

## The Goal Of Our Instruction

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### Introduction:

There are numerous kinds of teachers in the world today. They are marked with different goals. Some have the goal of making money. Some have the goal of producing a following. Some want power. Some simply want to raise questions and speculation. Some want to cause arguments over pointless issues. Some want to destroy the foundation of the gospel by teaching error. Some want desperately to be considered intelligent by always having something new and different to say, claiming, "I have studied this for myself." But none of these are to mark us as teachers. The scripture tells us what our goal in instruction is to be and it must govern everything we do and say to proclaim the gospel to others. Paul explained the goal of our instruction to Timothy in **I Timothy 1:5**: "But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."

### Discussion:

- I. The goal of our instruction is love.
  - A. In contrast to those false teachers and troublemakers in Ephesus, whose goals were to raise questions, further speculation and delineate pointless issues, Timothy was to focus on love. That is to be our goal as well. The purpose of our preaching is not to put people in their places. It is not to prove we are right and everyone else is wrong. It is not to make people do what they do not want to do. The purpose is to produce love within them. This is the "agape" love we have heard so many sermons about. It is the unconditional love which God had for us (**Romans 5:8**). But notice, Paul does not specify the object of our love. Paul is describing our lives in general, not a particular relationship.
  - B. We are to love God, who first loved us (**I John 4:10, 19**). But this is not some warm, fuzzy feeling inside. This love is an action: the action of obedience (**II John 6; John 14:15, 21**). Therefore, the goal of our instruction is to produce obedience to God (**Matthew 7:21-23**).
  - C. According to **II Thessalonians 2:10**, we are to love the truth. Without that love, there will be no salvation for us. In **II Thessalonians 2:12**, Paul demonstrates that loving the truth is what leads to believing the truth. And of course, believing the truth means obeying the truth. Again, the goal of our instruction is obedience to the truth of God which will set us free (**John 8:32**).
  - D. We are to love our brethren. John speaks of this in **I John 4:7-21**. Jesus commanded it in **John 13:35**. This love is described in **I Corinthians 13:4-7**. Therefore, the goal of our instruction is to produce proper relationships between us.
  - E. We are even to love our enemies. Jesus spoke of this in **Matthew 5:43-48**. Again this love is an action, providing blessing and goodness, even to those who have not and will not provide it in return. Thus, the goal of our instruction is to produce selflessness and humility even in the face of our enemies.
- II. The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart.
  - A. The goal of our instruction is not just about outside action but also about inner motivation and thought. As demonstrated by **I Corinthians 13:3**, someone may perform some action that appears to be love and yet their motivation is not right. Everything we teach is in order to produce love from a pure heart.
  - B. This first calls to mind that we fall short of this requirement by ourselves. As **Proverbs 20:9** says, no one can cleanse his own heart. That is why Jesus died for us, that His blood would sprinkle our hearts clean (**Hebrews 10:19-22**). The Hebrew writer calls to mind **Psalms 24:3-4**. No one but the pure of heart can come to the holy place. Jesus died that our hearts can be sprinkled clean from the wickedness that has taken up residence there. Now that Christ has sprinkled our hearts clean we must maintain purity of heart.
  - C. **II Timothy 2:20-26** demonstrates purity in action. Our instruction teaches us to be an honorable vessel, following after good works. To be pure we must flee youthful lusts and foolish speculations. Rather, we must pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace. We must be kind, patient, able to teach and correcting with gentleness. But in **I Timothy 1:5**, Paul is not speaking just about pure action but about a pure heart.
  - D. Remember Jesus' words about the Pharisees in **Matthew 23:23-28**. Here were men living in hypocrisy. They wanted to appear righteous, so they administered strict rules about certain issues in the law. But, their hearts were wicked. They were the ones of whom Jesus spoke in the Sermon on the Mount who taught you couldn't murder but you could hate (**Matthew 5:21-26**), you can't commit adultery but you can lust in your heart (**Matthew 5:27-28**). You can't lie when saying certain oaths but you can when you don't speak those oaths (**Matthew 5:33-37**). No wonder, Jesus said they were full of "dead men's bones". We must not only purify our actions, but purify our hearts as well. Of course, if our hearts are not pure, we will not be able to keep up the ruse forever. Eventually our actions will follow with our heart (**Matthew 12:33-35**). The goal of our instruction is to produce in us a pure heart and clean mind. Cleansing our heart and mind of the impure thoughts and motives that governed us as non-Christians.

- III. The goal of our instruction is love from a good conscience.
- A. Our demonstration of love toward God, our brethren and even our enemies, stems from the good conscience we want to maintain.
  - B. This good conscience is the beginning of our salvation as demonstrated in **I Peter 3:21**. Our baptism is the answer of a good conscience toward God. That is, because I want to have a good conscience before God I will do what He tells me.
  - C. Paul demonstrates this good conscience in **Acts 23:1**. In describing his entire life, Paul said he always had a good conscience before God. Yet, this man was a murderer of Christians. How could he have had a good conscience? Just as Jesus prophesied in **John 15:20-21**, Paul was murdering in the name of God, because he thought that was God's will. He had a good conscience about what he was doing because he was convinced it was right. However, all of that changed on the road to Damascus in **Acts 9:3-6**. Suddenly, Paul's perspective changed. He had to make a choice. He must either maintain his good conscience or he would continue persecuting Christians. He decided to keep his good conscience. He became a child of God through the blood of Christ and continued to do what he was convinced was right.
  - D. The issue of maintaining a good conscience before God is at the heart of **Romans 14**. In **Romans 14:5**, some believe Paul is speaking to two people who have mutually exclusive beliefs. One thinks a thing is wrong and the other believes it is right. To these, Paul is telling these men to be fully convinced of their positions. But such a view of this verse reduces all the instruction of the gospel to nothingness—since we would no longer be able to correct those who are in error as commanded in **II Timothy 2:25**. Rather, Paul is speaking of a man who is convinced something is right and one who is not convinced it is right. He is not convinced it is wrong, he simply doubts (**Romans 14:23**). His faith is weak (**Romans 14:1-2**). Paul's statement that we are to be fully convinced in our own minds then does not mean we are allowed to have mutually exclusive beliefs of right and wrong, but are not allowed to say anything about it. Rather, it means as individuals, we must be fully convinced that what we are doing is right. If I am not fully convinced, I can no longer maintain a good conscience and I am condemned (**Romans 14:23**). The goal of our instruction is to help others keep their conscience, even if their conscience is more strict than the gospel, so long as they do not make laws for the rest of us where God has made no laws.
- IV. The goal of our instruction is love from a sincere faith.
- A. Our instruction is not only to produce love from a pure heart and a good conscience, but we are striving to produce a sincere or unfeigned (KJV) faith. This unfeigned and sincere faith is a faith without hypocrisy as demonstrated by **James 3:17**. In other words, the goal of our instruction is to help us be consistent in the working of our faith before our brethren and before the world.
  - B. According to *Young's Analytical Concordance*, the term translated sincere or unfeigned here means "undisguised". Thus, the faith we are striving to produce is one that is not covered up or hidden. We must declare our faith to others with our very lives. Our Christianity begins with a declaration of our faith (**Romans 10:9-10**) and our lives must be marked by a confession of Christ before men (**Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 12:8-9**).
  - C. Peter urges this sincere and undisguised faith in **I Peter 2:11-12** and in **I Peter 4:1-6**. We are to live as Christians, differently from the world (**Romans 12:2**). We must not disguise our faith before others, even if they malign us. This refers not only to maintaining moral purity in their presence but also doctrinal purity. We need to be willing to tell others the truth of God's word and not disguise any part of our faith. The goal of our instruction is to strengthen us that we may believe, practice and teach our faith without hypocrisy.

### Conclusion:

There are two applications to gain from the study of I Timothy 1:5. The first is what we have already discussed throughout the lesson. That is, each of us, as teachers, must have this as the goal of our instruction. Our desire in teaching must be to produce this love from a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith. Secondly, this passage should govern us as those being taught. Often times we resent what is taught by others, whether in class, from the pulpit or even privately. When our brethren strive to fulfill their responsibility to bring about this love we might get angry. Or perhaps we simply respond, "That's nice, but your wrong," and never give their words a second thought. We need to give heed to the words of our brethren because this is their goal. That does not mean each of us is always right. But we must not be flippant with one another as we strive to help one another have this love. Finally, if you are not a Christian, please apply what you have learned to your learning of the gospel. What you hear from those who unashamedly preach the gospel is all about this. We are not trying to force you to do something you don't want. We are not trying to brainwash you. We simply want you to have this love from a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith. Won't you please join us in our endeavor to help one another have this love so we can be with one another in heaven for eternity? Why not allow Jesus' blood to sprinkle your heart as your body is washed with water (Hebrews 10:22)?