Where Is Your Church Going?

Essentials of a Quality Church

1 Timothy

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How to Use *Life Design*



LIFE DESIGN: Bible Study Designed for the Life You Live. These Bible study materials are designed to engage adult learners in inductive Bible study and in applying the truths of that study to their daily lives.

As you prepare to teach these lessons, keep these two factors in mind:

- The FOCUS of productive adult Bible learning is the learner. The intent of teaching is not teaching, but learning—the learner's learning.
- The GOAL of productive adult Bible learning is an appropriate life-response to Biblical truth. You do not teach simply to impart information; you teach so that the Holy Spirit of God can use the truths of the Word of God to change the child of God into the image of the Son of God.

The Lesson Plan

Each *Life Design* lesson has three distinct parts. GETTING STARTED is the attention-getter. The questions and activities "set the table," as it were, for the Bible study. SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES is the heart of the lesson. A series of inductive Bible study questions leads the teacher and learners through the Biblical text. MAKING IT PERSONAL applies the truth to life.

As is true of any teaching experience, you can adapt the parts of the lesson to fit your particular class. You may choose to alter the beginning activities or change the focus of the application. You will find more material in the Bible study than you can cover in one class session. Ask God to help you as you tailor the lesson for your learners.

The Study Book

This leader's guide is designed to accompany the Bible study book. As the teacher, you will want a copy of the Bible study. Commit to working through the questions before you plan your lesson. We encourage you to distribute Bible study books to your learners. Urge them to complete the study before class. The more your learners have studied on their own, the better the class discussions will be. When a question in the leader's guide is picked up from the Bible study book, you will notice the question number in parentheses. The answers to the questions are usually in the lesson commentary. They are also grouped together in the back of this book.

Other Resources

If you want to use transparencies as you teach, a packet of sixteen full-color transparencies is available. If you prefer to use PowerPoint, the resource CD includes a PowerPoint presentation for each lesson.

Some teachers stay very close to the outline as they teach. If this is true of you, and if you want your learners to capture that outline, reproducible in-class worksheets are included on the CD. The same worksheets may be downloaded from the Web and photocopied for class members. Visit www.regularbaptistpress.org/downloads or www.rbpadultministries.org. Thank you for choosing *Life Design* teaching materials. May God richly bless you and your learners as you study and apply His Word.

Preface

Constructing a building that will endure requires careful attention to the ground on which it will rest. Before a major construction project begins, a soil investigator analyzes borings from the construction site to determine the stability of the ground. Based upon those findings, an appropriate foundation is designed. It would be a disaster to construct a building only to have it sink into the soil.

Jesus used the illustration of building on solid ground (Matt. 7:24–27) to emphasize the importance of properly erecting one's life. He taught that the wise man who builds his house firmly on the rock of God's Word will see the house safely stand. Conversely, the foolish man who builds on the unstable sand of alternative teaching will see his house fall.

A wise church regularly inspects its ministry construction to ensure that it remains solidly grounded on the Word. It is a tragedy when a church carelessly drifts from a Biblically grounded approach to ministry.

Where is Your Church Going? will help you conduct a careful inspection of your church using the epistle of 1 Timothy. Originally when Paul wrote this letter he was helping a young pastor and congregation think about the essentials of a quality church. The instruction Paul shared provides an excellent assessment for your church to utilize in ensuring the stability of its ministry. Paul addressed such vital themes as the importance of Biblically sound teachers, the centrality of the gospel of God's grace, the necessity of prayer, the proper understanding of gender roles, the integrity of godly leadership, the preservation of right doctrine, and many other crucial topics that affect the way a church builds its ministries.

As you study 1 Timothy, ask God to keep your church constructing its ministries on solid ground. By faithfully following Biblical instruction, your church will function in its God-given role as "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15)

Resources for This Course

The transparency packet for this course (RBP1731) includes a transparency on which to record the summary statements from each lesson on 1 Timothy. The transparency will help you track and review these lessons. Starting with lesson 1, use transparency 1 at the end of each lesson or at the beginning of the next lesson to record the summary statement for each lesson. You may use the suggestions in this leader's guide or ask your learners to suggest summary statements.

The Resource CD (RBP1732) for this course includes a PowerPoint presentation for each lesson. All of the transparencies are part of the PowerPoint presentation. The transparencies are also included on the CD as printable PDFs. If you would like to make your own transparencies or PowerPoint slides, the CD includes backgrounds ready for your own text.

To help in your promotion of this course, the CD includes a PowerPoint slide, posters, and a flyer. You can add your group's information to all of the promotional material.

The CD also provides in-class worksheets. Each in-class worksheet has a fill-in-the-blank outline that follows the corresponding outline in this leader's guide.

Other classroom resources on the CD include handouts. Instructions on when and how to use the handouts are included in the appropriate lessons in this leader's guide.

The CD also offers one supplemental case study for each lesson. Each case study can be used as an in-class review, as material for a midweek Bible study, or as an e-mail attachment to your learners. E-mailing the case studies to your learners will emphasize living out the truth in daily life. You may want to enlist a learner to handle collecting e-mail addresses and e-mailing the case studies each week.

You will also find two supplemental application ideas on the CD. Use these ideas as handouts at the end of the appropriate lessons or as e-mail attachments. Both ideas could form the basis for class projects. Read through the ideas before you begin teaching this course so you can plan ahead how you will use them.

In addition, the CD includes a printable verse card for each lesson's key verse or verses. Blank verse cards are also included so you can enter different or additional verses for your learners to memorize. For your convenience, the verse cards are set for printing on Avery business cards. Use the Avery product number 8869 to avoid cutting apart the verse cards. You can find Avery business cards at avery.com. You could also simply print the verse cards on heavy paper and cut them apart using a paper cutter. Or you could e-mail the verse cards to your learners and have them print and cut their own.

LESSON 1

Problems Churches Face

Scripture Focus

Acts 18:1–3, 18–26; 19; 1 Timothy 1:1–3

Key Verses

"These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:14, 15).

Overview

Paul, along with trusted colleagues, established a vibrant church in Ephesus. Timothy was eventually appointed to be the senior pastor. As the church multiplied its ministries, inevitable problems surfaced. Paul wrote 1 Timothy to help Timothy and the people address those problems.

Topic

Handling problems facing a church

Theme

A church can face its problems and find Biblical solutions.

Desired Learner Response

The learner will affirm his or her desire to use Biblical solutions when facing church problems.

Outline

I. A Church Is Established (Acts 18:1–3, 18–26; 19; 20:17–31; 1 Tim. 1:1–3)
   A. Church birth (Acts 18:1–3, 18–26)
   B. Church growth (Acts 19; 20:17–31; 1 Tim. 1:1–3)
II. A Leader Is Developed (Acts 9:1–16; Gal. 1:12—2:1; 1 Tim. 1:12, 13; 2 Tim. 2:1, 2)
   A. Leadership chosen (Acts 9:1–16; Gal. 1:12—2:1; 1 Tim. 1:12, 13)
   B. Leadership groomed (2 Tim. 2:1, 2)
III. A Pastor and People Are Counseled (1 Tim.)

Materials

- RBP transparencies 1–3
- Lesson 1 case study from resource CD
- 1 Timothy 3:14, 15 verse card from resource CD

Getting Started

Use one of the following ideas to introduce this lesson on finding solutions to the problems that churches face.

Royal Flop

The often beleaguered Kansas City Royals started the 2003 baseball season on a tear. They won sixteen of their first nineteen games. They had the best record in their division and were in first place by five and a half games. Playoffs and maybe even a World Series championship seemed like a real possibility for the perennially last place Royals. But on Friday, August 29, the bottom fell out of their season. They lost to Anaheim that night and went on to lose seventeen of their final thirty games. The Royals finished the season in third place in their division, seven games out of first. The upstart team from KC was soon forgotten. And their manager, Tony Peña, went from hero to just another manager. The Royals' promising start ended in ho-hum mediocrity.

Ask: What collapses have you witnessed in sports or in other realms? To what did you attribute the collapse? **Discuss:** What threatens the collapse of churches? (Questions 1–3)

Church-planting Experience

Discuss: Has anyone been part of a church planting experience? If so, describe the atmosphere that was created by the experience.

The birth of a new church is an exciting experience. A group of believers often gathers in a home to pray, dream, and plan. Out of that initial meeting an embryonic church is conceived.

Searching the Scriptures

I. A Church Is Established (Acts 18:1–3, 18–26; 19; 20:17–31; 1 Tim. 1:1–3)



The background of 1 Timothy takes us to the church of Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3). The account of the birth and development of this church begins in the book of Acts.

MAP: Display transparency 2 as you discuss the founding of the church at Ephesus.

A. Church birth (Acts 18:1–3, 18–26)

Acts 18 contains a partial accounting of Paul's second and third missionary journeys. Paul traveled from Athens to the city of Corinth (v. 1). In Corinth he met a couple by the names of Aquila and Priscilla (v. 2). They had come to Corinth from Italy in response to the order of Claudius, Roman emperor, who commanded all Jews to leave. They developed a friendship with Paul because they shared his tent-making vocation (v. 3).

After approximately a year and a half of fruitful ministry in Corinth, verses 18 and 19 explain that Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla traveled on to the area of Syria and the city of Ephesus. Upon their arrival, Paul began to preach Christ in the synagogue. Declining an invitation to stay longer and continue his ministry,

Paul went on his way toward Jerusalm and left Aquila and Priscilla to carry on the work in Ephesus.

The record of Paul's third missionary journey begins in verse 23. Verse 24 transports us back to Ephesus where Aquila and Priscilla were carrying on their effective ministry. They came alongside an articulate and intelligent speaker by the name of Apollos. Recognizing some deficiencies as he spoke, they helped him grow in his understanding of God's redemptive plan.

Apollos eventually traveled on to open the Word of God and skillfully share Christ in other places (see Acts 18:27, 28).

READ: Ask a volunteer to read Acts 18:24–26.

B. Church growth (Acts 19; 20:17–31; 1 Tim. 1:1–3)

Acts 19 begins by explaining that Paul made his way back to Ephesus for another visit (v. 1). Verses 8–10 reveal that Paul carried on a preaching and teaching ministry for over two years in Ephesus. Paul's ministry reached out to the entire region and thereby established a network of churches.

READ: Ask a volunteer to read Acts 19:8–10. **ASK:** On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being extremely successful, how would you rate the success of Paul's church-planting efforts in Ephesus? **DISCUSS:** Imagine you are part of the growing church in Ephesus. What might your church's tremendous witnessing efforts and subsequent successful start do to your thoughts about how likely it was that your church would face problems? (Questions 4, 5)

We discover in Acts 20:17 that Paul, after leaving Ephesus, summoned the elders of the network of churches at Ephesus to meet him in Miletus so he might address them. His words of instruction are found in Acts 20:17–31.

READ: Ask a volunteer to read Acts 20:17–31. **ASK:** How thoroughly did Paul prepare the church at Ephesus for coming problems? (Question 6)

The Ephesian church obviously had the best Bible teaching and ministry training in its early days due to the involvement of Paul and other outstanding servants of the Lord. But as we will see, it was not a super church that was immune to problems from within and without.

Though we cannot be certain of the exact circumstances, it is apparent that at some subsequent point a young man named Timothy was appointed senior pastor of the church at Ephesus. Leading the church through their struggles was his responsibility.

READ: Ask a learner to read 1 Timothy 1:1 and 2. **ASK:** How intimidated do you think Timothy was when he stepped into Paul's shoes as a young pastor? (Question 7) **TESTIMONY:** Ask men who have

been pastors, or perhaps your church's current pastor, to briefly share what it is like to face the first day of pastoral ministry.

The great start for the church at Ephesus would certainly bode well for Timothy. But the stern warnings that Paul gave back in Acts 20:29–31 had to be on his mind. Perhaps as he entered the ministry, the "ravenous wolves" were already causing trouble among his flock.

READ: Ask a learner to read 1 Timothy 1:3. **ASK:** What hint do you find in verse 3 that Timothy may have been overwhelmed and discouraged? What clue do you find as to the cause of Timothy's discouragement? **DISCUSS:** What could have happened to the church at Ephesus if Timothy had left it for another ministry or vocation? (Questions 8–10)

Paul knew that Timothy's staying in Ephesus was important. He had already invested time and significant energy into Timothy. He didn't want to see him give up in the face of problems and thereby jeopardize the Ephesian church. Timothy needed encouragement and further instruction on how to lead God's church in Ephesus.

II. A Leader Is Developed (Acts 9:1–16; Gal. 1:12—2:1; 1 Tim. 1:12, 13; 2 Tim. 2:1, 2)

A. Leadership chosen (Acts 9:1–16; Gal. 1:12—2:1; 1 Tim. 1:12, 13)

DISCUSS: How does a person develop the skills of confident and competent leadership? (Question 11)

Having a wiser, more experienced person come alongside a leader can help him develop leadership skills. The experienced person becomes the leader's mentor. A mentor is one who invests his life in the development of another individual. Paul was Timothy's mentor. Paul's mentor was Christ Himself.

READ: Ask a learner to read 1 Timothy 1:12 and 13. **DISCUSS:** How was it that Paul—who described himself as a former blasphemer, persecutor, and violent man— was selected and equipped to be "an apostle of Jesus Christ?" (Question 12)

Acts 9:1–16 contains the account of the amazing conversion of Saul (later named Paul) and his appointment to the ministry. Following Paul's conversion, he went to a remote location for a period of time to be equipped directly from the Head of the church, Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:12—2:1). The Lord had taught the Word of God and the skills of ministry to Paul as He had with the other disciples.

What a privilege for Paul. He received his training straight from the Master Teacher Himself. What an impact Christ must have had on his life! But also what a responsibility Christ gave him! Christ didn't give Paul a private education so Paul could horde the information. Rather, Christ expected Paul to take what he learned and communicate it through mentoring countless others who would then share it with others.

As Paul began his ministry, it was not long until he was implementing the Master's plan of choosing potential leaders and building into their lives. Paul met Timothy and in essence began his mentoring ministry with him while he was on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:1–5).

READ: Ask a volunteer to read Acts 16:1–5. **ASK:** What lessons about ministry would Timothy have learned from serving alongside Paul? (Question 13)

B. Leadership groomed (2 Tim. 2:1, 2)

Paul began to invest his life into Timothy in order to equip him to live for the Lord and serve Him. The books of 1 and 2 Timothy record the continuing developmental process of the wise, experienced Paul mentoring his understudy on how to handle the issues of the ministry. Paul was a spiritual father to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:2).

READ: Ask a learner to read Philippians 2:19–23. **ASK:** How does Paul describe Timothy in this passage? (Question 14)

As Timothy learned and proved himself, Paul began to gradually turn over ministry responsibilities to him. Paul intended for Timothy to mature and in turn invest his life into others who eventually would do the same with still others (2 Tim. 2:1, 2).

READ: Ask a volunteer to read 2 Timothy 2:1 and 2. The mentoring method that our Lord initiated with His disciples was His strategy for leadership development. The strategy continues to be God's plan for grooming leaders today. Encourage your learners to consider their involvement in the developmental process of discipleship.

III. A Pastor and People Are Counseled (1 Tim.)

One advantage of having a trusted mentor is the availability of wise advice when problems arise. Timothy and the church at Ephesus were fortunate to have access to Paul's knowledge and experience as they confronted several difficulties in their ministry.

BIBLE STUDY: Divide the class into groups. Assign each group three or four of the following passages

from 1 Timothy and ask them to identify the problems that were addressed. The groups will need to "read between the lines," realizing that these instructions were given because there must have been problems in these areas. (The answers are provided for your review.) (Question 15)

1. 1: 4–6 (Some were departing from the exposition of Scripture into teaching that was extra-Biblical.)

2. 1:7 (Others wanted to be teachers but did not have a good grasp of the Word.)

3. 2:8 (Ungodly men were praying.)

4. 2:9, 10 (Some women were more concerned with what they wore and how their hair looked than with godly character.)

5. 2:12 (Women were trying to usurp authority from men and were speaking about inappropriate matters.)

6. 3:1–13 (Men whose character was not godly desired leadership positions.)

7. 4:1–5 (Some were teaching demonic doctrine.)

8. 4:12 (Not all of the older believers were respecting their younger pastor.)

9. 5:6 (Women were living for sensual pleasure.)

10. 5:13 (Idle women were going from house to house sharing juicy gossip and spreading dissension.)

11. 5:20 (Some elders were harboring sin in their lives.)

12. 6:9, 10 (Some people were caught up in materialism, to the neglect of serving the Lord.)

The church at Ephesus faced a number of difficult issues that threatened to dishearten Pastor Timothy and divide the congregation. The strong testimony of this influential church was in danger of being silenced.

Somehow Paul received word of the situation. Caring deeply about young Timothy, whom he had mentored, and also about his spiritual children in Ephesus, Paul wrote a letter to help them through this difficult time. First Timothy 3:14 and 15 is the key passage to understanding Paul's purpose of the book: "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

It is certain that nearly every church will face problems at times. What is needed on those occasions is the wise instruction of God's Word and the humble response of the church family to those guidelines. Having Paul's inspired letter to Timothy certainly provides valuable guidance to both the church and the pastor.

Making It Personal

Three Worthy Goals

Your church may currently be facing a problem. If not, it probably will at some future time. **Transparency:** Display transparency 3. Conclude by encouraging the class to affirm the three goals on the transparency as you embark on this study of 1 Timothy.

Prayer for the Quarter

Ask if two or three individuals would lead the class in prayer, asking the Lord to use the counsel of His Word in this quarter to make your church stronger. (Question 18)

Review Transparency

Use transparency 1 to review the Ministry Basic for this lesson: Use Biblical solutions when facing church problems.

Memory Verses

Distribute copies of the 1 Timothy 3:14 and 15 verse card from the resource CD.

Use the case study for lesson 1 as desired.





NEXT LESSON

Encourage your learners to complete the lesson 2 Bible study before the next class.