

THE
DISCIPLESHIP
PLACE

Telling the New Testament
Story of God



SESSION 14

Philemon, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus

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Philemon, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus

SESSION OVERVIEW

Letter to Philemon

Letters to Timothy

Letter to Titus

Guiding Principles

Application

Exam

Discussion Guide for Mentor and Participant

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you should:

- gain an understanding of the types of letters written in the first century.
- know the purpose and main content for Paul's letters to Philemon, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus.

INTRODUCTION

The letters Philemon, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus are written to individuals, all leaders in the church. The circumstances which are being addressed are radically different. One letter, Philemon, is addressed by Paul to an individual about a specific concern. In this short letter, the issue of slavery is raised. Since the thirteenth century, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus have been known as the Pastoral Epistles, a name given to them by St. Thomas Aquinas. These letters deal with pastoral and administrative issues in the Early Church.

LETTER TO PHILEMON



NOTES

Philemon is a unique letter of Paul in that it is a pure letter of mediation. It is the first one we have encountered in which Paul addresses an individual, and it is the only letter Paul writes to an individual who is not an overseer or someone with pastoral authority over more than one church.

According to the classification provided in this study, Philemon evidences traits of friendship letter, epideictic, and letters of mediation.

WHO?

Author: Paul, the apostle

Audience. Philemon, a man of means, had a home big enough to host the Christian meetings. He owned slaves, one of which was Onesimus, who ran away. Other persons such as Apphia and Archippus are mentioned as well.

WHERE?

Author: Paul is in Rome in prison.

Audience: Philemon, Gentile Christian in Colossae (Onesimus) is called a Colossian in Col. 4:9.

Cultural Note: According to Roman law, a slave could seek refuge at a religious altar and the person presiding over the altar could act as a mediator on the slave's behalf. Since Onesimus was converted under Paul, Paul became the priestly mediator with his master.

WHEN?

AD 60-64

WHAT?

While imprisoned in Rome, Paul encounters a runaway slave named Onesimus. Through Paul's evangelistic efforts, Onesimus becomes a Christian. We learn that Onesimus was the slave of Philemon, a man who had previously come to know Christ through the ministry of Paul (for comments on slavery in the Greco-Roman

 **NOTES**

world see the topic Morals in session 7). While desiring to keep Onesimus with him, Paul appeals to Philemon to accept Onesimus back, not as a slave but as a beloved brother in Christ. Paul knows what society would demand, but he urges a new Christian relationship (15-16). Paul could command Philemon to accept Onesimus, but he chooses not to do so (8-9).

WHY?

Paul felt the right thing for Onesimus to do was to return to his master and straighten things out (it seems some money had been taken). Paul writes to urge Philemon to treat his slave with mercy, as he is now a fellow believer. He calls Philemon to a higher law than the law of the land, namely the law of love.

LETTERS TO TIMOTHY



NOTES

The letters 1 and 2 Timothy are written to Paul's son in the faith and an able early leader, who organized and trained leadership in the churches Paul started. These Pastoral Epistles are unique in that they are letters written to individuals in administrative leadership over several churches or groups of churches.

Paul's letter to Timothy is a protreptic letter.

WHO?

Author: Paul, the apostle, is the traditional author.

Pauline School: Many scholars today view these letters as products of a later age, so the author would be an unknown Pauline disciple. This is based on differences in style, vocabulary, and content.

Argument for Paul: Due to the drastically different audience of these Pastoral Epistles (administrative leadership), it should not be surprising that Paul's style, vocabulary, and content is different from the letters he sent to individual congregations.

Audience: Timothy, pastor of the church in Ephesus, Paul's son in the faith is the traditional audience. If these letters were written later, then they would have been written most probably to young pastors.

WHERE?

Author: Paul in Rome, where he waited in prison for his execution.

Anonymous Author: Anonymous author's place of writing unknown.

Audience: Ephesus in Asia Minor for Timothy, otherwise unknown location.

WHEN?

AD 60-64 for Paul as author in late first century; early second century for unknown author.


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WHAT?

These are handbooks for church leaders and discuss issues of qualifications for leadership, as well as the organization and administration of the churches.

Special Verses

- 1 Tim. 2:1-7: Exhortations to Timothy.
- 1 Tim. 3:1-7: Qualifications of bishops or overseers.
- 1 Tim. 4:1-3: False asceticism, forbidding marriage, and demanding abstinence from foods.
- 1 Tim. 4:12: “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.”
- 1 Tim. 4:13-16: The importance of the public reading of Scripture, exhortation, and teaching.
- 1 Tim. 6:6-10: False teaching and greed, “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.”
- 1 Tim. 6:12: “Fight the good fight of the faith.”
- 2 Tim. 1:8-12: Suffering for the gospel and holding to the standard of sound teaching.
- 2 Tim. 2:3-7: Exhortations to Timothy, “Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”
- 2 Tim. 3:1-7: The coming of false teachers in the last days – a description of them in terms of being “lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, brutes, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to the outward form of godliness but denying its power.”
- 2 Tim. 3:14-17: Continuing “in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it”; “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

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- 2 Tim. 4:2: “Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.”
- 2 Tim. 4:7: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (Second Timothy has been referred to as Paul’s last will and testament.)

WHY?

- To encourage Timothy/pastors in face of opposition from false teachers.
- To give Timothy/pastors a list of priorities for the local church: prayer, worship, high standards for leadership, sound teaching, and care for the church members.

LETTER TO TITUS



NOTES

Titus is also a Pastoral Epistle written to a person Paul left in charge of organizing and training leadership for young churches. The letter is a paraenetic letter.

WHO?

Author: Paul, traditional author or anonymous Pauline disciple.

Audience: Titus who is overseeing several other pastors on the island of Crete. Paul had left him to finish church organization and leadership training. If these letters were written later, they would have been written most probably to overseers of young churches.

WHERE?

Author: Paul is probably at Nicopolis, a port city about 140 miles northwest of Corinth. This is where he wants Titus to join him.

Audience: Titus is in Crete. Unknown author/audience's location is unknown.

WHEN?

- AD 52-60, sometime during Paul's last missionary journey, before his arrest in Jerusalem.
- AD 60-64, if it is placed during the period of Paul's supposed travel to Spain, which took place, according to some scholars, between his two Roman imprisonments.
- Late first century, early second century for anonymous writer.

WHAT?

Special Issues:

- Qualifications for elders.
- Instructions for various age and gender groups.

**NOTES***Special Verse*

Titus 2:11-13: “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness . . . and to live self-controlled . . . while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

WHY?

- The purpose is to give Titus practical direction until Paul’s aides, Artemas and Tychicus, arrive.
- Paul lists his qualifications for elders in 1:6-9, so Titus has an objective standard in choosing leadership as well as Paul’s authority for the qualifications.
- Paul also gives Titus special instructions for his churches (2:1-2, 2:3-5, 2:6-8, 2:9-10).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



NOTES

First Tim. 2:11-15 reads: “Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing, providing they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty” (NRSV).

How do we interpret 1 Tim. 2:11-15? This passage contains the key verses along with 1 Cor. 14:33b-36 for those who do not believe in the ordination or leadership of women in the Church. The meaning seems plain enough. The problem is that it contradicts what we know of Paul’s practice and beliefs in other letters. Those who do not believe in the ordination of women accept the apparent meaning of verse 12 over the examples and passages in Acts (1:14, 2:14-17, 18:26, 21:9) and Paul’s letters (Gal. 3:28; 1 Cor. 11:5; Rom. 16:1, 7) that indicate other practices and beliefs. But they do not accept the plain meaning of verse 15 over the statements found in Paul’s writings (Gal. 2:16; Rom. 1:16-17).

This type of selective interpretation is not consistent or acceptable. We have to find a way to understand the passage that is consistent with all other Scripture, or admit we do not know what the author had in mind. There are two main problems for interpretation in this passage: (1) the role of women in the church and (2) how women are saved.

The passage says plainly that women are to keep silent and not to teach or have authority over a man, and that a woman will be saved through childbearing, provided she continues in faith, love and holiness with modesty. The interpretation of this passage is made even more difficult because of the divided opinion of scholars on when the passage was written and by whom.

If Paul did not write this passage, as many scholars believe, then perhaps this reflects the practice of the later, more established Church, which was anxious to establish its status and be considered respectable in the eyes of society. Even if we relegate this passage to a later period, that does not relieve us of how to interpret this passage in the light of all other scripture.

The one thing that seems to be true is this passage was written for a specific situation at a specific time. It does not have universal or timeless application. This position at least illumines verses 11 and 12, but verse 15 continues to remain a

 **NOTES**

mystery in light of the plain teaching of other scripture on salvation. The principle of interpretation that best helps us to understand this passage is to interpret obscure passages in light of those with clear and consistent meaning. Thus, although we do not understand the circumstances in which Paul or the author of 1 Timothy was writing, we do not interpret the passage to prohibit all women from speaking, praying, or teaching in church, and we do not condition a woman's salvation on whether she has had a child or not.

Immediately after this passage in 1 Timothy 3, there is a listing of the qualifications of bishops and deacons which emphasizes their need to be mature Christians. Considering the lack of educational opportunity for women in the first century, perhaps the problem Paul is addressing in 1 Tim. 2:11-12 is a lack of education on religious issues and knowledge in general.

Verse 15 may be contextually understood in light of the hope of each Jewish woman (since the Fall) to be chosen as the mother of the Messiah. Thus, the mother of the Messiah is saved through the child she bears. These suggestions are only guesses as to what the author was trying to say in these very obscure passages.

APPLICATION



NOTES

1. Read Philemon, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus in two different translations. Look for answers to the five hermeneutical questions Who, What, Where, When, and Why. How do your findings correspond with those presented in this session? New insights?
2. In Philemon, Paul writes to a slaveholder asking him to accept his runaway slave back as a beloved brother in Christ. Paul has been critiqued for not attacking the institution of slavery itself. Using information from this session, session 7, and study Bibles, Bible dictionaries, or Internet websites (Biblical Studies Foundation <http://www.netbible.com>; Blue Letter Bible <http://www.blueletterbible.org>; Crosswalk.com Bible Study Tools <http://bible.crosswalk.com>), research the institution of slavery in the Greco-Roman world during the time of Paul. Why does it appear Paul treated this issue as he did? Does Paul give voice to principles that undermine this institution? How does what Paul says in Philemon accord with what he states in Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
3. Read articles on the Pastoral Epistles in a study Bibles, Bible dictionaries, or Internet websites (Biblical Studies Foundation <http://www.netbible.com>; Blue Letter Bible <http://www.blueletterbible.org>; Crosswalk.com Bible Study Tools <http://bible.crosswalk.com>). How has your reading contributed to your understanding of these writings?

EXAM



NOTES

- _____ is a unique letter of Paul in that it is a pure letter of mediation.
 - Philemon
 - 1 Timothy
 - 2 Timothy
 - Titus
- First and Second Timothy may be classified as paraenetic letters. They attempt to provide positive role models or cultivate character traits that others can follow.
 - True
 - False
- Paul's letter to _____ raises the issue of slavery in the ancient world.
 - Philemon
 - 1 Timothy
 - 2 Timothy
 - Titus
- The admonition "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity" is presented in _____.
 - Philemon
 - 1 Timothy
 - 2 Timothy
 - Titus
- Traditionally, _____ has been understood as being written by Paul to an overseer of several other pastors on the island of Crete. Paul had left him to finish church organization and leadership training.
 - Philemon
 - 1 Timothy
 - 2 Timothy
 - Titus
- Based on a proper understanding of 2 Tim. 2:11-15, women should not serve as leaders in the church. This is Paul's consistent position throughout all his letters.
 - True
 - False

 NOTES

7. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” This well-known quote is found in _____.
- A. Philemon
 - B. 1 Timothy
 - C. 2 Timothy
 - D. Titus
8. The primary recipient of _____ is called to a higher law than the law of the land, namely the law of love.
- A. Philemon
 - B. 1 Timothy
 - C. 2 Timothy
 - D. Titus
9. _____ is a letter sometimes referred to as Paul’s last will and testament.
- A. Philemon
 - B. 1 Timothy
 - C. 2 Timothy
 - D. Titus
10. The designation Pastoral Epistles was given to 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus by _____.
- A. Martin Luther
 - B. St. Thomas Aquinas
 - C. John Calvin
 - D. Paul
11. _____ is dated AD 60-64, and is often placed during the period of Paul’s supposed travel to Spain, which took place, according to some scholars, between his two Roman imprisonments.
- A. Philemon
 - B. 1 Timothy
 - C. 2 Timothy
 - D. Titus
12. The declaration that “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” is found in _____.
- A. Philemon
 - B. 1 Timothy
 - C. 2 Timothy
 - D. Titus

**NOTES**

13. The one thing about 1 Tim. 2:11-12 that seems to be true is this passage was written for a specific situation at a specific time. It does not have universal or timeless application.
- A. True
 - B. False
14. A description of false teachers in the last days as being “lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, brutes, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to the outward form of godliness but denying its power” is found in _____.
- A. Philemon
 - B. 1 Timothy
 - C. 2 Timothy
 - D. Titus

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR MENTOR AND PARTICIPANT



NOTES

Be prepared to discuss the following with your mentor.

1. If you were Paul, writing to individuals in leadership, what changes in style, content, or vocabulary would you make in contrast to a letter that would be read to the whole church? Why?
2. How would you summarize the nature of administrative leadership in the Church as presented in the Pastorals? What are some of the primary traits that should be evidenced?
3. Read 1 Tim. 3:1-7 that presents qualifications for bishops or overseers. Discuss these qualifications in view of modern leadership needs in the church.
4. Should Paul have used the circumstance in Philemon to attack directly and forcefully the institution of slavery in the Greco-Roman world? Explain. How does he deal with this issue?
5. What principles do you see Paul presenting in 1 Tim. 2:11-15 relating to (1) the role of women in the Church and (2) how women are saved? How are we to interpret this passage? How should this passage be understood and applied today?