

1 AND 2 TIMOTHY, TITUS

A Theological Commentary for Preachers

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PERICOPE 1

Instruction for Godliness

1 Timothy 1:1–11

[Right Handling of Scripture; Promotion of the Divine Economy]

SUMMARY, PREVIEW

Summary of Pericope 1: The first pericope of 1 Timothy (1:1–11) focuses on the august responsibility of the people of God and their leaders to handle Scripture rightly, in contrast to what false teachers do. Such a right handling of Scripture in accordance with the gospel (in its broad sense) seeks to apply the sacred writings for the development of godliness in listeners, thus promoting the economy of God and culminating in God's glory.

Preview of Pericope 2: The second pericope of 1 Timothy (1:12–20) has Paul putting himself into the category of those sinners mentioned in the previous pericope (1:1–11). He gratefully describes his wondrous salvation by grace wrought by a merciful God through Christ Jesus. Such a work of God for all believers is for the purpose of appointing them into his service, strengthened by him and persevering in ministry, unlike false teachers who face discipline.

1 Timothy 1:1–11

THEOLOGICAL FOCUS OF PERICOPE 1

- 1 The people of God, divinely and authoritatively commissioned, in their right handling of Scripture—congruent to sound teaching and in accordance with God's glorious gospel: his grand plan for his creation—promote the economy of God and his glory, for the goal of their instruction is love, the manifestation of godliness (1:1–11).**

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OVERVIEW

This pericope (1:1–11) and the next (Pericope 2: 1 Tim 1:12–18) are carefully centered around the law/Scripture, its misuse and its right use¹:

Pericope 1 (1:1–11)	A	Heterodox teachers; Paul's opposition to them; ἵνα ... μὴ , <i>hina ... mē</i> (1:3–4a) "instruction;" "good conscience"; "faith" (1:4b–5)
	B	"from which things [feminine plural] some, going astray" (relative pronoun + τινες, <i>tines</i> + aorist participle)
	C	Condemnation of ignorant false teachers (1:6–7) μὴ νοοῦντες, <i>mē noountes</i> (present participle, 1:7) "not understanding"
	D	Right use of law; gospel (1:8–11)
Pericope 2 (1:12–20)	C'	Redemption of ignorant sinners (1:12–17) ἀγνοῶν, <i>agnoōn</i> (present participle, 1:13) "unknowingly"
	B'	"instruction;" "good conscience"; "faith" (1:18–19) "which [feminine singular] some, rejecting" (relative pronoun + τινες + aorist participle)
	A'	Heterodox teachers; Paul's opposition to them; ἵνα ... μὴ (1:20)

1 1 Timothy 1:1–11

THEOLOGICAL FOCUS 1

- 1 The people of God, divinely and authoritatively commissioned, in their right handling of Scripture—congruent to sound teaching and in accordance with God's glorious gospel: his grand plan for his creation—promote the economy of God and his glory, for the goal of their instruction is love, the manifestation of godliness (1:1–11).

TRANSLATION 1

- 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the command of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, our hope,*
- 1:2 *to Timothy, genuine child in faith: Grace, mercy, peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- 1:3 *As I charged you to remain at Ephesus, when I left for Macedonia, so that you may instruct some not to teach falsely,*
- 1:4 *nor to attend to myths and endless genealogies, which promote useless speculation rather than the economy of God which is in faith.*

1. Structure modified from Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 173; and Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure*, 124.

- 1:5 *But the goal of [our] instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and an unhypocritical faith,*
- 1:6 *from which things some, going astray, have turned aside to fruitless discussion,*
- 1:7 *wanting to be law-teachers, not understanding either what they are saying or things about which they make confident assertions.*
- 1:8 *But we know that the law is good, if one employs it lawfully,*
- 1:9 *knowing this, that law is not appointed for a righteous person, but for the lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for patricides and matricides, for murderers,*
- 1:10 *the immoral, homosexuals, kidnappers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching,*
- 1:11 *according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, with which I myself have been entrusted!*

NOTES 1

- 1 *The people of God, divinely and authoritatively commissioned, in their handling of Scripture—congruent to sound teaching and in accordance with God’s glorious gospel: his grand plan for his creation—promote the economy of God and his glory, for the goal of their instruction is love, the manifestation of godliness (1:1–11).*

The sense of passing on a commission, characteristic of the *mandata principis*, is all the more emphasized as authoritative with Paul’s self-identification as an apostle, himself commissioned by the “command” of God and of Jesus Christ (1:1), adding weight to the *mandata*—instructions to be conveyed, rebukes to be served, practices to be implemented, exhortations to be given, leadership qualities to be examined, and priorities to be promoted.² Paul’s confident pulling of rank stands in contrast to the pseudo-legitimacy claimed by “some . . . wanting to be law-teachers” (1:6–7) without any warrant or support. The inclination to follow heretical leaders is likely to have generated Paul’s claim to primacy right off the bat.³

Timothy is Paul’s “genuine child” (1:1; as also is Titus, Titus 1:4).⁴ It is a spiritual sonship, of course, not a biological one, a relationship born and bred “in faith,” a kinship authentic and legitimate because he, Timothy, “followed my [Paul’s] teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings” (2 Tim 3:10–11). He is the one being tasked with the *mandata* of the *princeps*, the charges of the leader. By extension,

2. “Command” (ἐπιταγή, *epitagē*, 1:1) is an assertive and compelling term, used elsewhere in the NT of divine commandment as here (also in Rom 16:26; 1 Cor 7:6, 25; 2 Cor 8:8).

3. This emphatic authority is also evident in Titus (1:3), another Epistle tackling false teachers; 2 Tim 1:1 has a less authoritative opening.

4. See also 1 Tim 1:18; 2 Tim 1:2; 2:1, as well as 1 Cor 4:17; Phil 2:20 for other affirmations of Timothy’s filiation with Paul. Of all Paul’s fellow workers, Timothy is the one mentioned the most: co-sender of letters (2 Cor 1:1; Col 1:1; Phil 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1; Phlm 1), a “brother” (2 Cor 1:1; 1 Thess 3:2; Phlm 1), a “coworker” (Rom 16:21; 1 Thess 3:2), “kindred spirit” (Phil 2:19–22), a gospel proclaimer (2 Cor 1:19), and one “doing the work of the Lord even as I [Paul] am” (1 Cor 16:10).

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all God's people, listening in on this correspondence, are enjoined to abide by the injunctions of God's authoritative apostle. After all, all of God's people are God's leaders, in some degree, to some fashion, in some arena—home, marketplace, office, playground, classroom, mission field. And so, what God through Paul intends Timothy to obey and live by, is what God intends all of his people to obey and live by.

Somewhat uncharacteristically for a NT Epistle, 1 Timothy and Titus (like Galatians) do not commence with a thanksgiving (see 2 Tim 1:3 for the exception in the PE), perhaps reflecting the seriousness of the issues in Ephesus and Crete, respectively.⁵ Also indicating the urgency of the situation is the interrupted sentence in 1 Tim 1:3–4; it begins but does not formally complete its thought, though an imperative is implied: “As I urged you to remain in Ephesus, when I left for Macedonia, so that you may instruct . . .”⁶

The verb “to instruct” (παργγέλλω, *parangellō*) in 1:3 is quite forceful, having the sense of “charge”/“prescribe” (also in 4:11; 5:7; 6:13, 17). This not only continues to underscore Paul's apostolic authority, but also implies that Timothy himself possesses Paul's authority as he undertakes to follow his mentor's “instruction” (παργγελία, *parangelia*, 1:5; equally forceful: see Acts 5:28; 16:24; 1 Thess 4:2; 1 Tim 1:18). Timothy, by virtue of being Paul's proxy, is thus being instructed to instruct others, particularly the false teachers. On the other hand, “some” (1:3, 6, 19) have no such authority (and two of these characters are named in 1:20; for others, see 2 Tim 2:17; 4:14).⁷ It appears that Paul had informed Timothy earlier (“as I charged you . . .,” 1 Tim 1:3) and that he is repeating himself here, likely for the benefit of the entire Ephesian church—another indication of this epistle being more public than one might suppose.⁸

The verb “to teach falsely” (ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω, *heterodidaskaleō*) shows up in the NT only here in 1:3 and in 6:3, in effect bracketing the entire letter. In several places in the rest of the Epistle, Paul will contrast falsehood and truth, as well as their respective proponents and the results of their particular propagations. Indeed, 1:3–7 is itself carefully structured, contrasting the false teachers with Paul and his cohorts⁹:

5. However, there is an extended and personal thanksgiving later in 1 Tim 1:12–17. Here, in the greeting, God is labeled “Savior” in 1:1, and also in 2:3 and 4:10, as well as in Titus 1:3; 2:10, 13; 3:4. Elsewhere in the NT, such a theme shows up only in Jude 25.

6. Such a discontinuity is called an anacoluthon, not entirely rare when Paul is the author (Rom 5:12–14; Gal 3:6; Phil 1:7).

7. “Some” (τινες, *tines*) is a fairly common quasi-pejorative designation by Paul for his opponents; also deployed in 1 Tim 1:19; 4:1; 5:15, 24; 6:10, 21; and in Rom 3:8; 1 Cor 4:18; 5:1; 15:12; 2 Cor 3:1; 10:2; Gal 1:7; 2:12; Phil 1:15.

8. The historical scenario behind 1:3, that mentions the situation of the writer and his recipient, is a bit obscure. It is sufficient to understand that Timothy had been separated from Paul and remained in Ephesus, as his mentor headed off to Macedonia.

9. Modified from Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure*, 120. A table summarizing the contrasts between true and false teaching is provided below.

A	<i>False teaching</i> : ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν, <i>heterodidaskalein</i> (1:3) ("to teach falsely")
B	<i>Negative</i> : ἐκζητήσεις; προσέχω and παρέχω; γενεαλογία (1:4a) (<i>ekzētēseis</i> ; <i>prosechō</i> and <i>parechō</i> ; <i>genealogia</i>) ("speculation"; "attend" and "promote"; "genealogy")
C	<i>Right teaching; positive</i> : "the goal" (1:4b–5)
B'	<i>Negative</i> : ἐξετρέψαν; ἀστοχέω; ματαιολογία (1:6) (<i>exetrapēsan</i> ; <i>astochēō</i> ; <i>mataiologia</i>) ("turn aside"; "go astray"; "fruitless discussion")
A'	<i>False teaching</i> : νομοδιδάσκαλοι, <i>nomodidaskaloi</i> (1:7) ("law-teachers")

The ones propagating false doctrine, those who "teach falsely" (1:3), were the ones seeking to be "law-teachers" (1:7). They were plying "myths" (1:4, and also in 4:7; 2 Tim 4:4; Titus 1:14) and "genealogies" (1 Tim 1:4; also in Titus 3:9, the only two instances of the word in the NT). "Myths" likely dealt with deity-related fables; "genealogies"—that had no end and furthered no goal ("endless")—could have had something to do with fabricated accounts of characters in Genesis (as in Philo, *On the Life of Moses* 2.47).¹⁰ The proximity of 1 Tim 4:1–3 with the reuse of "myths" in 4:7 may also suggest that the bogus content of those false teachers included these "teachings of demons" (διδασκαλίας δαιμονίων, *didaskaliais daimoniōn*, 4:1); in contrast is Paul's "sound teaching" (ὑγιαίνουσα διδασκαλία, *hygiainousa didaskalia*, 1:10). While we may assume their Jewish connections, it seems that they were operating within the church: as we shall see in Pericope 2 (1 Tim 1:12–20), they undergo some form of excommunication; Paul even appears to have entertained hopes of remedying their disorientation to divine writing and their disregard of divine economy (1:20). In any case, though it is uncertain what Paul was referring to by those terms describing the heterodoxy in 1:4, he is clearly affirming its falsehood, deceptiveness, and utter inutility.¹¹

These promoters of falsehoods were "attending to" (προσέχω) such perversions, thus "promoting" (παρέχω; note the paronomasia) "useless speculations" (1:4), the negative result of their errant pedagogy.¹² They ought, rather, to have been promoting "the economy of God"—his administration (οἰκονομία, *oikonomia*, 1:4b), i.e., his management and stewardship of his creation: "God's way of ordering things."¹³ This administration and ordering, this

10. Perhaps all of this was linked to some form of Jewish allegory, since 1:7 shows these false teachers to be connected to the law ("law-teachers"). From Titus 1:10, 14–16; 3:9, we can gather that these were "of the circumcision" (1:10). Besides, Paul referenced the Jewish fable of Jannes and Jambres (2 Tim 3:8), using it as an example of the gaseous thinking of these promoters of heterodoxy. In any case, "genealogies" and "myths" were standard pairings in Greek literature: see Plato, *Timaeus* 22A–B; Strabo, *Geographica* 8.2; Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors* 253; Polybius, *Histories* 9.2.1; etc.

11. Why the false teachers were doing what they were doing is also uncertain. At any rate, I don't think their specific motives are particularly pertinent to the thrust of this pericope.

12. "Useless speculations," ἐκζητήσεις, *ekzētēsis*, occurs only here in the NT; the related ζήτησις (*zētēsis*, "disputes") is found in 6:4 (linked with ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω, as was its cognate noun in this pericope in 1:3); 2 Tim 2:23 (1:17 has the verb, ζητέω, *zēteō*); and Titus 3:9 (where it is linked with γενεαλογία, as also here in 1 Tim 1:4), suggesting a uniformity of theme within the PE.

13. Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 157. Or "God's administration of an orderly universe which he arranged and continues to guide" (Reumann, "Use of *Oikonomia* and Related Terms," 391). Elsewhere, God's ruling over the universe is described with the verbs διοικέω, *dioikeō* (Wis 8:1, 14; 12:18;

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governing of the divine economy, occurs in the realm/sphere of “faith” (1:4)—a faith-based, faith-promoting, faith-operated, and faith-controlled undertaking.¹⁴ This is the “sound teaching” endorsed in this pericope—as opposed to the false teaching of some—congruent to the “gospel” (1:11). In other words, this “economy of God” is the gospel in its broadest sense of God’s grand, eternal plan to consummate all things in Christ.¹⁵ This is not merely a description of the atoning work of Christ; rather, it is the delineation of God’s operation stretching from eternity to eternity. And this gospel, Paul avers in 1:11, is glorious, because it brings glory to God as the divine economy is transacted.¹⁶

Thus the rest of the “instruction” in 1 Timothy (and even in the rest of the PE) explains the economy of God, how things ought to be in church and in society and in life in general, in the *world in front of the text*—“God’s plan for executing his purpose with respect to humankind and indeed all creation.”¹⁷ And this economy, administration, ordering of God—“the gospel of the glory of the blessed God” (1:11)—is facilitated by “God’s steward” (θεοῦ οἰκονόμος, *theou oikonomos*), the elder of the church (Titus 1:7) which body is, itself, the “household of God” (οἶκος θεοῦ, *oikos theou*, 1 Tim 3:15).¹⁸ So if those false teachers were themselves leaders of some sort in the οἶκος θεοῦ, we are being told that their heterodox activities exposed them as *not* being θεοῦ οἰκονόμοι (*theou oikonomoi*) and *not* furthering the οἰκονομίαν θεοῦ (*oikonomian theou*).

The contrast between false and true teaching continues with 1:5–7 (a single sentence), outlining the goal of Paul’s instruction (“but the goal of [our] instruction,” 1:5). That rightful “goal” or endpoint (τέλος, *telos*) was love sourced in “a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”¹⁹ In other words, love manifest and expressed is achieved by a heart cleansed of sin, a conscience cleared of guilt, and a faith cultivated in truth (as opposed to one that is hypocritical and not genuine).²⁰ This love, directed both toward God and neighbor, the zenith of godliness and the greatest of the commandments (Matt 22:37–40; Mark 12:30–31; Luke 10:27), is the mark of a person of God, living life God’s way, fully entrenched

15:1; *Letter of Aristeeas* 234, 254) and οἰκονομέω, *oiknomeō* (Philo, *On the Creation* 2; *On the Confusion of Tongues* 21).

14. The anarthrous uses of πίστις, *pistis*, generally deal with the realm/sphere or domain of faith.

15. A plan for the entirety of the cosmos: see Eph 1:8–10 (see Kuruvilla, *Ephesians*, 20–35; also see introduction).

16. The chain of genitives in 1:11, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς δόξης τοῦ μακαρίου θεοῦ (*to euangelion tēs doxēs tou makariou theou*), is analogous to another genitive cascade in Titus 2:13: ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ (*epiphaneian tēs doxēs tou megalou theou*), “the appearance of the glory of the great God” (= “glorious appearance”). The two are best interpreted similarly, and thus 1 Tim 1:11 would then read: “the glorious gospel of the blessed God,” the gospel that redounds to the glory of God.

17. Quinn and Wacker, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 76.

18. For notions related to the church as God’s household in the PE, see 1 Tim 3:4–5, 12, 15; 5:1–2; 2 Tim 2:20; Titus 1:7; 2:2–6.

19. Quinn and Wacker, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 79, note that “the three phrases here in First Timothy . . . are substantially synonymous.” So while there is no need to distinguish between them, it may be worth remembering that the heart is biblically the seat of godly intentionality (Gen 6:5; Exod 4:21; Deut 8:2; Rom 1:24; 6:17), the conscience the arbiter of godly behavior (that may be “good”/“pure,” 1 Tim 1:5, 19; 3:9; 2 Tim 1:3; or “seared”/“defiled,” 1 Tim 4:2; Titus 1:15), and faith the godly attitude with which the entirety of life is conducted. Hence, “love,” sourced in these godly attributes, is the manifestation of godliness.

20. Modified from Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 24. It is notable that in the PE, every occurrence of “love” is paired with “faith,” except in 2 Tim 1:7 (see 1 Tim 1:14; 2:15; 4:12; 6:11; 2 Tim 1:13; 2:22; 3:10; Titus 2:2).

in, and promoting, the economy of God, becoming an inhabitant of God's *world in front of the text*.²¹ But that, however, was not the goal of the false teachers, who only promoted “useless speculation” rather than furthering the economy of God. In other words, to further the divine economy, the people of God manifest love (the summative command of Scripture) in a life of godliness marked by “a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith,” i.e., the expression of a complete person of God. (This is going to be contrasted with a list of some insalubrious characters, entirely ungodly, in 1:9–10; see below.)

Notice the wordplay that brackets 1:3–10: ἕτεροδιδασκαλεῖν (1:3) and εἴ τι ἕτερον τῆ ὑγαινοῦση διδασκαλίᾳ ἀντίκειται (ei ti heteron tē hygiainousē didaskalia antikeitai, 1:10): those who “teach falsely” promote “whatever else is contrary to sound teaching.” In 1:8–11, the contrast between Paul's ministry and that of the false teachers is detailed further: using “the law . . . lawfully,” recognizing that the law was for the lawless (1:8–9) vs. not using the law lawfully (implied of false teachers):

1:8	οἶδαμεν ... <i>oidamen ...</i> “we know	ὅτι ... <i>hoti ...</i> that	ὁ νόμος ... <i>ho nomos ...</i> the law ...	νομίμως <i>nomimōs</i> lawfully”
1:9	εἰδὼς ... <i>eidōs ...</i> “knowing ...	ὅτι ... <i>hoti ...</i> that	νόμος ... <i>nomos ...</i> law ...	ἀνόμοις <i>anomois</i> lawless”

The law here, though referring to the Mosaic Law, is best seen as a metonym for Scripture and all divine demand, no matter what the genre of the text.²² The law is “good” when used “lawfully” (1:8), i.e., against the lawless (1:9) and against all manner of vices—all that is “contrary to sound teaching” (1:10). This “sound teaching,” Paul declares, is the gospel (1:11), in its broadest sense equivalent to the grand scope of divine action in creation, i.e., the glory-bringing economy of God, which Paul's instruction was promoting (1:4–5).

“Lawfully” (in 1:8) “refers to application of the law that is in accordance with the purposes of the divine lawgiver.”²³ No doubt there are multiple uses of the law, some of which, after the work of Christ, have been rendered anachronistic in the current dispensation. For instance, the law could point “prophetically” to the Savior, a function it does not necessarily have now (Gal 3:19–4:7). But other functions of the law still pertain to God's people, especially its ability to reveal sin (Rom 3:20; 5:13; 7:7–12; 1 Cor 15:56; Gal 3:19).²⁴ This is related

21. The only other collocation of “heart,” “conscience,” and “faith” in the NT occurs in Heb 10:22, where also the context deals with purity of life and engagement in holy living—the divine economy incarnated in community as godliness.

22. See Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text!*, 151–209. In other words, divine demand encompasses *all* of God's law—pre-Mosaic commands, Mosaic Law, law of Christ, laws of his millennial reign, etc. And, by divine demand, I do not mean to exclude non-imperatives in Scripture; every pericope in every genre of every book in the Bible depicts God's ideal *world in front of the text*—its precepts, its priorities, and its practices: how the divine economy runs. In that sense, every biblical pericope makes a divine demand upon mankind and is imperatival. Divine demand is certainly a gracious invitation from God to his people to inhabit his ideal world; but let us not forget that the rejection of that call has consequences.

23. Thornton, “Sin Seizing an Opportunity,” 147.

24. Another permanent property of the law is its inability to justify (Rom 3:20) or empower sanctification (Rom 8:3).

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to Paul's intent in 1 Tim 1:9a: the lawful use of the law points out behavior that is divinely proscribed, thus condemning lawbreakers (the ones listed in 1:9b–10). Notice that it is not only doers of those extreme acts of sin who stand condemned, but also those who engage in doing “whatever else is contrary to sound teaching” (1:10), considerably broadening the scope of lawlessness (i.e., sin).

Standard commentaries are unanimous in reading 1:3–17 as decrying law and exalting faith and grace. Commentators expatiate on Paul's attitude to law vis-à-vis gospel; for e.g., “the law is not of use for the Christian but rather for the unbeliever.”²⁵ But Paul has just affirmed that “the law is good” (1:8)! And elsewhere in Romans, he asserts that “the law is holy and the commandment is holy and righteous and good” (7:12), and “spiritual” (7:14). In fact, Paul “establishes” the law (3:31), and in it he “delights” (7:22; also see 7:16). Indeed, it is through obedience powered by the Holy Spirit that the “righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled” (8:4). Paul's attitude to the law cannot be pejorative when he refers to the Mosaic Law in this very epistle (1 Tim 2:13–15) and even cites it approvingly, drawing application from that older text (5:17). Indeed, “every [text of] Scripture is God-breathed and profitable” (2 Tim 3:16).²⁶

Against this traditional understanding, I submit that when Paul is seemingly derogating the law, for instance in Eph 2:14–18, he is actually talking about the *condemnation* of the law—the sentence pronounced in/by divine law upon sin and sinners.²⁷ Historically, what God demanded of his people was enshrined in the Mosaic Law; later such divine demand included every one of the laws of Scripture, in both Testaments. It is the condemnation called upon sin by this generic law that has been removed by Christ's atoning work. It is not that God's demands/laws have been nullified, but only the condemnation of the law pronounced upon the sinner, for the price of sin has been paid. In Christ there is no longer any condemnation for sin that affects the standing of believers with God for everlasting life (Rom 8:1). Those who trust Jesus Christ as their only God and Savior from sin are finally and forever freed from condemnation for breakage of God's demand/law. All that to say, divine demand/law is not rendered inoperative for those in Christ—all of it is still valid; it is only *the condemnation for not abiding by the law* that has been removed by redemption in Jesus Christ.²⁸ Divine demand/law, in its theological sense, is always valid, for all humanity—it directs the behavior of those who (already) have become the people of God. This is the “lawful” use of the law that Paul is arguing for in our text.²⁹

25. Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 122.

26. Cranfield describes the common understanding of the law as being abrogated as a “modern version of Marcionism” that regards the biblical history as “an unsuccessful first attempt on God's part at dealing with man's unhappy state, which had to be followed later by a second (more successful) attempt (a view which is theologically grotesque, for the God of the unsuccessful first attempt is hardly a God to be taken seriously)” (*Romans*, 2:862).

27. See my *Ephesians*, 66–83, from which this discussion is abridged. On the other hand, the law has no condemnatory jurisdiction upon those who are believers (Rom 7:1–4; 8:1); release from the law (i.e., from its condemnation) is found in 7:6 (also see Gal 2:19).

28. Paul's declaration of believers as no longer under the condemnation of the law (Rom 6:14)—the law having come to bring about wrath, increase transgression, and arouse sinful passions (4:15; 5:20; 7:5)—is consistent with this view.

29. For an extensive discussion on the *theological* validity of all God's demands for all of God's people in all ages and all places, see Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text!*, 151–209.

Such an understanding is in accordance with “the gospel of the glory of the blessed God” (1:11)—the divine economy. Of course, if one is not sinning and is a “righteous person,” then one has no need of the law (1:9a). But the law cannot justify, and even more importantly, it cannot sanctify. Only the Holy Spirit can, and he *does* enable every child of God to that end (Rom 8:3–5). All that to say, obedience is all of grace, yet there is Christian responsibility.

In sum, the child of God is never to attempt obedience with self-resources: that would be a self-glorifying, flesh-driven, merit-attempting, grace-rejecting, faith-negating obedience to divine law—the legalism Paul so often excoriated. Utterly futile. Instead, the “obedience of faith” (Rom. 1:5; 16:26) that God empowers is a God-glorifying, Spirit-driven, merit-rejecting, grace-accepting, faith-exercising endeavor. So, Christian life, in its entirety, is a function of divine grace, designed to bring glory to God: the Father’s choice of men and women to become a holy people in Christ (justification), their empowerment by the Spirit to live lives that are Christlike (sanctification), and, one day, consummation of their transformation into the image of Jesus Christ (glorification).³⁰

Thus, a “lawful” use of the law (1 Tim 1:8) directs it to appropriate malefactors and their activities (1:9–10)—no doubt also to believers who, unfortunately, also tend to sin, living by the flesh rather than by the Spirit—to facilitate cessation of the malfeasances deprecated in 1:9–10: all that is “contrary to sound teaching.”³¹ This is to direct God’s people to align themselves to divine demand. The vice list of 1:9–10 names nefarious actors and their pernicious activities that are antithetical to God’s requirements. It labels four pairs of sinners, then a series of six singly listed evildoers, and concludes not with a seventh villain, but with “whatever else is contrary to sound teaching” (1:10).³² This list appears to reflect the Decalogue, offenses against deity (I–IV in the Decalogue) and offenses against humanity (V–IX)³³:

30. Kuruvilla, “Christiconic View,” 68. Also see Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text!*, 195–204, for more on such an “obedience of faith.”

31. Notice the opposing use of κείμαι (*keimai*, “is . . . appointed for”—relating to the right use of the law by truth teachers) in 1:9, and ἀντίκειμαι (*antikeimai*, “is contrary to”—relating to the wrong use of the law by false teachers) in 1:10.

32. So, 1:9–10 is not a list of *vices*, but mostly a list of the *vicious!* Paul begins 1:9 with δίκαιος, a masculine singular, follows it with a list of masculine plural substantives (the “vicious”), and ends in 1:10 with τι ἕτερον, *ti heteron*, a neuter singular (the “vice”).

33. The tenth commandment, against coveting, is not represented here; the catch-all, “whatever else is contrary,” would include it, of course. Other lists in the New Testament that parallel the Decalogue are also likewise incomplete: Matt 19:18; Mark 10:19; Luke 19:20; Rom 13:9; etc.

1 TIMOTHY

	1 Timothy 1:9–10	Correspondence with the Decalogue
I	ἄσεβής <i>asebēs</i>	ungodly = having other gods (Acts 13:43, 50; 16:14; 17:4, 17; 18:7)
II	ἁμαρτωλός <i>hamartōlos</i>	sinners = idolatry (Exod 20:4–6; Gal 2:15; Rom 2:22)
III	ἀνόσιος <i>anosios</i>	unholy = taking the name of God in vain (Exod 20:7; Matt 6:9; Luke 11:2)
IV	βέβηλος <i>bebēlos</i>	profane = anti-Sabbath (Exod 20:8; Lev 19:12)
V	πατρολῶας, μητρολῶας <i>patrolōas, mētrolōas</i>	patricide, matricide = dishonoring parents (Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16)
VI	ἀνδροφόνος <i>androphonos</i>	murderer (Exod 20:13; Deut 5:17)
VII	ἀνδραποδιστής <i>andrapodistēs</i>	kidnapper or slave dealer = stealing (Exod 20:15; Deut 5:19)
VIII	ψεύστης, ἐπίορκος <i>pseustēs, epiorkos</i>	liar, perjurer = false witness (Exod 20:16; Deut 5:20)
IX	πόρνος, ἀρσενοκοίτης <i>pornos, arsenokoitēs</i>	fornicator, homosexual = illicit sexuality (Exod 20:14; Deut 5:18)

“The list echoes the Decalogue in such a way that the relationship is close enough not to be missed and broad enough to appeal to the Hellenistic ear of the church that would have overhead this letter. Calling on the Decalogue at this point makes perfect sense since as the core of the Torah it establishes the essential criteria for making sin against God and people known . . .—the appropriate use of the law that Paul has in mind.”³⁴ One might ask why Paul tweaked the Decalogue in this fashion without resorting to actual quotes from the Torah. “Two factors may account for this. The first is Paul’s evident decision to express the commandments in single words, a phenomenon not present in the Hebrew OT and thus not in the LXX. The second may be his desire to express this list in the contemporary terms known to the hearers and false teachers.”³⁵ There is also Paul’s need to shock listeners: “Look at the effects of the unlawful use of the law!” Paul exclaims. While shocking the list might be, it is rhetorical in intent and, though hyperbolic, its thrust is evident. The list of 1:9–10 is polemical, to underscore the fact that the rightful use of the law is to aid right living; and, on the other hand, an unlawful use of the law, the way it was being used by the false teachers, was not at all conducive to keep evil/evildoing in check. So Paul’s declamation “lays the blame for committing such crimes upon the false teachers” and their unsound teaching that, rather than further God’s economy in accordance with the gospel and for the glory of God, move people away from such an ideal *world in front of the text*, inducing their engagement in debased behavior.³⁶

So, to summarize, here are the contrasting terms related to “true” teaching and false teaching in this pericope:

34. Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 125.

35. Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 87–88.

36. Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 378.

True Teaching	False Teaching
Promotes the “economy of God” (1:4)	Furthers “useless speculations” (1:4)
Seeks love/godliness (1:5)	Strays from love/godliness (1:6)
Uses law lawfully (1:8)	Uses law unlawfully (implied)
Applies law to sin and sinners (1:9–10)	Attends to myths and genealogies (1:3–4)
Is “sound teaching” (implied)	Is “contrary to sound teaching” (1:10)
Is in accord with the “gospel” (1:11)	Is not in accord with the gospel (implied)
Brings glory to God (1:11)	Does not bring glory to God (implied)

Thus the law was given to combat sin and unlawfulness, so that God’s people would live in accord with, or be measured by the standard of, “the gospel of the glory of the blessed God” (1:11). This “gospel” of divine glory—considered in its broadest sense as the “economy of God” (1:4), the entirety of his plans and purposes for his creation—is the benchmark of “sound teaching.” And so it is such instruction, congruent to the gospel (i.e., the lawful use of the law: the right handling of Scripture), that brings glory to God—declaring and manifesting God’s glory in the godly lives of his people, lives marked by love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. Such a grave responsibility that was “entrusted” to Paul,³⁷ and which he was, in turn, entrusting to his “genuine child in the faith,” Timothy, is by extension, being entrusted to all believers as well.

SERMON MAPS

THEOLOGICAL FOCUS OF PERICOPE 1 FOR PREACHING³⁸

1 The people of God, in their handling of Scripture, promote the economy of God (in contrast to false teachers), for the goal of their instruction is love, the manifestation of godliness (1:1–11).

Putting like things in the text together in the sermon is a critical skill to master. Rather than being constrained to go verse-by-verse, be controlled by the homiletical map you choose: the ordering of your sermon is governed by that map, not by the text. The two communicational modalities, spoken sermon and scripted text, are vastly different and will not necessarily have an identical sequencing of content. This is particularly true for non-narrative biblical literature.

37. The phrase *ὃ ἐπιστεύθην ἐγὼ* (*ho episteuthēn egō*, 1:11) is emphatic—“with which I *myself* have been entrusted.”

38. This is a reduction of a reduction! Such reductions are *not* what must be conveyed to listeners or what is intended to be caught by them. Rather, the Theological Focus is an aid for the sermon preparer: it helps in the creation of a sermon map, as well as in the deriving of specific application. See Kuruvilla, *Manual for Preaching*, 57–112; and Kuruvilla, “Time to Kill the Big Idea?”

1 TIMOTHY

*Possible Preaching Maps for Pericope 1*³⁹

- I. Functioning of False Teachers
 - The interests of false teachers (1:4)
 - The failure of false teachers (1:6–7)
 - Move-to-relevance: Mishandling of Scripture today⁴⁰
- II. Functioning of True Teachers
 - Seriousness and urgency of the task (1:1–3)
 - The goal of true teachers: love, manifestation of godliness (1:5)
 - Scripture and the guidance of godliness (1:8–10)
 - Move-to-relevance: Our failure to be goal-oriented in our instruction
- III. Consequences
 - The non-promotion of the divine economy by false teachers (1:4–5)
 - The promotion of the divine economy by true teachers (1:5)
 - Congruence with the gospel, leading to the glory of God (1:11)
 - Move-to-relevance: Consequences for the church and the Christian
- IV. *Teach truly!*⁴¹
 - How we can handle Scripture rightly, for ourselves and our listeners

With some minor changes, one may create a Problem–Solution–Application map⁴²:

- I. PROBLEM: Mishandling of Scripture and its Consequences
 - The interests of false teachers (1:4)
 - The failure of false teachers (1:6–7)
 - The non-promotion of the divine economy by false teachers (1:4–5)
 - Move-to-relevance: Mishandling of Scripture today
- II. SOLUTION: Right Handling of Scripture
 - Seriousness and urgency of the task (1:1–3)
 - The goal of true teachers: love, manifestation of godliness (1:5)
 - Scripture and the guidance of godliness (1:8–10)
 - The promotion of the divine economy by true teachers (1:5)
 - Congruence with the gospel, leading to the glory of God (1:11)
 - Move-to-relevance: Our failure to be goal-oriented in our instruction
- III. APPLICATION: *Teach truly!*
 - How we can handle Scripture rightly, for ourselves and our listeners

39. The maps provided are deliberately skimpy; they are intended merely to be suggestions for further thought—rough-hewn stones to be polished by the preacher. It is nigh impossible to prescribe a sermon map without knowing the particular audience it is to be used for, and therefore this commentary will refrain from micromanaging homiletics for the preacher. Needless to say, the preacher must also provide the congregation with specifics on how the theological thrust of each pericope may be put into practice so that lives are conformed to Christlikeness in the power of the Spirit, for the glory of God (application; see Kuruvilla, *Manual for Preaching*, 57–86).

40. Moves-to-relevance are critical in every major move of the sermon, relating the theological thrust (or portions thereof) to listeners and their particular circumstances.

41. Maps in this commentary will have an imperative as a major move—the application. The specificity and direction of that imperative is between the Holy Spirit, the preacher, and the audience.

42. This age-old rhetorical scheme is easy to organize and manipulate; perhaps the reason is because we tend to think that way. There might very well be a hardwiring in our brains for a Problem–Solution–Application sequence.