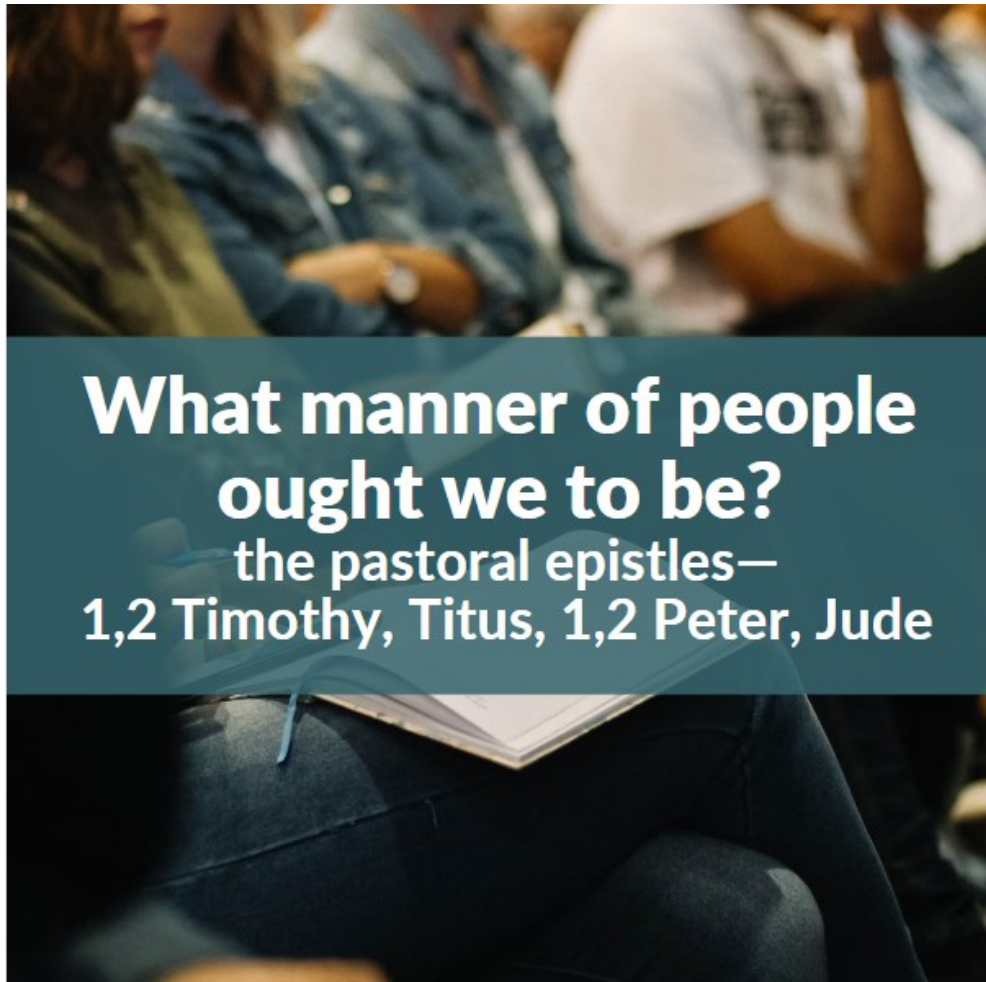


Handouts

Including

Notes and Questions



**What manner of people
ought we to be?**
the pastoral epistles—
1,2 Timothy, Titus, 1,2 Peter, Jude

As we come near the end of our project of reading through the Bible, what is the most important thing to focus on?

Maybe it's different than you'd imagine....

Your Notes

What manner of people ought we to be? the pastoral epistles— 1,2 Timothy, Titus, 1,2 Peter, Jude

The date and setting of the Pastoral Epistles

- The Christian church has exploded in size and geographic reach—we'll look at maps in a minute).
- These books are some of the last of the New Testament and were written at least 30 years after Jesus' resurrection and Pentecost, dating them being written between 62-68 AD.
- They are written by the leaders of the Christian faith including Paul, Peter, and Jude (a brother of Jesus and James who wrote the first book in the New Testament).

34 Churches are mentioned by name in the Bible and assume many more also—met in homes

What were these churches like?

- We know very little about them as formal structures—the emphasis for a very long time was on the people who made up the church, the “ekklesia” the “called out ones.”
- *Ekklesia* is a Greek word defined as “a called-out assembly or congregation.” *Ekklesia* is commonly translated as “church” in the New Testament. (from Got Questions)
- We often talk about how the church is not a building, but the people and that was literally true then—there were no buildings, denominations—they met primarily in homes.
- Here are some quotes about them from an article about the early church. The first from an early Christian writer and then from a Roman emperor who tried, unsuccessfully to destroy the Christian faith.

The people were the church and their lives defined it

- *And what kind of lives did they lead? Justin Martyr, a noted early Christian theologian, wrote to Emperor Antoninus Pius and described the believers: "We formerly rejoiced in uncleanness of life, but now love only chastity; before we used the magic arts, but now dedicate ourselves to the true and unbegotten God; before we loved money and possessions more than anything, but now we share what we have and to everyone who is in need; before we hated one another and killed one another and would not eat with those of another race, but now since the manifestation of Christ, we have come to a common life and pray for our enemies and try to win over those who hate us without just cause."*
<https://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/the-spread-of-the-early-church-11629561.html>

More about what Christians were known for

- *Christians became known as those who cared for the sick. Many were known for the healing that resulted from their prayers. Christians also started the first "Meals on Wheels." By the year 250, they were feeding more than 1500 of the hungry and destitute in Rome every day.*
- *When Emperor Julian ("the Apostate") wanted to revive pagan religion*

in the mid-300s, he gave a most helpful insight into how the church spread. This opponent of the faith said that Christianity “has been specially advanced through the loving service rendered to strangers and through their care of the burial of the dead. It is a scandal that there is not a single Jew who is a beggar and that the [Christians] care not only for their own poor but for ours as well; while those who belong to us look in vain for the help we should render them.”

- <https://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/the-spread-of-the-early-church-11629561.html>

We are part of that heritage of being a certain kind of people, as Dallas Willard reminds us

- *About two thousand years ago [Jesus] he gathered his little group of friends and trainees on the Galilean hillsides and sent them out to “teach all nations” (Matthew 28:19-20)—that is to make students (apprentices) to him from all ethnic groups. His objective is eventually to bring all of human life on earth under the direction of his wisdom, goodness, and power, as part of God’s eternal plan for the universe.....[through a] revolution of the human heart or spirit. . . . **a revolution of character.**” (Dallas Willard)*
- ***This is the most important thing, the eternal creation of God’s— a changed, redeemed people.***
- All else will fade (churches, buildings, denominations); God’s people will not. And it is those people (you) who will reach the world with God’s message of salvation.

How we become that, the spiritual formation of God’s people is what these “Pastoral Epistles” are about

- Earlier New Testament writings clarified the theology of salvation.
- That we are saved by grace alone through faith alone—in other words, Jesus’s death on the cross accomplished all the WORK of salvation.
- By faith we accept it—without any work or merit of our own. That is the foundation of our faith.
- BUT once we are saved—God expects us to live as HIS saved, redeemed people.
- Though previous books taught this; how we are supposed to live is the emphasis (instead of theological issues) in these books.
- We will look at various passages, and we only have time for a few—please study more to understand and apply fully!

First—focus your mind

- 2 Peter 2:3 the chapter begins with Peter saying that he wrote his letters, “to stimulate you to wholesome thinking” or in the **MSG “to hold your minds in a state of undistracted attention”**
- I really like that, as I think we don’t do all we could for the Lord not because of any intentional decision, but more often, purely out of getting distracted.
- Let’s take some time now to FOCUS on living as Jesus’ student and apprentice, as we learn to live like Him.
- A foundational reason we do that, as we’ve talked about, is **because Jesus will return** and in spite of distractions or what people say questioning the reality of it.....

The day of the Lord will come

- ***The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought***

you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

- ***So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. 2 Pet. 3:10-13***

That reality should help us focus

- ***....And to make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace.***
- Note what is of supreme importance, what we should make every effort for—not to be rich, or successful, or as happy as we can be doing our thing—but “spotless, blameless, and at peace.”
- What do these words mean?
- **Spotless, áspilos**, free from censure, irreproachable, free from vice, unsullied.
- **Blameless, amómētos**, that cannot be censured, blameless.
- Clean up what we need to and we all know what that is in our individual lives.
- After that we are challenged to be at peace—

At Peace, eirēnē

Outline of biblical usage from Strongs:

--the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is

- **From Thayers, Greek Lexicon**
- According to a conception distinctly peculiar to Christianity,[the peace mentioned here is] **the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is.**
- **[the word is also]** is used of those who, assured of salvation, tranquilly await the return of Christ and the transformation of all things which will accompany that event, 2 Peter 3:14
- Most challenging to me because it is an inward challenge—I can be working so hard on the outside—forgetting the Lord wants us to be at PEACE—He has it all under control.

As we work to be at peace, it can help to remember who we are

As 1 Peter 1:1, and other passages describe us as pilgrims we are God's elect, “strangers in the world,” and as the passage continues,

- *^{1 Pet 2:9-10} But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God;*
- If we feel things are “off” in this world, that in many ways we don't fit—
- That is a correct assessment of our situation—as the old song says, “This world is not our home, we're just passing through.”

Because of that we need to learn to live with a certain detachment because

- This world truly is not our home, and all around us will some day be replaced and renewed.
- We belong to Jesus as does everything we have and everyone we love.
- We must hold it all loosely, praying for balance that we be good

stewards of what we have while we have it.

- God is so gracious to give us so much and yet we need to remember as C. S. Lewis said, ***“The Lord refreshes us on the journey with many pleasant inns, but He will not let us mistake them for home.”***

As we travel our pilgrimage, we do have a guidebook as another pastoral letter reminds us

- *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17*
- God’s Word is ESSENTIAL for all life and service that is pleasing to God.
- If you ever don’t know what to do—the Bible will guide you and the better you know it, the more you will know how God wants you to act.
- Application: Finish your reading through the Bible this year and with excitement—start again next year!
- Try a different translation or a different study Bible or this year LISTEN to the Bible—You Version, Bible app, or just read the same plan—I do....
- And come to/listen to/watch the lessons each week also on Bible805.com.
- Let’s continue with advice from it on how to live.....

Characteristics of God’s people-Titus 3

- Teachings now on how we should relate to each other—as the Christian life was not intended to be lived in isolation (it might seem easier if it was).
- *Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, ²to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone.*
- *³At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. ⁴But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us. . . .those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.. . .*
- *⁹⁻¹⁰Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them. ¹¹You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful; they are self-condemned. Titus 3:1-11*

Comments on the passage

- Why it is so important *“to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate.”*
- It is easy once we know the truth to think everyone else should also.
- And if they don’t, it is so easy to slip into “slander.”
- ***Gk. blasphemēō, defame, rail on, revile, speak evil.***
- When we do that, we often put ourselves in God’s place, acting as if we can see hearts and motives and judging that.
- If it is a real concern what someone is doing, pray for them.
- If you can’t talk to the person directly about it, don’t talk to anyone but God about it.

Back to challenges to ourselves

- *2 Timothy 2: You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.· ³Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.*
- *No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer.*
- *⁵Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor’s crown except by competing according to the rules.*

- ⁶ *The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops.*
- **The passage goes on to talk about why it's important to suffer (the natural result of self-denial), to focus, to play by the rules--**

The result of that hard work

- **2 Timothy 2: 20** In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. ²¹ ***Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work..*** . .pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. ²³ Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. ²⁴ **And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.** ²⁵ Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,
- We have choice, we can be cleansed and kind—growing ever more useful to the Lord
- The Lord can't use you in greater things if you fail in small ones, so work hard to do well at whatever little task you've been given.

Peter's progression of growth—his workout plan

- ^{2 Pet. 1:5} *For this very reason, **make every effort** to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.*
- ⁸ *For if you possess these qualities **in increasing measure**, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.*
- Bit by bit work on growing in your Christian life—daily Bible reading, listening, sharing a verse with someone, all very positive ways to do that.

Self-control, a core essential and foundational for all other characteristics and spiritual growth

- Because we continuously must choose, how to act, think, what to do.
- **What is self-control— or “temperance”?** Greek, **ἐγκράτεια, self-control**, the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, esp. his sensual appetites. (desires—we wouldn't need self-control if we didn't want bad things).
- Other verses on self-control:
- *A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls. Proverbs 25:28,ESV*
- *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23, ESV*
- *For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. 2 Timothy 1:7,ESV*

So how do we develop self-control as disciples

- Just being here (at a Bible Study) is one of the BEST things you can do!
- In the book, **Atomic Habits**, James Clear emphasizes that environment is one of THE most important aspects of habit formation—

- We can't emphasize enough the importance of being with a group of fellow Christians,
- Listening to Bible teaching, either in person, or online (do check out the Bible805 podcast and YouTube channel).
- Discussing the lesson with each other and sharing with friends.
- **Reading your Bible daily, reading Christian books, listening to Christian radio and podcasts.**
- All these things help bring God's Word into our lives more and more and ***this will change us.***

The book Atomic Habits by James Clear talks about how habits compound

- Just as interest compounds....
- If you practice positive things—and for the Christian life what I just mentioned—you WILL make progress!
- The book states that a 1% improvement each day will make you 37x better at whatever you are trying to do by the end of a year.
- I have no idea how that translates to spiritual growth—but it makes sense and is a great motivation ***for consistency in small things in our Christian lives.***

What do you want your 1% improvement to be?

- It doesn't need to be big deal, huge improvements, major changes
- Just little by little—read a chapter or even a verse every day.
- Write down your thoughts about it for one minute.
- Spend an intentional 5 minutes in prayer.
- Be nice to one person you find difficult; respond with kindness not irritation.
- Be silent once when you want to speak.

These little things matter—for us, for our world, for our Lord

- As this little verse says.....
 - *You are writing a gospel*
 - *A chapter each day by things that you do*
 - *And the things that you say*
 - *People read what you write*
 - *Distorted or true—*
 - *What is the gospel according to you?*

Trust the truth of this Proverb

- *The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. Prov.4:18*
- As you do little things, bit by bit, always intentional on how you please the Lord, when you meet Him, you can be assured that you will be found—
- “Spotless, blameless, and at peace.”
- And that in summary is the goal of all the challenges, promises, and lessons of these Pastoral letters.
- May they be true for all of us.

Discussion Questions

The Pastoral Epistles, 1,2 Timothy, Titus, 1,2 Peter, and Jude

1. When were the Pastoral Epistles written and how are they different than the books that have come before them?

2. What defined the early church? Was it their buildings or church structure? (obviously not) What was it about the people that made them different than the society around them?

3. Why is it important for us to focus our minds on the reality that Jesus will come back? How can we practically do that in our lives?

4. The Bible is our guidebook for life and 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tells us, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Give some practical examples of how the Bible can help us in these ways.

5. The lesson talked about how we can grow as disciples of Jesus in little ways that will eventually yield big results. What are some that you can do, that are important to you?

In other words, what will your 1% improvement in your Christian walk be?