

Series: True Church Leadership: Christ Jesus

Title: False Teachers. Text: 1 Timothy 1:1-11

Introduction

This morning, we are starting a new series called “True Church Leadership: Christ Jesus.” Honestly, this topic feels heavy to me. We are going to look at a letter the Apostle Paul wrote to the early church leadership. As we read his letter, I often struggle. His words challenge my own feelings and my natural habits.

When I struggle, I remember the hard truth in [Jeremiah 17:9](#). It says, *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?”* I have learned that we cannot fully know our own hearts. Even worse, our hearts can trick us into believing things about God that are not true. That is a scary thought. For a long time, I tried to live my life based on my feelings. I did what seemed right to me. But now I see that feelings make a weak foundation.

In this series, Jesus invites us into something deeper than changing feelings or human ideas. He asks us to trade our flawed habits for His unchanging Word. We must remember that we are not just studying a list of church rules. We are looking at the heart of our Savior. As we seek Him in this series, keep three things in mind:

- **Our words can fail us:** When we rely on ourselves, we often end up in useless arguments.
- **Jesus’ Word has a beautiful purpose:** It is meant to create love from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and a real faith.
- **His Truth is our solid ground:** Our personal rules change all the time. But His true teachings give us a map for a life with real purpose.

Today, I encourage you to accept this challenge. We are not just here to study a manual or debate theology. We are here to step away from our own guesswork and step into a life-giving relationship with our Savior. He is the only one who can help us grow.

Before we open the Word together, will you join me in prayer?

Pray

Heavenly Father, we confess that we often follow our own habits instead of Your truth. Please quiet our minds and soften our hearts as we open Your Word today. May Your Holy Spirit guide us away from human ideas and plant us firmly in a real faith that honors You. Amen.

[Timothy’s Charge - 1 Timothy 1:1-3a](#)

Please join me as we begin in 1 Timothy chapter 1. We will start with the first three verses. Here, we see ‘Timothy’s Charge.’ Listen to the authority and deep love in Paul’s words. He reminds us of the weight and beauty of the good news God gave us.

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, to Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus...

Trading Our Habits for His Authority

Paul did not become a leader because he wanted power or had good ideas. God directly commanded him to lead. We must trade our flawed habits for God's unchanging Word. We must also respect the leaders God chooses. When we understand our calling, we stop guessing. We step into a life of purpose that honors Him.

Building on Our Savior and Hope

Our hearts can trick us. But Paul's greeting points us back to our true foundation. He calls God "our Savior." This means we must trust God's plan to save us, not our own feelings. He also calls Jesus "our hope." This hope is not just a wish for the future. It is solid ground for our lives today. It gives us strength when we feel weak.

Growing Together

We are not here to read a church manual by ourselves. God made us for relationships. Paul calls Timothy his "true child in the faith." This shows the beauty of having a spiritual mentor. Older Christians should help younger ones grow. We must build relationships that look like the heart of Jesus.

Receiving God's Gifts

Instead of building a life on what "feels right," Paul tells us that God offers us three gifts that will guide us. Those are:

- **Grace:** God's completely unearned favor and gift of salvation, provided not by our own works but by His reach toward us. [Ephesians 2:8-9](#) says that: *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*
- **Mercy:** God's daily compassion that spares us from what we deserve, renewing our hope even when we fail. [Lamentations 3:22-23](#) says that: *The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*
- **Peace:** Because Jesus has made us perfectly right with God. [Philippians 4:7](#) says that: *And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

These gifts come from God the Father, Jesus our Lord, and the Holy Spirit our guide. We must plant our lives in these truths and share them with a broken world.

The Job of a Leader

Paul tells Timothy to "remain at Ephesus." This reminds us that church leadership is a big job. Leaders do not just hand out rules. God calls them to be faithful managers. They must teach the truth. They must guide their church with honesty, love, and real faith.

Building Your Circle

Paul did not expect Timothy to lead alone. God does not expect you to live your faith alone, either. To stay grounded in the truth, we need each other.

Dr. Hendricks said every believer needs three people: a Paul, a Barnabas, and a Timothy.

- **You need a Paul:** This is an older or wiser Christian. They mentor you. They show you your blind spots. They point you back to the truth when your feelings trick you.
- **You need a Barnabas:** This is a friend who encourages you. They stand with you. They hold you accountable. They give you grace in hard times.
- **You need a Timothy:** This is a younger Christian. You teach them what God has taught you. We should not just keep God's grace for ourselves. We must let it flow to the next generation.

Your Challenge This Week:

Look closely at your life. Ask yourself: Which of these people am I missing? If you do not have a Paul, ask God for courage, and invite an older, wiser believer to lunch just to hear their story. You don't have to formally ask them to be your mentor right away, just start learning from them. If you do not have a Barnabas, take the first step. Send a text or buy someone coffee to start a real friendship. If you do not have a Timothy, look around our church this Sunday. Who is God asking you to help? Take one simple step this week: learn their name, ask how you can pray for them, or invite them to sit with you next week.

The Use and the Abuse of the Gospel - 1 Timothy 1:3b-6

Please follow along as we continue in verses 3 through 6. Here, Paul draws a sharp line. He shows us the true purpose of the Good News. He also warns us about distractions that pull us away. Let's look at how a "pure heart" is different from "useless arguments."

...so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith. The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion...

Protecting the Pure Truth

Keeping our teaching pure is not about winning arguments. It is not about forcing people to follow strict rules. It is about protecting the hearts of God's people. Paul told Timothy to confront false teaching. God calls us to be just as careful today. False ideas often come from our own changing feelings and human wisdom. These ideas can easily lead believers away. They can also break the unity of our church. We must have courage and a deep understanding of the Bible to face these false teachings. But we must always do this with real love. We want to gently guide our church family back to our solid foundation in Jesus.

Rejecting Guesses for God's Plan

Paul warns us not to waste time on "myths and endless genealogies." These things only create empty guesses. When we rely on ideas outside the Bible, or when we get caught up in controversies that "feel" right, we quickly get confused. Instead, we must build our lives on God's plan. This plan comes by faith. The Christian life means trusting God's unchanging Word. It does not mean getting into useless arguments that divide our church. We must focus our energy on the core truths of Jesus and how they change our daily lives.

The Real Goal: A Love that Changes Us

The world's wisdom often leads to pride and division. But the goal of our teaching is love. This is not just a temporary feeling. It is a clear choice that comes from a changed life. This love shows up in how we serve our church and our neighbors. To keep this love strong, Paul points us away from ourselves. He points us toward three gifts from God:

- **A Pure Heart:** Having clean thoughts and good intentions.
- **A Clear Conscience:** Living free from past guilt. Living in a way that matches God's standards.
- **A Real Faith:** Trusting God without faking it. Building a faith that is honest and true.

Growing Together Through Mentorship

Timothy had a hard job. But his steady faith is a great example for us. Protecting the church from false ideas is a heavy weight. Because of this, we desperately need deep, life-giving relationships. Paul's letter shows us how important it is to mentor others. Older believers must invest time in the next generation. They must help younger Christians learn to spot and reject false teaching. In the end, we are all responsible for studying the Bible. We must let it guide our lives so we do not wander into the empty guesses Jesus wants to save us from.

Illustration: Singing Truth in an Age of Guesswork

Let's look at an example from our worship service today. I asked Miguel to lead us in singing "Goodness of God." Help me sing this chorus:

And all my life You have been faithful
And all my life You have been so, so good
With every breath that I am able
Oh, I will sing of the goodness of God

When we stand together in this room and sing this song, it is a beautiful and moving experience. But songs like this also show a tension many churches face today. This song, like many others, comes from a church movement that has seen a lot of controversy. Some of these groups promote questionable teachings, like the idea that God always promises wealth and health. Some of their leaders have also faced serious moral failures. Many pastors fear what is called the "pipeline effect." They worry that singing a beautiful song on Sunday might lead a vulnerable person to download a podcast on Monday that teaches false ideas.

This is exactly why Paul's warning to Timothy matters so much today. We must use deep, biblical wisdom to protect the truth. If we sing a song from a controversial source, we cannot just blindly accept the movement behind it. We must carefully anchor the lyrics in the unchanging truth of the Bible.

When we approach worship this way, this song becomes more than an emotional high or a temporary feeling. It transforms into a bold declaration of biblical truth, anchoring our hearts not in how we feel, but in the unchanging Word of God. By doing this, we consciously trade our flawed habits and shifting emotions for His authority and solid ground. We are celebrating that we can sing of God's goodness even when our circumstances are difficult, effectively separating the true message of His grace from the empty guesses of human wisdom. This intentional, grounded worship is what helps us move beyond self-reliance to build the pure heart, clear conscience, and real faith that Paul commands.

Apply

Since true, grounded worship requires a pure heart and a real faith, how do we protect ourselves from empty guesses this week?

- **Check Your Inputs:** *What voices are shaping my faith right now?* This week, pick one podcast, book, or worship band you listen to often. Carefully compare its main message against the solid truth of the Bible.
- **Check Your Motives:** *When I talk about God or church, am I trying to win an argument, or am I trying to show love?* The next time you want to start a debate, stop. Pray for a loving heart before you speak.
- **Talk to Your Mentors:** *Am I trying to figure out the truth all by myself?* Reach out to your "Paul" or "Barnabas" this week. Talk to them about a Bible verse or a podcast you are wrestling with. Let their wisdom help keep you grounded.

As we learn to filter out these empty guesses and focus on the true gospel, we must also be careful with how we handle God's rules. This brings us to Paul's warnings about the law in the next section of our scripture.

The Lawful and Unlawful Use of Law - 1 Timothy 1:7-10

In verses 7 through 10, Paul talks about people who want to teach God's rules without understanding them. Listen closely as he explains the right way to use the Law. It is not a heavy weight for good people to carry. Instead, it is a mirror for those who have wandered away from the truth.

...desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions. Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine,

Teaching with True Understanding

Teaching God's Word is not about acting confident or relying on human ideas. It is a big responsibility that requires a humble heart. If we try to lead without knowing the truth deeply, our ignorance can easily hurt the church. We might lead people away from God. We must always be willing to learn and grow. We must ask the Holy Spirit to guide us as we read the Bible so we do not wander into the false teachings we are trying to avoid.

The Real Purpose of God's Rules

Paul reminds us that God's law is good because it shows us His perfect character. But we must use it the right way. God never meant for the law to be a heavy burden. It is not a tool to prove how good we are, or to earn our own salvation. If we try to use it that way, we fall into the trap Paul warns about in [Galatians 2:21](#): *I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.* The law's real purpose isn't to make us righteous, but to show us our need for Jesus.

A Guide for Our Hearts

When we trust our own feelings more than the Bible, we easily accept the world's changing rules. Paul lists some serious sins here. This list reminds us what happens when we ignore God's truth. The law acts as a moral guide. It exposes evil in the world and in our own lives. It calls us to look at ourselves honestly and to always be ready to turn away from our sin.

Changing Through Grace

The law is perfect at showing us our sin. It proves that we cannot save ourselves. But the law cannot fix us. Only the grace of Jesus can change our hearts. As believers, the heavy weight of the law no longer crushes us. We live under grace. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to live the right way. We do not do this by following an exhausting list of rules. We do it through real love and joyful obedience to our Savior.

The Mirror, the Club, and the Magnifying Glass

Today, it is very easy to use God's law the wrong way. This usually happens when we forget about grace. Often, it starts quietly. We begin to treat our faith like a business deal. We think that if we follow the rules perfectly, God owes us a good, comfortable life. We create a culture where we always have to perform. Then, when hard times come, we feel crushed. We wonder why we were not "good enough" to earn God's protection.

Other times, we turn the law into a magnifying glass. God meant it to be a mirror to show us our own need for a Savior. But instead, we use it to judge the sins of everyone else. We build an "us versus them" religion. We loudly judge the world's failures, but we ignore the pride, greed, and lack of love in our own hearts. We might even use the law like a club. We put heavy rules on other people and think that strict rule-keeping makes us spiritually mature.

Paul reminds us that the law is not a club to control people. It is not a magnifying glass to judge the world. It is not a contract to earn God's love. Its beautiful purpose is to show us an honest picture of our own broken hearts. When we see our need, we stop trying to save ourselves and run directly into the arms of Jesus. When we use the law the right way, it does not crush us with shame or puff us up with pride. It gently leads us straight to grace.

Apply

If the lawful purpose of God's commands is simply to lead us straight to His grace, we have to honestly evaluate how we are wielding the Bible in our daily lives.

- **Look in the Mirror:** Am I using God's word to examine my own heart, or as a magnifying glass to judge the culture around me? Spend ten minutes in prayer this week asking the Holy Spirit to reveal any hidden pride or sin in your own life, rather than focusing on the failings of the world.
- **Drop the Club:** Do I place heavy, extra-biblical expectations on myself or the people I love? Identify one area where you are equating rigid rule-keeping with spiritual maturity, and intentionally surrender that expectation to the Lord.
- **Ditch the Transaction:** Am I treating my relationship with God like a contract where my obedience earns His blessing? When you fail or fall short this week, instead of punishing yourself or striving harder, actively choose to thank God out loud that your standing with Him is based entirely on Christ's grace.

When we stop using the law as a weapon or a contract and let it drive us to Jesus, we are finally positioned to truly understand the glorious nature of the God who saves us.

The Nature of God - 1 Timothy 1:11

We close our reading today with verse 11. Everything we just read points to one big truth. The warnings and the rules all find their anchor right here: in the good news of our glorious God.

...in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

Finding Our Anchor in a Joyful God

When our own feelings and the chaos of the world toss us around, Paul points us to our true anchor. He points us to the good news of the "blessed God." This is not just a dry idea or a strict list of rules. It is the real, life-giving truth of who God is. The word "blessed" means He is completely joyful, completely in control, and totally good. When we build our lives on His good news, He invites us to share in that deep, unchanging joy. We can stop carrying the heavy weight of trying to make ourselves happy. We can find perfect rest in Him alone.

Protecting a Beautiful Gift

Paul knew this incredible good news was a gift God "entrusted" to him. God gives us this same trust today. We are not just supposed to sit back and receive grace. God calls us to actively protect and share this message. Doing this takes a lot of honesty and humility. It means we must let go of our own "human wisdom." We must let the Holy Spirit change our hearts every day. Then, our lives and our leadership will show the world the glorious, loving heart of our Savior.

Showing His Heart to the World

In the end, everything Paul tells Timothy to do has one beautiful purpose: to show the world what God is like. True church leadership is never about acting like the police. It is not about winning debates or relying on our own strength. It is about knowing our Savior deeply. It is about letting His grace flow into all our relationships. When we accept this challenge, we step into the real spiritual growth God created us for. We give a broken world a beautiful picture of our glorious and joyful God.

Illustration: The "Social Media Theologian" vs. The Joyful Witness

Imagine a dedicated church member who spends hours every week online. They listen to podcasts that criticize other Christians. They argue in the comment sections about theology. They loudly complain about the newest worship songs. They think they are defending the faith. They act like a theological watchdog for the church.

But when their unbelieving co-worker or neighbor looks at their life, what do they see? They do not see the love of Christ. They see someone who is always angry, easily offended, anxious, and deeply unhappy. People only know them by what they are *against*, not what they are *for*.

The sad truth is that this person is trying hard to defend the gospel, but they are completely misrepresenting our "blessed God". As we learned, "blessed" means supremely joyful, fully satisfied, and perfectly at peace. If our God is truly glorious, secure, and overflowing with joyful love, our lives should show that same steady peace.

When we get caught up in the anger of the modern world, we act just like the false teachers Paul warned about. We get lost in "useless arguments." We argue over small issues, "cancel" other believers, and divide over politics. Even worse, we show a tired, broken world a picture of a miserable, defensive God. We fail to show them the glorious, joyful God who invites them into His rest.

Apply

When the world looks at how we interact with our community, they should see a reflection of a joyful, perfectly satisfied Savior, not an angry watchdog.

- **Check Your Witness:** Am I known more by what I am against, or by the love and joy of what I am for? Ask a trusted friend or your "Barnabas" how they see your daily life. Is it marked by frustration and anger, or by a steady, joyful peace?
- **Seek God Before You Police Others:** Do I spend more time policing the behavior of others than I do seeking the heart of God? Dedicate your next quiet time entirely to praising God for His goodness. Rest in His presence, instead of asking Him to fix the world's problems or complaining about the culture.
- **Reflect the King:** Does my life give a broken world an attractive picture of our "blessed God"? Find one specific way you can show God's unearned grace and joy to a difficult coworker, neighbor, or family member this week.

Embodying this kind of joyful, grace-filled life is not something we can do on our own. This is why we must continually rest in His glorious gospel as we wrap up our time today.

Conclusion - Resting in His Glorious Gospel

As we finish up today, I want to leave you with one main goal for the week: build your life on the solid foundation of Jesus. You can do this in your own heart and in how you treat others. First, take one real step to connect with your church family. Text a "Barnabas" to encourage them, invite a "Paul" to lunch to learn from them, or get to know a "Timothy" you can help.

Second, as you go about your week, whether you're scrolling on your phone, listening to music, or hanging out with friends, choose to happily protect the truth. Don't be an angry watchdog who only wants to enforce rules. Instead, be someone who reminds yourself and others about God's free gift of grace.

We don't have to stress out trying to be "good enough," and we don't have to guess what God wants from us. We can simply rest in the good news of Jesus and invite others to do the same.

Paul's message to us today is clear, but it is also a big challenge. It is easy to rely on our feelings. It is easy to get swept up in human ideas. It is tempting to use God's rules like a heavy club to prove we are right. But God offers us a much better way to live.

He asks us to stop guessing and striving. Instead, He gives us the solid ground of His grace, mercy, and peace. He reminds us that His law is not here to crush us. It is a mirror that shows how desperately we need a Savior. Everything we talked about today points to one beautiful truth: the good news of our glorious, joyful God. When we build our lives on Him, we are not just following a list of rules. We are stepping into a real, life-changing relationship with a God who is totally good. As a church family, let us protect this pure message. Let us grow together, and let His love flow through us to a world that needs it so much.

Invitation

Perhaps you walked in today feeling the heavy weight of trying to be "good enough." You might be constantly striving to meet a standard you can never quite reach. Or maybe you feel lost. You might be caught up in changing feelings or a culture that promises happiness but always leaves you empty.

Today, Jesus is inviting you to stop striving. He invites you to look into the mirror of His Word, admit you need Him, and step into His incredible grace. You do not have to clean yourself up first. You just have to come to Him. If you have never trusted in "God our Savior and Christ Jesus our hope," we would love to introduce you to Him today.

For those of us who already know Him, the invitation is to lay down our pride. Let's stop the theological debates that lead nowhere. Let's ask the Holy Spirit to renew our pure hearts, our clear consciences, and our real faith.

If you need prayer, if you want to know more about following Jesus, or if you simply need someone to stand with you today, our prayer team is here at the front. Please come forward as we sing this final song.