

THE LAWS OF LEADERSHIP

1 Timothy 1:12-17

LAW #2 Never Get Over the Privilege of Your Position

Somebody said, “He’s so conceited he takes a bow every time it thunders.” You know, that’s the way some people are and pride is there and is a very, very big problem.

There was a man who stood on the scale and he got his fortune told. And when the little card came back it said, “Man, you’re dynamic, a born leader, handsome, and much admired by women for your personality.” He gave it to his wife and said, “See honey, what you married.” She looked at it and said, “Yah, and the weight’s wrong too.”

It was Epictetus a Greek philosopher who said, “Selfish personal interest is the motive behind all human conduct.

Hudson Taylor said this: “All God’s giants have been weak people.”

Robert Girard observed, God’s most effective difference makers seem to have “gone through some type of weakening process to break the outer shell of arrogance, self-righteousness, and dependence on personal strength, charisma, and talent. God uses failure, he uses sickness, he uses breakdown, he uses sin, personal tragedy, and sorrow to reduce his people to usefulness. Unless the servant of God learns to depend utterly on God and to forsake self-dependence of any kind, he or she remains too strong to be of much value.” This doesn’t mean that we should seek to be weakened. It means, instead, that we can expect weakening if we are serious about making a difference in our life.

And you know, sometimes if we don’t take care of this problem of pride and selfishness, and arrogance, God has a way of taking care of it.

What does 1 Corinthians 11 say when you get ready to celebrate the Lord’s supper?

1 Corinthians 11:28 “*Let a man examine himself and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.*”

Law #1 last week was:

A Statement of Goal is Essential in Leadership.

Now, Law #2 is

Never Get Over the Privilege of Your Position.

Recognize the wonderful privilege you have of being used by the Lord and of having lived today and serving Him.

Pick up with me in verse 12:

v.12 “I am feeling grateful to the One who strengthened me, Christ Jesus our Lord, because He deemed me trustworthy, having appointed me for service.”

Now, this is the key verse to the study. And I want to just focus on it for a minute, because that doesn't sound much like a statement from a leader does it?

Let's look at the phrases just a little bit more closely.

See the words, “*I am feeling grateful.*”

**Actually you could literally translate that,
“Thanks I am having.” The key word in the sentence is
“Thanks.” Or if you want to put it another way,
“Gratitude I am having.” Now the Greek word, is in the
present tense. That means that every day I’m awake, and
every minute that I live, I am filled with *gratitude*. I am a
person who is always giving *thanks*. I am *thankful*!**

**Now can I give you a couple of things, that will help you
ascertain, how a person is doing, in the realm of leadership
and something that will never fail you, in determining
where you are today, in this realm?**

Gratitude is an attitude of effective leaders!

Now think about that a minute.

Gratitude is an attitude of effective leaders.

**Who are the people that make the greatest impact on your
life? They’re people just filled with gratitude. They’re on
top of it, they’re thanking the Lord and you want to be
around them, because of their enthusiasm.**

Gratitude is an attitude of effective leaders.

**Now, can I put it in the negative, for just a second?
And this'll bear out, too.**

Gratitude is not an attitude of a proud person.

Why?

Because they're always getting less than they think they deserve. Gratitude is not an attitude of a proud person.

Let's look at verse 12 again.

v.12 "Gratitude I am having (what?) toward the One who strengthened me."

Now, can you believe that Paul, as a leader, is confessing in his humility, his weakness (right in this verse)?

And that he is a dependant individual and that he needs daily strengthening. Can you believe that?

That's the truth of the passage. *"Gratitude I am having toward the One who strengthened me."* And who is that *One*? *"Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Now Paul doesn't only just say that here, there's a verse you've probably memorized **Philippians 4:13 *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."***

Colossians 1:11 *"Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power."*

How about, **John 15:5?**

When Jesus is on His way to the garden of Gethsemane. **John 15:5 *"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."***

You see, when it comes to the realm of leadership, you almost have to reverse it completely from what you see in our culture to be effective for God if you wanna be one of His leaders.

God is more interested in your availability, than He is in your ability. He just wants an empty vessel, that He can fill with Himself and use for the glory of God.

He wants my weakness, not my strength.

And He'll take my inadequacies that I confess and I admit. He'll accept my humility and my brokenness, and He will fill you and me with Himself and then an impact will be made for the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 "My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather glory in my weaknesses, than the power of Christ may rest upon me."

Back to verse 12.

v.12 "I am feeling grateful to the One who strengthened me, Christ Jesus our Lord." (Why?) "Because He deemed me trustworthy!"

Paul says, “I am never gonna get over the fact that God can trust me with the eternal destiny of men and women that are living by proclaiming the gospel of Christ to them!”

“He deemed me trustworthy!” He allowed me that privilege!

And what’s the next thing?

v.12b “Having appointed me for service.”

He gave me an appointment of ministry to the Gentiles and He’s thrilled with it.

What is Law #2?

Never Get Over the Privilege of Your Position in Serving Him.

Christian calling and Christian leadership in the Scriptures seems to be focused on God looking down.

1 Chronicles 16:9 “The eyes of the Lord run two and fro through the whole earth (to what?) show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect or right toward

Him. He’s looking for available instruments to be useful. And then He tunes them and fills them with His power and authority and they become difference makers. They become leaders in the Body of Christ.

Now there is another thing I think we need to understand. And that is, most of the leaders in the Scripture were not trying to get there by things they were doing and power struggles they were going through to try to get there. It’s just the opposite. Many of the leaders didn’t even want to do what they were being asked to do and they thought God was making a mistake in asking them to do it.

What about Moses? I mean, he had a list of excuses a mile long and on top of that he couldn’t talk well. The Lord said, “Get out of here and go and do what I need you to do.”

Gideon was the same way. Here he is thrashing out the grain: “Who me? deliver the children of Israel from the Medianites?”

“Yes you. Get your army and get on with the program.”

There is only one exception to that and the Lord had to really nail their hearts to the wall. And that was James and John the sons of Thunder, when they sent their mother to Jesus, to see if they both couldn't sit in the kingdom, one on the right and one on the left.

And what happened? It stirred up a rumble among the 12. That's the only place Scripturally where you got guys in a power struggle trying to get to a position of leadership.

Every place else it is God reaching down and picking up an available instrument and using him for His glory and His honor.

But you see, that's so different than me filled with ego wanting to serve God. Edging God Out, that's Ego.

A. W. Tozer wrote these very prophetic words about leadership:

A true and safe leader is likely to be one who has no desire to lead, but is forced into a position of leadership by the inward pressure of the Holy Spirit and the press of the

external situation. Such were Moses and David and the Old Testament prophets. I think there was hardly a great leader from Paul to the present day but was drafted by the Holy Spirit for the task, and commissioned by the Lord of the Church to fill a position he [or she] had little heart for. I believe it might be accepted as a fairly reliable rule of thumb that the man [or woman] who is ambitious to lead is disqualified as a leader. The true leader will have no desire to lord it over God's heritage, but will be humble, gentle, self-sacrificing, and altogether as ready to follow as to lead, when the Spirit makes it clear that a wiser and more gifted person has appeared on the scene.

You see, that's the difference between biblical leadership and someone who is just out for all of the attention.

This is a startling statistic. What is the greatest sin of the ministry? There was a survey taken of ministers, what's your answer gonna be? sex? greed? pride? 42% of ministers admitted that the occupational hazard of the ministry is pride. With that goes ineffectiveness and disqualification and an inability to be used.

You see, that's what creates all the havoc in interpersonal relationships. That's what destroys the effectiveness of ministry.

There was a prominent British official who was honored at a dinner by a general and the general happened to sit her at his left instead of at his right. She was so upset she said to him when she finally sat down, "Does your aide-de-camp always seat his guests improperly like this?" And the general said, "Oh, not at all. I have found that those who matter don't mind, and those who mind don't matter!"

And you know, he said it, real well but you and I have got the same problem, don't we?

Never Get Over the Privilege of Your Position.

Now, when a person knows this kind of humble, broken walk before God, he can afford to be honest about his past. And here's where you can really tell it.

Verse 13

v.13 “*though I was formerly a slanderer and a persecutor and a violent man, but I was shown mercy because, being ignorant, I acted in unbelief.*”

Now, is that an incredible testimony? You see because of our wanting to look good, because of our wanting people to think we’re cool, we don’t tell the truth, about the pit from which we have been dug.

What does Paul say about his past here?

v. 13a “*I was a slanderer*”

He was a smart ally with the Christians.

He was a *persecutor*. He was standing there, while they were stoning Stephen to death.

And he went around from house to house, getting the Christians out and putting them in prison and harassing them.

But look at that next word, that is a big word.

“A violent man”

You talk about an abuser, he was a *violent man!*

Now, too many times we think that to tell people the truth is gonna destroy our ministry but instead it's gonna give it genuine authenticity.

And too often times, we don't do that.

What does verse 13 say?

v.13b *“I was shown mercy.”*

To translate that, *“I was mercied.”*

God reached down in mercy because, *“I acted in unbelief.”*

Can you believe the miracle of God's work to take an arrogant, proud, religious pharisee, that was trying to stamp out Christianity and literally break him to pieces so he can make a confession like this today.

To magnify the grace of God.

Now, I'm gonna read a statement. I'd like to see if you can even come close to thinking, who made this statement as you listen to it.

“Through my years of active public life and through observing many kinds of people, I have found that the strongest, wisest, most competent and reliable man is the one who is first to admit his own inadequacy. Contradictory though it may sound, he is strong because he is humble, and he always remembers that man is a creation of God. No rule of life is more basic. When one leans on his own understanding, lives by his own strength, boasts of his own accomplishments, and claims he is his own master, the result is untold suffering. Even though his position is maintained and his material wealth increases, success quickly turns to failure when God is forgotten. There is no peace of mind, no personal satisfaction, no experience of true inner joy. To trust in the Lord with all the heart is a mark of strength! It is the only path to true fulfillment.”

**Who do you think said that? Some great theologian?
Somebody who's been in religious circles all of their life?**

J. Edgar Hoover made that statement. Isn't that incredible?

You see, he had witnessed enough leadership that he could tell you what it takes to be a leader. And the first thing it takes is to admit your own inadequacy.

Now verse 14.

v.14 "And the grace of our Lord was present in great abundance, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus."

***"The grace of the Lord was present."* And Paul pulls out a new Greek word that he uses no where else in the New Testament to describe how much grace there was. It was so much grace that it overfilled and overflowed his vessel and flooded everywhere, is the description that you have here. It was a tremendous amount of grace that was present so that, *"with faith and love"* he came to know Jesus Christ.**

John Newton was the man who magnified the grace of God like nobody else and in his legacy left behind that great old hymn "Amazing Grace How Sweet the Sound."

**John Newton wrote his own epitaph and it reads as follows:
“John Newton, Clerk, once an Infidel and Libertine, a
Servant of Slaves in Africa, was by the Mercy of our Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ, Preserved, Restored, Pardoned,
and Appointed to Preach the Faith he had so long labored to
destroy.”**

**You know when he got ready to die there was a young
minister who came in to offer his condolences and farewell.
And Newton looked up at the young man and he said, “*You
know, you’re gonna die too. And when you come to heaven I
know because of our love and friendship you’re gonna wanna
know where I am. I’ll tell you where I’ll be. I’m gonna be
sitting at the feet of the thief on the cross.*”**

**Do you recall what the thief on the cross said to Jesus at the
crucifixion? “*Remember me when you come into your
kingdom.*” Jesus answered him, “*I tell you the truth, today
you will be with me in paradise.*” And God’s grace was
present there at the cross.**

Now, it was William Barclay that made this statement but this is the central thought of today's study. Listen to these words very carefully.

“The memory of our sin is the surest way to keep our gratitude aflame. The memory of our sin is the surest way to keep our gratitude aflame. To be honest. To be able to recognize this is the way I was and the grace of God was present and now this is the way I am.”

Let's look at verse 15

v.15 “Reliable is the word, and worthy of wholehearted acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am foremost.”

Now is that a humble man? He's saying, “You can stake your life on it. What I'm telling you is reliable. You can accept it wholeheartedly. Christ Jesus came into world on a mission, what? to save sinners.”

Luke 19:10 “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which is lost.”

John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

But His mission was to save sinners! And Paul says, *“Guess what? I am the foremost! I was the chief of sinners!”*

Just think about Paul’s biography for a minute.

**What was he before he met the Lord on the Damascus road?
In Judaism he tells us in Philippians 3, what?**

Circumcised the 8th day, of full Hebrew parentage, tribe of Benjamin, Pharisee of the Pharisees, as far as the Law, blameless.

He was the epitome of humanity from a religious point of view, right? So, he was the best of men.

But he also says, because he was a slanderer, a persecutor, and a violator he was the violent man, he was the worst of men.

From these 2 testimonies of the Apostle Paul, here's a statement to consider: *If God can save the chief of sinners, He can save us! None of us is beyond salvation.*

But, now here's the other side of it: *If God can save the best of men, guess what? You and I need to be saved too!*

You must experience the grace of God. The grace of God is available for the best and for the worst! All epitomized in the Apostle Paul, he is an illustration of both of these.

And he tells you that in verse 16.

v.16 *"But on this account I was shown mercy, (purpose) in order that in me first Jesus Christ might demonstrate (what) His unlimited patience, as an example to those who will be (what) believing on Him for life eternal."*

Paul says, *"I'm just a model of the marvelous grace of God."*

Doesn't that make you just wanna stop and sing *Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound?*

Listen to those words:

**Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!**

You know, Robert Schuller had his church change those words.

**Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a man like me!**

But you see today, it's hard for us to accept that we're wretches. It's destroying our self-image to think poorly of ourselves. And that's where we're really failing. We don't magnify the grace of God, when we deny the fact, that we've got a great need and that we are sinners and that we desperately need mercy. That's the only hope.

**Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.**

You know this is really a neat study, because it starts with the key verse that says, “*I’m feeling gratitude,*” and it ends with demonstrating it by singing the greatest doxology Paul ever sang in all of his writings!

Look at verse 17

v. 17 “*Now to the king of the ages! immortal! invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever! Amen!*”

You almost feel like singing the Alleluia chorus from Handel’s Messiah!

LAW #2 Never Get Over the Privilege of Your Position, in Christ.

Paul starts out in verse 12, “*I am feeling grateful.*” And he verbalizes that gratitude in this doxology at the end of the study.

Now at the finish of the study I did some reflecting for a minute and I wanna do that with you know.

1 Peter 5:5-6 “God resists the proud and He gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.”

Matthew 20:26-27 “It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant.”

John 3:30 “He, Christ, must continually increase, and I must decrease.”

Philippians 1:20 “That Christ would be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.”

John 13:3-5 “Jesus takes the towel, and He begins to wash the disciples feet.”

Earl Jabay wrote a book called, The God Players.

And in it he says:

For those people who are proud and unbroken, their lives are filled with anxiety, loneliness, unteachableness, conflict, and possessiveness, the way out of our misery is to make our

peace with God. No more climbing on His throne. No more playing god. No more self-enthronement.

And then he says this:

The suffering person, before he can really be helped, must come to an acceptance of his problem. He must admit that there is a problem and that he has it. This is extremely difficult for all of us and we have all kinds of ways of hedging and even denying what we really have. Instead of a flat statement like “I am a homosexual,” a person will say, “I think I am a homosexual” or “I am a little bit homosexual.” Such tactics are similar to the young, maiden lady who told her doctor that she thought she was “just a little bit pregnant.” When the doctor finally talked her out of that one, she insisted that this must be one of those very rare cases of a virgin birth!

You see, the truth about ourselves is very painful to accept. It is excruciatingly painful to our egos to make statements like “I am overweight,” “I am a liar,” “I am an adulterer.” Until we, by the grace of God, finally reach the point where we can say “I have this problem,” we are beyond the reach of those who would help us.

Now why is it so hard for you and for me today with our ego, to sit here in our hypocritical stance and say that, “I am Your Name and I am a sinner!” And then for you to say the

**From the desire of being praised,
From the desire of being preferred to others,
From the desire of being consulted,
From the desire of being approved,
From the fear of being humiliated,
From the fear of being despised,
From the fear of suffering rebukes,
From the fear of being falsely accused,
From the fear of being forgotten,
From the fear of being ridiculed,
From the fear of being wronged,
From the fear of being suspected,**

Deliver me Jesus.

**That others may be loved more than I,
That others may be esteemed more than I,
That, in the opinion of the world,
others may increase and I may decrease,
That others may be chosen and I set aside,
That others may be praised and I unnoticed,
That others may be preferred before me in
everything,**

**That others become holier than I,
provided that I may become as holy as I should,**

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus says:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Now there are 10 lessons that come out of the study.

**Lesson #1: “Never Get Over the Privilege of Your Position.”
(Law #2)**

Lesson #2: Paul was feeling gratitude for God choosing him, trusting him, appointing him, and empowering him for ministry.

Lesson #3: Remembering our past, causes us to appreciate even more the grace of God.

Lesson #4: The grace of God exceeded Paul's need.

Lesson #5: If God can save "the chief of sinners," he can save us.

Lesson #6: Paul says, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am foremost."

Lesson #7: The mission of Jesus was to save sinners.

Lesson #8: Paul's conversion is a pattern for others to be encouraged that if God can do it for Paul, He can do it for anybody.

Lesson #9: Paul's salvation is an illustration of God's unlimited patience with us.

Lesson #10: Praise is the expression of a humble heart.

STUDIES IN THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

PART I — 1 TIMOTHY 1-3

"The Laws of Leadership"

LAW NUMBER TWO – Never Get Over the Privilege of Your Position 1 Timothy 1:12-17

Key verse 1:12

Notes

v. 12 I am feeling grateful to the One who strengthened me, Christ Jesus our Lord, because He deemed me trustworthy, having appointed me for service;

v. 13 though I was formerly a slanderer and a persecutor and a violent man, but I was shown mercy because, being ignorant, I acted in unbelief.

v. 14 And the grace of our Lord was present in great abundance, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

v. 15 Reliable is the word, and worthy of wholehearted acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am foremost.

v. 16 But on this account I was shown mercy, in order that in me first Jesus Christ might demonstrate His unlimited patience, as an example to those who will be believing on Him for life eternal.

v. 17 Now to the king of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever Amen.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Read 1 Timothy 1:12-17 and summarize in your own words what Paul is saying in this section.**
- 2. To whom is the apostle Paul "feeling grateful," according to verse 12?**
- 3. Why is he "feeling grateful," according to verse 12?**
- 4. In what three ways does Paul characterize his pre-Christian life, according to verse 13?**
- 5. What was present in "great abundance," according to verse 14?**
- 6. Why did the Lord Jesus Christ come into the world, according to verse 15?**
- 7. Why was Paul "shown mercy," according to verse 16?**
- 8. In what four ways does Paul characterize the Lord in his doxology in verse 17?**
- 9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?**

16. What lesson have you learned from this study?