**HISTORY 11 - 1 & 2 TIMOTHY - SECOND GENERATION LEADERS MANUAL**

Timothy was one of Paul’s last books – probably written during the time when Paul was under house arrest in Rome. Timothy was a young man who had a Jewish mother and a Greek father and is one of the second-generation Christian leaders in the early church in Asia Minor.  He was sent to give pastoral oversight to some of the churches by Paul. So, what we have in the books of Timothy and Titus is a second generation of leadership coming to the fore. The original apostles are leaving for heaven and the gospel is raising a new generation of followers and leaders.  It is a vulnerable time for the church as questions are asked as to whether the next generation can carry the fire and wisdom of those who have given leadership up until now. Can they give the kind of leadership required? Within a few years, no living person will still be around who walked the dusty road of Israel with Jesus the Son of God. Will this new movement be a ‘flash in the pan’ or will it hold fast to the teaching and the apostles despite the persecution and opposition and become the movement that will change the entire world?

The Timothy books can be summarised topically. There is a range of topics …let me just name a few for you.

**PRAYER** – Your most effective work is done when you pray. Only God can change a life. Make sure prayer is featured in public worship. We cannot fully understand what happens when we pray. Does it move the hand of God to do something that otherwise would not have happened? Why does prayer work sometimes and not others? Scientific research has been done where people received prayer for the same conditions and another group that did not – and the results showed that the people who were prayed for had significantly better outcomes. Paul urges Timothy to keep prayer a priority in the churches. I well remember one well-known Christian leader saying at the end of his life what he would do differently if he had his time again…. he replied "I would pray more and worry less". Prayer is a mystery we don’t fully understand, the scriptures encourage us to pray because God has invited us to participate with him in bringing about change in this world. Do we always get the change we want or ask for? – No, but we get changed in the process and God in his wisdom answers prayer in his way, his time, and for our best.

**LEADERSHIP** – Leaders, especially in the Church need to be people of character more than people of gifting.  Teachable, humble, and able to take correction with self-control. Accusations against leaders should be seriously addressed if there is overwhelming evidence. So, this young man Timothy is to look for leaders who have depth in their lives, who are not out to promote themselves, and who are never led by threats or manipulation. Leaders who are unafraid of lifting the covers of their convictions and beliefs and examining what it is that is truly motivating them.

**FALSE TEACHING** – This is going to happen, the source is demonic because Timothy needs to understand that behind every false teaching is an attempt to destroy and derail people's faith. The clear teaching of the Word in and out of season is required. Challenge teaching that does not hold to the faith. Watch out for people who will teach to attract a crowd. Today false teachers don’t wear signs around their necks….they might even have international ministries or they might be pastors in pulpits who refuse to address the hard issues for fear of upsetting their listeners. It is not an easy thing to teach the scriptures well because to do so means to offend at times, to challenge misbelief, and to hold in tension apparent contradictions.

**RELATIONSHIPS** – Mutual submission to one another is the biblical teaching on relationships. Care for those who are vulnerable, the poor and the widows. Give generously to those who teach scriptures. Don’t waste your time arguing over unimportant theories or beliefs – they only seek to puff up those who think they are right and cause division in the Church. Instead, practice a godly example with humility.

**MONEY AND WEALTH** – True contentment with godliness is what to aim for. It’s the love of money that is the problem. Teach those with wealth to use it wisely for good – it’s a resource for the kingdom, not something to be trusted in. But money is not evil – it is a resource to be used for the kingdom. If you want evidence of the power of money in our world – you don’t need to look far. Just lift the cover and look beneath almost every contentious issue facing our planet and money is at the centre. The disparity of wealth and the sharing of money and goods was one of the key marks of the early Church to which people were drawn.

Now I want to move away from these topical issues to what I'm going to call ***life lessons from Timothy*** because here is what I think Timothy offers that is unique.  Any young man or woman entering life especially if you desire to be used by God in any sort of ministry – needs to remember Paul's teaching to Timothy….and there are **FOUR** things I want to highlight.

**1.**     **DISCERNMENT……**

**There is a lot of teaching in Timothy about your conscience.**

Timothy…cling (holdfast) to your faith and keep your conscience clear. 1.19

What is your conscience?  **Webster** says - It is the moral sense within you that decides whether an action is right or wrong, good or bad.

It is the moral indicator for your life….The Bible teaches every person has a conscience, 2 Corinthians 4:2, it is not the voice of God in you because it can lead you to do things contrary to God's Word. Interesting that the word conscience does not appear in the OT…. The word ‘heart’ is used – like when David's heart smote him after he had murdered Bathsheba’s husband, 1 Sam 24.5.

The Bible speaks a lot about conscience….7 things.

**An evil conscience** Hebrews 10.22 having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. 1 Tim 4:2 In the last day's people’s consciences will be seared – warped or bent Titus 1:15 speaks of people’s minds and consciences being defiled.

**A convicted conscience** Romans 2:15 Their consciences accuse them or tell them they are doing right**.** John 8:1-11 Story of the adulteress and those who were about to stone her – those of you who have not sinned be the first! And they left one by one…because their consciences convicted them.

**A purged conscience** Hebrews 9:14 Purge your consciences then from dead works to serve the living God**.** The thought here is to awaken and ***train*** your conscience to God's standard and keep choosing Him. So, your conscience can learn to follow the right path, but it needs the training to do so.

**A pure conscience** 1 Tim 3:9 Holding the ‘mystery of faith’ with a pure conscience**.** 2 Tim 1:3 I thank God whom I serve with a pure conscience

**A weak conscience** 1 Corinthians 8:7 Conversion and rebirth involves the recreation of your conscience and rewiring of it to God's new order in your life. So, we learn to modify our thinking and rewire our consciences to a new set of values.

**A good conscience** 1 Tim 1:5 love out of a pure heart and a good conscience

1 Tim 1:19 Hold the faith with a good conscience.

**A conscience void of offence** Acts 24:16 I try to maintain a clear conscience before God and all people.The Holy Spirit speaks to your conscience, your will decides to listen and obey.

***Your conscience can be overruled, weakened, adjusted, convicted, awakened, and trained. How is yours today?*** One of the most important things for Timothy was to have his conscience in good shape because it gave him the ability to make godly discernment.

**2.**     **AUTHENTICITY**

It’s got to live IN you first before you can teach it OUT of you. Passion has to be real not hype.Ministry has to be shared not hogged**.** Worship has to be from the heart, not the liturgy or the head.There has to be honest sincerity about who you are…. before people will listen to what you say. So here is the great challenge for every one of us who attempts to speak truth into people’s lives. There has to be authenticity between what we say and what we are as people. The truth about each of us is that none of us is 100% authentic all the time. There will always be areas in our lives that God is bringing his truth and healing to bear upon. Do we speak truth into our own lives before we try to tell others?  Is there a teach-ability and humility about us, is there a growing edge to our lives? If people could see below the surface of your life – more than you show them, what would they see?

**3.**     **OBEDIENCE**

Preach the Word in and out of season, call for a response when you feel like it and when you don’t. Ask people to decide when you think you should and also when you don’t…. Why? Because God's ways are not ours! Here is another great life lesson. Do you continue to obey God when inside you feel it’s the last thing you want to do? There are times when we need to obey without letting the feelings dictate. You learn this quite quickly in marriage, don’t you!  But in ministry and using the gifts God has given you, God just asks you to obey Him.  Stories in the Bible abound, Peter stepping out of the boat when the storm rages around him. Abraham holding the knife over Isaac his promised son and heir through which God had promised the future of the nation. Elijah praying, even though no rain was coming on the horizon. Joshua standing on the shores of the Jordan River in flood with the people trying to figure out the way across. The disciples fishing without success all night.

The thing we learn about life and following God is to obey even when what you see doesn’t make sense. *1 and 2 Timothy are full of what are called commanding Verbs;*fight, guard, teach, hold-fast, hold on, run, stir, avoid – all these commanding verbs are opportunities to obey God and his voice.

1. **EXAMPLE**

Be an example in faith, word and deed, purity, etc. What Timothy needed to remember and what we do too….is that we don’t only possess the message….we are the message! Is the message just the bare facts or is the messenger an integral part of the message itself? Let’s put it another way, can the messenger impede, confuse and detract from the message? And the answer clearly is yes! PAUL – By my lifestyle, I don’t want to cause others to stumble! – Why? So that the message may not be hindered. There is a kind of thinking about today that all we need to do is deliver the message and let God save those he wants to….that it does not matter how we live or conduct ourselves, we just go around dumping truth on others – friends this is not what the Bible teaches. You can detract, hinder and confuse the message by the way you live.

And just to add something even more challenging onto being an example. We need to be an example in the way we treat the Bible and teach it. It’s very easy to stick clear of the difficult issues. I will speak more about this in a couple of weeks when we do Philemon. But we need to be an example to rightly teaching God’s word and handling the balance where it appears to contradict. Some things need to be held in check with each other.

God chose me but I chose Him.

Holding speaking the truth…. and doing it in love… **Ephesians**.

Obeying the boundaries and rules yet living in freedom and liberty – **Galatians.**

Living by faith and in faith yet having deeds and works that live it out – **James.**

Receiving our salvation as a free undeserved gift yet choosing - **Romans**.

Telling the truth which divides – While exercising grace and love - **Thessalonians**

Strive to be an example – but relax in grace – Don’t sweat it! - **Timothy**

**So there are our four words….for Timothy this young second-generation believer.**

Having godly discerning **consciences** – is needed today more than ever.

Having **authentic** leaders who will be role models in life and ministry.

Living each day with the resolve to be **obedient** to what I know God is asking.

And to be an **example** of the gospel I profess.