

## 1 Timothy #12

July 13, 2025

## Series: Body Essentials: Imperatives for Church and Leaders

## Today's Message: Church, Keep the Main One the Main Thing! 1 Timothy 3:14-16

What if the letter Paul wrote to Timothy was full of ideas and suggestions for Timothy to consider, so that he could grow the church. Can you imagine Paul writing, "Try this, Timothy. Try having a Sunday service centered around a theme, such as "old fashioned Sunday. Or maybe a Sunday service centered around the Superbowl. Or a Sunday centered around children, or mothers, or fathers." What if Paul suggested gimmicks such as, *if we have so many new people in the next month, the pastor will have his head shaved?* Or what if he pushed for Timothy to preach family friendly sermons; or sermons centered on the "cause of the day?" What if Paul decided that preaching Christ was just not relevant anymore? What if Paul taught Timothy that instead of the Church being the "household of God," "the Church of the Living God," and "the pillar and buttress of truth,"—what if he declared the church to be a *family gathering, the church of committed friends, and the protector and provider of individual expression?* There would be no church of the Living God in Ephesus, where Timothy was ministering.

1 Timothy 3:14-16 is sobering. We learn the purpose as to why 1 Timothy was written. We learn who the Church belongs to. We learn what the Church is to stand for. And we learn the message of the Church. Paul's aim is not to make us great in our own eyes, but to make the Triune God great again in the Church. We must keep the main one the main thing! That's imperative. Or we don't have a church.

- I) **(3:14-15a) Make Biblical Conduct Great Again in the Church.**
  - A) Conduct in the church is the theme of 1 Timothy.
    - 1) The first 3 chapters are very positive.
    - 2) The last 3 chapters are filled with warnings.
  - B) "...so that *you* (singular) may know how people are to conduct themselves...*in the church*"
    - 1) Timothy has to know *how* to conduct himself if he is going to teach how the people are to conduct themselves in the church.
      - (a) So, Paul writes Timothy to teach him so he can teach others.
        - (i) You will notice in all of Paul's teaching that he emphasizes a consistent pattern of life.
      - 2) And, if we are going to conduct ourselves biblically, behaving in the Church as God desires...
        - (a) He lays out three essential realities of the Church that must be held on too and guarded.
          - (i) (3:15b) The Church is God's church, not our church.
          - (ii) (3:15c) The Church is to be the shining light of God's Truth in the world!
          - (iii) (3:16) The Church is to be the preacher of the message of Christ in the world.
- II) **(3:15b) Make the Triune God Great Again in the Church.**
  - A) What does "Church" mean? *Ecclesia* means "assembly of people." It can be any assembly of any group. But the Church being spoken of, and the way we are to understand it: **The Church belongs to God. The Church to which Paul refers is in no sense a human institution! It is God's Church, His family!**
    - 1) Think of Jesus' words in Matthew 16:18: On this rock (on God's fulfilled prophecies concerning Christ, and on His person and works) I will build by church (My assembly of people (called out ones)).
      - (a) It is God's Church. Here we begin to see the Godhead emerge in the definition of "God's church."
  - B) God's *household*: Like a *family*. As God's family we are to conduct ourselves appropriately.
    - 1) The idea of the Church as God's family is also noticed in Gal. 6:10; Heb. 3:6; and 1 Peter 4:17.
    - 2) God has gathered His people to His assembly. It's His church.
      - (a) Ephesians 2:19: "...you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household (His family)."
      - (i) Can you hear the words in the hymn, "elect from every nation yet one o'er all the earth."
  - C) The Church of the Living God
    - 1) The Living God. Unlike the pagan religions whose gods are mere idols and fictitious characters, God is the eternal living God. (On worthless idols see Ps. 115:4-8; Habakkuk 2:18; Is. 44:9-20)
      - (a) He has not simply asked people to join His assembly, He's gathered His assembly!

- (b) The Church is His b/c He purchased His assembly, His chosen people, with His own blood!
    - (i) Acts 20:28 says so referring to God the Son: “He purchased it with His own blood!”
      - (a) Eph. 1:14: The Church is called “God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory!”
        - 1. Other verses to look up: Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9; Rev. 5:9
  - 2) The Church of the Living God is Light in a dark and gloomy world of false religion.
    - (a) APPL: Having an active awareness that the Church is the Living God’s Church—that is, keeping the main One the main thing—will inform our conduct and spur us on to **a faithful ministry of the Word of Truth and the Gospel to a lost world.**
- III) **(3:15c) Make the Truth Great Again in the Church.**
- A) In war the most devastating defeats usually begin with compromise and corruption.
    - 1) In the Church when Truth is compromised and corrupted the Church is no longer useful.
      - (a) Improper conduct takes root in the members.
      - (b) The message of Christ is shuttered, and an empty message makes the church useless.
  - B) The Church is the *pillar and foundation* of the Truth.
    - 1) Pillar: Paul is picturing the magnificent temples of idol worship with their magnificent pillars.
      - (a) The pillars were gifts of the king. They glorified the king.
      - (b) The pillars served the vital function of holding up the roof of the temple.
    - 2) Foundation: The Church supports the Truth.
      - (a) It is not the foundation for the truth; it holds up the truth for the world to see it!
  - C) The Church is made up of the chosen people of God.
    - 1) Therefore, when the people of God stand boldly and preach the Word it is the pillar and foundation of Truth.
    - 2) When it hides the Truth or compromises and corrupts the Truth it is no longer serving its purpose and mission in the world.
  - D) The Church is God’s means of supporting and safeguarding the Truth!
    - 1) Every member has a responsibility to learn, know and uphold the Truth!
      - (a) To sinners the Truth is a saving treasure for their salvation.
      - (b) For Christians the Truth is a sanctifying treasure for their edification and growth!
  - E) **APPL:** What are you doing to uphold the truth? What are you doing to know the Truth.
    - 1) The most faithful and useful believers are those who learn, meditate on, and obey the Truth!
      - (a) See Ps. 19:14; Ps. 119:11; 2 Timothy 2:15; Joshua 1:8; Luke 11:28.
    - 2) If you are hiding the Truth from your family, friends and others, what will you do to change that?
- IV) **(3:16) Make the Gospel Great Again in the Church.**
- A) The Word of God is a vast inexhaustible storehouse of Truth. But the most essential Truth for the Church to uphold and proclaim is the message of Jesus Christ. It is the core of all that we teach and preach.
    - 1) All Scripture points to the person and work of Christ Jesus!
      - (a) Luke 24:46-47 says, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to the nations beginning in Jerusalem.” (Also, read Acts 10:37-43 and see what Peter proclaimed!)
  - B) (3:16) Paul sets forth the message to be upheld and proclaimed:
    - 1) A Common Confession: NIV misses the thrust. It is better stated, “And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness:”
      - (a) It means “To say the same thing.” It’s the truth that everyone agrees with unanimous conviction!
    - 2) The mystery of godliness is the great truth of salvation and righteousness revealed in Christ. Once hidden, now revealed!
    - 3) The hymn: “He (God) appeared in a body (incarnation), was vindicated by the Spirit (justified, declared to the Son of God through His sacrifice unto death and raised in power, declared to be the Son of God), was seen by angels, was preached (not hidden) among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.”
  - C) Make the Gospel Great again! Our mission and message hinges on keeping the main One the main thing!
    - 1) **APPL:** What are you doing to know and love the message of the Gospel. Is it primary in your life?