remarrying were limited. In such a situation, the church should be like an extended family, in which older women are treated as mothers.

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### **Paul portrays the young widow as a frequently frivolous busybody.**

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In the less industrialized nations, grandparents and other older members of the family still live with their children and grandchildren. Thus children are able to benefit from the knowledge and wisdom of ancestors. However, changes in the social and economic structures of most societies have caused older people to be on their own. This fosters independence on their part, but it widens the generation gap because children no longer have that close contact with older relatives. It also creates loneliness for the elderly.

Paul portrays the young widow as a frequently frivolous busybody whose behavior impedes the growth of the church, and he suggests that marriage would make her a more responsible member of the spiritual community. He was not insinuating that the church shun its task of caring for young widows, but he was especially concerned with the temptations that assailed young women.

Paul's message to young widows is even more crucial today than it was in his time, and concerns not only young widows but also all young unmarried women. There is said to be a shortage of men. Although Paul's idea is excellent, where do these young widows and women find husbands? Moreover, the young widow usually has children. How many young men, or even older ones, are willing to undertake the responsibilities of a ready-made family? The younger widow is sometimes seen as a misfit; her marital status takes her out of the class of young people, but she is also too young to be classified with the older widows. The church needs to provide programs for this situation.

### **REACT**

How could the church assist young unmarried women?

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*By Ruth Rhone, a graduate student at Howard University, Washington, D.C.*

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# Spiritual Orphans

## HOW-TO

**Key Text: James 1:27**

I enter through the beautiful double doors as I have done countless times before. I meet and greet friendly members and then proceed into the main sanctuary for the morning's services. Again, I am met with "Happy Sabbaths" and pearly-white smiles. After the inspiration of the music, the sermon, and the benediction, I linger to bask in the fellowship of church friends while silently hoping that this is the Sabbath when someone will invite me home for lunch. The sad irony is that I'm a long way from home, studying in this metropolitan city, and even though I regularly attend this church, I have never really felt welcome.

The above scenario is neither fictional nor isolated. It is borne out from Sabbath to Sabbath in the lives of many a fatherless or family-less individual. We regularly think of the fatherless in a rather restricted manner—those without natural parents. Why do we not include spiritual orphans and transient orphans, as well?

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## I linger to bask in the fellowship of church friends and hope someone will invite me home for lunch.

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Spiritual orphans would be those young in the faith who lack spiritual support systems at home and who would certainly appreciate spending a Sabbath afternoon in the company of Adventist friends.

Transient orphans would include those away from their homes for a period of time owing to work or study schedules. These too, along with the truly fatherless and widows, long for shared Adventist fellowship, and, of course, a healthful meal.

Many of us in these situations experience a feeling of loneliness and isolation. This is particularly true on weekends following a hectic week of work and study. Surely, the "Happy Sabbaths" and the Christian hugs are appreciated, but members must reach out and affirm our brotherhood in deeds of love.

And this is pure religion when you welcome the "orphans" and widows by inviting them to your homes and social activities; sharing with them your special meals, worshiping together, rejoicing in victories, commiserating in defeat.

## REACT

1. What are some different ways you can reach out to care for the "orphans" in your church.
2. What biblical principles pertain to the church's responsibility to unmarried young adults?
3. How can unmarried young adults themselves help to alleviate loneliness and isolation?

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*By Yvette Weir, a senior dental student at Howard University, Washington, D.C.*

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## Sabbath School Then and Now

### OPINION

**Key Text: 1 Tim. 5:1**

The number of older Americans is now approaching an estimated 25 million and will continue to rise at least until the year 2035. By that time, the U.S. will have more than 55 million over 65. These figures reflect the demographics of our future church. How we treat others today may very well predict how we will be treated then.

It is particularly troubling to observe the apparent lack of respect and concern that young people have for the elderly. It seems obvious that they are not following the counsel Paul gave to the church in 1 Timothy 5:1, "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father." This text is not telling us that the views of the elderly are always correct, but that they should be dealt with tactfully and respectfully.

At my home church I took an interest in an elderly woman. I would always visit her after church. While I was away at school, she took ill and was hospitalized. I sent her cards, and during my vacation I went to see her at the hospital. With tears in her eyes, she told me I was the first youth of the church besides her grandchildren to visit her. Unfortunately, later that year she passed away. At her funeral my name was mentioned in her eulogy. She had considered me one of her own children.

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### **The number of older Americans will continue to rise at least until the year 2035.**

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Youth today are forgetting how much oral history can be obtained from the elderly. The history, ideas, and counsel they provide should be of great value to young, developing minds. I am sure many would love to have this opportunity.

I recall visiting a church one Sabbath, and the theme that morning was "Sabbath School Then and Now." The elderly of the church reenacted how Sabbath School was conducted when they first joined the church. Song service was especially enjoyable; one could see the sparkle of youth in their eyes as they sang their favorite songs. It was a day of personal testimony of their early church experiences. I learned a lot about the history of our church that day. I also learned how important special days like Senior Citizens' Day are for the elderly members.

Some suggestions on improving relationships with the elderly include the following:

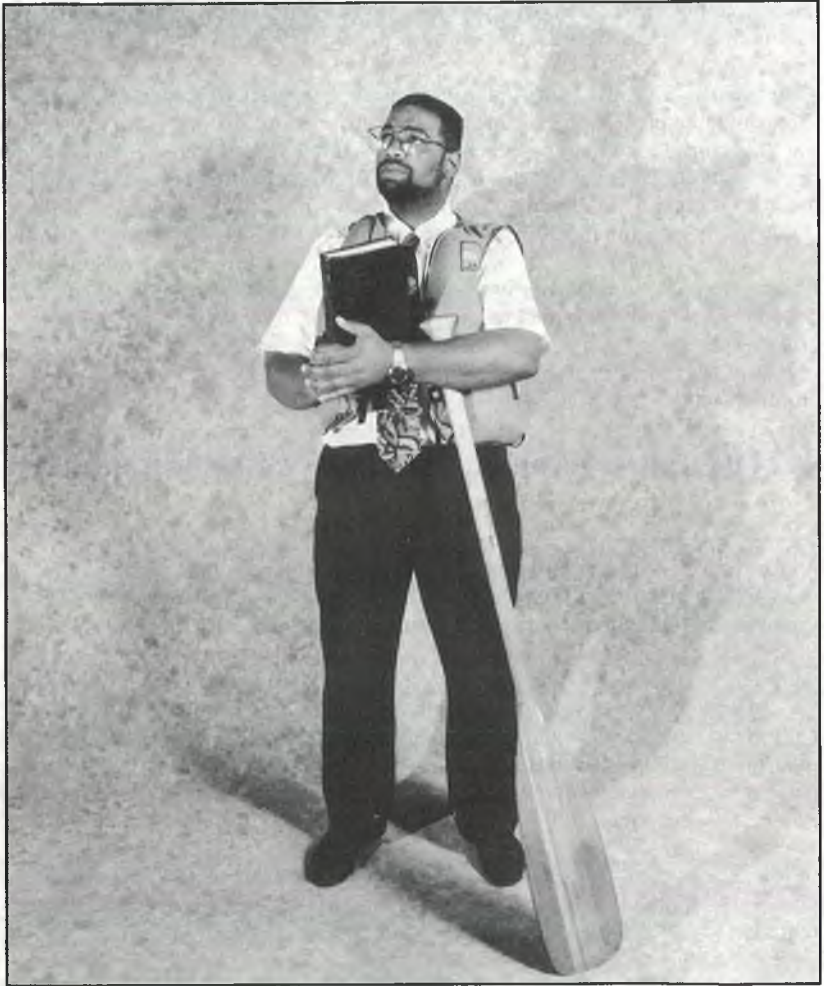
1. Provide the elderly with transportation to church programs and other appointments.
2. At gatherings take time to speak to someone who is alone, shy, or very quiet.
3. At communion service, wash the feet of an elderly person.

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*By Kenrick H. Jones, a second-year medical student at Howard University College of Medicine, and Anesther O. Henry-Shaw, a graduate student at Howard University, Washington, D.C.*

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# ROW, ROW, ROW YOUR BOAT



**“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine” (1 Tim. 5:17).**

# Frightening Instructions

## INTRODUCTION

Scripture: 1 Tim. 5:17-25

Instructions frighten me. I often forget them or fail to understand them altogether. Before I began working for the English department at Walla Walla College, I sat through a meeting to learn the definition of a good reader. Teachers wanted careful, efficient, reliable, confidential readers who would deliver phone messages accurately and not mess up their photocopying jobs. The meeting inspired me. I planned to read my entire WordPerfect manual, to answer the phone boldly (without mumbling), and to master the buttons on the copy machine.

When I began working, however, I realized that I had forgotten what I was supposed to do to make myself “official,” or eligible to be paid. The teachers had told me to fill out some sort of authorization form, but I didn’t remember where to get the form, and I didn’t remember whether “authorization” was the form’s actual title. Embarrassed that I had forgotten my instructions and frightened of such a word as *authorization*, I put off asking for help until the last week of the quarter, at which time, and with much guilt, I handed in my form and all 12 of my time sheets at once.

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## I don’t know what I’d have done if I’d been Timothy.

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I don’t know what I’d have done if I’d been Timothy. Not only does Paul give him lengthy instructions regarding church workers but he charges him “in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions” (1 Tim. 5:21, NIV). If my teachers had charged me “in the sight of God,” et. al, to pick up my authorization form, I would have been so frightened as to be incapable of uttering the word *help* all year. I’m not surprised that Timothy had to take wine for his stomach troubles.

Ironically, I think it is Paul’s statement about the wine that brings verses 17-25 together, because in them, Paul shows concern for Timothy personally. These verses contain at least three levels of instruction: Paul instructs Timothy on how to instruct the elders, who, in turn, will instruct the people. Not only, then, should we study Paul’s instructions, but we should also study *how* he instructs. In verses 17 and 18 Paul states that church elders deserve “double honor” because of their work; in verses 21 and 22 he assigns work; and in verse 23 he remembers that work is hard and reminds Timothy to take care of himself. Paul then concludes that “good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not cannot be hidden” (1 Tim. 5:25). To tell Timothy that church workers deserve “double honor” is a good deed, but to show concern for Timothy’s health is a good deed that cannot be hidden. It is such concern that binds Christians together.

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By Kellie Bond, a senior English major at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.

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# How to Treat Church Leaders

## LOGOS

### 1 Tim. 5:17

Our passage is simplified if we imagine that three questions lie behind this section:

- a. How should leaders who serve well be treated?
- b. How ought the church to deal with leaders who deserve discipline?
- c. How does the church deal with those who have proven themselves unworthy of the ministry?

### How to support leaders who serve well (read 1 Tim. 5:17-19)

What is the meaning of this “double honor” due to elders (presbyters) “who direct the affairs of the church well”? (NIV). The word can mean either “honor,” in the way we would use the word, or it can mean “honorarium” or even “salary.”

Verse 18 would seem to support the idea of financial compensation. Paul has argued strongly for this in 1 Corinthians 9. Here he quotes the same scripture (“Do not muzzle an ox” [Deut. 25:4, NIV]) to support the same argument.

The saying, “The worker deserves his wages,” seems to come from the words of Jesus Himself (see Luke 10:7), although it is also a proverb of the times. The intent of these verses is clear enough. Paul wants Timothy to understand that a divine sanction supports the principle of fair pay for those who serve the church. He has already warned against money grubbing (1 Tim. 3:3), but he equally warns against inadequate wages.

Paul also insists on protection for leaders from false accusation. Jewish law required the agreement of “two or three witnesses” before any charge could be brought against anyone; so it must be in the church. Paul seems to be saying this is especially true when an elder is implicated.

Church leaders are particularly vulnerable to attack. One of their tasks is to speak out against sin. They may also have to preside over administration of church discipline. Someone who has been disciplined may retaliate by charging leaders with sins of their own. Any accusation can damage a leader’s reputation, even when the accusation isn’t true. The message here is plain. To participate in irresponsible talk about church leaders can do infinite damage, not only to those named but to the church itself.

### How to deal with leaders deserving discipline (read 1 Tim. 5:20, 21)

Although Paul wants to protect leaders from unjust accusation, he does not suggest special treatment. If clear grounds for accusation exist, then disciplinary action should be taken in the presence of the whole church. This public nature of the discipline is “so that the others may take warning.” The “others” are generally thought to mean other leaders. Discipline can be abused, leading to harsh intolerance, but neglect of discipline can be equally dangerous, leading to the impression that the church condones sin.

So Paul warns Timothy against favoritism of any kind. This is important to him. Even the hint that some in the church might be given special consideration would do harm to the community.

### **How to deal with leaders unworthy of their ministry (read 1 Tim. 5:22, 24, 25)**

There are two possible explanations of the admonition "Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands." It may refer to hasty ordination. If so, Timothy is charged to be careful about whom he ordains.

It may also refer to the early church practice of laying on hands at the reinstatement of a penitent who had been under discipline. This seems to fit the context better. The statement that by hasty admission of a leader Timothy will "participate in another man's sins" (RSV) follows more naturally the general topic of this section, which is the discipline of leaders.

The office of elder is too important for the hasty readmission of someone who has brought disgrace on the church. This is not to suggest that a fallen leader is to be treated unkindly. He or she is still a member of the body and is due all the Christian charity any member of the body of Christ deserves. But sometimes permanent removal from leadership may be necessary.

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### **Jewish law required the agreement of "two or three witnesses" before any charge could be brought against anyone.**

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If we regard verse 23 as parenthetical, verses 24 and 25 give good reason not to act hastily. Hasty action relies on early impressions, but impressions can be deceptive. A distinction is drawn here between those whose sins are "obvious" (NIV) and those whose sins are not immediately apparent.

The "judgment" could mean the estimate of Timothy and his fellow leaders, or it could mean the judgment of God. Although it is possible for Timothy and the church to make mistakes in matters of discipline, God will bring all things to light in the judgment.

### **Personal advice to Timothy (read 1 Tim. 5:23)**

This parenthetical sentence shows the personal nature of the letter. Timothy is to keep himself "pure" (verse 22), not sharing in the sins of others. This reference to purity may have brought to the apostle's mind recollection of Timothy's health. He may be saying in effect: "In your concern for purity, don't practice the falsely ascetic purity of some teachers. On the contrary, use a little wine occasionally for the sake of your health." But how are we to understand the use of wine in the context of health?

One commentator points out that the word for wine (*oinos*) is sometimes used in the Greek Old Testament for "must," or unfermented grape juice. "Furthermore, it is generally agreed that the wine of Jesus' day was usually rather weak and, especially among the Jews, often diluted with water. Moreover, safe drinking water was not always readily available in those eastern countries."\*

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\* *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* with The New International Version of the Holy Bible, vol. 11 [Ephesians - Philemon] (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), p. 381.

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*By Henning Gulddammer, associate pastor of the Walla Walla College Church, College Place, Washington.*

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## Fearing What's Within

### TESTIMONY

**Key Text: James 4:11**

God has given us faithful leaders to guide and encourage us and to share their knowledge and insight on spiritual matters. People with those great responsibilities need and deserve our support, but they also must be held accountable. "We have far more to fear from within than from without. . . . Unbelievers have a right to expect that those who profess to be keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, will do more than any other class to promote and honor, by their consistent lives, by their godly example and their active influence, the cause which they represent. But how often have the professed advocates of the truth proved the greatest obstacle to its advancement! The unbelief indulged, the doubts expressed, the darkness cherished, encourage the presence of evil angels, and open the way for the accomplishment of Satan's devices."<sup>1</sup>

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**"We have far more to fear from within than from without."**

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Church leaders have special spiritual gifts, but just like the rest of us, they can become discouraged at times. When this happens, rumors and accusations can overwhelm them, but a little support and insight can revitalize their spirits. Without a close relationship with God, we tend toward the destructive. "There is in the nature of man, when not under the direct influence of the Spirit of God, a disposition to envy, jealousy, and cruel distrust, which, if not subdued, will lead to a desire to undermine and tear down others, while selfish spirits will seek to build themselves up upon their ruins."<sup>2</sup>

But if we band together, determined to show God's love to others, the world will see God through us and be changed. "It is not alone by men in high positions of responsibility, not alone by men holding positions on boards or committees, not alone by the managers of our sanitariums and publishing houses, that the work is to be done which will cause the earth to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. This work can be accomplished only by *the whole church* acting their part under the guidance and in the power of Christ."<sup>3</sup> United we stand, divided . . .

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1. *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, March 22, 1887.

2. *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 343.

3. *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 47, italics supplied.

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*By Jon Hawkins, a student studying computer technology at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.*

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## If You Can't Say Something Nice . . .

### EVIDENCE

**Key Text: 1 Tim. 5:19, 20**

"If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all." Although this advice may be valid in some or even most situations, there are times when something nice may be exactly the wrong thing to say.

Human nature generally needs no prompting to find fault with others, especially those in positions of authority. Comments such as "church leaders are such hypocrites" are fairly common. But vague, general accusations rarely help anything, and even specific, well-founded gripes change nothing if not communicated to the right people.

I have occasionally heard friends complain about a pastor's messages being too shallow, too dull, or too harsh, but each week as they walk out the door, they tell the minister they enjoyed his sermon. Compliments such as these are offered almost without thinking, and although they might please the minister, he may still wonder why people are sleeping through church. If there is a genuine problem, the pastor deserves, not criticism behind his back, but honest suggestions on how to improve.

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### **As dedicated as church leaders may be, they are still human and still capable of making mistakes.**

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Sometimes church leaders make more serious mistakes out of ineptitude or thoughtlessness. If these are more than isolated incidents, someone needs to speak out. Those who "direct the affairs of the church well" are indeed deserving of much honor and support—no doubt far more than they receive. But "those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning" (1 Tim. 5:20, NIV). If the advice of Matthew 18:15-17 is followed, this public rebuke is not the first mention of a problem. If the right channels of communication are opened, an agreement may be reached before public rebuke becomes necessary.

Leaders must be protected from malicious and unfounded criticism, but sometimes problems are clearly evident. This verse about the need for honest criticism can apply, not only to sins but to unwise decisions, as well. Obviously, this rebuke is no place for expressing personal grudges. But neither are we expected to accept blindly anything and everything our church leaders do or tell us to do. As dedicated as they may be, they are still human and still capable of making mistakes.

The priesthood of all believers is one of the great Protestant traditions. To be saved, we don't *need* the church or its leaders, but that doesn't make them unimportant. We should certainly support our ministers wholeheartedly, but if this support is to mean anything, it must be honest. If our leaders are doing well, thank them; if not, then help them work out their difficulties. Saying nice things but complaining inwardly will solve nothing.

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*By Krista Thompson, a recent graduate, with degrees in English and history, of Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.*

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# Hand Me an Oar, Please!

## HOW-TO

**Key Text: Eph. 4:16**

Human beings generally seem to have a thirst for bad news. Even within our church, we often tend to concentrate on the negative side rather than the positive of our church leaders. Instead of criticizing our church leaders, we need to give them encouragement and our individual effort. Pastors can't row the church boat by themselves—it is our responsibility to do what we can to keep our church going.

## Encouragement

There are few things more disheartening than doing a thankless job. Most of us have had the experience of completing a task and finding that no one notices. We like to hear the words “You did a great job!” Just a few words can sometimes determine whether or not we'll want to do that job again. Pastors are as human as the rest of us—they need encouragement every bit as much as we do. There are many ways for us to show our church leaders that we notice their contributions. I can tell my pastors I appreciate their efforts by writing them a note or taking an extra minute to thank them at church. Probably the greatest thank you, however, is for me to give not only words but my time and effort.

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## Pastors can't row the church boat by themselves.

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## Effort

If I'm not getting enough out of my church, maybe it isn't my pastor's fault. Perhaps I'm not putting enough into it. Consider the game of golf for a moment. Golf is a (very) boring spectator sport unless you actually play the game yourself (which I don't). In the same way, being a spectator at church doesn't increase the benefits I receive from going there. In order to understand and be interested in my church, I must be actively involved.

There are numerous activities and groups within a church community that I can help with. If I don't feel drawn to these particular activities or groups, I shouldn't throw up my hands and roll my eyes; I can take my gripe to my pastor. I can talk to him about beginning a small worship group during the week, taking cookies to elderly people, or organizing extracurricular activities for church youth. And the possibilities don't end here; there are dozens of groups to be formed, scores of activities to be planned, and hundreds of people to get involved!

Ephesians 4:16 calls the church a “whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament” (NIV). Each of us has his or her own strengths and weaknesses, and we should focus on bringing out the best in one another—including our leaders. We are all in the same boat, and I'd like to be the kind of church member who doesn't just occupy a seat. Hand me an oar, please.

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*By Meaghan Cutting, a recent graduate, with a degree in English, from Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.*

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# The Good, the Bad, and the Honest

## OPINION

**Key Text: 1 John 1:6, 7**

I would rather have an honest church leader than a perfect one. Wouldn't it be nice to have elders and pastors who were so open about their relationship with God (or lack of it) that they couldn't be embarrassed if God started to write on the ground as He did after some well-meaning clergy brought before Him the woman caught in adultery?

Perhaps we long for a return to the good old days, when God Himself came in power to deprive a person of the Promised Land if that person struck, instead of spoke to, a rock. In the good old days the ground swallowed dissidents while the clergy looked on in relief. Things were easier in the good old days.

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## Church leaders live up to our expectations— unfortunately.

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Today is not the good old days. Today it is reasonable to expect mature Christians to talk to one another honestly about their failures, church leaders included. I have never been empowered so much by a tale of phenomenal faith under trial as by a story of a Christian simply admitting his mistakes. If we give our leaders room to err, to grow, to learn just as we do, then they can serve us better. Rather than being living examples of the power of the human will to brainwash itself, they will be living examples of the power of God in an ordinary mortal who is nonetheless ordinary or mortal for being in a position of spiritual leadership.

Yes, there is a terrible tension between being strong spiritual leaders and people who can be honest when they are having a bad day or even an off year. Church leaders live up to our expectations—unfortunately. We expect pastors and elders to be constantly strong, courageous, and cheerful—which means that on bad days these paragons of virtue simply have to put on a mask of calm perfection so that those they serve have very little idea of their own doubts, fears, or struggles.

God became human for us. I wish our church leaders could become human for us too.

## REACT

1. In what ways should church leaders “become human”?
2. How has discipline in the church changed from the “good old days” of apostolic times? Why?
3. How can church members know when to support and when to discipline a church leader?

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*By Donald Carson, a senior English major at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.*

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# GENTLENESS AS A WEAPON



**“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (1 Tim. 6:12).**

# What's Worth Taking

## INTRODUCTION

**Scripture: 1 Tim. 6:1-21**

“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it” (1 Tim. 6:6, 7, NIV).

I was anxious to get home for Christmas. I had been in New York City only four months, but as the holidays drew closer, I grew increasingly excited to see my family and friends again.

My original intention on going to the Big Apple was to help feed the homeless. But when the opportunity arose at a small upper East-side Manhattan hospital to work with AIDS patients, I couldn't resist. I didn't quite know what to expect, but I knew God probably had something in mind.

It didn't take me long to grow attached to Rosa. By the third visit, I knew bringing a can of Pepsi would delight her. She seemed genuinely happy to see me at each arrival, even when I knew the pain had grown much worse and that not much could be done to relieve her suffering.

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## **What Rosa took with her when her eyes closed for the final time was worth far more than the gifts I could have given her.**

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The institution in which I was volunteering happened to be a Jewish hospital, and therefore I was not allowed to proselytize. Only if the patient initiated a conversation on religion could it be talked about. I was pleased, then, when Rosa asked me to read to her from her Bible. She seemed eager to talk about God. One day she asked me whether I thought God really loved her, since she had “done some things He wouldn't have liked.” I told her that if God loved me, then He definitely loved her. I'll never forget the smile that flashed across her face.

On my last visit before I flew home, I noticed that the flowers in Rosa's room were gone. She told me they had died, and I replied that I would have to do something about that. She caught my hand and said, “Oh, no, you've done enough for me already. I just want you to get home to your family for Christmas.”

Rosa's selflessness and concern for me in her time of suffering and pain amazed me. Little did she know how much of an impression she had made on me, the volunteer, who was supposed to be there for her.

I thought about the gifts I had purchased to take back to my family and friends. I remembered what Rosa told me she had brought to the hospital—a toothbrush and her small Bible. What she took with her when her eyes closed for the final time was worth far more than the gifts I could have given her.

I left New York City with memories of Wall Street, Grand Central Station, Miss Liberty, and Rosa. She left this world a better place and with the knowledge that God loved her.

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*By Gina Jervej, a medical student at Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California.*

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# Good Slave, Bad Teachers, and Persevering Pastor

## LOGOS

### 1 Tim. 6:12

#### 1 Timothy 6: Context and Content

The series of topical instructions to Timothy that began in chapter 5 come to a close in 6:1, 2 with the admonitions regarding Christian slaves. The admonition, “Teach and urge these duties” (verse 2, NRSV), literally, “these things” in the Greek, refers to those instructions, so as to provide a conclusion to 5:1–6:2 and a transition to the next section. The rest of the chapter breaks down as follows: In 6:3-10 Paul describes teachers whose instruction is contrary to the foregoing counsels and whose teaching does not agree with that of Christ. In contrast to such persons, Timothy is admonished in verses 11-16 to fight the good fight of faith until the manifestation of Jesus Christ. The concluding doxology and “Amen” (verses 15, 16) was probably intended to bring the letter to a close, but the author decided to add instructions regarding affluent Christians (6:17-19) before his closing warning to Timothy that has led some believers astray (verses 20, 21).

#### Be a Good Slave

A modern reader of 1 Timothy 1:1, 2 cannot but recoil at the thought of a Christian author admonishing Christian slaves to honor their masters. In dealing with this passage, keep two things in mind. First, earliest Christianity did not understand itself in terms of a movement of militant social reform. It was more like leaven that, when placed in the dough of society, would transform it from within. Second, slavery in the Roman Empire was not entirely comparable to its later American and European forms.

In ancient times slavery was a virtually universal institution that even the Old Testament condoned (Exod. 21; Lev. 25; Deut. 15). In the Greco-Roman world it was an integral part of the fabric of society, with a slave/freeman ratio of about one to five at large and about one to three in Rome itself.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, although many slaves were procured by kidnapping and military conquest, a great number became slaves through debt-enslavement, self-sale, or were homebred, i.e., the offspring of female slaves. Although slaves were deprived of legal marriage and political rights, they had the benefits of exemption from military service and taxation. Their occupations could range from gang labor in mines to occupying a seat in the imperial cabinet. Some slaves even owned slaves!<sup>2</sup>

Although all this certainly does not detract from the abhorrence of slavery, it helps explain why the earliest Christians did not attack the institution. Our author, however, is so bold as to place “slave traders” among murderers, sodomites, liars, and perjurers (1 Tim. 1:10, 11). In view of this, his admonitions in 6:1, 2 obviously cannot be seen as entirely condoning slavery.

#### Signs of Spurious Teachers

The spurious teachers that the author deals with in verses 3-10 evidently gave



teaching that conflicted with the instructions in 5:1–6:2. If they are the same type of teachers referred to in 4:3 as forbidding marriage, they would obviously reject the advice in 5:14 that young widows should remarry.

These teachers' ascetic attitude to marriage and procreation probably resulted from a widespread view that material reality was somehow inferior, transient, and evil in contrast to nonmaterial, spiritual reality, seen as superior, eternal, and good. Such a dualistic conception contrasts dramatically with the mainstream Judeo-Christian understanding in which God looks at His creation and pronounces it "good" (Gen. 1).

The character description of these teachers can be reduced to three basic features: conceit (6:4a), contention (6:4b, 5a) and covetousness (verse 5b). With regard to their covetousness, it is instructive to go back to 5:17, 18, where the author writes that elders who ruled well should be worthy of "double honor." The word for "honor" in the Greek can also translate as "compensation." The latter meaning is preferable in view of the context (see verse 18). It is fair to surmise that some teachers competed for such monetary support by pursuing leadership status through controversial teaching. To be so eager for monetary gain and at the same time subscribe to a doctrine that viewed the material world as essentially evil would be contradictory indeed.

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## **In ancient times slavery was a virtually universal institution that even the Old Testament condoned.**

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From the last accusation, "imagining that godliness is a means of gain" (verse 5), the author digresses on the danger of desiring riches. The message here is that although godliness may be a means of gain, contentment safeguards the Christian from slavery to material gain. Then, once more just before closing, the author returns to this topic (verses 17-19) to encourage the wealthy not to set their hope on riches, but on God, who richly provides. Thus, contrary to an ascetic outlook, affluence itself is not regarded as the problem.

### **Taking Hold of Eternal Life**

In contrast to the spurious teachers (verse 11), Timothy is admonished to pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness as he fights the good fight of faith. Perhaps the tension between these genial characteristics and the subsequent martial language was intended as a gentle reminder of the Christian means of battle. The next admonition, "Take hold of the eternal life," indicates that faith is not merely a battle until Jesus comes, but that it also translates future benefit into present blessing. Many Christians are tempted to escape from unpleasant realities by focusing entirely on future glory. By taking hold of eternal life, however, the Christian can presently experience the paradox of life in the midst of death.

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1. *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, supp. vol., p. 830.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 831.

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*By Bruce C. Johanson, a theology professor at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.*

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## Getting Bogged Down

### TESTIMONY

**Key Text: 1 Tim. 6:3-5**

I know many people who love to argue the finer points of salvation, and after listening to them, I always seem to come away confused. This confusion drives me to prove to myself why I believe what I do, which is necessary to the life of a healthy Christian. Also, we must consistently remain focused on our objective, and that is to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30, NIV).

Jesus, speaking of the end of age, said, “For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible” (Matt. 24:24). Paul says, “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ” (Col. 2:8). We must test doctrine for ourselves if we are to remain strong in our faith.

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**“The men in authority are not always to be obeyed, even though they may profess to be teachers of Bible doctrine.”**

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Ellen White also warns us many times of the dangers of false teaching. She tells us that even “the men in authority are not always to be obeyed, even though they may profess to be teachers of Bible doctrine.”<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it is imperative that you “study the Scriptures for yourselves.”<sup>2</sup> She goes even farther and says, “There may be those who will tell us of the things contained in the Word of God, but that will not meet the requirements. We must search the scriptures for ourselves. There are special points that we must understand pertaining to our own time.”<sup>3</sup>

Our own time happens to be the end of time if you believe as I do. This makes it even more critical that we have support for our beliefs. Proving things to ourselves gives us practice in testing the validity of a doctrine so that we might not be deceived so easily. It also makes it easier to hold to our beliefs, since they will be a part of our understanding, not just something you grew up believing or hearing the pastor say at church.

### REACT

If you think objectively about a sermon and find you disagree with the speaker’s understanding, how should you respond?

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1. *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 69.
  2. *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, June 10, 1890.
  3. *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 3, p. 88.

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*By Andrew Woodruff, a senior computer science major at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.*

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## Paul the Abolitionist?

### EVIDENCE

**Key Text: 1 Tim. 6:1, 2**

In Paul's time slavery was an integral part of Roman social structure. Some skilled slaves became teachers, doctors, or secretaries to empire administrators. Some enjoyed better physical health and economic gain than some lower-class freemen. Good masters cared for their slaves. Owners freed a large number of slaves, and those freemen sometimes became wealthy members of society. Others saved their money and bought their freedom.

If slavery in Paul's day reflected only positive relationships, the fact that he does not speak against it would seem reasonable. Not all slaves, however, were so fortunate. Roman law dictated a slave was a commercial asset to be bought and sold at the owner's will. Slaves had no legal rights, and protective legislation for them was similar to modern protection for animals.

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### Some slaves became teachers, doctors, or secretaries to empire administrators.

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Unskilled slaves who worked on the land and in the mines faced poor working conditions, long hours, and short life expectancies. As physical property, errant slaves suffered corporal punishment by their masters, who held the power of life and death over them. These unfortunate laborers did not leave slavery by emancipation or by earning their freedom, but by the only other option—death.

When we consider this side of slavery—the inhumane treatment of fellow human beings—it is difficult to understand Paul's approach. New Testament scholar Richard Longenecker suggests Paul was fighting slavery, but in a different way. He writes that “rather than engaging in a head-on confrontation with slavery, Paul sought to elevate the quality of personal relationships within the existing structures of society.”\*

By improving personal relationships, people would treat one another better. Not only would wives submit to their husbands, but husbands would respect their wives. Slaves would serve their masters well, and masters would be good to their slaves. Ultimately, this understanding of “spiritual equality” would lead to a level of social equality.

### REACT

How is Paul's approach appropriate and/or inappropriate for today's Christian?

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\* Richard N. Longenecker, *New Testament Social Ethics for Today* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1984), p. 59.

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*By Janelle Cheeseman-Reimer, a recent graduate with a B.A. in English from Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.*

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# The Art of Living Well

## HOW-TO

**Key Text: 1 Tim. 6:6-10, 17-19**

The Greek Stoic philosopher Epictetus said: "The art of living well depends on self-control, contentment, orderliness, suitability, and thrift." The apostle Paul may have been reflecting on these ideals as well, especially since the Christian community was attracting more of the educated and wealthy.

The counsel given to Timothy is that the art of living well does not depend on accumulated wealth for one's own self aggrandizement, but rather on contentment, self-control, and sharing.

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## Living well in a capitalistic society is contingent on economic self-control.

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**1. Be Content.** Today when the accumulation of material things is a sign of the good life, we are advised that "godliness combined with contentment" is great gain (1 Tim. 6:6, NRSV). The rigor of this advice is demonstrated in the suggestion that we should be content with only food and clothing (verse 8). Many Greek Cynics and Stoics attempted to live simply, subsisting on minimal food and clothing. The advice here, however, is not that extreme; verses 17, 18 say that God provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

**2. Have Self-Control.** The art of living well in a capitalistic society is contingent on economic self-control. The love of money (verses 6, 10), inflamed by the desire to obtain wealth, can not only lead to rejection of God and the community of faith, but ultimately brings unbelievable agony (verse 9). The inordinate desire to become rich quickly in the hope of obtaining happiness is repudiated here. The New Testament absolutely rejects the popular philosophy of eudaemonism (that which considers the moral value of actions in terms of their ability to produce personal happiness) as far as wealth and money are concerned.

**3. Share.** The New Testament goes one step beyond the Stoics. There is a call to share. Although God has provided everything for our enjoyment (verse 17), it is clear that those who have must share and be generous. As one shares, he or she lays up treasure in heaven (verses 18, 19; cf. Matt. 6:19-21). The art of living well is contingent on a fair economic balance. Paul is quite clear: "I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance" (2 Cor. 8:13, 14).

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*By Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, professor of biblical studies at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.*

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# Worthy of Full Respect

## OPINION

**Key Text: 1 Tim. 6:11, 12**

I'd like to comment on the specific themes of the sixth chapter of 1 Timothy—the proper behavior of slaves, the duty of the wealthy, and warnings about the effects of greed—and also a final discussion of the central message.

The “yoke of slavery” (verse 1, NRSV) is not about the institution of slavery; it is about power and how to behave when dealing with the powerful. It is also (although implicitly stated here) about how to behave when dealing with the powerless (see Eph. 6:9 and Col. 4:1). All are worthy of “full respect” and especially those who are believers, because they are “dear to us.” Do we treat the women of our denomination as though they are “worthy of full respect” (1 Tim. 6:1, NIV) when we deny them the privilege of ordination? Do we “serve them better” by keeping them from serving? How can our General Conference president offer the youth a piece of the pie and deny the women access to that pie?

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## Do we treat the women of our denomination as “worthy of full respect” when we deny them the privilege of ordination?

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The counsel to the wealthy (verse 17) is not just a command to beware of its all-consuming interest, but to all believers to “put their hope in God” (NIV) instead of whatever else it is that occupies their time. Our culture has taught us that we are individuals, that what we have is ours, that we do not need to share. This section of 1 Timothy is to remind us that God calls us out of our culture to help the homeless, the minorities, the children who are battered by this world. Deny our cultural god of gold and “take hold of the life that is truly life” (verse 19).

Regarding those who “think that godliness is a means to financial gain” (verses 4, 5), why do many business people look at church as just another place to “make contacts” and “cut deals”? I have had friends tell me that the only reason they pay tithe is so that God will reward them financially. This sounds like a “temptation and a trap . . . that plunge men into ruin and destruction” (verse 9). What happened to being “content with food and clothing”? How much does our corporate-based church system reinforce our culture’s bent toward getting ahead?

## REACT

1. In your own words how would you explain the expression “life that is truly life”?

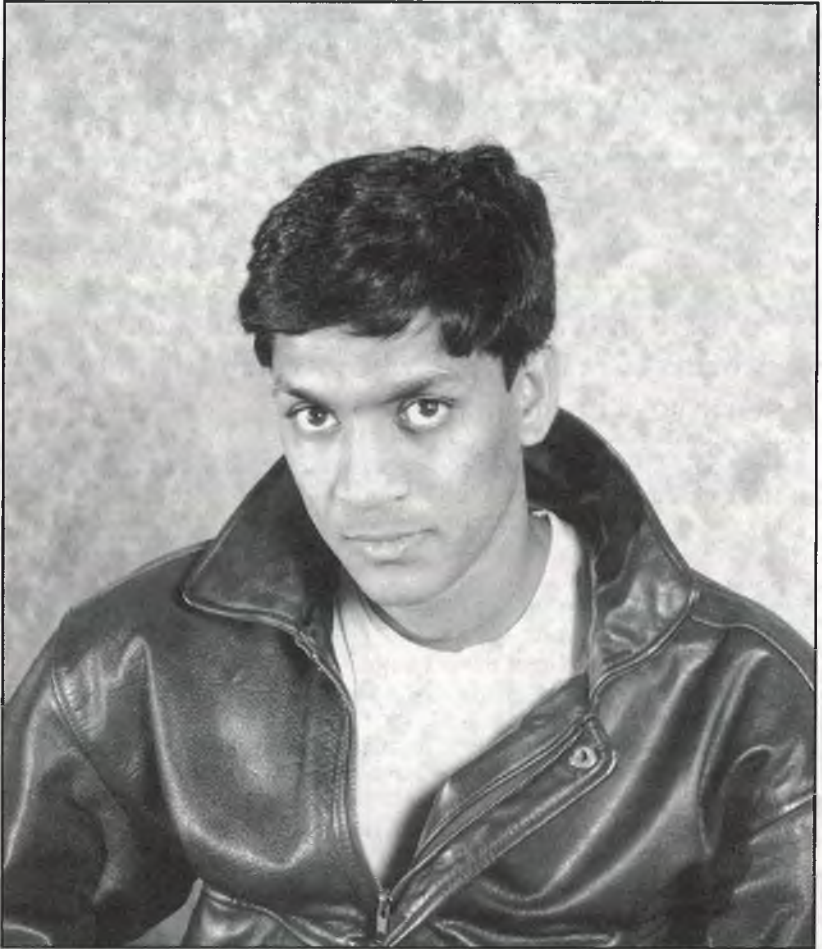
2. How is 1 Timothy 6 relevant or irrelevant to the issue of women’s ordination in the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

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*By Michael Zharaschuk, a senior humanities and Spanish major at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.*

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# THE CRETAN IN ALL OF US



**“He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it” (Titus 1:9, NIV).**



## Some of Them Twice!

### INTRODUCTION

#### Scripture: Titus 1

Judge Wapner of “The People’s Court,” a syndicated television courtroom program, deals with many interesting people and situations. Having viewed this program on different occasions, I’ve noticed that one aspect of a person’s testimony can really upset the judge’s countenance. Even though the litigants have been sworn in to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, on occasion someone will leave out of their testimony a key factor, or simply not tell the whole truth. The judge doesn’t like it when that happens.

It can be interesting to play with the English language. A person in the office the other day, upon seeing all the books in my office bookcase, asked, “Have you read all these books?”

I replied, “Some of them twice.” The whole truth: some of them I have read twice; some of them I have not read at all.

### The judge doesn’t like it when that happens.

“Say, pastor, how many young adults are attending your Friday-night Bible fellowship?”

My reply, “Oh, between one and 200!” The whole truth: about 30. That is between one and 200.

Often times in an academic setting, colleagues will talk about their graduate programs and where they earned their respective degrees. Someone will automatically assume that as a minister I went to seminary and graduated. “You’ve been to Andrews, haven’t you?”

“Yes, I have,” I respond. The whole truth: Yes, I’ve been there . . . it was a beautiful day . . . saw a few friends . . . I believe it was the summer of . . .

It is vitally important to tell the whole truth about God and to live our lives by sound doctrine. Perhaps it is vitally important, as well, not only to say the right thing but also the real thing. The Judge likes it when that happens.

*By Ken Rogers, campus chaplain, Southern College, Collegedale, Tennessee.*

## Just How P.C. Is Paul, Anyway?

### LOGOS

#### Titus 1:5

Paul was your basic practical sort. He did what worked. But he also had a huge sense of what was right, and it made for an intense combination in his dealing with people and the operations of the church.

“Faith and knowledge,” he says in his introduction to Titus, “are the two factors which lead to godliness.” That’s what he was after. Those who would make irresponsible grace out of Paul’s theology in other scriptural passages are simply bypassing the high moral intent of his instructions.

“The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you” (Titus 1:5, NIV). The church needed guidance. The system of elders worked. Without it—without leadership and constituted authority in the structure—the churches floundered. It was a practical matter. Titus did what worked.

Then comes the sense of principle—a list of behaviors necessary for elders—monogamy, obedience in children, blamelessness, temperance, honesty, hospitality, uprightness, holiness, discipline, doctrinal soundness. It would appear that these noble principles should be good enough to stand on their own. But a very practical Paul gives the reason for these requirements in elders. His reason is “so that he [the elder] can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it” (verse 9). Paul was your basic practical sort. He did what worked.

It would seem more satisfying, somehow, if he were calling for this leadership in some setting of high-blown righteousness. But, no. These words arise in the ugliness of rebellious people, deceivers, false teachers, and corrupt motives. And we are not talking here of outside influences. These are people in the church. These are people who are fighting over religion and behavioral issues.

Then Paul seems to step way outside the bounds of political correctness. It certainly does not seem politically correct and racially unbiased to say what he says about Cretans, even if he does quote one of their own spokespersons. We would certainly not accept such talk in proper circles today. To class a whole race of people as always being liars and brutes and lazy gluttons simply will not work in today’s view of unbigoted and unbiased propriety. Even after a few lines of spiritual exhortation, Paul returns for one last whack at the Cretans by branding them as “detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good” (verse 16).

How do we deal with such straight talk? The writers of the Bible seem so often to speak with a frankness and brutality that we find offensive. Paul, for that matter, even holds views we would violently oppose. He seems to condone slavery, for example, even if he does provide a rather different view of it from your traditional brutal slave-owner.

But how do we deal with the conflict of values we hold dear and those we find in Scripture? Take polygamy, for example. Even the laws of our society forbid it (though society today makes mockery of such a prohibition by condoning multiple relationships outside marriage).

It seems odd to us somehow when Bible writers exhibit behaviors that we find

unacceptable. But here it is. Paul is not p.c. So we try to ignore it or we use tortured explanations and interpretations in an attempt to make the problem go away or obscure it. In reality it would be much easier just to come to the honest recognition that our time and theirs are different. And the honesty of Scripture reflects the setting of real people in real time.

Yes, we are better about some things than people were in Bible times—including even the Bible writers. But we are no doubt incredibly blind to a whole lot of things in which we are much worse.

But one thing is sadly the same. The church terrorists are still among us. Paul was exasperated in trying to deal with them. They are so self-righteous, so unrelentingly pious. And, of course, they always have some high-sounding, sanctimonious reason for the havoc they wreak on the church.

And Paul has had enough. It always seems so spiritual to play by the rules of lovingkindness and operate under the laws of rational dialogue. And even while the church terrorists are wreaking their havoc, they come across with such righteous indignation whenever anyone responds to them in language they can understand—their own.

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## **The writers of the Bible seem so often to speak with a frankness and brutality that we find offensive.**

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Well, Paul has had enough; give him a break. A bit of hyperbole is in order. This is, after all, a personal letter to Titus. Perhaps Paul never intended it to be used outside its context and to be judged by the rubric of another time and place in public forum. Isn't it a bit pompous on our part to impose our context on this 2,000-year-old personal letter? And yet it is so useful to us because the same needs in the church still pertain today. There are yet those who would impose their own will on God's people (maybe even ourselves) and in the process destroy the church. Structure is needed. Parameters for both doctrine and behavior must be established and maintained. And the elders are charged with this responsibility. It has worked before in other places. It will still work today.

### **REACT**

1. How does so-called political correctness relate to Scripture?
2. Explain why you agree or disagree that a portion of the book of Titus was not "to be judged by the rubric of another time and place in public forum."
3. How do we deal with conflict of modern values with those in Scripture?
4. How would you define a "church terrorist"?
5. What are the best ways to counteract the effects of "church terrorism"?

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*By Gary Patterson, administrative assistant to the president, North American Division, Silver Spring, Maryland.*

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## “Impressible as Putty”

### TESTIMONY

**Key Text: Titus 1:7, 8**

Some have the idea that the only leaders in the church are the pastors—a great misconception! The Lord uses teachers, elders, deacons, deaconesses, Sabbath School leaders, and a vast army of laypersons to be spiritual leaders in His churches. Titus 1:8, 9 lists several qualities that should be present.

**1. Strong Character.** “Independent men of earnest endeavor are needed, not men as impressible as putty. . . . A man who cannot adapt his abilities to almost any place, if necessity requires, is not the man for this time. Men whom God will connect with His work are not limp and fiberless, without muscle of moral force of character.”<sup>1</sup>

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### “Men whom God will connect with His work are not limp and fiberless.”

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**2. Leader in Temperance.** “On the subject of temperance we should be in advance of all other people; and yet there are among us well-instructed members of the church, and even ministers of the gospel, who have little respect for the light that God has given upon this subject.”<sup>2</sup>

**3. Rebuker of Transgression.** “God would have His servants prove their loyalty by faithfully rebuking transgression, however painful the act may be. Those who are honored with a divine commission are not to be weak, pliant time-servers. They are not to aim at self-exaltation, or to shun disagreeable duties, but to perform God’s work with unswerving fidelity.”<sup>3</sup>

**4. Patience and Trust.** “To wait patiently, to trust when everything looks dark, is the lesson that the leaders in God’s work need to learn. Heaven will not fail them in their day of adversity. Nothing is apparently more helpless, yet really more invincible, than the soul that feels its nothingness, and relies wholly on God.”<sup>4</sup>

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1. *Gospel Workers*, p. 133.

2. *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 158.

3. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 323, 324.

4. *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 174, 175.

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*By B. J. Boles, a senior studying religion, psychology, and family studies at Southern College, Collegedale, Tennessee.*

## Reading Someone Else's Mail

### EVIDENCE

**Key Text: Prov. 25:11**

Imagine poking through someone else's mail. One letter catches your eye. In it, a minister-educator tells his field student to "sharply rebuke" some members of his congregation. You wonder whether this is a little harsh. Maybe there is a reason or maybe these ministers are just cold and insensitive.

In Titus 1:12, 13 you will find the scenario just described. (By the way, you are reading someone else's mail, but it is acceptable in this case.) "One of them, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.' This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (Titus 1:12, 13, NKJV). Two things should be noted here. First, Paul gives Titus a character sketch of what the average Cretan is like. He doesn't give the rebuke command without giving a little background. Second, he gives Titus a reason for rebuking—so that they (the Cretans) may be sound in the faith.

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### Paul left Titus in Crete to save the Cretans from the fate of the rest of the world.

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Paul and Titus are not insensitive individuals. Neither are they the only ones who have had to rebuke or even chastise. God said, referring to the Israelites, "When it is My desire, I will chastise them" (Hosea 10:10, NASB). A little reading in this book will give an ample background of the Israelites' stubborn, continual sinning. And a little searching will give a reason for God's discipline to the nation of Israel or anyone else. "When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11:32, NIV). How beautiful! God has a master plan—our ultimate good. And any disciplining along the way is to save us from the total destruction to which this world is heading.

And this is why Paul left Titus in Crete, to save the Cretans from the fate of the rest of the world. It is what this letter is all about—the how-to's of organization and discipline. And Titus has some disciplining to do. But a sharp rebuke is pretty mild compared to some of the graphic, dire warnings of the Old Testament prophets. He will have to speak words that he may not like to say. He will have to say things the Cretans may not want to hear. He would probably far rather speak encouraging, comforting words that wouldn't spark defensiveness or anger. But he knows what you know, that these words will be spoken for their ultimate good—"that they may be sound in the faith." He will speak words that fit the situation, not his desires.

### REACT

1. How can we recognize a godly rebuke when we receive it?
2. What steps should we take when we must rebuke others?

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*By Leslie Brooks, a junior at Southern College, Collegedale, Tennessee, who is pursuing a B.A. in biology.*

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## Words of Love, Friendship, and Thanks

### HOW-TO

#### Key Text: Titus 1:9

“You’re nothing but a lying, evil, good-for-nothing glutton.” How would you have reacted if someone had told you all this? How do you react when you read Titus 1:12, in which Paul characterized the early Cretans? The apostle was in fact quoting Epimenides, the people’s own poet. The early Cretans’ deceitful and self-destructive nature was proverbial. We are not unlike them.

When the standards of God’s law are set before us, we are forced to realize that we don’t measure up. We too claim to know God, but our actions deny Him. We too are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for doing anything good (see Titus 1:16).

Yet God calls us to a ministry not just reserved to theologians, but to any one of us who claims to be a Christian. When I read Titus 1:9, I understand that we are to commit our lives to serve Christ and our peers, commit our lives to uphold Bible truth.

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### “You’re nothing but a lying, evil, good-for-nothing glutton.”

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Our relationship with family, friends, or strangers should reflect our faithfulness to Christ. We all have at one time felt the stab of unkind words. This alone should deter us from hurting one another. As the colorful poster on my room door reminds me: “Let no day end before you have spoken words of love, friendship, and thanks.”

The eloquence of actions far surpasses words. Paul wrote: “You, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?” (Rom. 2:21, 22, NIV). To be an able teacher, you must speak of “sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it” (Titus 1:9, NIV). You need to read and study the Bible. Pray that God sends you faith and the Holy Spirit to open your mind and touch your heart. Get to know Christ. And strive to become Christlike.

Can I, can you, possibly fulfill such a high aspiration? With God’s help, we know we can. Paul was a “persecutor and a violent man” (1 Tim. 1:13) who found peace and became one of Christ’s most ardent servants. God’s love and mercy changed Paul. The most awesome thing is that His love and mercy can change you too, if you give in to them. Then you will find a peace you need in this dying world.

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*By Sabine Vatel, a nursing, English major, pre-medical student, who attends Southern College, Collegedale, Tennessee.*

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## Finishing Jesus' Unfinished Business

### OPINION

#### Key Text: Titus 1:9

Titus was given the awesome responsibility of leadership on the island of Crete so that he might complete Paul's unfinished business there and appoint elders in every town. But Paul didn't leave him without instruction first. "In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us" (Titus 2:7, 8, NIV).

Paul realized the importance of leadership by example. He understood that in order to manage and direct a group of people, a leader must live by the same rules he expects others to follow. On an island that was known for its lack of principle (Titus 1:12, 13), Paul knew that the people of Crete didn't need to hear how to live a Christian lifestyle—actually to see it.

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### Others' hypocrisy becomes the justification by which we walk away from responsibility to God.

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All around us is a world in which the lifestyle rivals, if not supersedes, that of the Cretans. As in Paul's day, respect from the world comes only to those who back up their words with like action. And when empty words are spoken, people will tune them out and stop listening.

The same holds true for those of us already in the church. We respect our leaders and look to them, as well as our peers, for guidance and for an example to follow. But when we hear empty words and see contradictory action, we begin to question it all and stop listening. Because of others' hypocrisy, we blame someone else for our inability to live up to the standard. It becomes the justification by which we walk away from responsibility to God.

Sometimes we get the impression that in the big picture we are only followers in the crowd. And we assume that when leadership fails, the system on which it is based must be flawed. But leadership doesn't originate from our pastors, teachers, or friends. It begins with us. Jesus left unfinished business on earth, and He has commissioned us to be the leaders of today.

The ultimate model of leadership by example is Jesus.

### REACT

1. What is your reaction when you see a leader break the same rules he or she expects you to follow?
2. What might nonbelievers think if they saw you break the Sabbath? a fellow Adventist?

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*By Rick Mann, a junior broadcasting major (who also serves as director of Destiny Drama Company) at Southern College, Collegedale, Tennessee.*

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# INCREDIBLE CREDIBILITY



**“Show yourself in all respects a model of good deeds, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity, and sound speech that cannot be censured” (Titus 2:7, RSV).**

# Faithful and Talkative

## INTRODUCTION

**Scripture: Titus 2:1-10**

Remember the television game show “To Tell the Truth?” Three individuals pretended to be the same person, but only one told the truth. To win, contestants had to identify the person telling the truth. At the end the game show host would say, “Will the real Mr. or Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ please stand up.”

Imagine that we changed the rules. We could play with Christians. “Please identify the real Christian,” the host would say.

What is real Christianity anyway? In one scene of *Pilgrim’s Progress* the weary traveler, Christian, and his companion, Faithful, have just finished a trek through the Valley of the Shadow of Death and are resting at the roadside when another traveler meets them. Immediately Faithful strikes up a conversation. Realizing the traveler’s identity, Christian pulls Faithful to the side.

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### **“He puts on his best image away from home, but at home he is ugly.”**

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“This man with whom you are so impressed will, with that tongue of his, deceive almost anyone who doesn’t know him.”

“Do you know him?”

“Know him! Yes, better than he knows himself. His name is Talkative. He lives in our town. He is the son of a Mr. Say-Well. In spite of his fine tongue, he is a very sorry fellow.”

“Well, he seems like a very impressive man.”

“Yes, he puts on his best image away from home, but at home he is ugly. It is apparent that true faith has no place in his heart, in his house, or in his way of living. All he possesses lies in his tongue, and his religion is to make a great deal of noise with it.”

“Well, I see that words and deeds are two different things, and from now on I will make a better observation of this distinction.”\*

The heart of true religion is the part that puts it into practice. “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (James 1:27, NIV). Talkative is not aware of this; he thinks hearing and speaking, in and of themselves, will make him a good Christian; he thus deceives himself.

Let us be assured that on the day of judgment, all people will be judged by their fruit. They will be asked, “Were you doers, or merely talkers?”

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\* John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, ed. Cheryl V. Ford (Wheaton, Ill., 1991), pp. 91-94.

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By Jeffrey Gang, associate chaplain and director of CARE ministries at Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists, Collegedale, Tennessee.

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# Everything Except Character

## LOGOS

### Eph. 5:8

Thomas B. Macaulay: “The measure of a man’s real character is what he would do if he knew he would never be found out.”<sup>1</sup>

Jack Miner: “A man’s reputation is the opinion people have of him; his character is what he really is.”<sup>2</sup>

Jerry B. Jenkins: “Character is what you do with your fast-food garbage when you’re driving along a deserted road at night.”

Like these gentlemen, Paul, in his letter to Titus, attempts to describe the meaning of character, specifically Christian character. Paul comes right to the crux of the matter: “Show yourself in all respects a model of good deeds” (Titus 2:7, RSV). He proposes that Christianity is more than words; it involves the exhibition of a certain set of qualities.

What are those qualities? What is character? What is “Christian” character? Perhaps we can best answer these questions by looking at the lives and teachings of two men. One is the perfect example of what character is. The other is the perfect example of what character is not.

With the exception of Alexander the Great, Alcibiades (450-404 B.C.) was possibly the most dramatic figure in the history of Greece. By the time he was 30, he had it all: charm, good looks, intellect, popularity, wealth, and power. He was also a selfish, egotistical, dishonest schemer, who had one lifelong dedication—to get what he desired regardless of anything or anyone. You might say he had everything except character. His story, as told by historian Finley Hooper, is a sad, almost unbelievable one.<sup>3</sup>

An Athenian, he believed it was to his own personal advantage that the peace between Athens and her rival Sparta end. When his traitorous ways were exposed in Athens, he left for Sparta just before he would have been arrested and tried. Shortly thereafter, he convinced the leaders of Sparta that Athens was an arch-enemy whom she must destroy. War between the two ensued. Thus he attained his goal and ended the peace.

Before long, however, the Spartans were after him. He had seduced the king’s wife, hoping to introduce his own hook into the royal line by having his child accepted as the legitimate heir. His scheme exposed, he was on the run again. This time he joined the Persians. As it turned out, this was merely a ploy to get him back in favor with the leaders of Athens. Through a series of carefully crafted lies and deceptions, he convinced the leaders of Athens that he was no longer a wayward son. Promising to bring the friendship of Persia with him, he returned home and was elected commander in chief of the Athenian forces!

Promising a return to the glory years, he sailed away with the Athenian navy to whip Sparta once and for all. Hopes were high in anticipation of a great victory. A great victory was indeed won, but it was Sparta who had the celebration, not the Athenians. From here, Sparta went on to win the Peloponnesian War.

But what of Alcibiades? Having forever altered the course of Greek history and after failing to be reelected as a general, he returned to Persia, where he was killed. One account states that the Persians assassinated him as a favor to Sparta.

Another states that he was murdered by the brothers of a girl he had sexually mis-used. Such conflicting accounts are typical of the life he lived.

Alcibiades. A man who found it impossible to accept second place gracefully. A man who craved attention. A man dedicated to getting his ends regardless of the means that it took to do so. A man who had everything except character.

How unlike Jesus, who said the following: "If any one would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all" (Mark 9:35, RSV). "For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?" (8:36); and "So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them" (Matt. 7:12).

What is character? Jesus is the perfect definition. Paul exhorts us to be men and women of character. We do this by beholding Jesus as our example and by allowing the Holy Spirit to transform our lives. Peter makes it clear that the Christian will pattern his life after the example of Christ. He states that the Christian "should follow in his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). Ellen White makes the same point while adding some additional insight on how Christian character is developed: "Before the believer is held out the wonderful possibility of being like Christ, obedient to all the principles of the law. But of himself man is utterly unable to reach this condition. . . . The work of transformation from unholiness to holiness is a continuous one. Day by day, God labors for man's sanctification, and man is to cooperate with Him, putting forth persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits."<sup>4</sup>

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## **“Character is what you do with your fast-food garbage when you’re driving along a deserted road at night.”**

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Paul's instruction in Titus is just one of his many discussions on what constitutes appropriate Christian behavior. He sees the development of character as a natural product of a vibrant, growing relationship with Jesus Christ. As he wrote in Ephesians 5:1, 8, "Therefore, be imitators of God." "Once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light."

### **REACT**

1. Am I allowing God to transform my character by surrendering my life completely to His control?

2. If not, what can I do to make this a reality?

3. What things in my life need to be removed or transformed in order for my character to be in accordance with what God wants it to be?

4. Define *character* in your own words.

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1. Laurence J. Peter, *Peter's Quotations: Ideas for Our Time* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1977), p. 76.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Finley Hooper, *Greek Realities: Life and Thought in Ancient Greece* (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1978), p. 303.

4. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 532.

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*By Stan Hobbs, associate dean of men and the superintendent of the CQ Sabbath School at Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists, Collegedale, Tennessee.*

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# On Being a Sermon

## TESTIMONY

**Key Text: Titus 2:7**

“I’d rather see a sermon than hear one” is a concept my grandmother would encourage me to practice in my life. This coincides with what Paul urges Titus to do. “Show yourself in all respects a model of good deeds, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity, and sound speech that cannot be censured” (Titus 2:7, RSV).

Ellen White elaborates on this when she writes, “The light that shines forth in privileges and opportunities, in the ministry of the word, in counsel, warnings, and reproofs, will perfect character, or will condemn the careless. This light is to be cherished by the young as well as those who are older.”<sup>1</sup>

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## Being a sermon to the world is a challenge we all must accept.

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Being a sermon to the world is a challenge we all must accept. Ellen White writes, “The True Witness [says]: ‘I would thou were cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.’ Satan is willing that you should be Christians in name, for you can suit his purpose better.”<sup>2</sup>

The gospel of “sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you” (Titus 2:8) exemplifies the true Christian character we are to present to the home, church, and world. “Steady progress in a good work, the frequent repetition of one kind of faithful service, is of more value in God’s sight than the doing of one great work, and wins for the youth a good report, giving character to their efforts.”<sup>3</sup>

“Who will now take their stand for God, determined to give His service the first place in their lives? Who will be burden-bearers?”<sup>4</sup> Who will be a sermon?

## REACT

1. What is a burden-bearer?
2. How do you become a burden-bearer or a sermon?
3. How can true Christian character be attained?

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1. *Messages to Young People*, p. 368.

2. *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 162.

3. *Messages to Young People*, p. 369.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 368.

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By Angie M. Coffey, a public-relations major at Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists, Collegedale, Tennessee.



# Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy

## EVIDENCE

### Key Text: Titus 3:8

Paul visited Crete about A.D. 60. He left Titus, a gentile Christian who worked closely with him, to “set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city” (Titus 1:5, NKJV). About three years later, Paul wrote this letter of instruction on church organization and behavior, for Titus had no small task in Crete. First-century Crete was notorious for its dishonesty and immorality. “To act the Cretan” became an idiom meaning “to play the liar.” Paul himself characterized them as “abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work” (verse 16).

It is easy to understand why Paul emphasizes practical godliness. The Cretans needed it. Perhaps we need it too! A blurring of secular culture with Christian culture endangers Christianity today. We ought to consider how the message of Titus should affect our day-to-day lives, not just our church life.

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## “To act the Cretan” meant “to play the liar.”

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Chapter 2 begins, “But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine” (verse 1). Then, in verse 7, Paul says, “in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works.” These two admonitions, to speak and act correctly, strike at the root of the Cretan problems of untruthfulness and being “disqualified for every good work.” A genuine belief in salvation makes a difference in the way we live our lives. The principle Paul lays down is that orthodoxy (correct doctrine) leads to orthopraxy (correct behavior). What we believe and say ought to be consistent with what we do; people judge the church, and Christ Himself, by how we treat one another, not merely by what we believe.

Paul tells Titus to be a “pattern of good works” (2:7). The Greek word is *tupos*. *Tupos* was used for the resulting object when molten material was poured into a cast and allowed to take its shape. The *tupos* was a copy of the original.

Titus was not the original pattern, setting the standard of proper behavior himself. Rather, he bore the imprint of our only genuine Pattern, Jesus Christ Himself. The message of Titus is not a narrow, Christless command to do good works. Rather, Jesus is the center of the message. Jesus calls us to live our lives the way He would so that they bear the imprint of His love and obedience.

## REACT

How is Paul’s counsel to old and young women on how to behave in Titus 2:3-5 relevant or irrelevant in today’s culture?

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By Byron Corbett, senior religion major at Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists, Collegedale, Tennessee.

# My Divine Appointment With Humanity

## HOW-TO

**Key Text:** Matt. 5:16

The phone rang a few moments ago during the midst of a busy evening of studies. I was interrupted just as I began to write this lesson for *CQ*. My mom informed me that it was Jill. "Mother," I said with an exasperated sigh, "not now . . . I'm so busy." Unfortunately, that is frequently how I feel when she calls. Jill is a college dropout, a loner, friendless, jobless, and basically homeless. In the midst of indecision I grabbed the phone and said hello. Reluctantly I listened to the voice on the other end of the line telling me of a lost job and broken-down car. It didn't take long. All she needed was a few words of encouragement and a listening ear. Maybe she was my "divine appointment" for today or, more likely, maybe I was hers, as the Lord continues to remind me that "if you have done it unto the least of these . . . you have done it unto me."

With my initial response to this phone call I placed a higher value on writing this article—ironically about actions being evidence of a divine relationship—than I did on one of God's children. By beholding we become changed. A friendship with Christ should produce not only a changed person but changed actions, actions that display compassion, actions that display love, actions that display Jesus.

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## Unfortunately, I frequently feel exasperated when Jill calls.

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Here are a few tips for daily Christian living:

1. Every morning ask God to bring you into contact with one person whom you can positively influence or encourage. Find someone to be your "divine appointment" for each day.
2. Make a conscious effort to have the communication lines with Christ open at all times. Talk to God. Communication will enhance any relationship whether human or divine.
3. Be willing to ask in every situation, "What would Jesus do if He were in my place?" Philippians 2:5 says that our attitude should be the kind shown by Jesus Christ.

## REACT

How does one draw the line between meeting the needs of others and meeting the needs of oneself?

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*By Gina Bietz, who is now in the physical-therapy program at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.*

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## Real Zeal

### OPINION

**Key Text: Titus 2:7**

At the time of this writing America is consumed with the 1992 campaign for the presidency of the United States. It is primary season, and the negative, “dirty campaigning” is in full force. To survive the barrage of attacks, each candidate has but one major objective: to stay *credible*. A politician’s credibility is like a building’s foundation—absolutely necessary.

Titus 2:7 talks about “a model of good deeds . . . integrity, gravity, and sound speech” (RSV). In other words, credibility. Christian credibility.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has always been concerned with credibility. We are careful to make sure those using the name “Seventh-day Adventist” truly uphold its commonly held standards. We require in our academies and colleges a code of conduct that gives Adventism a good name. And we do whatever we can to remain credible in circles of conservative Christianity and in society as a whole. None of this is bad.

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### Jesus provides the perfect example of credible incredibility.

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But I asked myself whether the secular world, the conservative Jewish tradition, and the established religions of the first century saw Christianity *then* as credible. Were Peter and Paul considered to be rational in the world view? If yes, then why was one crucified upside down and the other beheaded? If no, then what are we twentieth-century credible Christians missing?

The answer: *incredibility* . . . as in extraordinary. The early church was not persecuted because of a lack of credibility, but rather because of certain credibility and incredibility. Real zeal.

Jesus provides the perfect example of credible incredibility. No lawyer nor priest nor Pharisee nor Roman governor nor king could call him not credible. Yet they feared His credibility because it was mixed with radical incredibility.

Baseless zeal is useless and dangerous. But so is credibility without passionate action on the part of the Christian. Half of Christian credibility is incredibility. A lukewarm Christian, in all reality, despite earthly credibility, is not credible unless that sureness of foot is running full pace ahead.

### REACT

1. How would you define “incredible credibility”?
2. How does this term describe Jesus?
3. In what ways are the world’s view of Christianity important?
4. How should this importance affect a Christian’s behavior?

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*By Alex Bryan, a junior religion-and-history major at Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists, Collegedale, Tennessee.*



# FEELING PECULIAR?



**“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14).**

## The Letter

### INTRODUCTION

**Scripture: Titus 2:11-15**

It was January 5, 1977—my sixteenth birthday. I had always imagined this particular birthday would be extra special. I would trade in my well-worn learner's permit for my own driver's license. I would have a huge birthday party surrounded by my best friends. And Dad would consider letting me test the limits of my new-found maturity by taking the family car for a spin, all by myself. But things don't always go according to plan, and neither did my sixteenth birthday.

Mom had been under doctor's orders to rest for six weeks, and it was all my dad could do to take care of Mom, my brother, me, and the household chores.

It was still early in the day, but disappointment had already set in, and I had decided that a day of feeling sorry for myself in front of the television was in order. That's when I saw her at her bedroom door.

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### **Disappointment had already set in, and I had decided that a day of feeling sorry for myself in front of the television was in order.**

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My mother smiled weakly as she leaned against the door frame. "Happy birthday," she said. "I wanted today to be special for you."

Her eyes welled up with tears, and she had a hard time continuing. "I wanted to buy you something nice," her voice trailed off. "I wanted to find a pretty card."

She smiled again and handed me a small envelope.

I watched quietly as she disappeared back into her room, leaving me to read her letter.

I opened it slowly. It was wrapped around my mother's favorite brooch. I cried when I saw it, because it was one of her most prized possessions. But it was the letter that made my sixteenth birthday the most memorable, and there have been many since.

She told me how proud she was of me and how important it was for me always to keep Christ as the center of my life. She shared with me her secrets to happiness and the importance of always doing your best.

The driver's license would have to wait. And there would be more years for parties. But my mother's letter held a valuable message that I continue to treasure and try to follow.

Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus were also written in love. And, like my mother's letter, they contain guidelines that have proved to be timeless.

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*By Patti Smedley, account representative/writer for Florida Hospital public-relations department, Orlando, Florida.*

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# Recipe for a Growing Church

## LOGOS

### Titus 1:11

#### God's Relentless Pursuit (read Romans 5:6-8)

"May I please see your driver's license, registration, and proof of insurance, sir?"

I liked the "sir" part, but I knew things were going to become worse before they became any better. I handed over the necessary information. Of course I knew why. My passenger-side headlight had burned out two days previous, and I had not yet had it fixed.

The polite-but-serious officer walked back to her patrol car, and I crossed my fingers, hoping for grace. The officer soon returned to my car window to bestow upon me a \$35 ticket. I was not a happy camper.

Grace. Something we take for granted. Especially for those of us who have grown up in the church. In fact, oftentimes it's not until we know what it feels like not to have grace that we fully appreciate how nice grace is.

Might I be so bold as to suggest that the entire backbone of Titus 2 is found in verse 11? "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men."

Basically, Paul takes the first 10 verses of chapter 2 to tell Titus what to tell the church at Crete. "Teach the older men to be temperate." "Teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live." "Train the younger women to love their husbands and children." "Encourage the young men to be self-controlled."

But the question begs to be asked, "Why?" Why be temperate, self-controlled, reverent, and pure? The answer is simple. Because we have chosen to accept the "grace of God that brings salvation" (verse 11). Titus 2:11 is the reason for all that is written in verses 1-10 and 12-15. Works, outside of a grace relationship with Jesus, are an exercise in futility. William Barclay writes in his commentary on the book of Titus, "It is only Christ who can make not only our outward life but also our inward heart fit for God to see."<sup>1</sup>

*Paul says in verse 12 that the grace of God teaches us to say No to ungodliness and worldly passions. How does this happen?*

*Explain why you agree or disagree that the backbone of Titus 2 is found in verse 11.*

#### Grace Requires Response

No one escapes Paul's admonition in the first 10 verses of chapter 2. We might say that what Paul is describing in verses 12 through 14 is nothing more than radical discipleship. Paul is giving Titus a spiritual blueprint of a young church that will make a difference, that will stand out. We get the idea from reading this passage that a specific group of people who willingly choose to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions are going to have a hard time maintaining their anonymity! People around them are going to notice. And that's exactly what Paul wants. He makes that crystal clear in verse 14 when he tells Titus that Christ gave His life for us to redeem us and to set aside a group of people who will be noticeably different from the non-Christians who live around them. George Barna, in his



recent book entitled *The Frog in the Kettle*, speaks to this issue:

“Most of all, we must show nonbelievers what it looks like to be at peace with ourselves, and to truly love other people. The best means of creating an interest in Christ and the Christian way of life is to so thoroughly live and enjoy it that others will want to know how they, too, can have it.

“Survey data show that most Americans believe that you cannot tell a born-again Christian from nonbelievers because there is no difference in the way they live. The only distinction, people say, is that Christians are more religious, more fanatical, or more closed-minded. There is no widespread sense that the religious experience of Christians has changed the fabric of our thinking or the nature of our life-styles (other than requiring regular participation in church activities).”<sup>2</sup>

*How can you move your particular Sabbath School class to a more radical discipleship? (Be specific, start small.)*

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**“The only distinction [between Christians and non-Christians], people say, is that Christians are more religious, more fanatical, or more closed-minded.”**

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#### **Practicing Accountability (read Titus 2:15)**

Paul concludes chapter 2 by emphasizing to Titus the importance of continuing to stress the validity of living a life of integrity and selflessness. Paul even goes so far as to say that those who choose not to practice such a lifestyle and yet persist in calling themselves Christians should be rebuked.

Encouraging and rebuking are hot potatoes. Being accountable to someone else isn't always easy to do, especially in Western society. You know—mind your own business, and I'll mind mine. But it seems from Paul's concluding remarks that as Christians we should be held accountable to one another, which means being open-minded and nonjudgmental.

Paul's dream for the young church in Crete was for them to be a group of people immersed in the grace of Christ. And he knew if that were taking place, then, indeed, they would be a group characterized by their good works and lives of integrity. Finally, he knew that if Titus could teach them accountability, then the sky would be the limit for what God could do through them. Sounds like a recipe for a vibrant church to me!

*How do we walk the fine line between encouraging one another and judging one another?*

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1. William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible, The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), p. 256.

2. George Barna, *The Frog in the Kettle* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1990), p. 167.

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*By Michael Fulbright, associate pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at the Florida Hospital, Orlando, Florida.*

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## Temptation-Proof

### TESTIMONY

#### Key Text: Titus 2:11-14

“ ‘As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.’ God will have a people zealous of good works, standing firm amid the pollutions of this degenerate age. There will be a people who hold so fast to the divine strength that they will be proof against every temptation.”<sup>1</sup>

“God is leading out a people to stand in perfect unity upon the platform of eternal truth. Christ gave Himself to the world that He might ‘purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.’ This refining process is designed to purge the church from all unrighteousness and the spirit of discord and contention, that they may build up instead of tear down, and concentrate their energies on the great work before them. God designs that His people should all come into the unity of the faith. The prayer of Christ just prior to His crucifixion was that His disciples might be one, even as He was one with the Father, that the world might believe that the Father had sent Him.”<sup>2</sup>

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### “The prayer of Christ just prior to His crucifixion was that His disciples might be one.”

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“In order to be happy, we must strive to attain to that character which Christ exhibited. One marked peculiarity of Christ was His self-denial and benevolence. He came not to seek His own. He went about doing good, and this was His meat and drink. We may, by following the example of the Saviour, be in holy communion with Him; and by daily seeking to imitate His character and follow His example, we shall be a blessing to the world and shall secure for ourselves contentment here and an eternal reward hereafter.”<sup>3</sup>

“Christ came to do His Father’s will. Are we following in His steps? All who have named the name of Christ should be constantly seeking for a more intimate acquaintance with Him, that they may walk even as He walked, and do the works of Christ. We should appropriate the lessons of His life to our lives. Christ ‘gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.’ ”<sup>4</sup>

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1. *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 472.

2. *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 17.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 227.

4. *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 538.

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By Randy Haffner, assistant director of DRG Management at Florida Hospital, Orlando, Florida.

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# God's Character Demonstrated

## EVIDENCE

### Key Text: Titus 2:14

Even in today's hostile environment, we can exemplify God's character. One example is found in studying the behavior of Daniel and his three friends. If you were given the same Babylonian challenge today, how would you exemplify God's character? Would you stay with the traditional issues of not smoking or drinking, or would you include a total approach to a healthful lifestyle? Consider these issues:

1. *Nutrition.* You would consume at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day and have no more than 30 percent of your daily calories as fats.

2. *Stress.* You would know that relief could be found in such ways as simplifying your calendar—spacing fewer things out and enjoying them more; changing pace and activity one day in seven; taking 15 minutes for quiet time (listening to music, reading a book); taking a brisk walk to release endorphins—God-given chemicals in the brain that provide pain relief; and tickling your funny bone—humor helps keep things in perspective.

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## Your mind has a lot to do with your body.

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3. *Exercise.* You would participate in rhythmic exercise (i.e., walking and/or jogging) for 20 minutes a day along with moderate resistance training, and would understand that the body needs rest one day a week.

4. *Social Support.* By helping others through volunteering, you would prevent focusing on yourself and at the same time give yourself a sense of well-being.

5. *Self-examination.* To detect cancer early, women would do breast exams, men testicular exams, and all would conduct skin exams.

6. *Positive Thinking.* You would be aware that your mind has a lot to do with your body and that your attitude could help cause or cure your illnesses. A positive outlook on life would not only lift your spirits but would infectiously spread to your associates.

In contemplating the above example, Daniel and his three friends chose a total approach to honor God. In return, God honored them. This relationship still exists today. Through Christ your Saviour, you too can be ambassadors, exemplifying God's character as modern-day Daniels. In return, God will honor you.

## REACT

1. If being healthy should be more than just the absence of disease, then how could being a Christian be more than striving not to sin?

2. How is it possible to lose God's character with a lot of how-to's in a wellness program?

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By Rick Stevens, a cardiovascular researcher at Florida Hospital, Orlando, Florida.

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## Resting in God's Hammock

### HOW-TO

#### Key Text: Titus 2:14

"[God] gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).

Jesus sees more potential in us than we can even imagine ourselves, and if we allow Him to work in our lives He will "create in us a clean heart and renew a right spirit within us." In the *Steps to Christ* chapter "Growing Up Into Christ," some of the following points are made:

1. **We need to depend on Christ.** Spend time with God in the morning reading His Word and talking to Him about the plans you have for the day. "Let your prayer be, 'Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let my work be wrought in Thee.'"<sup>1</sup>

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### You can fight as hard as you can to be good, but soon you'll become exhausted.

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Ask Him to help you throughout the day to make wise decisions and let Him be in control of "what happens to your plans." Ask Him to use you during the day to draw others closer to Him.

2. **Commit the keeping of your soul to God.** You've just finished mowing the lawn. You're completely exhausted, so you sag into your new hammock in the backyard. You don't worry that the trees or ropes might break. You just relax and sway in the gentle breeze. It's the same with God. You can fight as hard as you can to be good, but soon you'll become exhausted; then God helps you realize you can't do anything by yourself and says, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest."

3. **"The heart that rests most fully upon Christ will be most earnest and active in labor for Him."**<sup>2</sup> The more we see how much Christ values each soul, the more we will be inspired to help meet the needs of each person with whom we come in contact.

Trust can be achieved and love can develop when time is spent getting to know the person with whom you want a relationship. When we learn that we can do nothing by ourselves and are totally dependent on God, we can "rest in the Lord" and allow Him to work through us. By beholding Him we will be changed. Remember that Christ promises to give us the desire and the power to do what pleases Him. He wants to make us not just ordinary or usual; He wants to make us *beyond* usual, His very own. The choice is ours to make.

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1. *Steps to Christ*, p. 70.

2. *Ibid.*

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By Amy Shultz, a student nurse at Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists, Orlando Campus, Orlando, Florida.

## What *Is* the Advent Message?

### OPINION

**Key Text: Titus 2:14**

I was not raised in the church, but along with my family, was baptized during my early teens. As I experienced Adventism, I was molded through a number of stages that began with an early works-oriented dogmatism. I have many recollections of attempting to come to grips with what Paul meant in Titus 2:14 about Christ “purifying unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

Later, during my college years, I experienced conversion as I gained an understanding of Christ’s sacrifice for me. After graduation I entered into a period of deep devotion and commitment to the Adventist cause that involved 10 years of denominational work, which I loved.

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### **Instead of attempting to draw me into the Lutheran religion, my friend led me to the foot of the cross.**

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During my early years of denominational employment as a pastor and literature evangelist, I felt my church had sent me out to convert the world. Although I knew that God was able to work through me, I found that it was often I who was blessed, and my walk with Christ deepened. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that there were many warm and wonderful people outside of Adventism who loved Jesus Christ. Many people to whom I was sent out to give “the message” already knew my Saviour.

Then, after 20 years in the church, and as a result of unforeseen circumstances, I went through a period of disillusionment at which time I left Adventism for more than a decade. During those years, however, I never turned my back on Christ or His message of acceptance, but, like many Adventist baby boomers, mainly had difficulty with the church hierarchal system.

It was at this time, when I desperately needed a friend with a shoulder to cry on, someone who was deeply in love with Christ, that I turned to a Lutheran pastor-friend. Instead of attempting to draw me into the Lutheran religion, my friend led me to the foot of the cross and encouraged me to stay within the framework of the church with which I was comfortable. I have often wondered in the ensuing years, *If the shoe had been on the other foot, would I have done the same? Would I have pointed him to Christ, or would I have pointed him to Adventism as having all the answers?*

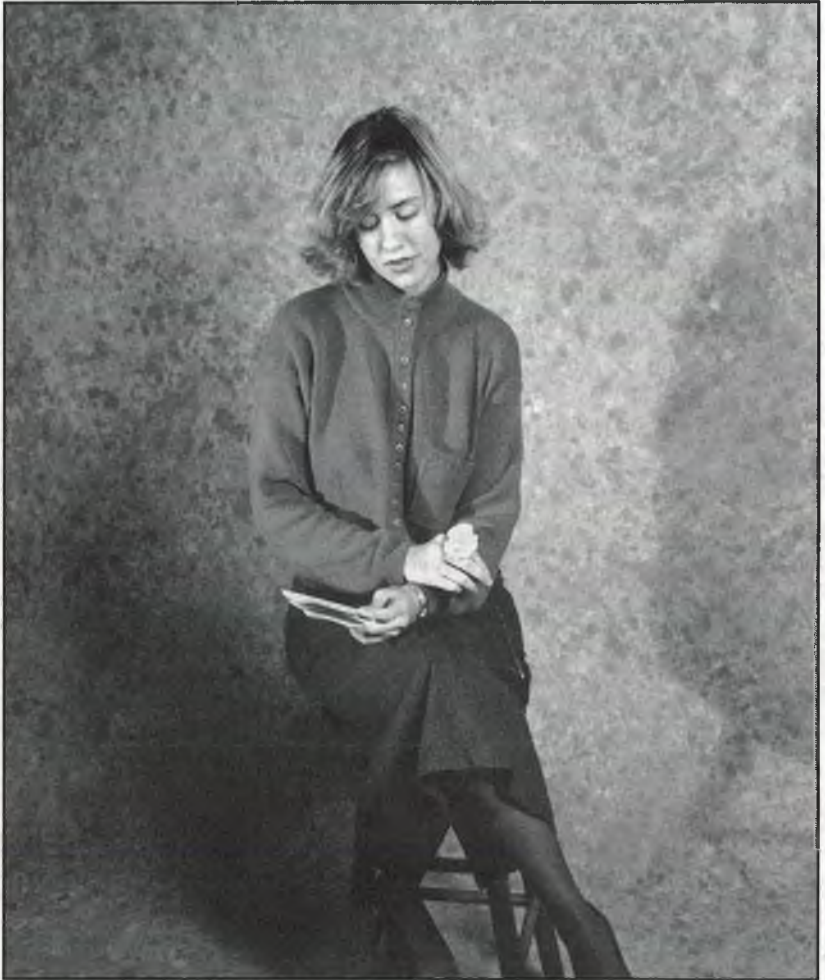
Within the past year, I have once again sought fellowship within the Adventist Church. As I attempt to help define what Adventism is in the 1990s, I continue to pray that God will help me to grasp the true meaning of a “peculiar people”—a meaning that I am convinced my Lutheran pastor-friend already understands and possesses.

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*By Danny B. Howell, a former pastor and academy Bible teacher who now owns an international business dealing with antique and classic Chevrolets.*

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# ONE LAST GRACE NOTE



**“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5).**



# He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not

## INTRODUCTION

### Scripture: Titus 3

Remember what it's like to be in love? I don't mean the fact that the sun shines brighter or that the world is a beautiful place, but simply the things you did.

The love of my life always got one phone call a day, two letters a week, and a flower. It wasn't a routine or an expectation—simply a gift, from me to him. The reasons that I did these things are a mystery to me, but at the time it was because I believed he loved me.

I'm sure that in his own way he cared for me, but when one's perceptions of how love should be reflected do not mesh with another's actions, this causes not only a cognitive dissonance but a breakdown in interrelations. He began by coming late to dates. I don't mean half an hour, or 45 minutes. I mean two hours! Island time is one thing, but come on! He said he'd come to visit at college, but he didn't. Gradually I got the message. Slowly but surely it came to me that there was a problem here.

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## **The love of my life always got one phone call a day, two letters a week, and a flower.**

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I found myself hesitant to call him as often. The letters became few and far between. The flowers became an unnecessary expense. No longer did I rush to the mailroom or eagerly await phone calls, because I knew that things had changed between us. It's amazing how our perception of issues influences our actions.

It's the same with how we look. They say that thin is in but fat is where it's at. I'd like to believe that Rubenesque is the way to go. Yet walk around a college campus, and you will see the larger person wearing the dark, somber colors. Why? Simply because some say that black slenderizes! (I do it all the time.) Then you have the slimmer (malnourished) ones wearing clothes that seem to look nicer on them. They're into the bright colors and the slinky fashions.

Sure, what we believe changes how we act. But what about Christianity? Aren't we saved apart from what we have done? Is it necessary for us to change because of what we believe? Perhaps the letter to Titus might help here.

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*By Litiana Qiosese, a B.Ed. student with a major in English at Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.*

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# The Christian Way to Act

## LOGOS

### Titus 3

Titus 3, the text studied this week, breaks naturally into three sections, each of which has a major theme.

#### Christian Behavior (Titus 3:1-2)

*“But as for you, teach what befits sound doctrine” (2:1, RSV).*

The close connection between belief and behavior is one of the great themes of Titus. Back in Titus 2:1, Titus had been urged: “But as for you, teach what befits sound doctrine.” This exhortation to sound doctrine is immediately followed by a series of instructions in the area of behavior. These instructions almost appear to be a commentary on what sound doctrine is—correct behavior. In other words correct belief must be reflected in correct behavior.

The first few verses of chapter 3 continue to emphasize this link between belief and behavior. Before becoming Christians, “We ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days with malice and envy, hated by men and hating one another.” The fact that non-Christians are outside of Christ reflects in their behavior. They are enslaved to their passions.

Christianity likewise affects behavior. The Christians still need reminding (“Remind them . . .” [3:1]), but their acceptance of Jesus brings changes to their lives.

Titus 3:1, 2 brings together a disparate selection of exhortations. Submission and obedience are not qualities attractive to modern college students, and they were clearly not attractive to the Cretans to whom Titus was to minister. They were also told to be ready for any honest work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all.

*What kind of individuals are obedient, work hard, and show perfect courtesy? Would they be attractive? Would such persons be good fun? Would you want them for your friends?*

#### Salvation (3:2-7)

*“He saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy” (3:5).*

When the link between belief and action is emphasized as strongly as it is in Titus, there is a temptation to think that the essence of Christianity is doing the right thing. That Christians are those who keep God’s requirements. That being a nice person is the same as being a Christian.

But this is to misunderstand the relationship between belief and action. Christians are saved because of God’s mercy, not by anything they have done. They are justified by grace. Grace is not given on the basis of merit, but is something given to us independently of our behavior. Our salvation is based on faith, our belief that Jesus’ death made a complete difference to our status.

Even though salvation is completely independent of what is done, however,

saved Christians do show changes in their behavior. Christian salvation is also empowerment. Titus 3:5 describes this in terms of regeneration and renewal. There is a change at work in the life of the Christian. This does not mean that the basis for salvation is different for the Christian after conversion. The regeneration Christians experience does not give them merit before God. It is but a response to what God has done, something that God works in us. It is not ours and it is not meritorious. Salvation begins and continues on the basis of grace.

*Is it correct to say that the truth of Christianity is shown by the behavior of Christians? Is the behavior of Christians better than that of non-Christians? Some non-Christians are more law abiding and nicer than Christians; does this mean that Christianity doesn't work?*

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## **There is a temptation to think that being a nice person is the same as being a Christian.**

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### **Dissension (Titus 3:8-11)**

*"As for the man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him (3:10).*

The advice to avoid quarreling at the beginning of Titus 3 was clearly needed in the Christian community on Crete. Titus 3:9 reveals the community had been quarreling over both genealogies and law. The debate does not appear to have been carried out in a very dignified manner; otherwise it would not have been called a quarrel. It does not appear to be on a matter of central importance, or else it would not have been called a "foolish controversy."

Sometimes, there are important matters that need to be resolved. Under the leadership of the apostles, the earliest Christians met to talk these important issues through. But then, as now, there were some less important issues that are always the cause of endless friction. The advice given to Titus about quarreling over unimportant issues is clear. It is the attitude of those involved that is more important than the actual issue. Are they showing gentleness? Is Christian courtesy extended by all? Have they avoided speaking evil of anyone? Truth is of vital importance to a Christian. But the link between belief in the truth and Christian behavior should not be missing. Truth must be defended in a Christian manner. Gentleness and loving consideration sometimes speak louder than a shouting match.

*If Christians should be loving and accepting, why are they told to have nothing to do with somebody who is a problem to the group? What is meant by Titus 3:10—ostracism, disfellowshipping, or something else? What is the best way to handle interpersonal problems? How does it change the way we read the Bible if we realize that the verses we read come from a personal letter? Why does the Bible have so many letters written to answer specific problems instead of chapters that set out general principles that can apply at any time in history?*

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*By Robert K. McIver, New Testament teacher at Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.*

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## A Gift—but Not for Angels

### TESTIMONY

**Key Text: Titus 3:4-7**

Christians should never tire of talking about God's marvelous saving grace. In Titus 3:4-7 Paul reminds us that the source of grace is the Godhead (verses 4-6). Then he describes the dimensions of grace—God's kindness, love, and mercy (verses 4, 5). Grace is seen through our "rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit" (verse 5, NIV) so we became "heirs having the hope of eternal life" (verse 7).

Ellen White further magnifies God's grace: "We should never have learned the meaning of this word 'grace' had we not fallen. God loves the sinless angels . . . but He does not give them grace. These heavenly beings know naught of grace; they have never needed it; for they have never sinned. Grace is an attribute of God shown to undeserving human beings."<sup>1</sup>

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**“We should never have learned the meaning of this word ‘grace’ had we not fallen.”**

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Since we are saved *only* through God's free gift of grace, how unreasonable it is to be proud of our supposed good works. "The divine favor, the grace of God bestowed upon us through Jesus Christ, is too precious to be given in exchange for any supposed meritorious work on the part of finite, erring man. Man has nothing in himself. The most exalted talent . . . is the endowment of his Creator, and can purchase nothing from God."<sup>2</sup>

Then are our good works of no value? "In His divine arrangement, through His unmerited favor, the Lord has ordained that good works shall be rewarded. We are accepted through Christ's merit alone; and the acts of mercy, the deeds of charity, which we perform, are the fruits of faith; and they become a blessing to us; for men are to be rewarded according to their works. It is the fragrance of the merit of Christ that makes our good works acceptable to God, and it is grace that enables us to do the works for which He rewards us."<sup>3</sup>

### REACT

1. Why does Ellen White say that "the kind of works we perform" are "an index of the way in which we regard Christ"<sup>4</sup>?

2. If our good works are the result of divine power and grace (see 1 Cor. 15:10), what role—if any—does human effort play?

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1. *Review and Herald*, September 15, 1896.

2. *Ibid.*, January 29, 1895.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

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*By Allan G. Lindsay, director of the Ellen G. White/SDA Research Center, Avondale College Campus, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.*

## The Dilemma of Cultural Conflict

### EVIDENCE

#### Key Text: Titus 1:10

“Because of our Tradition everyone of us knows who he is and what God expects of us” (Teveye, *Fiddler on the Roof*).\* According to Teveye, the symbol for his small Russian Jewish community was a fiddler, precariously perched on the rooftop, buffeted by wind and weather and yet able to produce exquisite music. He argued that his people were able to survive hardships with humor and happiness because of their traditions. These traditions bound the community together and gave each member a sense of identity and a strength of purpose that conquered poverty and persecution.

Teveye’s views provide us with an insight into the thinking of some early Christian Jews who believed that the advent of the Messiah in no way abrogated the traditions associated with the laws of Moses. Paul referred to them as those of the “circumcision” (Titus 1:10). These people argued that all converts to Christianity, including the Gentiles, must submit themselves to the laws of Moses, including the rite of circumcision.

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### **Are there some rites and customs embedded within Seventh-day Adventism that are scarcely understood or needed by younger generations?**

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Like Teveye’s community, these Christian Jews saw adherence to the laws of Moses—and particularly circumcision—as a confession of faith, a mark of identity, and the sign of the covenant to the Jewish people. It represented an act of obedience to God, the mark of their separation from the world, and the seal of their salvation. It legitimized their claim to be true Israel and the people of the Messiah.

Yet, while Paul remained a Pharisee (Phil. 3:5; Acts 23:6; 26:5), he vigorously condemned attempts to enforce adherence to the laws of Moses upon the newly converted Gentiles (Gal. 2-5) and recommended that the uncircumcised Titus take strong action against the active circumcisionists among the Christians on Crete (Titus 1:10-14; 3:9). In Paul’s eyes enforcement would produce an exclusiveness that would limit the gospel and would unnecessarily turn some honest in heart away from Christianity (Gal. 2-6). To Titus, Paul argued that the gospel spoke of grace and justification and that its acceptance resulted in changed lives (Titus 2:1-3:7). Physical circumcision did nothing for the person (1 Cor. 7:19; Gal. 6:15); what God wanted was a change of heart (Rom. 2:29).

---

\* From the song, “Tradition,” in the stage production *Fiddler on the Roof* by J. Bock and S. Harnick.

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By Cedric Greive, education department teacher at Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.

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## Search the Scriptures

### HOW-TO

#### Key Text: Titus 3:1

The old adage “A little knowledge is a dangerous thing” applies with particular force to biblical exposition. Consider, for example, the admonition given in Titus 3:1. In this verse Paul asserts that Christians should obey earthly rulers. Secular authorities have piously cited this text in an effort to convince Christians that if and when their country requires them to take up arms in its defense, they should obey the apostle and do as they are told.

But the issue of the Christian’s duty in time of war is more complex than this verse, taken in isolation, might suggest. For in Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus told His followers to love their enemies, which can scarcely be equated with engaging them in mortal combat. And though God’s people were told to eliminate those who threatened their national existence, this was not the preferred method of dealing with opposition. Wherever possible, God seems to have wanted people’s lives to be spared, as is evident in the account of Elijah’s dealing with the Arameans (2 Kings 6:15-23).

---

### **A little knowledge of the Bible may well be a dangerous thing.**

---

So how should we regard such passages as Titus 3:1? First, we must accept that Paul’s words are an expression of an important principle. Ordinarily, we should accept civic responsibilities. Only when these things conflict with conscience have we any right to dissent from them.

Second, to facilitate the process of rightly dividing the word of truth, we should observe the following principles:

1. We must know the Word, not merely an isolated passage or so, but everything that has any bearing on the topic.
2. We must seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in ascertaining what meaning the original writers intended to convey.
3. We must use our God-given intelligence in applying revealed biblical principles and admonition to the contemporary problem or situation.

As intimated above, a little knowledge of the Bible may well be a dangerous thing, but there is no such danger associated with an in-depth knowledge. On the contrary, it is a knowledge of this kind that, according to the apostle Paul, is able to make us wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3:15).

### **REACT**

In your own words, explain the meaning of the expression “wise unto salvation” (2 Tim. 3:15).

---

*By Don Hansen, lecturer in history, Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.*



# First Things First

## OPINION

### Key Text: Titus 3:5, 9

If the ruthless facts are revealed, we humans must admit to being slow learners and fast forgetters. I nearly forgot to write this article! But we may be mistaken in even more important things, and Paul touches on perhaps the most difficult to learn and easily forgotten thing of all in our chapter.

In Titus 3:5 Paul restates a pivotal position of all his letters, namely, that we are not saved by our own works, but by the mercy and merit of Christ. In verse 7 he reaffirms that we become heirs as we are justified, i.e., *declared* just. You mean you knew? And understood? Great. But as Adventists we have been very slow learners and easy forgetters on this point. Remember 1888 and all that? Even when I was a student in the seventies the question of why and how we are saved inspired considerable controversy. Then it seemed to die away as though everybody had understood at last. But now, the welter of fundamentalist literature currently clogging many church mailbags, possibly as part of a well-documented cultural tendency toward conservatism, once again contains strong threads of perfectionism, a kind of do-it-yourself-with-the-help-of-the-Holy-Spirit moral-repair kit. The idea that I must reach a state of internal sinlessness *before* I can be saved.

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## Perfectionism is a kind of do-it-yourself-with-the-help-of-the-Holy-Spirit moral-repair kit.

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But this is not according to Paul. His statements are clear and unequivocal. And not according to Christ. What about the thief on the cross? He couldn't go anywhere or do anything. There was no time for a lengthy process, just a few hours or so. And yet Jesus then and there promised him eternal life.

Interestingly, in verse 9 Paul comes down hard on foolish questions and contentions, particularly, it would seem, in connection with law (i.e., righteousness). There may be a message for us. If Paul were to appear in our midst and could listen to us as we still wrangle over the mechanism of salvation, which he so clearly and consistently presents in his letters, and on which many reformations and revivals have been based since, what would he think? I can hear him now. "Condemned under the *act*" of verse 9!

Of course, Paul never intended that we should sin away to our heart's content. It is as Melancthon implied: we are not saved by faith and works, but by faith *that* works. And the rest of the chapter looks after that side of the picture. Simple and well balanced, isn't it?

---

*By Lyndon Rogers, lecturer in physics at Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.*

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## Next Quarter's Lessons

### Ezra and Nehemiah

If you have not yet received a copy of *CQ* for fourth quarter 1993, here is a summary of the first two lessons:

#### Lesson 1: Hall of Heroes

*Scripture:* Ezra 2:1, 2; 3:8; 7:6, 11; Neh. 1:11; 5:14; 8:1, 2; Dan. 8:2-4; Hag. 1:1.

*Theme:* Who is a hero or heroine? Why can ordinary persons do great exploits for God and others?

#### Lesson 2: Going Home

*Scripture:* Ezra 1, 2.

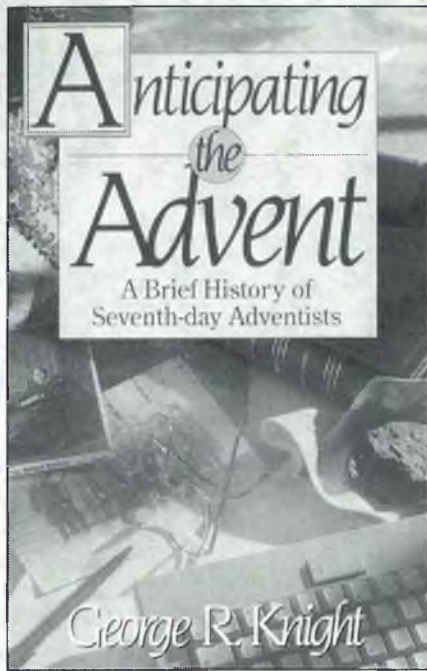
*Theme:* Permission to return to Judah astonished and excited the exiles, yet only a few thousand actually went home. Likewise, God's people will be delirious with happiness when Jesus appears in glory. What preparation is necessary for participation in heaven's homecoming?

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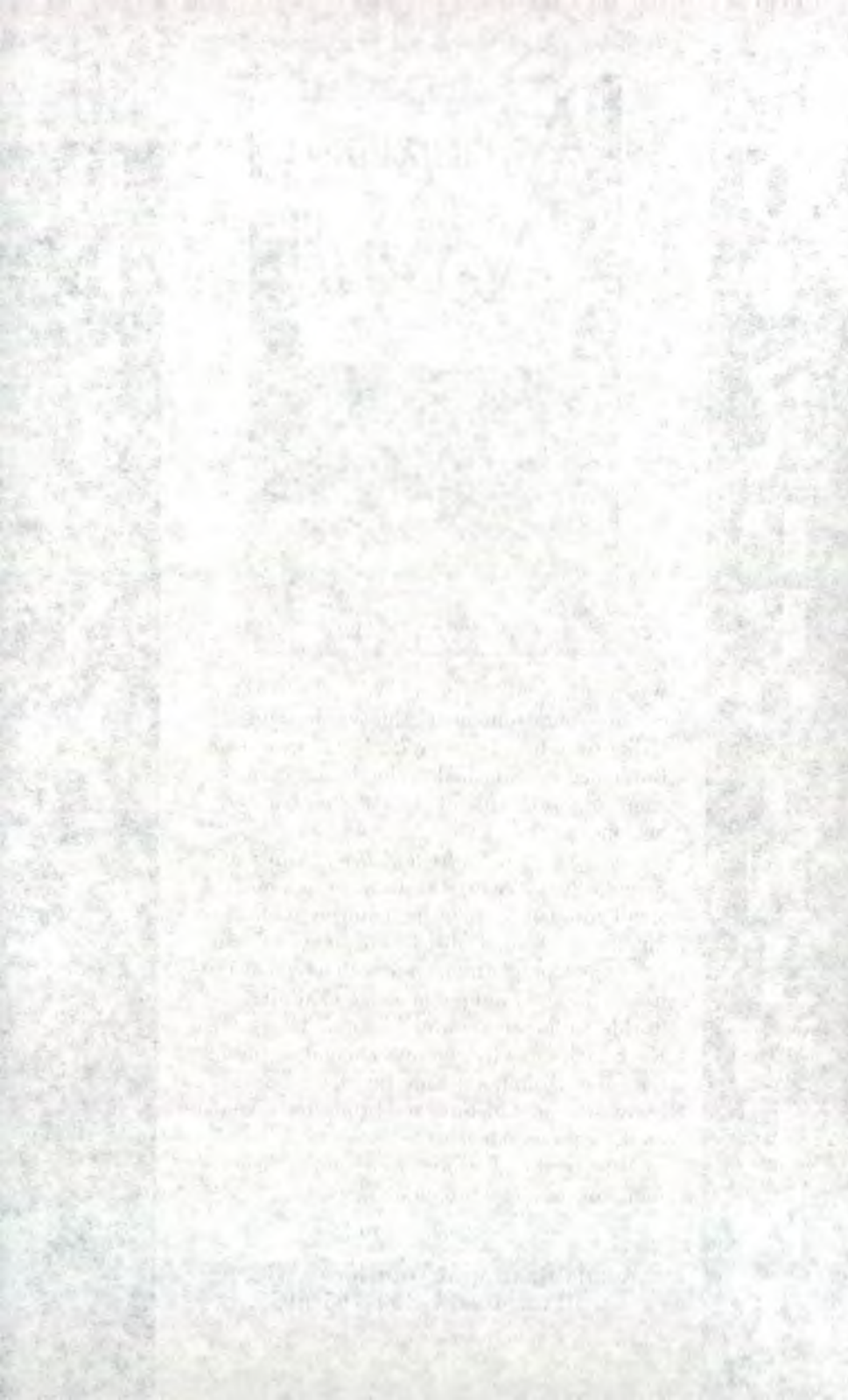
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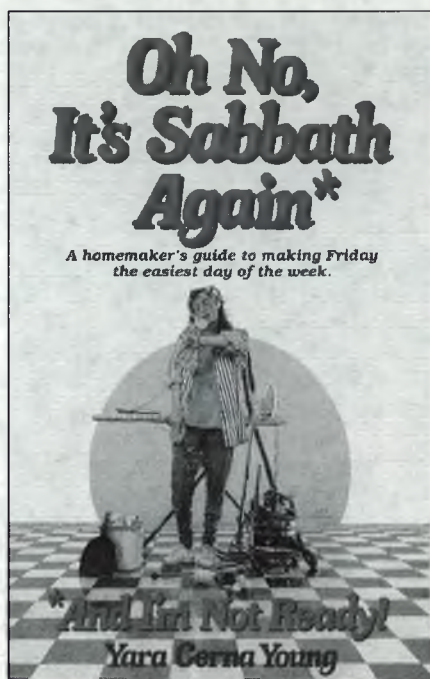


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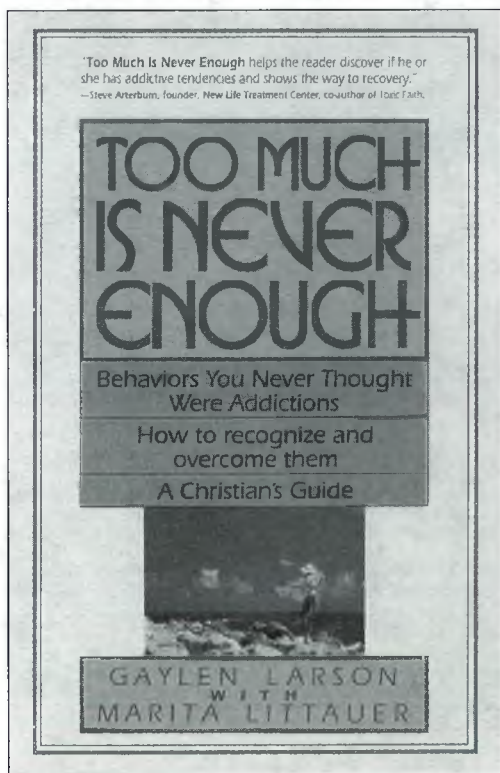
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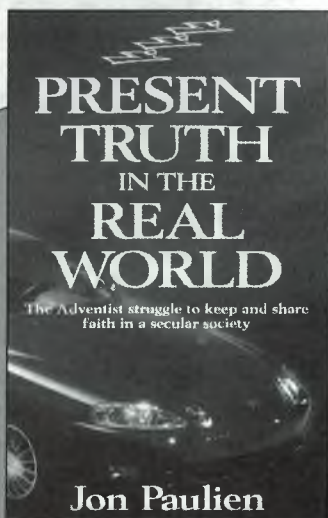
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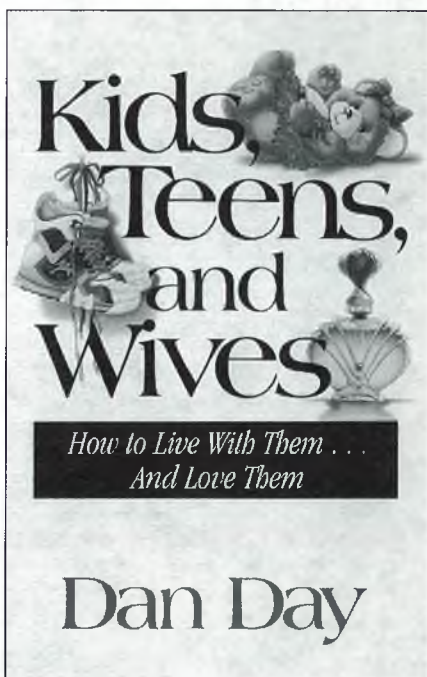
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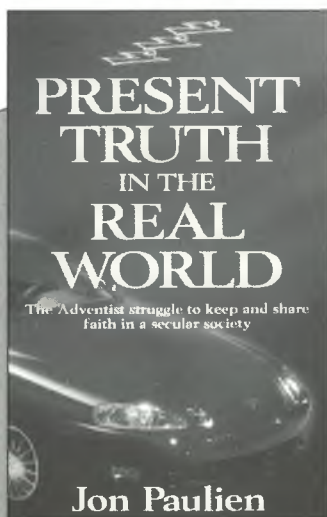
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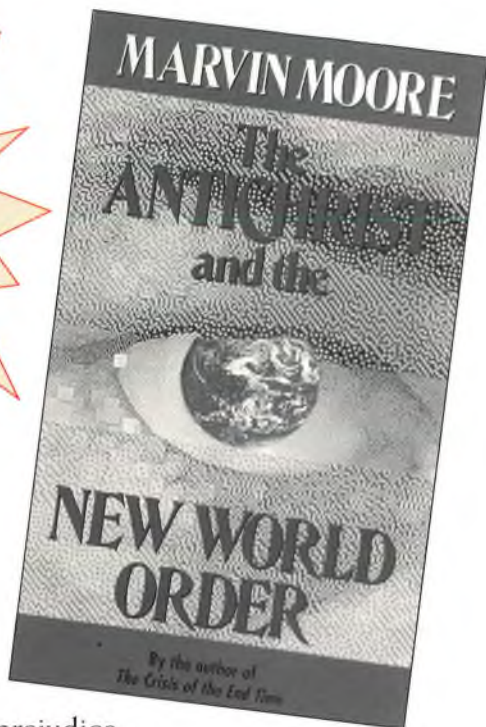
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