



I Timothy

Confrontation

1:5...Now the purpose (the goal) of the commandment is love:

*...from a pure heart,
...from a good conscience, and
...from sincere faith,*

4:12...be an example to the believers:

1...in word, 2...in conduct, 3...in love, 4...in spirit, 5...in faith, 6...in purity.

This morning we will take a look at how the Apostle Paul counselled his young protégé Timothy, to confront those who had wandered away from the truth. Paul instructed him to bring God's counsel to them from a good heart, from a good conscience and from a sincere faith. He also instructed Timothy to model what he believed and taught from scripture, as our actions speak louder than our words.

In modern parlance: Walk the talk

We, like Timothy, find ourselves having to confront error at some time in our lives and within the church is no exception. So, how should a Christian confront something which does not agree with what we believe in and with what the word of God declares to be true?

Francis Schaeffer: truth carries with it confrontation

Context of Paul's letter to Timothy:

In the early church there were false teachers (Judiazers/early Gnostics) who were going around the many small home churches in Ephesus (modern day Turkey). They were affecting God's work of building up Christ's body in truth and love. Paul said *these teachers do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm; their teaching promoted controversies and the faith of many was shipwrecked.*

The Apostle Paul instructed Timothy to remain in Ephesus and oversee the churches and to correct their doctrine where it was in error i.e. doctrine is what they were being taught to believe and by extension, to apply in their Christian life.

The letter to Timothy also gives instruction on worship; prayer for authorities; the qualification of overseers and deacons; advice on supporting widows; correcting older men and commanding those who are rich in this world not to put their hope in wealth but to lay up treasures in heaven.

Timothy was charged to fight the good fight and bring believers back to the truth of God's word, in love, accepting that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

The Apostle Paul said: **1:13-14** *although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.*

He goes on to state an important truth in **verse 15**: *It is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners - of whom I am the worst.* I believe we can all insert our name in place of Paul's!

1. What counsel did the Apostle Paul give to his young protégé?
2. What can we learn from studying it?
3. How do we apply what it teaches when we are faced with confrontation?

1 Tim 4:12 illuminates 6 aspects of Christian character that will help us achieve the goal of love. If we struggle with confrontation (and that is a natural fear), then this teaching may help guide us in how to share the truth with those we relate to, whether in the church, at work or at home.

Paul counsels Timothy to set an example for the believers in:

1. word (*logos*) or doctrine/ the whole truth we are taught to believe from the bible.

This is what we state about the bible on our All Nations website:

The sole basis of our beliefs is the Bible, composed of 66 books in the Old Testament and New Testament. We believe the entire Bible originated with God, who used men as instruments to convey His message to the world. The Bible simultaneously speaks with the authority of God and reflects the backgrounds, styles and vocabularies of the human authors – that is, men writing through divine inspiration of God. We hold the Bible as infallible and God breathed in the original writings. They are the unique, full and final authority on all matters of faith and practice, and there are no other writings similarly inspired by God.

This is what we believe and what we teach from – we are to know God through His beloved Son and know His word which transforms us by His spirit.

2. conversation (*anastrophe*) i.e. the way of living, our conduct toward others, our behaviour e.g. not just bringing the truth from God's word but handling it correctly, speaking the truth in love; **Colossians 4:6** *Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

Our life may be the only bible people will read

3. love (*agape*) i.e. bringing the truth of God's word in love

I Corinthians 13: 4-8a

⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸Love never fails...

If this scripture is too long to memorise, then try to remember at least the first two characteristics: *love is patient, love is kind...*

4. spirit (*pneuma*) I suggest we cannot understand spiritual truth in our old nature but only from a new one; the truth is that we are new creations in Christ. Truth and correction must be brought with the Lord's supernatural power and love.

Remember the Apostle's counsel is love, God's loving kindness leads to repentance **Rom 2:4** *Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?*

The Apostle drives home the misuse of spiritual gifts in Corinth

¹If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ²If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

If we exercise our spiritual gift (in this case bringing truth to confront error) in any other way than from our new nature, it will result in zero with the ring rubbed out!

5. faith (*pistis*) i.e. this calls us to exercise our faith and trust when we speak to one another, trusting the love of God is flowing from His throne-room of grace through these earthen vessels.

We trust the Holy Spirit has the desire and power to lead us into all truth.

6. purity (*hagneia*) i.e. of sinless life. Dealing with spiritual issues can lead to division, anger and sin. Unless our heart is *pure, our conscience is good, and our faith is sincere*, we will fail to reach the goal of bringing the truth in love to those in error.

Challenge this week: 1 Timothy 4:15-16 *Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.*