

The Aim Of Our Instruction Is Love

1 Timothy 1:5-7

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Pastor Francis Bezzam

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.*

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

Last week, we started a new series with the title “Conducting ourselves in the household of God”.

My prayer is that you saw from last week is that we have an apostolic mandate – to continue to be devoted to what has been handed down to the apostles from the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostolic teaching is our baseline, our guide, our directive and our rule for all things done in the church of Jesus Christ. And the only way to counter any aberration of truth, any false teaching is to stick to the writings of the apostles and the New Testament authors.

So we saw how the apostle Paul urges, implores and pleads with Timothy to command some people to stop false teaching, promoting myths and genealogies.

Instead of promoting unprofitable and unhelpful things for the Christian life, Paul tells Timothy that God’s plan ought to be promoted. The true Gospel needs to be promoted.

And Paul uses military like language to urge Timothy. He tells Timothy not to negotiate or discuss. Rather to command or direct false teachers to stop what they are doing.

There are times when things are getting out of hand, there ought to be a concrete, firm and resolute message to those who bring shame to the cause of Christ. However, when we do that, there can be a reason for people to question motives. After all nobody likes a heavy-handed approach to resolving issues.

So, the firm instruction must be tempered with something that doesn’t sound *authoritarian* while being *authoritative*. You hear what I just said? Authoritarian is not the same as being authoritative.

Authoritarian is being domineering, overbearing, dictatorial. Authoritative is basing our convictions on the primacy of the Word of God, the Scriptures, the Bible.

So today, we are going to look at Paul's motive and aim in writing such a letter to Timothy.

Verse 5. The aim of *our* instruction is love.

Observe in verse 5 that Paul doesn't say "my" aim. He says "our" aim. Paul knows Timothy well enough to include Timothy that their common aim to instruct is love. Their motivation to correct false teaching is love and ought to be love.

So one hand, Paul urges Timothy to tell false teachers to halt teaching these unprofitable things but on the other hand he helps Timothy so he can disarm any potential accusations.

Paul says his goal his motivation for offering this correction is love. This is agape love.

And how do we know Paul's motivation is love? After all, Paul was once a hater of those followed Jesus Christ. Paul didn't just *hate* Christians at one time, he *persecuted* them. Paul's name was notorious among the followers of Jesus at one time. They knew if Paul was pursuing them, they would end up in jail or end up dead. Stephen was of them. Paul stood by and watched Stephen being stoned to death. But one day, when Paul experienced God's love, his life radically changed. In Galatians 2:20, Paul sums up God's agape love for him this way – "*And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me*". Paul's zeal for his religion once produced hatred in him but after he met Jesus Christ, his hatred turned into radical love for Jesus, others and the truth.

A relative in my family recently asked why do Christians keep telling and sharing their faith, sometimes to the point to being annoying? Well, here is Paul's reason – Jesus' agape love for Paul and Jesus' death as payment for Paul's sin.

So, Paul's motivation to speak the truth is love. That ought to your motivation as well. Speak the truth but speak the truth in love.

In what is known as the love passage in scripture, in 1 Corinthians 13, Paul writes to the Corinthians that "*Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things*". But right there in the middle of that passage, in verse 6 Paul says,

"love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth".

Today, the definition of love has become so aberrant and so unbiblical. Some think that love is accepting anything and everything including the most vile and depraved things we see in culture.

Paul tells us true agape love does not rejoice at evil, at wrongdoing, at false teaching, at perversion. Love rejoices with the truth.

And these false teachers had deviated from the truth. In Paul's language, they had swerved from the things that should profit people and promote godliness. The false teachers were leading people into all kinds of vain discussions.

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.*

These teachers want to be teachers of the law. Yet they lack understanding and yet profess to know a lot. And they act confident in things they don't really know about. The Law tells us the perfect standard of God. The Law, however, cannot make you perfectly righteous. Only Christ can.

Paul says the false teachers are hypocrites and liars who ignore their consciences. They are no longer sensitive to the truth of God.

1 Timothy 4:2 *"the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared"*.

Another way Paul describes false teachers is in Titus 1:15 *"..but both their minds and their consciences are defiled"*.

The word defiled is to mean the conscience had become stained and polluted.

So how did they these false teachers end up that way?

Lets look at verse 6. Paul says, "by swerving from these". What are those things that they have swerved from?

Paul explains in verse 5.

And in verse 5, Paul says these are things that these false teachers have departed from.

And Paul gives three underlying reasons for his motivation – *three* adjective filled reasons.

Look at verse 5 again – *"The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith"*.

First reason – Pure heart. Another translation says "a cleansed heart". I think "cleansed" heart is more appropriate because Paul himself once had hateful motivations but after Jesus transformed his life, his heart was purged of his evil motives. Jesus uses this word "cleanse" in John chapter 15 verse 3. It is the idea of being purged of impurities or from sin. When you repented and trusted in Jesus Christ as your Savior. When you received his forgiveness through his death for your sin, you were made clean. And this cleansing is an ongoing journey. The longer you walk with Jesus he more you see the need for being cleansed daily.

Paul knows that his heart was once not in line with the Gospel, but since he met Jesus, his inner desires were transformed.

The only way your heart is cleansed is by obedience to the truth. 1 Peter 1:22 *“Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God”*.

Second reason – good conscience. This is an important reason. What is *conscience*? Webster’s dictionary defines it this way: *It’s the sense of consciousness or the blameworthiness of one’s own conduct, intentions, or character together with a feeling of obligation to do right or good*.

Conscience is the inward faculty, the attentiveness to obligation. Now sin has marred our consciences but when God convicts you of sin, your conscience is affected. God gives the believer a confidence and assurance when you are forgiven of your sin (Romans 9:1).

Does your conscience bother you when you are at the checkout counter and you ring up 10 items but when you notice your receipt you see a charge for only 9 items? Your conscience is stirred and you can’t walk away because you hadn’t paid for it.

Paul says his inner motivation to tell false teachers to stop comes from a “good” conscience. Now Paul writes this in a sequential way because you can’t have a good conscience without a cleansed heart. That is why he mentions the clean heart first and good conscience second. There are some people whose consciences are hardened, unfeeling and hard as stone. It is only the Holy Spirit that convicts people to turn from hardness to softness and tenderness.

Third reason – sincere faith. A literal translation of the word “sincere” is “un-hypocritical”. Paul is telling Timothy that his motivation is love from a plain, straightforward and sincere faith. He does not feel superior or puffed up about his position in telling the false teaching to stop. Paul’s desire is as sincere as he could tell. He lived up to his teaching. He practiced what he preached. He was competent in the Scripture and the Law of God.

But there were some people who claimed to know things and were making confident assertions about things they did not know. Jesus called out the Pharisees many times for their hypocrisy. The sad part is that they were masters of hypocrisy and they did not even know it. Hypocrisy is simply saying one thing but living another way. Hear the words of Jesus to the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:27-28 *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness.”²⁸ So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness”*.

Jesus said hypocrites are good at lip service while their hearts are far from God. (Matthew 15:8).

So, Paul's aim is love and three underlying motivations – a cleansed heart, a good conscience and sincere faith. Romans 12:9 *“Let love be sincere, genuine, unhypocritical”*.

May we never swerve from these.

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: **The Aim Of Our Instruction Is Love.** 1 Timothy 1:5-7

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. What is the purpose of Paul writing this letter to Timothy? (1 Tim 3:14). In verse 3, Paul's urges Timothy to instruct false teachers to stop spreading false doctrine. Why is it important to learn Paul's motives for his instruction? Go around and share.

HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.

2. What are three internal motivations of Paul's instruction? Verse 5. Go around and share why these internal motivations are necessary for your life as a believer.
3. What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

4. For personal reflection: What are some ways to maintain a cleansed heart, clear conscience and unhypocritical faith before God?