

1 Timothy 1:12-17 Study and Discussion Guide

¹²And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, ¹³ although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained **mercy** because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. ¹⁴ And the **grace** of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with **faith** and **love** which are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. ¹⁶ However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. ¹⁷ Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

1. Comparing vs 12-17 to vs 3-11 how would you describe the passages side by side?
 - a. Who are the subjects of the discussion? (not Timothy, rather the people he is to oppose compared to the subject of 12-17)
 - b. How do the subjects relate to each other? One is a _____ teacher/ Minister and the others are _____ teachers/Ministers.
 - c. What we see are starkly opposing views of doctrine and even opposing views of the Law. One group uses the Law to enslave, berate, and attack. Where the other sees the Law as a means to love and minister.
2. What qualifies a person to be or become a minister?
 - a. What is the primary role of a minister in the body of Christ? Greek root is *διακονος* (Diakonos)
 - b. How necessary is education?
 - c. Is it mandatory that a minister be an eloquent speaker?
 - d. Whose opinion is critical regarding a person who would be a minister to God's people?
 - e. What prerequisite conditions must be met for a person to be a minister??
3. Paul lays out his history stating, "¹³ although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. ¹⁴ And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."
4. Is ignorance mandatory for forgiveness? Saul of Tarsus firmly believed that Jesus was not the promised Messiah and because of that belief he engaged in 'correcting' every person who did express that belief.
 - a. What if a person knows and has been thoroughly taught the reality of the Gospel, is that person held responsible for their refusal to believe?
5. Paul enthrones himself as the Chief of sinners. This naturally implies a level of superior significance.
 - a. Paul establishes himself as "the chief" of sinners. How does the concept of a person being a worse sinner than another fit with the totality of scripture?
 - b. How are sins graded? What makes one sin worse than another?
 - c. What influence is Paul demonstrating when he presents that there are certain sins that are worse than others? He states that blasphemy, persecution, and insolence (*υβριστησ* -hubris) result in him being a 'superior sinner' to someone who say told a little white lie.
 - d. How should we view ourselves in ranking our sinfulness? If you could rank yourself 1 to 10 how bad would you say you were before you were saved? What about now?
 - e. What level of forgiveness does salvation impart to a person? Are we only forgiven a certain amount relative to the sins we committed?

- f. Jesus said there is an unforgivable sin; Matthew 12:31-32 ³¹ “Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. ³² Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.” So what is the one sin that is so BAD God will abandon a person and condemn them to eternal Hell?
 - g. Who cannot be saved?
6. What was Jesus’ response to Saul’s sinfulness?
- a. Paul says that he received or experienced 4 things (vs 13-14) what were they?
 - b. How does Paul’s experience relate to the experience of all other believers?
 - c. How does Paul’s experience of Jesus’ mission compare to what other people might experience? Was his experience better? Did he get more? Is his salvation imparted differently?
7. Paul presents himself as the penultimate example of Jesus’ salvific power. He basically says, ‘If Jesus saved me He can save anybody.’
- a. Is this really a biblical principle?
 - b. Does Paul’s experience degrade or reduce the salvation experienced by any other person?
 - c. Who else can truthfully make claim to be the worst sinner in the world?
8. Considering the totality of this passage it seems that Paul suddenly drops into prayer as he reflects on the impact of Jesus in his life.
- a. Shouldn’t we all be impacted like that?
 - b. Shouldn’t we be more compelled to think of the blessings and grace, and love, and mercy we have been shown? When we think on that shouldn’t we be compelled into thanksgiving prayer just automatically?
 - c. What do you think of when you remember how Christ saved you?
 - d. In verse 17 Paul has some comments regarding the person of God. How does God, Yahweh, Jehovah, Adonia, Jesus measure up to other deities in society?
9. Paul here reminds his young protégé of the place he has come from and the severity of the position he has been placed in along with clearly showing the only path to success, prayerfully following God on a constant basis.