

Fact Sheet for **“What Are You Aiming For?”**
1 Timothy 1:1-11

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One of the many blessings God has given us is His written Word, the Bible. But the OT, particularly Exodus through Deuteronomy, includes some very different rules of behavior and worship than what we observe as Christians. What do you do with the Torah, the Law of Moses? Is the OT Law binding on us? Is it instructive for us? What about the Ten Commandments? What about the other 603 OT laws? Can we pick and choose which of them to follow and which of them to set aside (*for example Levirate Marriage, Deuteronomy 25:5-10*)? Instead of the Jewish Law do we live by a sort of Christian Law presented in the NT? Do we have it easier than the Jewish people did in OT times?

Today we have an expert on the OT Law who will be instructing us, the Apostle Paul. Here, in his own words, are some of his credentials (Acts 22:3; Philippians 3:4-6). Paul wrote to Timothy, a younger partner with him in the ministry, whom Paul had left in Ephesus to instruct the church further.

1:1 ¶ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, 2 ¶ To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul was aware that there were problems in that group of believers. He mentions some here.

3 ¶ As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, 4 nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.

“different doctrine”.... “myths”.... “genealogies” Exactly what these three involved we don’t know for sure; however they were almost certainly of Jewish origin. We know this because in the immediate context Paul goes on to reference the OT Law. Also Paul to Titus wrote about *Jewish myths* when referencing a problem in Crete (Titus 1:13-14). So the doctrinal problems Timothy was dealing with were likely of Jewish origin, which would naturally involve the OT Law and whether it was binding on the church. Now I want you to very carefully think about and note Paul’s next few words.

5 The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

The word translated “aim” here is one of the two words we get “telescope” from. We use telescopes to see things far out there. In 1 Timothy 5 this word points to the end result, the outcome, the desired purpose of Paul’s charge or authoritative instruction. Paul states that the aim of instruction was love (*agape*) that issues from 1) a pure heart, 2) a good conscience, and 3) a sincere (*un-hypocritical*) faith. This kind of love between believers was certainly uppermost in Paul’s mind (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). Those in Ephesus who, from an OT Law perspective, taught different doctrines and paid attention to Jewish myths and endless genealogies, did not show in themselves this kind of love. Neither did they inspire it in the church. So Paul wrote these words about those who deviated from a pure heart, a good conscience, and an un-hypocritical faith.

⁶ **Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, ⁷ desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.**

Now Paul, a noted expert in the OT Law, and an apostle of the church, wrote these remarkable words about that OT Law.

⁸ ¶ **Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹ in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.**

Wow, what a thought! Now think about it. *If* the OT Law dealt with every possible way of sinning that man could come up with *then* it was way too short. There is nothing specifically in the Law about transgender issues or pornography for instance. And where is that dividing line between work and non-work on the Sabbath? It was possible to be blameless as to the Law and still sin. Paul knew that had been true of himself.

Now the OT Law does have ceremonial, moral, and cultural aspects. NT Christians are not bound by many of the aspects of the Law. This was what the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 was all about. And Paul later wrote about problems with the Law (Romans 7:6; 8:2; Galatians 3:2, 11). We get that we are not bound by the ceremonial and cultural aspects of the OT Law. But what do we do about those pesky moral aspects? May I actually suggest to you that we are actually bound by a *more stringent* code of right and wrong than what is laid out in the OT Law. Perhaps the best example of this is found in Matthew 5 and Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Here are two examples from that sermon (Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28). Jesus ends that chapter with this verse.

^{ESV} **Matthew 5:48** You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

The apostle John would later write...

^{ESV} **1 John 1:5** ¶ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

The things Jesus said in His Sermon on the Mount, and that John wrote in his letter, are consistent with what Paul told Timothy in this chapter.

⁵ **The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.**

Paul told Timothy that the OT Law was laid down for sinners. Our aim should be higher than that. Instead of merely setting rules as to what behavior to avoid and what specifically we should do... we should be aiming to have a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. This aim needs to go deep into our souls. What the Bible teaches, in both Old and New Testaments, will keep us on track with this. And we will find that we walk a straighter line than we would if we were just to follow the rules. Wrap your heart, soul, and strength around 1 Timothy 1:5. Go deep with God!