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## **Explaining how the provided questions have and/or helped one gain benefit from the study of scripture from the bo**

Meditations on Chapter of Timothy In this letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul is writing to provide guidance to Timothy in his role as a leader of the Church at Ephesus. This book is the first of what are known as the Pastoral Epistles, providing instruction and exhortation. Chapter 1 contains a short coverage of the Christian faith, but is worthy of study in and of itself. The example of all Christians is Christ, for as Paul writes: Christ's " perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life" is to be emulated by all who serve Him. (1Tim 1: 16) This has application in our everyday lives, an exhortation that we are to be patient with those who are in sin, loving the sinner but hating the sin. As Christ was patient with Paul, so are we to be patient with our enemies. Paul's command to Timothy to " fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience" (1Tim 1: 18-19) is not just to Timothy alone, but to all Christians. In order to keep a clear conscience, believers are to keep themselves pure. Paul gives multiple examples of sinful behavior such as murder, lying and homosexuality, but he ends his list of examples saying " and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching according to the glorious gospel of God..." (1Tim 1: 10-11) Thus, the practice of that which is contrary to the gospel places one in the same category with rebellious, lawless, ungodly sinners. Christians are partakers of the promise of salvation of sins (1Tim 1: 15) through faith in Jesus Christ, who deserves the obedience of those called according to His name. The mystery of the gospel is that God was merciful toward us while we were His enemies, sending His Son to die for us. Having claimed the promise of

salvation, how then can we betray our Lord and continue to sin against Him? We cannot. We must not. The final comment of Paul from verse 18 to verse 20 is one that many Christians find troubling. Paul states he has delivered over Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan because of their blasphemy. Reflecting on the passage, it is evident that Hymenaeus and Alexander kept neither faith nor a good conscience and in not doing so, they failed to fight the good fight. The meaning of being delivered over to Satan is generally held to mean casting the “so called brother” out of fellowship; (1Cor 5: 11, Eph 5: 8-11) the remainder of the believers in the body ordered not to associate with such a person any longer. Our society of today is condemning of such actions, yet this is obviously a sound teaching in accordance with the gospel of God and failure or refusal to obey is sin. The church has no authority to judge the motives of the heart, a prerogative reserved to God alone. We are only able to see actions and judge accordingly. As the parable of the sheep and the goats taught, there will always be those among the flock who are not committed to Christ. The clearly stated doctrine is judge the behavior to “remove the wicked man from amongst yourselves.” (1Cor 5: 13) This causes difficulty for many believers, and to them we say: “And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve ... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (Jos 24: 15) In reflection on this chapter, the thought has come to me of the need to make a list of my enemies in order to lift them up in prayer in all humility and patience, daily. Work Cited New American Standard Bible. The Lockman Foundation. 1995, Print.