

Growth Group Lesson
October 8-9
1 Timothy 1:12-20

Recap: Paul charges Timothy with correcting false doctrine in the church at Ephesus. True gospel teaching always leads to love, unity, and genuine faith.

Last week you discussed goals for loving God, one another, and your neighbors. Spend time sharing the progress of your goals, and then spend time praying for unity and love in your group and our church.

Get to know one another:

1. Share a time when God used you for a ministry opportunity this past year.

This Week: Paul takes a moment to thank the Lord as he writes encouragement and instruction to Timothy. He praises God for the astonishing transformation the gospel accomplished in his once cruelly, despicable life. Here is an example of the gospel's power!

Read 1 Timothy 1:12-17

Paul reflects on God's abundant, undeserved grace in his life.

2. How did God equip Paul for the task of ministry? **Verse 12**
 - a. How has God equipped you for ministry?
3. In **verse 13**, Paul describes his past. Read **Acts 7:54-8:1-3**, & **9:1-2** for reference to Paul's persecution of the church.
 - a. How did Paul describe himself?
 - b. Why was he given mercy? Did Paul earn this mercy?
4. Does your past life resemble Paul's life? How would you describe your past (or present)?
 - a. If you have received Jesus, why did he give you mercy?
 - b. How easy is it for you to recognize and appreciate the Lord's mercy and grace flowing toward you? What obstacles do you sometimes face? **Verse 14**
5. In **verse 15**, Paul gives a short Gospel presentation, "...that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners..."
 - a. Why did Paul say he was the worst sinner?
 - b. Was he the worst sinner?
6. Why is it so important to share your story of grace with others?

Optional Activity:

Each of us has come from a broken life or a life we are ashamed of because of our choices. Our stories are compelling as we share them with others; they can impact the person you share with. Will your group commit to taking time each week for one person to share their life story? The last page is a template to use if you need help organizing your thoughts.

In **verse 16**, Paul speaks of his salvation experience as an encouraging model for others and a display of Christ's "perfect patience."

7. In what ways are Paul's movement from unbelief to salvation a pattern and example for your own faith journey?
 - a. In what ways have you seen Christ's perfect patience toward you recently?
8. Look closely at the praise Paul gives God our King in **verse 17**.
 - a. How would you express these truths about God in your own words?
 - b. In what ways can you genuinely honor God for these truths about him?
 - c. How is God calling you to seek to glorify him at home, work, school, and recreation this week?

Read 1 Timothy 1:18-20

Paul encourages Timothy to "fight the battle well." (NIV) False teachers had infiltrated the church, and Paul calls Timothy to command them to stop teaching false doctrine (**v.3**). Paul's second call to Timothy is to live a life of faith, in contrast to these false teachers. That faith will keep him from shipwreck.

9. What does Paul mean by faith? **Verse 19**
10. How can we hold on to the right doctrine? See **1 Tim 6:20-21, 2 Timothy 2:2,15, & 2 Timothy 4:2-4** for additional insights from Paul.
11. How has having the right doctrine helped you live a life of faith?

Notice that Paul calls Timothy his child (ESV) or son (NIV) in **verse 18**. He also gives him a command.

12. Why is accountability and support so crucial to fighting the good fight?
 - a. Who in your life holds you accountable?
13. Paul mentions two names in **verse 20** whom he has handed over to Satan so they will learn not to blaspheme. Why is Paul being so harsh with these false teachers? **Matt. 18:15-17**

Spend time praying by asking God to lead your group in loving Him, one another, and your neighbors.

- Spend time praising God's attributes.
- Ask God to help each of you to keep the faith.
- Ask God for one person you can share your life story with next week.

Preparing your life story

One of the most vital evidence for God is your personal life story. Every time you tell your story of how you became a follower of Jesus, you give honor and glory to God, and He is pleased with that. The Bible calls you to “always be ready” to explain your hope in Christ with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15-16).

Spend time praying before you prepare your life story.

You will see Paul shares his story multiple times as you read the book of Acts. Read Acts 26, where Paul shares his conversion with King Agrippa. Spend some time reading the passage as you prepare your story.

Your life story should answer these questions:

- **What was your life like before?** Paul explains his life before his conversion in verses 9-11.
 - What was lacking or missing in your life before you met Christ?
 - What methods for improving your life did you try that didn't work?

Do not dwell too much on or brag about past sins or struggles. Share just enough to show your need for Christ.

- **How did I come to know Jesus as my Savior?** Paul explains his conversion in verses 12-18.
 - What were the circumstances that caused you to consider following Jesus?
 - Share about how you trusted Christ and give a brief explanation of the gospel.

Communicate in such a way that the person you are talking with, and anyone who overhears you, can understand how they can become a Christian too.

- **How is my life different now?** In verses 19-29, Paul explains his mission since his conversion.
 - Give an example of how God has met your physical or emotional needs since you accepted Jesus.
 - Share what part of your relationship with God you're most grateful for today.
 - Share how God is currently teaching you to be more like him.

We still struggle as Christians. Life is far from perfect. But what is different about your life now?

Believe your life story needs to be shared.

If you have not accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, talk with your growth group leader if you want more information.