

## Keep on message

Paul understands what's at stake in Ephesus. If the believers are distracted by the false teaching they're hearing they may turn away from the *hope [they have] set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all people, especially of those who believe.*

He encourages Timothy to be both **consistent** and **persistent** in expressing the promise found in Jesus Christ in 'the present life and the life to come.'

- How do you feel about being **consistent** and **persistent** in the Christian life?



According to The Age, Alastair Clarkson, coach of the Hawthorn AFL team, has shaped his coaching path around picking up knowledge from a host of sources. He has tremendous belief in people and always sees their development possibilities. Think of a person who has believed you could achieve something you had doubts about.

- What did the person say or do to encourage you?

Paul has confidence that Timothy will achieve the goals he's set him.

- What do you think of when someone tells you to keep on message? What kind of actions do you take to achieve that?
- Think of Paul as a director and Timothy as an executive manager. What do you think of the direction Paul gives Timothy? How do you think Timothy would go about implementing the direction he has been given?

*Our hope is set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all people, especially of those who believe and we hold that promise for both the present life and the life to come.*



This study prepared 27.9.08 by Dianne Shay at St Michaels Anglican Church North Carlton and may be reproduced for non-profit use for study groups



Small Group Notes

the first letter to timothy

## Lessons on Life in the Church #5 How to keep on message

*"The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance;...we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all people, especially of those who believe. These are the things you must insist on and teach. 1 Timothy 4:9-11*

Study No.5

### Doing a proper job...

What do you think typifies doing a job properly?

Think of a time you've wanted to focus on a strategic task but something's happened to distract you.

- How did you feel about the distraction?
- How long did it take to return to your original aim?
- What did you do to get 'back on track'?



In 2006, Mark Thompson, coach of the Geelong AFL team, was voted "Coach most likely to go at the end of the season." He then lead Geelong to a premiership in 2007.

- What are the advantages and challenges of 'staying for the long haul'?
- What do you admire or dislike about leaders who remain in a role for a long time?

## Re-cap



### 1. Desperate times

Split the following passages between the group. Diagnose what the problems are that Timothy is facing in Ephesus.

Verse in 1 Timothy	Diagnosis
1:3-4,6-7	
1:19-20	
2:1-2,8	
2:9-12	
3:1-7	
3:8-13	

## 1 Timothy 4

In chapter 4 Paul starts to pull together the threads of the previous sections.



- READ 1 Timothy 4:1-16. Make a quick note of the passages you think reference the problems already outlined in the letter.

### 2. Christians are free

At the end of chapter 3 Paul asserts the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Now he questions why people are surprised that some would turn away from those truths because, he says, the Holy Spirit has prophesied this would happen.

- Why are we surprised when people leave the church?
- What do you think when you hear of a church leader whose message strays from the gospel?

Paul implies the leaders who are teaching false things about Jesus and the church may still believe the truths of the gospel are right. But they've become so busy with their own ideas that they no longer teach the truth. This is neither surprising nor accidental, according to Paul, but is evidence of the work of Satan.

Look at verse 2. The image is that of a branded slave. A severe burn impacts nerves and skin, the scars left by this type of burn have no feeling. Paul says the consciences of the false teachers are like that scar, they have no feeling in their consciences.

Verse 4 rebuts teachings that restrict or bind a Christian unnecessarily in living out the gospel. Paul stresses that Christians are free and we must not give up our freedom to false spirits. If we believe everything created by God is good, we have freedom to choose. The difference is between being told what to do or not do, and being told we can choose what to do or not do.

- What 'gospel plus' or 'gospel less' ideas have you seen or heard of?

### 3. How to fight false teaching

In chapter 3 Paul has written about the characteristics of leaders. Now, he gives Timothy specific instructions on behaviours he can model and actions he can take to turn around the church in Ephesus.

READ 1 Tim 4:6-16

- Write down the suggestions Paul gives Timothy

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Paul understands we all work better with a bit of encouragement.

- Write down the personal feedback Paul gives Timothy.

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