

# Paul's Personal Letters

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## A Note of Introduction

In our fast-paced society of cell phones, computers, e-mail and instant messages, letter writing has almost become a lost art. The idea of sitting down and putting pen to paper...of capturing our thoughts in a way that is permanent and very tangible is something that is almost foreign to us.

Yet, the delight of receiving a letter lives on. Each day when I go to the mailbox, my five-year-old asks, "Is there a letter for me?" When the answer is "No," (as it almost always is), the dismay is evident. But, when the answer is "Yes, there is a letter for you!" the delight spreads over her whole body. Sometimes she can't even wait to get inside to open it. "Who loves me enough to send a letter?" "Who is thinking about me?"

Timothy, Titus and Philemon most likely each had the same reaction as my five-year-old. They probably could hardly wait to get inside to open the letter from their beloved mentor, Paul.

The Apostle Paul understood the power of the written word...the delight of letters...the tangible evidence of caring. In these short New Testament Books (I & II Timothy, Titus and Philemon) we see the heart of a great man of God. We see what matters to him as he encourages and admonishes these young men in the faith.

Join us as we "open" these letters and learn the same truths that Paul shared with his sons in the faith: The importance of church leadership, the relationship between life and doctrine, your personal role and responsibility in the church, the power of the gospel message and the validity of richness in Christ. We hope this study guide will encourage you to grow and think and then, just like Paul urged Timothy in II Timothy 2:15, each of us will be "a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."

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Like all other Illuminations studies, this workbook is written from the New International Version. You should be able to answer all the questions by either examining the text or examining your life. Please be sure to pray before you begin each lesson.

Our minds and thoughts have been challenged by the study of these New Testaments books. We are not the same women we were when we began writing this study guide; we have become convicted about the power of God and the influence our daily walk with Him has on the people around us. We pray the same blessing for you as you examine and meditate on God's word through these letters of the Apostle Paul.

**Connie Barker and Karla Taylor**

# Challenges

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## Lesson #1 — Selections from I Timothy

*Authors' Note: To look at the important lessons the apostle Paul is passing on to Timothy, we have divided the book of I Timothy into four themes: Challenges, Conflict, Christ and Conduct. As we examine each theme we will look at all the verses in I Timothy that deal with that theme; some verses will be in multiple lessons.*

### Section I. Read I Timothy 1:1-11

1. a. Describe Timothy and his relationship to Paul (Acts 16:1-3; Philippians 2:19-23; I Timothy 1:2).
  
- b. What "family" do you have in the faith? What do you do to nurture those relationships?

*Using Acts 19:23-28 & Acts 20:17, 28-30 as background information along with I Timothy 1:3-7 answer questions 2-4.*

2. What was Timothy's mission in Ephesus?
  
3. a. Rank the difficulty of Timothy's task.  
 Very Easy       Easy       Medium       Hard       Very Hard
  
- b. Discuss the reasons for your ranking.
  
4. Learning from Paul and Timothy, when your ministry becomes difficult, what does God want you to do?

*"The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."  
I Timothy 1:5*

### Section II. Read I Timothy 4:6-16

5. a. Share a passage that defines godliness.
  
- b. How does this trait bless our life?
  
6. a. List the areas in which Timothy was to serve as a model for others.

6. b. If you are young, what does verse 12 say to you? If you are older, what does it say to you?

7. What level of energy is Paul requesting Timothy to expend on the tasks in verses 11-14?

8. a. In your own words, describe the difference between life and doctrine.

b. For salvation, why must people watch and persevere in those areas?

### **Section III. Read I Timothy 5:21-25**

9. When we show partiality and favoritism, what are we really doing (James 2:1-4) and how does it hurt the church?

10.a. What has experience taught you about hasty behavior?

b. In your ministry, how can you refrain from acting hastily per Paul's instructions?

11. What are some ways to keep pure (Psalm 119:9-16)?

12.a. What is the same about sin and good deeds according to verses 24-25?

b. Cite one of Jesus' teachings to illustrate what Paul is telling Timothy about sin and good deeds.

## Section IV. Read I Timothy 6:6-14, 20-21

13. How does leading a godly life affect contentment (Proverbs 19:23; Philippians 4:11-12; I Timothy 6:6-10)?
14. List the changes in your life if you pursued godly wealth (as defined in 6:11) with the same intensity that you pursue earthly wealth.
15. a. Explain why possessing faith involves a fight.
- b. Give a biblical example of someone who had to “fight” to hold onto his/her faith.
16. List the action words in verses 11-12. What does that tell you about the kind of approach we should take to remain faithful?

## Section V. One More Look at Hope

17. Use Timothy 1:1 to fill in the blanks.  
Paul was an apostle of \_\_\_\_\_ by the  
command of \_\_\_\_\_ our Savior and of  
Christ Jesus our \_\_\_\_\_.

*“This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance (and for this we labor and strive), we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially those who believe.”  
I Timothy 4:9-10*

18. What role does hope play in equipping us with faith?

Romans 5:5 \_\_\_\_\_  
Romans 8:24 \_\_\_\_\_  
II Corinthians 3:12 \_\_\_\_\_  
Hebrews 6:17-20 \_\_\_\_\_  
I John 3:3 \_\_\_\_\_

19. Why is hope the driving force behind faith?