

LESSON 2

BUILDING ON A FIRM FOUNDATION

1 TIMOTHY 1:1–20



1 Why is a solid foundation important for a building? Where else should we be concerned about the foundation?

2 Why is a solid foundation important for our faith?



Read 1 Timothy 1:1–20 and the following notes:

☐ 1:3, 4 ☐ 1:3–11 ☐ 1:5 ☐ 1:6 ☐ 1:19

3 What was so harmful about the false doctrines that were being taught in Ephesus?

4 What did Paul mean by “right teaching” (1:10)?

5 For what reasons could Paul's word and opinion be trusted above the false teachers?

This chapter contrasts the heretical doctrine of the false teachers with the right teaching of Paul. Right teaching forms the solid foundation for faith; without a firm foundation, the building crumbles. The situation in Ephesus was critical because people in the church were being led away from the faith. Paul wanted Timothy to put a stop to the false teaching and to command certain men not to teach anymore. This was especially critical in churches such as Ephesus, where many of the believers were Gentiles with little or no knowledge about the Old Testament. In this setting it was relatively easy for new, destructive heresies to spread and take hold. Like Timothy, we must carefully oversee what is taught. This is not just an academic matter, because what we believe directly influences how we live. Because we live in a time when truth is considered relative and people are led by their feelings rather than by their thoughts, we must take added precautions to preserve right teaching, keeping our faith-foundation strong.



6 What are some of the avenues that allow false teaching to enter a church today?

7 What does your church or denomination do to preserve right teaching?

8 How should churches oversee what is taught to children and teenagers in Sunday school and other programs?

9 How might teachers in church be screened?

10 How do you determine what are major issues (which must be carefully guarded) and what are minor issues (where there is room for a variety of opinions and interpretations)?

11 How could a church ensure right teaching while allowing freedom for discussion, questions, and disagreements?



12 When might disagreement be needed and useful in the church today? How can we avoid dangerous or pointless controversies?

13 What do you see as your role in preserving right teaching in your church?

14 How can you know if your opinions, beliefs, and interpretation of Scripture are going off in a heretical direction?

15 What can you do to protect yourself from false teachers and false teaching?

16 Where can you go for answers if you have questions regarding teaching?

17 Each of us needs a teaching check from time to time to make sure we have not unintentionally strayed from the truth. What teachings do you need to review? About what are you interested in learning more?

18 Make a list of questions you have regarding your faith or other aspects of the Bible or theology. (No one is sure about everything.) Then set up an appointment with your pastor or a knowledgeable friend for a checkup on your teaching.



A What did Paul mean when he called Timothy his “true child in the faith” (1:2)? Who might be considered your spiritual parents? your spiritual children?

B What is the proper use of the law for us today? How might we use it improperly?

C How did the motivation of the false teachers (1:7) differ from the motivation of Paul (1:12)? What motivates you to teach others?

D How did Paul live a righteous life? Why then does he call himself the worst of sinners (1:15)? How did Paul's attitude help him minister to others?

E What do we learn about the character of God the Father from the doxology in 1:17? If you were writing a song of praise to God, what attributes would you list?

F How could a person shipwreck his or her faith?

G What did Hymenaeus and Alexander do? What does their punishment teach us about church discipline?

MORE
for studying
other themes
in this section