1 and 2 Timothy

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Using these Bible Studies

The studies are broken down into different sections that each focus on one of St James in the City's values. We think this is a helpful way to have time together that focuses on many different areas of our lives as Christians, and not simply in getting more 'head knowledge' about God.

Live:
The foundation for spiritual growth is an intimate connection with God and His family. The questions in the section will help you get to know the members of your group and help grow that sense of family which we are called into.

Grow:
In this section, the questions are designed to bring you to a deeper understanding of the Bible and to help you consider how the truths of the Bible can impact your life.

Serve:
Nothing is more fulfilling than using your God-given gifts to serve and help meet the needs of others in God's family. This section will help make that desire a reality. You will be encouraged and challenged to take steps to serve those inside and outside of the group.

Build:
The thought of sharing our faith can be scary and can feel awkward. Don't worry: this is a common feeling! However, God wants to use you to reach those around you for Christ. This section is designed to give you and your group practical, manageable steps for sharing Christ that can become a part of your everyday life.

Love:
You were made for God's pleasure. Even when we gather as a smaller group, it is great to have the opportunity to worship and to surrender your heart to God. This could come in a variety of forms such as prayer, singing, or simply sharing what God is doing in your lives. Contribute as much or as little as you feel able to.

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Introduction

Much of the material for this study series comes from our sermon series on 1 and 2 Timothy in 2018-19. You can find these online at https://www.stjamesinthecity.org.uk/Media/AllMedia.aspx.

Timothy had been with the apostle Paul when he established the church in Ephesus (53-56 AD) and was now a key leader in the church. He was young, but had a responsibility to try and keep the church from a group of false teachers who were stirring up trouble. Ephesus itself was devoted to a female goddess (Artemis) and had a strategic harbour so it was a prominent and wealthy city. As people started to follow Jesus, the silver trade got hit as it was closely associated with the worship of Artemis. The church was full of both Jews and Gentiles and was a big threat to the well-being of the city.

1 Timothy was written probably after Paul's first imprisonment (63 AD) and 2 Timothy was written during his final imprisonment in the run-up to his death (65 AD). You get a sense of Paul passing on the baton of leadership to this young man and feel his determination to preserve the Body of Christ.

1 Timothy:

The main concern of Paul's letter in 1 Timothy is to preserve the church from false teachers in their midst. There seems to be a mix of false teachings at play:

- Gnosticism – the belief that Jesus came to save us by giving us special knowledge.
- Jewish elements – a high focus on the law.
- Asceticism – a 'holier-than-thou' approach and denying of good things given by God.
- Cultural – a movement, especially among wealthy women, that rejected the dress code advocating respectability and found greater sexual freedom.
- Theological – a belief that the kingdom of God was really imminent so it did not matter what one did.

Paul therefore writes against many of these themes and gives us many lessons about leadership and following Jesus in the midst of it. The first half of the letter is about ordering the household of God (i.e. the church) and the second focuses on the practical applications of this.

2 Timothy:

With Paul knowing he was likely to die, this is essentially his final words to Timothy as he asks him to keep up the ministry he has established. 2 Timothy is therefore a much more personal letter. Suffering in leadership is a key theme, as is the future hope in Jesus. Godliness, the good news of Jesus, and false teaching are again all themes.

Do not be put off by the repeated themes of leadership and false teaching: these letters have much to say to us today. We hope they will help you learn and lead as a disciple of Jesus.

As you read through the letters, reflect on the key themes that keep coming up and enjoy the depth in these letters. We hope they will help you to continue to grow in your relationship with Jesus.

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Study 1: Grace and truth

Live
When was the last time you wrote a letter? Who was it to? How did you start/end it?

Love
Start your time together in prayer and worship: give God 'all honour and glory. He is the eternal King, the unseen one who never dies; he alone is God.' (1:17)

Grow
Read 1 Timothy 1 together.

- What does this passage tell us about:
  - God?
  - Humanity?
  - The church/God's people specifically?
- Looking at 1:1-11…
  - What is the goal of Paul's teaching/instruction? Why?
  - What seems to be the problem in Ephesus? What have the teachers been doing instead?
  - When is the law good?
  - What is the relationship between truth and grace?
- Looking at 1:12-20…
  - 1:15 – what is a full acceptance of the gospel?
  - What does Paul call on Timothy to do?
  - What does Paul mean in 1:20 about 'handing them over to Satan'?

Thinking about our own walks with Jesus…

- What is important in your walk with God and what are you wasting time on?
- Paul had a huge awareness of his sin.
  - How aware are you of your sin?
  - How aware are you of God's grace?
- How do you feel about the language of 'fighting in the Lord's battles'?
  - Comfortable/uncomfortable?
  - Why/why not?

Build
Does the gospel touch every area of your life? Would your family/work colleagues/friends agree with you?

Prayer
Close in prayer for each other: pray that you would walk in the way of grace and truth.

Note for leaders: 1:10 mentions homosexuality in the list of sins. Very briefly, the list in 1:9-10 reflects the Ten Commandments and was, to some extent, and 'off-the-shelf' list. Try not to get bogged down in the topic – this one verse is not the whole Christian teaching in the area of sex and sexuality!

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Study 2: A God of order

Live
Are you neat and tidy or messy? Is order important to you, or are you more of a free spirit?

Love
Start your time together in prayer and worship. Thank God that he created all things and is a God of order, not of chaos.

Grow
Read 1 Timothy 2 together.

- What does this passage tell us about:
  - God?
  - Humanity?
  - The church/God's people specifically?
- Looking at 2:1-7…
  - Why should we pray for those in authority?
  - What does 2:4 mean – that God wants everyone to be saved?
  - Paul gives the heart of the gospel in 2:5-6. Why is Jesus described in this way? How would you describe the gospel to someone who did not know it?
  - 2:6 – what does Paul mean that God gave this message at 'just the right time'?
- Looking at 2:8-9…
  - Why is Paul so concerned about the way people behave in church?
  - 2:8 – Paul wants men to be free from anger. Is this a problem for us (men and women!) today?
  - 2:15 – Paul seems to be calling women to good relations in their homes. Why is the way we behave (men and women!) important?
  - What cultural assumptions do we make today that might need to be challenged?

Thinking about our own walks with Jesus…

- Do you pray for all leaders and authorities? Why/why not?
  - How could you make it part of your prayer time?
- Is anger an issue for you?
- How important are external appearances for you (physical and the way you present yourself)?

Serve
Can you be accountable to each other around anger and the way you present yourself?

Prayer
Close in prayer for each other: pray for the gospel to change all areas of your life.

Note for leaders: Again, this is a tricky passage! There are essentially three interpretations: this is a universal prohibition on women teaching; Paul was addressing a specific local problem where the women had been caught up in the local heresy; or Paul was urging the church to be respectful of culture as far as possible (women were not usually well-educated). There is a definite movement in the NT where women share in the leadership of God's people. See Appendix 1 for a bit more detail!

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Study 3: Leaders

Live
What have you found makes a good/bad leader? What are your experiences of leadership?

Love
Start your time together in prayer and worship. Perhaps use the song ‘Good, Good Father’ and reflect/pray on the words used.

Grow
Read 1 Timothy 3:1-13 together.

- What does this passage tell us about:
  - God?
  - Humanity?
  - The church/God’s people specifically?
- Looking at 3:1-7…
  - Who are overseers today? Bishops? Church leaders? Others?
  - Why does Paul put these particular standards on a church leader?
  - What is/are the most important one(s)?
  - What could be the Devil’s trap Paul refers to in 3:7?
- Looking at 3:8-13…
  - Deacons are ‘those who serve’. Who are they today?
  - What kind of leadership tests might Paul mean (3:10)?

Thinking about our own walks with Jesus…

- Are you a leader?
  - How do you influence others?
- How do you support leaders inside and outside church?

Serve
What could you do to serve your leaders (of any kind) this week?

Build
How important is leadership to help grow God’s kingdom? What does good and bad leadership do to God’s church?

For further reading… Try *Hopeful Influence* (Jude Padfield) and *Garden City* (John Mark Comer)

Prayer
Close in prayer for your leaders and for all those who you can influence. Pray that God would use you and them for his purposes.

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Study 4: Right teaching

Live
Play ‘Two truths and one lie’ – each come up with two truths about yourself and one lie and then try to work out for each other which one of the three statements is false.

Love
Start your time together in prayer and worship. You could use the song ‘Such an Awesome God’ by Maverick City and meditate on 3:16.

Grow
Read 1 Timothy 3:14-4:16 together.

- What does this passage tell us about:
  - God?
  - Humanity?
  - The church/God’s people specifically?
- Looking at 3:14-4:5…
  - What does Paul say Timothy’s responsibility is?
  - 3:15 – what is the relationship between the church and the truth?
  - 4:3 – Paul mentions a couple of false teachings. What might the popular false teachings be today?
- Looking at 4:6-16…
  - What is godliness?
  - 4:8 – What does ‘training for godliness’ look like in practice?
  - 4:11-16 – Paul gives Timothy a load of advice.
    - What speaks to you today?
    - Is this advice just for leaders or for all Christians?

Thinking about our own walks with Jesus…

- 4:12 - What could be different about:
  - What you say?
  - The way you live?
  - Your love?
  - Your faith?
  - Your purity?
- Who are the older/more mature Christians who are speaking into your life at the moment? Who are you encouraging who is younger/less mature than you?

Serve
Could you mentor a younger/less mature Christian in one way this week? Phone them, meet up for a drink or meal, have them round for a conversation.

Prayer
Close in prayer for each other: pray for God to help you grow in godliness and to build up good habits in your walk with Jesus.

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Study 5: Looking after God's church

Live
Who do you look up to? Who has inspired you in your walk with Jesus?

Love
Start your time together in prayer and worship. Praise God using truths about him, perhaps using a Psalm such as Psalm 146 or any from 96-100.

Grow
Read 1 Timothy 5-6:2a together.

- What does this passage tell us about:
  - God?
  - Humanity?
  - The church/God's people specifically?
- Looking at 5:1-16…
  - Why should we treat our elders with respect?
  - What do you make of the instruction that families should look after widows first?
  - 5:9-10 - Is it OK for the church to look after those inside the church community first? Why/why not?
- Looking at 5:17-25…
  - What do these verses say about church discipline? Look at Matthew 18:15-20 to help you discuss church discipline.
  - What do think about Paul's advice for paying church leaders? Comfortable or uncomfortable? Why/why not?
- Looking at 6:1-2…
  - Do these verses have anything to say to us today? What?

Thinking about our own walks with Jesus…

- Who do you look after who is vulnerable?
- Is there anything in your life that you need to be challenged on by others? Be brave!

Build
Does looking after the vulnerable in society help build God's Kingdom? Why/why not? How could your group help build God's kingdom by reaching out?

Serve
The church was called to protect and look after widows – those who could no longer support themselves. What can you do this week to care for the vulnerable around you?

Prayer
Close in prayer for each other: pray for God to show you those who need help around you.

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Study 6: Contentment

Live
What's the most expensive item you have ever bought?

Love
Start your time together in prayer and worship; maybe use the song *I am loved* by Maverick City Worship.

Grow
Read 1 Timothy 6:2b-21 together.

- What does this passage tell us about:
  - God?
  - Humanity?
  - The church/God's people specifically?
- Looking at 6:2b-5…
  - What is wrong with arguments and slander within and among God's people?
  - Do people try and show godliness today to gain wealth?
  - What might fake godliness look like today? What might people try to gain?
- Looking at 6:6-10…
  - Where is true wealth found? Why?
  - What is it about money that leads us away from godliness?
- Looking at 6:11-21…
  - 6:12 – what does 'fighting the good fight for the true faith' mean?
  - 6:15-16 – what would it look like to live in light of this truth?
  - 6:21 – have you ever wandered from the faith? What was it like?
    - What brought you back?

Thinking about our own walks with Jesus…

- Would you describe yourself as content? What could you change to help you feel content? What do you need to take up or give up?
- How can you pursue faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness this week?

Serve
How can you be generous this week?

Build
How does this chapter help us reach out to those who do not yet know God? What motivation does it give you?

Prayer
Close in prayer for each other: pray for true wealth and contentment.

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Study 7: Stay faithful

Live
When was the last time you cried? Was it tears of joy or sadness?

Love
Start your time together in prayer and worship; you could use one of the Psalms to help frame this time.

Grow
Read 2 Timothy 1 together.

- What does this passage tell us about:
  - God?
  - Humanity?
  - The church/God's people specifically?
- Looking at 1:1-4…
  - Why did Paul have such a depth of feeling for Timothy?
  - Did Paul really pray 'night and day' for him?
- Looking at 1:5-11…
  - 1:5 – do you have a 'spiritual heritage' from your family/friends? How did it help you?
  - 1:6 – What gifts has God given you?
    - How can you 'fan them into flames'?
  - 1:8 – Are you ever ashamed to tell others about Jesus? Why/why not?
  - 1:9 – What does Paul mean that God planned this before the beginning of time?
- Looking at 1:12-18…
  - 1:12 – Have you ever suffered for knowing Jesus?
  - 1:14 – How can we guard the truth given to us? Who helps us?

Thinking about our own walks with Jesus…

- Where could you be more self-disciplined this week? Can you group help you?
- How much time to give to prayer? Could you pray an extra 5 minutes each day this week?

Serve
Challenge: learn more about your persecuted brothers and sisters and consider how you might support them practically. Open Doors might be a good place to start.

Build
How can you grow in confidence in sharing the good news of Jesus? What one action would help you grow in confidence this week?

Prayer
Close in prayer for each other: pray for each other to be unashamed by the good news of Jesus.

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Study 8: Suffering and opposition

Live
Are you athletic? Does running and sport interest you? Why/why not?

Love
Start your time together in prayer and worship; maybe reflect on 2:11-13 together.

Grow
Read 2 Timothy 2 together.

- What does this passage tell us about:
  - God?
  - Humanity?
  - The church/God's people specifically?
- Looking at 2:1-2…
  - How many generations of Christian are mentioned here?
  - What does it mean to keep passing the baton of faith on to others?
- Looking at 2:3-13…
  - What aspects of a solider/athlete should we imitate?
  - What do you think 2:6 means?
  - 2:8-9 – why does Paul link preaching the Good News and suffering? Why is he willing to endure it?
  - 2:11-13 – what do these verses especially tell us about God and us?
- Looking at 2:14-19…
  - 2:15 – what does it mean to 'work hard' as a Christian? Does this contradict God's grace?
  - What is God's truth specifically referring to in these verses?
- Looking at 2:20-26…
  - What is the contrast between cheap and expensive utensils trying to tell us?
  - 2:26 – how has the devil trapped some people in Ephesus? What could this trap be for us today?

Thinking about our own walks with Jesus…

- 2:16 – is your speech Godly? What do you need to change this week?
- 2:21-22 – how are you pure/impure? Is there anything you need to run away from?
- 2:24 – are you a person of peace? Why/why not? What could you change?

Serve
How can you support a less mature Christian this week? Are you mentoring someone regularly?

Build
Do you worry about what might happen if you share the Good News of Jesus? How can you grow in confidence with your friends/colleagues?

Prayer
Close in prayer for each other: pray for you to be 'ready for the Master to use you for every good work'.

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Study 9: The Last Days

Live
What is your favourite book (and you can't say the Bible…)

Love
Start your time together in prayer and worship; you could reflect on John 1:1-5 and Jesus as the Word of God.

Grow
Read 2 Timothy 3 together.

- What does this passage tell us about:
  - God?
  - Humanity?
  - The church/God's people specifically?
- Looking at 3:1-9…
  - What in 3:1-5 can you see happening in today's culture? Where can you see it happening in the church?
  - What do you think 3:5 refers to? What power makes us godly?
  - 3:8 refers to Exodus 7:8-13, 8:18, 9:11. Are there other links to the Exodus story in this passage?
  - Why will false teachers be found out?
- Looking at 3:10-17…
  - 3:10-11 - is Paul being boastful here? Is it justified?
  - 3:13 – why do evildoers/imposters flourish?
  - 3:14-17 – what role should Scripture play in our lives? Why?

Thinking about our own walks with Jesus…

- Read through 3:1-5 again. What one or two things in the list especially speak to you? What could you ask God to change this week?
- Have you ever faced persecution for your faith? What was it like?
- How much do you read Scripture and let it affect your life? What next step could you take to read your Bible more?

Serve
Can you be an accountability partner for someone else in the group? Start with some of the list from 3:1-5 or Bible reading.

Build
Does the fact that we are living in 'the last days' affect how you view your non-Christian friends/family/colleagues? How?

Prayer
Close in prayer for each other: pray for Jesus the Living Word to transform us.

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Study 10: Final Words…

Live
What would you like your final words to be? What one thing would you like to be remembered for?

Love
Start your time together in prayer and worship; thank God that he is always with us.

Grow
Read 2 Timothy 4 together.

- What does this passage tell us about:
  - God?
  - Humanity?
  - The church/God's people specifically?
- Looking at 4:1-8…
  - What does Paul urge Timothy right at the start of this passage?
  - 4:1-2 - how does this apply to you?
  - Do you see any evidence of 4:3-4 today? Where and in what way?
  - 4:6-8 – is only Paul able to speak of his walk with God like this? Who can say 'they finish the race' well?
  - 4:8 – what prize is Paul talking about? Is it good motivation for us to follow Jesus more closely or not? Why?
- Looking at 4:9-22…
  - How is Paul living in light of 4:1 through this passage?
  - 4:14-15 – is Paul harsh here? How important is it to protect God's people?
- Looking back over all of 1 & 2 Timothy, what one thing has God spoken to you about?

Thinking about our own walks with Jesus…

- 4:5 – what ministry has God given you specifically? Are you 'fully carrying it out'?
- How can we live differently knowing that Jesus is returning one day?
- Who are the close Christian friends who can speak into your life and support you?

Serve
How can you serve your close friends this week?

Prayer
Close in prayer for each other: pray for God to keep speaking to you through these books.

Appendix 1 – Women in Ministry (Notes from STJ Sermon 11-11-18)

- STJ is unequivocal about this as a leadership – we want women teaching, leading, preaching. Doesn't mean it's impossible to hold the other view though.
- What is said here is only about women in leadership, and not about other social issues in the NT/Paul. Might be some overlap but can't equate this necessarily with other issues.
- Two major errors with texts like this:
    - Easy to scrub this passage out because it offends our 21st Century enlightened views. It's God's word – can't just ignore it.
    - BUT also easy to read this without considering the 1st Century context OR the wider NT context of Paul/Jesus/Early Church. (Paul is remarkably pro-women in general).
- Regardless what you think about this issue, difference in role does not mean difference in value – that's an unbiblical thought. This passage does challenge our worldview: Paul often talks about how we shouldn't give less honour to parts of the body doing less honourable things.
  Your role does not determine your worth – Jesus gives us our worth.

Some context for Ephesus:

- Key thing to understand: 'Propriety' starts and ends this passage.
    - Good order is really important. God is an ordered God.
    - Think of the structure of Question Time, or of other debates, or of an election husting – good order for a reason! Best way for candidates to get their points across.
- Christian worship was in the public area of the home.

<u>2:8-10 - What was going wrong?</u>

- Men – praying in anger!
    - **Attitude** was wrong. How would it look if they were just angry all the time?
    - Guests coming in – how would it look?
- Women – dressing immodestly! Paul is taking aim at a much bigger target – the new Roman woman.
    - In nearly all Jewish/pagan texts, rejecting external adornment was part of woman's submission to her husband (they indicated material extravagance and sexual infidelity, not good things).
    - Transgressed traditional dress code of respectability. Think of parents saying 'you're not going out like that are you?'
    - Augustus legislated against it.
    - An enlarged public profile would expose these women to the same critical eye that looked with suspicion and disdain on the anti-traditional new woman.
    - Paul did not want women classed as these new women to bring witness and mission into jeopardy.
    - **All about attitude, again.**

So, 2:8-10 seems to be about attitude and how we do things in church, for both men and women.

<u>2:11-12:</u>

Lots of evidence elsewhere that women had an increasingly public role to play in Paul's churches and there was a presence of a fundamental equality principle within in gospel.

We see women teaching elsewhere in the NT, speaking in church, prophesying etc. For example, Timothy was taught by his mother and grandmother (2 Tim 1:5, 3:15); women pray/prophesy (1 Cor. 11:5); women teach (Acts 18:26) and are seen as leaders/key church members (Rom. 16:1-7).

Some key language things to say about vv11-12:

- 'Peaceably' is a version of the no argumentativeness that was required of men in 2:8. Both words for silence are about being peaceable c.f. 2:2.
    - What is involved is the opposite of being a trouble-maker, a stirrer up of things.
- Submission here is submission to the teaching of the church, submission to the word of God.
- Teach (not teach a man – man is only the object of the second sentence) – problem with false teachers.
- Authority – about overbearing, a kind of going on about it constantly.
    - Nolland: My guess is that in 1 Timothy it is likely to mean something like 'browbeat' or dominate.
    - It is probably chosen to be deliberately colourful language, where the more literal force of the word might be something like 'beat up' or even the original 'murder'.

- "I do not permit a woman to teach for the purpose of gaining total mastery or domination over a man". Once again, Paul asserts that a woman should be peaceable and submitted to God's Word.
- This applies to men as well (remember the context)!

Picture is that the women in Ephesus have not grasped the bigger picture for whatever reason – too enamoured with being a 'new woman' and taking a new role in society. NOT that this is unacceptable (Paul is lifting the lid on quite a masculine world), but they have over-stepped the mark in some way.

2:13-14:

- If women were more and more taking the role of men and disrespected them, 2:13 is a reminder that Genesis in no way allows them to do that. 2:14 also reminds them that they were not free from the consequence of sin (we are *all* unfinished) and perhaps illustrates the deception of the women by the false teachers.

2:15:

- The verse might mean that women can be saved while they are still in a childbearing state, i.e. while they are feminine.
- McKnight suggests that Paul aims to counter the view of the sexually promiscuous New Roman Woman, for whom getting married and having children was, quite frankly, boring and oppressive.
- Paul counters this view with one that says that childbearing is a good and Godly path for a woman – much better than a noisy, sexually promiscuous life.
- This is a bomb – only way to make sense of this passage is the New Roman Woman (see **Introduction**). Means must read the rest of the passage like this too.