

Letters to Young Pastors  
1 Timothy 1:6-11  
Loving the Law

Paul is writing to a young protégé who wants a different pastoral assignment. The apostle encourages him to remain in Ephesus and 1 Timothy is written to encourage him to stay and explains the reasons Paul doesn't want him to leave.

5

*The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart  
and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*

The purpose of Paul's charge to stewarding the faith is

- a) Love that issues from a
- b) Pure heart
- c) Good conscience
- d) Sincere faith

6

*Certain persons, by swerving from these,  
have wandered away into vain discussion,*

*swerved* = *astocheo* = to deviate from, to miss the mark

*wandered* = *ektrepo* = to turn out or twist; used of dislocated limbs

The vain discussion concerns:

- a) Myths
- b) Endless genealogies
- c) Speculations

Christian theology is practical.  
If it isn't practical, it isn't Christian theology.

7

*desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they  
are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.*

The "Law" is the Mosaic Code—but also the Scriptures of Paul's day, the Old Testament.

He probably meant that they did "not understand" what they were really "saying" and or not saying by their emphasis. They missed the point of the Law.

Their "main interest seems to have been to rival contemporary Rabbinical exegesis, rather than to expound the gospel.

The teachers that Paul warned about in Colosse, in Colossians, were promoting serious heresy, but the teachers that he warned about in Ephesus, in 1 Timothy, were majoring in the minors.

We need to stress the true meaning of a passage, rather than drawing out of it something that is not there. Some leaders have used the Bible simply as a springboard to launch off into—and to legitimize—their personal prejudices, convictions, and interests.

Preaching or teaching is only faithful to God when it is consistent with the purpose for which God intended it (vs 8-10).

## 8

*Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully*

What ‘law’ is to be used lawfully?

- a) Civil laws – national government, behavior and punishments. These are not valid on the church because we are not Israel and are not a national entity.
- b) Ceremonial laws – Clean and unclean things and the sacrificial system. These are no longer valid because Jesus is the ultimate priest and final sacrifice.

The writer warned his Hebrew audience – There is no more sacrifice for sins (in the Temple) because Jesus was the ultimate and final sacrifice. If you go back to the Temple, you are “*setting aside*” Jesus and “*trampling underfoot Jesus’s blood.*” All you can expect, if you reject Jesus and return to the Temple is “*a fearful expectation of judgement and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries*” because in doing so, you have “*outraged the Spirit of grace.*” (10:26-29).

- c) Moral laws – Ten Commandments that reflect God’s character

These are the laws that Jesus had in mind when he said, “*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them*” (Matt 5:17)

Jesus “ful-filled” these laws (think about last week’s jar being filled with Jesus’ righteousness that is given to you.

In spite of Calvary, the Jews continued to work up their own righteousness which is an impossibility. This is why Paul lamented,

*Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. (Romans 10:1-4).*

At the same time, we have been saved to keep the law as a reflection of God's character. This is what made Israel and makes us a unique people in the world.

Works don't save but salvation works.

Heidelberg Catechism #86 – **Question:** *Since we have been delivered from our misery by grace alone through Christ, without any merit of our own, why must we yet do good works?* **Answer:** *Because Christ, having redeemed us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit to be His image, so that with our whole life we may show ourselves thankful to God for His benefits, and He may be praised by us. Further, that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by its fruits, and that by our godly walk of life we may win our neighbours for Christ.*

Romans 8:1-4 – *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

Why was the law given?

- a) To reveal God's character
- b) To prove our condemnation
- c) To prick out consciences
- d) To point us to Jesus

Romans 3:23-26 - *Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. 24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.*

Paul's contention in this passage of 1 Timothy is that the law is very practical and should be used for those purposes.

### 9a

*understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane,*

When referencing the law here, Paul may have specifically had in mind the Ten Commandments

### Commandments 1-3

- a) The disobedient

*You shall have no other gods before Me*

- Lawless = people who refuse to recognize God
- Disobedient = individuals who refuse to obey laws

*You shall not make idols*

- b) The irreverent
- Ungodly
  - Sinners

*You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain*

- c) The impure
- Unholy
  - Profane

### **9b-10**

*for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, 10 the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine,*

Commandments 6-10

*Honor your father and your mother  
Do not murder*

- d) The violent
- Parent strikers
  - Murderers

*You shall not commit adultery*

- e) The immoral
- Sexually immoral
  - Homosexuality

*You shall not steal or bear false witness*

- f) The deceitful
- Enslavers
  - Liars
  - Perjurers

**Note:** Paul doesn't refer to the fourth commandment about the Sabbath because it is not part of the moral code.

*Shabbat* is the original Hebrew word for our English word *sabbath*. It comes from the root *Shin-Beit-Tav* and means "to cease, to end, to rest." The word is linked to the seventh day after the six days of creation, and that is how we see it used in the Old Testament.

The Sabbath was given to Israel as a covenant sign, and Israel was commanded to rest on the seventh day. We see elsewhere in the Old Testament that covenants have signs, so that the sign of the Noahic covenant is the rainbow (Gen. 9:8–17) and the sign of the Abrahamic covenant is circumcision (Gen. 17).

Shabbat is the most important holy day on the Jewish calendar, though it is kept every week by observant Jews and some others, and not just once a year. God put great emphasis on the Sabbath, as it is referenced in Scripture numerous times, such as in Exodus 20:8–9—"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work" (see also Exodus 23:12 and Leviticus 26:2). Shabbat was so important that God imposed the death penalty on those who refused to observe it (Exodus 31:15).

Two themes govern Shabbat: to remember and to observe. It is a commemoration of God's six-day creation of the universe (Exodus 20:8–11) and of being led out of Egyptian captivity (Deuteronomy 5:15). So, the Jewish observer also remembers that rest comes with following God.

Why was God so serious about the Sabbath?

God weekly reminded Israel to rest in him and that they could trust him by ceasing to work. The same principle exists in the manna God provided and in letting the land rest every 70<sup>th</sup> year.

#### 1 - Jesus fulfilled the year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25)

*Luke 4:16-21 - And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. 17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

#### 2 - The one day of rest points to resting in one man –

*Hebrews 4:9-11 - So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, 10 for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.*

*Matthew 12:8 - For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.*

3 – The Sabbath is all about rest and was not intended to be a burden

Mark 2:27 - *the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath*

4 – We are not to judge each other according to days

Romans 14:5-6 - *One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord.*

Colossians 2:16-17 - *Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ”*

5 - Traditionally, Christians have held their primary corporate worship services on Sundays, the first day of the week

Acts 20:7 - *On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight*

1 Corinthians 16:2 - *Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.*

6 – The church met in celebration of Christ’s resurrection, which occurred on a Sunday (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1).

Revelation 1:10 – *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet*

7 – Jesus intentionally healed / worked on the Sabbath

John 5:1-18 – **T**

8 – The Sabbath is a covenant sign of the Mosaic covenant. Christians are not under the Mosaic covenant

Romans 10:4 - *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*

8 – Sunday best represents what Christ has done

- Israel worked 6 days and rested
- Christians rest and work 6 days

We work out of rest and not into it. We work out of salvation and not into it.

*It is clear in Paul's letters that the Sabbath is not binding upon believers. In Colossians Paul identifies the Sabbath as a shadow along with requirements regarding foods, festivals, and the new moon (Col. 2:16–17). The Sabbath, in other words, points to Christ and is fulfilled in him. The word for "shadow" (skia) that Paul uses to describe the Sabbath is the same term the author of Hebrews used to describe Old Testament sacrifices. The law is only a "shadow (skia) of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities" (Heb. 10:1). The argument is remarkably similar to what we see in Colossians: both contrast elements of the law as a shadow with the "substance" (sōma, Col. 2:17) or the "form" (eikona, Heb. 10:1) found in Christ. Paul does not denigrate the Sabbath. He salutes its place in salvation history, for, like the Old Testament sacrifices, though not in precisely the same way, it prepared the way for Christ. I know of no one who thinks Old Testament sacrifices should be instituted today; and when we compare what Paul says about the Sabbath with such sacrifices, it seems right to conclude that he thinks the Sabbath is no longer binding.*

- Tom Shreiner

To become involved in arguments about the Sabbath is exactly what Paul is trying to keep Timothy from.

What he has written to Timothy so far is so that the young pastor might teach and live

## 11

*in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.*