The Pastoral Charge

A Focused Four Week Study of 1 Timothy

St. John's Men's Bible Study | Participant Guide

This four-week study reads 1 Timothy in its historical and literary context, follows Paul's defense of apostolic truth and its universal mission, considers the character that truth forms in Christian men, and explores how the Church preserves and lives the faith through Scripture, the Creeds, and the Book of Common Prayer. We will connect each week's readings to the formation of men in the home, workplace, Church, and wider community.

Guiding Scripture and Goal

1 Timothy 1:5 teaches that the goal of Christian instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. Our goal is to read the letter in context, receive apostolic truth faithfully, and allow that truth to form Christlike love, sound judgment, and dependable service.

Our Study Pattern

- **Before Week 1:** Read 1 Timothy 1-6 once in a single sitting. Notice repeated connections between teaching and love, truth and godliness, sound doctrine and sound living, and the Church as God's household.
- **Assigned readings:** Complete the core preparation before the meeting. The selections are designed to take about 30 minutes or less.
- **Suggested readings:** Use these optional passages for additional biblical and historical context.
- **Weekly Reading:** This passage will be read aloud and examined together during the meeting.

Meeting Rhythm

We will open in prayer, review the preparatory readings, connect them to the Weekly Reading, observe and interpret the text together, discuss its formation of Christian men, and close with practical response and prayer.

Three Themes We Will Follow

- **Truth and Discernment:** Receiving, testing, and defending apostolic truth without pride, speculation, or needless quarrelling.
- **Character and Responsibility:** Allowing sound doctrine to form self-control, integrity, faithfulness, courage, and dependable service in every vocation.
- **Servant Leadership and Mission:** Leading through example, equipping others, bearing witness to Christ, and preparing younger men to carry the faith forward.

WEEK 1

Reading 1 Timothy in Context

Central Question

How do we read Scripture faithfully before attempting to apply it?

Assigned Readings

- **1 Timothy 1-6:** Read the entire letter once to see its overall movement and repeated connections among truth, love, godliness, leadership, responsibility, and life in God's household.
- **Acts 16:1-5:** Meet Timothy, learn about his family background and reputation, and see how his ministry with Paul began.
- **Acts 19:1-20:** Enter the religious and cultural world of Ephesus, where the gospel confronted idolatry, magic, false spirituality, and resistance to God's truth.

Suggested Readings

- **Acts 9:1-19:** See Paul's conversion, calling, and dependence upon Christ's mercy.
- **Acts 20:28-32:** Hear Paul warn the Ephesian elders that false teachers would arise from both outside and within the Church.
- **Philippians 2:19-24:** See Timothy's proven character, genuine concern, and trusted relationship with Paul.

Weekly Reading

1 Timothy 1:1-7 and 3:14-16

How the Readings Connect

The supporting passages introduce Paul, Timothy, Ephesus, and the danger of false teaching. Acts 16 presents Timothy as a younger man whose character was already known within the churches, while Acts 19 shows the spiritual, religious, and cultural pressures surrounding the Ephesian church. Against this background, Paul charges Timothy to protect apostolic teaching from speculation and distortion. This truth is not merely information to be defended; its intended result is love arising from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith. First Timothy 3:14-16 further identifies the Church as God's household and the pillar and foundation of the truth. Careful exegesis therefore requires more than gathering facts or immediately searching for personal application. Men must first receive the text humbly, understand it within its historical and literary setting, allow it to correct their assumptions, embody its teaching, and faithfully pass that truth to others.

Discuss Through the Three Themes

- **Truth and Discernment:** What do we need to understand about Paul, Timothy, Ephesus, and the false teaching before applying this letter? How does attention to context help men distinguish the meaning of Scripture from their own assumptions, preferences, or cultural expectations?
- **Character and Responsibility:** Timothy was entrusted with difficult responsibility because his character and faithfulness had already been demonstrated. What do his reputation, teachability, concern for others, and willingness to serve teach men about becoming trustworthy in their households, workplaces, and the Church?
- **Servant Leadership and Mission:** What does the relationship between Paul and Timothy teach us about receiving guidance, accepting responsibility without seeking status, and preparing younger men to guard, embody, and pass the faith to others?

WEEK 2

The Apostolic Truth and Its Universal Mission

Central Question

What is the apostolic truth Paul is defending, where does it come from, and what mission does it create?

Assigned Readings

- **1 Timothy 1-2:** Trace the contrast between apostolic teaching and speculation, Paul's testimony to grace, prayer for all people, and Christ as the one mediator.
- **1 Corinthians 15:1-8:** Identify the historical events at the center of the apostolic gospel.
- **Galatians 1:6-12:** See that the gospel is received from Christ and cannot be revised to suit another audience or agenda.

Suggested Readings

- **2 Timothy 1:8-14:** Consider the gospel as a trustworthy deposit that must be guarded and transmitted.
- **Ephesians 1:3-14:** Place election within union with Christ, adoption, holiness, and God's redemptive purpose.
- **2 Peter 3:8-10:** Connect God's patience with his desire for repentance rather than destruction.

Weekly Reading

1 Timothy 1:3-17 and 2:1-8

How the Readings Connect

The readings identify the apostolic gospel as truth received from Christ, centered on his saving work, and entrusted to the Church. Paul emphasizes prayer for all people, God's desire that all be saved, Christ's ransom for all, and his own mission to the nations. An exclusive faith in the one God and one mediator necessarily creates an inclusive mission: no person or group lies outside the Church's prayer and witness. Election should humble and reassure believers and stir them toward mission, never narrow their concern or justify indifference.

Discuss Through the Three Themes

- **Truth and Discernment:** How can men guard apostolic truth with conviction while rejecting pride, anger, quarrelling, and personal preference presented as doctrine?
- **Character and Responsibility:** How should the gospel of the one mediator shape prayer, conduct, relationships, and spiritual leadership?
- **Servant Leadership and Mission:** If the one God desires all to be saved, how should men pray for, serve, and bear witness to people across their divisions?

WEEK 3

The Men Apostolic Truth Forms

Central Question

What kind of character, leadership, and life should the truth of the gospel produce in Christian men?

Assigned Readings

- **1 Timothy 3:1-5:2:** Examine leadership, the mystery of the faith, false spirituality, training for godliness, Timothy's example, and relationships within God's household.
- **Galatians 5:16-26:** Contrast the works of the flesh with the fruit produced by the Holy Spirit.

Suggested Readings

- **Titus 1:5-9:** Compare the character expected of church leaders.
- **2 Timothy 2:1-7, 20-26:** Consider endurance, discipline, purity, and usefulness through Paul's images of a soldier, athlete, farmer, and household vessel.
- **John 15:1-11:** Ground spiritual fruitfulness in abiding in Christ rather than relying upon human effort alone.

Weekly Reading

1 Timothy 3:1-13; 4:1-16; and 5:1-2

How the Readings Connect

Paul describes leadership primarily through observable character: faithfulness, self-control, hospitality, maturity, household responsibility, reputation, and freedom from greed. Christian leadership is tested in a man's conscience, relationships, and care for those closest to him before it is expressed through office. Authority is therefore a responsibility to care, teach, and serve, made credible through gentleness, discipline, and example. Galatians and John clarify that this formation is not self-powered: the Spirit produces fruit as men abide in Christ and practice obedience.

Discuss Through the Three Themes

- **Truth and Discernment:** Why must Christian men watch both their doctrine and their lives, and what happens when either one is neglected?
- **Character and Responsibility:** Which qualities in 1 Timothy 3-4 most challenge men as husbands, workers, providers, protectors, and members of the Church?
- **Servant Leadership and Mission:** How can men lead through service, spiritual discipline, and example while helping younger men grow into faithful responsibility?

WEEK 4

Guarding and Living the Faith in the Church

Central Question

How does the Church preserve, pray, embody, and transmit the apostolic faith?

Assigned Readings

- **1 Timothy 5:3-6:21:** See how apostolic teaching governs family care, leadership, work, money, contentment, generosity, and guarding the faith.
- **The Nicene Creed:** Hear the historic Church confess the Triune God and the saving work of Christ.
- **The Collect for Purity:** Approach God with honesty and dependence upon the Holy Spirit.
- **The Baptismal Covenant:** Connect apostolic belief with worship, repentance, proclamation, service, justice, and respect for human dignity.
- **The General Thanksgiving:** Practice gratitude, dependence, service, and remembrance of God's mercy.

Suggested Readings

- **Ephesians 4:1-16:** See the Church as one body called to unity, maturity, truth, love, and shared ministry.
- **BCP Catechism, The Church and The Ministry:** Consider the Church's identity, mission, worship, and ordered ministry.
- **A form of the Prayers of the People:** Notice how common prayer trains the Church to intercede for the Church, the world, civil authorities, those who suffer, and the departed.

Weekly Reading

1 Timothy 6:11-21, the Nicene Creed, and the Baptismal Covenant

How the Readings Connect

First Timothy ends by calling Timothy to pursue godly character, guard the apostolic deposit, resist greed, hope in God, and practice generosity. Simplicity, gratitude, contentment, and generosity give practical form to baptismal discipleship in family care, work, money, and service. The Nicene Creed identifies the historic apostolic faith being guarded, while the Baptismal Covenant describes the shared life that flows from it. Subordinate to Scripture, the Book of Common Prayer helps the Episcopal Church confess, pray, embody, and transmit that faith within the one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

Discuss Through the Three Themes

- **Truth and Discernment:** How do Scripture, the Creeds, and the Book of Common Prayer help men receive and guard the apostolic faith rather than construct an individual Christianity?
- **Character and Responsibility:** How should contentment, generosity, baptismal commitment, and common prayer shape money, work, family life, and participation in the Church?
- **Servant Leadership and Mission:** How can men preserve and pass the faith to their families, younger men, and future generations while serving the universal Church?

The Pastoral Charge

A Focused Three Week Study of Titus

St. John's Men's Bible Study | Participant Guide

This three-week companion study follows 1 Timothy and traces the movement of Titus from apostolic truth, to grace-formed character, to good works that make the gospel visible. We will read each chapter in context and discuss how its teaching forms Christian men in the home, workplace, Church, and wider community.

Guiding Scripture and Goal

Titus 2:11-14 teaches that the grace of God not only brings salvation but also trains believers to reject ungodliness, live self-controlled and upright lives, and become eager to do what is good. Our goal is to receive apostolic truth faithfully, allow grace to form our character, and make our faith visible through dependable service.

Our Study Pattern

- **Before Week 1:** Read Titus 1-3 once in a single sitting. Notice repeated connections between truth and godliness, sound teaching and sound living, grace and formation, and good works and public witness.
- **Assigned readings:** Complete the core preparation before the meeting. The selections are designed to take about 30 minutes or less.
- **Suggested readings:** Use these optional passages for additional biblical and historical context.
- **Weekly Reading:** This chapter will be read aloud and examined together during the meeting.

Meeting Rhythm

We will open in prayer, review the preparatory readings, connect them to the Weekly Reading, observe and interpret the text together, discuss its formation of Christian men, and close with practical response and prayer.

Three Themes We Will Follow

- **Truth and Discernment:** Receiving, testing, and defending apostolic truth without pride, speculation, or needless quarrelling.
- **Character and Responsibility:** Allowing grace to form self-control, integrity, faithfulness, courage, and dependable service in every vocation.
- **Servant Leadership and Mission:** Leading through example, equipping others, meeting real needs, and making the gospel credible through good works.

Apostolic Truth and Order in the Church

Central Question

How does apostolic truth establish, order, and protect a faithful local church?

Assigned Readings

- **Titus 1:** Meet Paul and Titus, examine Titus's task in Crete, and trace the connection between trustworthy teaching, qualified leadership, and the correction of false teaching.
- **Galatians 2:1-5:** See Titus as a Gentile believer whose acceptance without circumcision demonstrated the truth and freedom of the gospel.
- **2 Corinthians 8:16-24:** See Titus as Paul's trusted partner and fellow worker, marked by earnest concern and dependable service.

Suggested Readings

- **2 Corinthians 7:5-16:** See how Titus strengthened Paul through faithful ministry and encouraging news from Corinth.
- **2 Timothy 4:9-10:** Notice a later glimpse of Titus continuing in missionary service.
- **1 Timothy 3:1-13:** Compare the character expected of overseers and deacons.

Weekly Reading

Titus 1:1-16

How the Readings Connect

The supporting passages establish Titus as a tested Gentile believer and one of Paul's trusted coworkers. This background explains why Paul could leave him in Crete to complete unfinished work and appoint elders. Titus 1 presents leaders as stewards of God's household: they hold firmly to trustworthy teaching, refute error, and embody the message through faithful households, self-control, sound judgment, and responsible authority. Leadership is therefore accountable service rather than personal status, learned through faithfulness in nearer responsibilities and exercised alongside others.

Discuss Through the Three Themes

- **Truth and Discernment:** How can men distinguish apostolic truth from speculation, cultural pressure, personal preference, or teaching shaped by personal gain?
- **Character and Responsibility:** Why does Paul connect leadership with marriage, household life, self-control, reputation, and the faithful use of authority?
- **Servant Leadership and Mission:** What does Paul's confidence in Titus teach men about accepting difficult responsibility, mentoring others, and preparing trustworthy leaders?

WEEK 2

Grace That Forms Godly Men

Central Question

How does sound doctrine become visible through godly character, faithful relationships, and disciplined lives?

Assigned Readings

- **Titus 2:** Follow Paul's teaching for different generations and responsibilities, then observe how he grounds Christian conduct in the appearing grace of God.
- **1 Timothy 4:6-16:** Connect sound teaching with training for godliness, disciplined practice, spiritual gifts, and the leader's personal example.
- **Galatians 5:16-26:** Contrast the works of the flesh with the character produced by the Holy Spirit.

Suggested Readings

- **1 Timothy 5:1-2:** Consider relationships across generations in the Church through family-like respect and purity.
- **John 15:1-11:** Ground spiritual fruitfulness in abiding in Christ rather than self-reliant effort.
- **1 Peter 2:11-17:** Connect honorable conduct before outsiders with Christian freedom, public witness, and responsible citizenship.

Weekly Reading

Titus 2:1-15

How the Readings Connect

Titus 2 directs sound doctrine toward recognizable patterns of life: self-control, dignity, faithfulness, love, endurance, and good example. Grace not only saves; it trains men to reject ungodliness and practice upright, disciplined living. The supporting readings clarify that this formation is not self-powered: the Spirit produces fruit as men abide in Christ and practice obedience. Teaching and example belong together because everyday faithfulness in the household and workplace can either adorn the gospel or make it less credible.

Discuss Through the Three Themes

- **Truth and Discernment:** What is the relationship between sound doctrine and sound living, and what happens when Christian belief is separated from visible character?
- **Character and Responsibility:** How should grace-trained self-control shape men as husbands, workers, providers, protectors, and members of the Church?
- **Servant Leadership and Mission:** How can mature men form younger men through teaching, encouragement, correction, friendship, and consistent example?

Good Works and Christian Mission in the World

Central Question

How should people saved by grace live faithfully within the Church and the wider world?

Assigned Readings

- **Titus 3:** Trace Paul's call to public obedience, gentleness, humility, good works, doctrinal clarity, and resistance to divisive controversy.
- **Ephesians 2:1-10:** See salvation as God's gift and good works as the life prepared for those he has redeemed.
- **Matthew 5:13-16:** See faithful disciples as salt and light whose visible good works direct attention to the Father.

Suggested Readings

- **Romans 13:1-7:** Consider Christian responsibility toward governing authorities and public order.
- **1 Peter 3:8-17:** Join gentleness, suffering, holy conduct, courage, and a reasoned defense of Christian hope.
- **James 2:14-18:** Consider why living faith cannot remain merely verbal or inactive.

Weekly Reading

Titus 3:1-15

How the Readings Connect

Titus 3 completes the letter's movement from apostolic truth in the Church, to grace-formed character in the household, to visible mission in public life. Good works never earn salvation, but they are its necessary fruit and public evidence. Remembering the mercy we have received produces humility and gentleness, while responsible citizenship, useful work, and meeting urgent needs carry Christian mission into the wider community. Men must therefore defend essential truth without becoming consumed by foolish, unproductive, or divisive arguments.

Discuss Through the Three Themes

- **Truth and Discernment:** How can men defend essential truth while refusing foolish, unproductive, or divisive arguments?
- **Character and Responsibility:** How should remembered mercy produce humility, gentleness, honesty, generosity, and responsible citizenship?
- **Servant Leadership and Mission:** What urgent needs can Christian men meet in their families, workplaces, parish, and community so that faith becomes visible through good works?