

Legacy: Paul's Letters to Timothy

This week I'd like to look at these two letters through a few different lenses:

1. Timothy is the first second-generation Christian mentioned in Acts – maybe in the entire New Testament. The relationship is described as a parent/ child one.

How could this affect what Paul wrote to him?

2. Stages of Spiritual Development: This is the only time I can think of, at the moment, that a Biblical writer was writing to someone with a similar stage of spiritual development.

How would this affect how Paul wrote?

3. Stages of personal growth: When we are younger, we tend to be more fundamentalist in whatever view point we have. I am thinking of myself and all the marches I went to in my twenties and early thirties. As we get older, we see more shades of grey. These days I do not canonize people just because they are left-wing socialists. (Sorry Joan Baez).

What would be the best way for an older mentor/parent figure to address issues with his younger protegee?

4. Social culture of the 1st Century CE Roman Empire.
 - a. Marriage was a strictly monogamous institution. A Roman citizen, male or female, could have only spouse at a time. **Note** the word *spouse*. Dalliances of various and sundry kinds were common.
 - b. There is some extant evidence of Judaic polygamy being practiced in the New Testament period. It was only 1,000 years ago that

Rabbi Gershom banned polygamy but even then, the ban was not accepted by Sephardic and Yemenite communities.

- c. Women in First Century Rome, free or enslaved, could be: an empress, priestess, goddess, shop owner, midwife, prostitute, daughter, wife, mother. They did not have an open voice in public life.
 - d. Women or men could initiate a divorce by simply saying they wanted to end a marriage.
 - e. It was legal to treat slaves terribly: even killed for any reason. Slavery was generally accepted though some people, such as Seneca, argued publicly that slaves should be treated fairly.
 - f. Livia Augusta, Agrippina the Elder and Agrippina the Younger – had overt influence and visibility.
5. *How would we negotiate these factors if we were developing a new Way?*

1st Timothy

The resources I found say Timothy was somewhere between his early 20s and 30. Just a reminder; in Judaism of the time men became full adult at 30.

- 1st Timothy 1: 3-5, 8,15 -

What does this say to you about Paul's way of being a mentor?

- 1st Timothy 2: 4

What does this say about Paul's priorities?

- 1st Timothy 2: 8-15

How is this instruction affected by the culture of the time?

How do you think a man who was raised in a home by two women who taught him not to follow the beliefs of his father (and then sent him off to promulgate those beliefs) would have thought about Paul's teaching here about roles.

Do you think this might have something to do with Paul's assessment of Timothy's stage of personal or spiritual development?

- 1 Timothy 3

Where do you see, in this counsel the mix between Paul being raised as a Pharisee and yet now mentoring someone who will be a leader in The Way in a 1st Century Roman environment.

- 1 Timothy 4: 1-13

If you were in Timothy's shoes, what how would Paul's warnings be helpful to you?

- 1 Timothy 4:13

What do you think was his spiritual gift?

- *1 Timothy 5*

Where do you see the voice of Judaism here; where do you see the effect of building a community in first central Roman/Hellenic culture?

- *1 Timothy 6:1.2....* This counsel reminds me of Proverbs 25:21, 22

I could go on a bit about the insurrection of this but I am wondering what you think?

Pursue doing right. Live in a sacred way; trusting, loving, never giving up. Walk softly in a humble manner.

Last Words – 2 Timothy

The sources I have read believe that this is the last letter Paul wrote. Other sources said Timothy was around 40 when he received this.

What would you want to make sure you said in similar circumstances?

What I read here is Paul's very last chance to strengthen, encourage and comfort.

(I Corinthians 14:3)

1:5-7 – Timothy's spiritual legacy.

1: 8-10 Death will be defeated

1:-14 – Turning shame on end...in some ways the same counsel he gave about slaves he gives about himself.

1:15, 2:10 – Letting Timothy know what can happen to leaders of The Way.

And final words:

May the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit and may the gift of his great kindness rest on you.