

Fact Sheet for **“A Charge”**
1 Timothy 1:12-20

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Two weeks ago I opened a series on 1st & 2nd Timothy with a passage that clearly referenced the Law of Moses (verses 3-11). The Apostle Paul followed this by writing about his own salvation (verses 12-17). And then he wrote about the prophecies made about Timothy (verses 18-20). Are these three seemingly different subjects with at best a light connection with one another? One of the most profitable questions I have learned to ask when I study the Bible is “Why?” Why did the human author move to the next subject matter? What did he have in mind? And there is another question that quickly follows. What is there in the passage that will help me on my spiritual journey with God? We’re going to answer both of these questions in 1 Timothy 1 this morning. There *is* a vital connection between everything Paul wrote in this chapter. And he introduces his discussion with the Mosaic Law in verses 3-11.

In our world there are some hot button topics... gender identity and roles... abortion... creation or evolution. These were not the hot button topics in Paul’s day, but one was. Should Christians be required to follow the Mosaic Law? This was not just about the Ten Commandments. It was about the whole Law... all 613 commands. It included the moral commands like “Honor your father and mother.” It detailed dietary restrictions. Bacon is out! It required ceremonies at the tabernacle in the wilderness, and later at the temple in Jerusalem. The Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 was convened to answer this question concerning the increasing influx of Gentile believers like Cornelius. James, Jesus’ half-brother was presiding. Paul was in attendance. Their conclusion was a resounding “NO!” The new Gentile believers would not be required to follow the Mosaic Law. This shows up multiple places in Paul’s letters Romans 7:6; Galatians 3:1-2; Ephesians 2:14-15; Philippians 3:4-7). These same thoughts are found elsewhere in the NT (Hebrews 7:18-19; James 2:10-12).

In verses 3-11 of his 1st letter to Timothy Paul warned about those in the church who were requiring believers to follow the Mosaic Law. And Paul gave an alternative in verse 5. The ESV has “charge”; the KJV and NKJ “commandment”; the NIV “command”; the NASB, NET, and NLT “instruction”. Literally this is the passing on of an announcement, or a proclaiming. It is a directive from an authoritative source... thus it can be translated order, command, charge, or instruction. Paul relied on faith for his salvation, not on the works of the Law. That is why he wrote the next words.

¹² ¶ I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, ¹³ though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. ¹⁶ But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

If God could save Paul He can save anyone! Paul then adds this great statement.

¹⁷ To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

1. Did Paul intend that we should totally ignore the OT Law?

No. In fact he uses it in teaching the morality of the 5th Commandment, honor your father and mother (Ephesians 6:1-4).

2. Should we substitute NT law for the OT Law?

There are a lot of commands in the NT. If we follow all of these are we living righteously? Is this what our focus should be? No. There can be exceptions to commands that are not covered in the Bible, both NT and OT. Here's an example.

^{ESV} **Ephesians 5:18** And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

If you were a soldier in the Civil War who needed to have a leg amputated on the battlefield, and there was no anesthesia available, would it be a sin to drink enough whiskey to get falling down drunk before the doctor began cutting?

Paul does command that we should be filled with the Spirit. This does not mean speaking in tongues. This does mean being genuinely responsive to the Holy Spirit's leading in our lives.

3. Should we be satisfied *alone* that we are saved by faith?

The operative word is "alone." No. God clearly desires that we should live righteously.

4. How do we live by the Holy Spirit?

I've never heard Him audibly speak to me. I do know He indwells every believer. How do we access Him? May I suggest that you do this by having a good conscience before God.

^{ESV} **Proverbs 20:27** The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD, searching all his innermost parts.

If we are honest with ourselves we know when our conscience is bothering us and when it is not. Pay attention to your conscience. And the Holy Spirit that indwells you will use both the NT and the OT as He speaks into your conscience (Hebrews 4:12). Read verse 5 again. You will find this thought there. Now let's go into the last three verses.

¹⁸ ¶ **This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, ¹⁹ holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, ²⁰ among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.**

What charge? This is the same word used in verse 5! The NASB translates "wage the good warfare" as "fight the good fight." "Holding faith and a good conscience" is similar to verse 5.

Remember those passages about eating meat sacrificed to idols (Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8)? Remember the story of the Rechabites (Jeremiah 35)? Having a good conscience before God may result in some different choices for different individuals.

What is there in the passage that will help me on my spiritual journey with God? **We are indeed saved by faith alone. Highly value a good conscience that is tempered by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.**