

THE LAWS OF LEADERSHIP

1 Timothy 3:8-13

LAW #8 Jesus Christ Is the Great Model of Leadership

Robert Fulghum became famous when he wrote *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten* several years ago. In the book this is what he said:

All I really needed to know about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate-school mountain, but there in the sandpile at Sunday School. These are the things I learned:

Share everything.

Play fair.

Don't hit people.

Put things back where you found them.

Clean up your mess.

Don't take things that aren't yours.

Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody.

Wash your hands before you eat.

Flush.

Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.

Live a balanced life—learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.

Take a nap every afternoon.

When you go out into the world, watch out for the traffic, hold hands, and stick together.

Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup: The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.

Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup—they all die. So do we.

And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned—the biggest work of all—LOOK.

And then in a few pages, he says:

And it's still true, no matter how old you are—when you go out into the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.

The body of Christ is made up of brothers and sisters who need to do 2 things:

- 1. they need to stick together.**
- 2. they need to serve one another.**

As we've been dealing with the whole subject of leadership it has been our purpose to bring to the surface the fact that there are certain things the Scripture demands before a person qualifies for leadership.

Here's an old story that came out of the Revolutionary war. There was a young man who was sitting on his horse watching his men repair a defensive barrier. And this man in plain clothes came riding by and he asked the man, "*Why aren't you helping your men?*" And he said, "*Sir, I am a corporal!*" Well, the stranger apologized, he dismounted and proceeded to help the exhausted soldiers. The job having been done, he turned to the corporal and said, "*If you should ever need any more help, son, just call me.*" With that, the Commander-In-Chief, George Washington, remounted his horse and rode on.

(From *Jumping Hurdles, Hitting Glitches, Overcoming Setbacks* by Steve Brown)

Why is it that we have the idea that when we take a place of leadership that it excerpts us from certain levels of work?

If we truly have the spirit of a servant there is no work that is beneath our dignity. It is our responsibility to realize that the greatest contribution we make to everyday, is the way we serve one another.

Now that we've come to the 8th law of leadership, we have looked at 7 laws:

Law #1: A statement of goal is essential to leadership.

Law #2: Never get over the privilege of your position.

Law #3: To be a leader you've got to be willing to fight.

Law #4: A commitment to leadership is a commitment to prayer.

Law #5: Leadership is primarily a man's role.

Law #6: Character is a vital ingredient of leadership.

Law #7: There is no place in leadership for dishonest, double-tongued drunks.

And that brings us to Law #8: Jesus Christ is the great model of leadership.

Now I want to tell you right at the beginning that with 3 verses you're not getting out early

Two of them only lead up to the key verse.

Fourteen and fifteen are significant in setting the stage but our key verse for this study is verse 16.

Let's begin with verse 14.

V. 14 "These things I am writing to you, hoping to come to you quickly."

The word "*these things*" refers to the 15 qualifications of the elders and all the qualifications of the deacons that we saw last week and the deacon's wives, or the deaconesses.

***"All of these things,"* he says, *"I am writing to you, hoping to come to you quickly."* Isn't it interesting that Paul turns over the responsibility of the leadership of this significant ministry in Ephesus, his favorite place.**

Paul had been there for 3 years, his longest ministry and turns it over to his young understudy, Timothy.

Then he goes to Macedonia and when he arrives over there he gets home sick. He says, “*I’m hoping to come to you quickly.*”

Paul says, “*I have to get back there! I just want to be with you BUT!*” Verse 15:

V. 15 “*If I am delaying, you may know how it is necessary for men to be conducting themselves in the house of God,*”

How can Paul say, “*I would like to come to you quickly but if I am delaying*”? How can Paul be so incredibly disciplined and accomplish all the things that he accomplished in his life and yet he can be so flexible to turn around and say, “*I’d like to be there quickly but if I am delaying.*”

Doesn’t he use his time wisely?

But you see, there’s something about Paul that probably I really need to learn and that is, you can make all the plans in the world but you better be dependent.

And you better be flexible.

Because my thoughts are not his thoughts neither my ways his ways, says the Lord. His ways are higher than my ways and his thoughts are higher than my thoughts.

So there always needs to be that flexibility and intensity of planning as a leader to allow the Lord to delay, or to stop.

In Thessalonica Paul was there for three weeks and he prayed night and day that he could go back. He said, *“Satan hindered me twice but the Lord never allowed him to go back.”*

It was God’s greater purpose for 1 and 2 Thessalonians to be written. And if he’d gone back it would never have been written.

Proverbs 3:5-6:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path.”

So Paul is saying, *“If the Lord wants to put a stop, if He wants to put a delay and He wants to keep me in Macedonia longer, that’s great, that’s okay.*

But I'm telling you *"I've got a desire to come to you quickly, but if I am delaying, you may know how it is necessary for men to be conducting themselves in the house of God."*

Because of the list, the qualifications for the elders, and the deacons, and the deacons' wives, he's saying, *"You already know now how it is necessary for you to be conducting yourself."* That little phrase, *"it is necessary,"* was back in chapter 3:2 when we started out on the elders. It says:

1 Timothy 3:2 *"It is necessary, therefore, that the overseer be above reproach"* (that's the way the passage began.)

Paul is saying, *"You know how it is necessary to conduct yourselves in the house of God."*

When I say that to you, what immediately is the picture that comes to your mind? You know how to conduct yourself in this church or the church down the block. The only problem with that is there were not any buildings in the early church. There was no physical *"house of God"* in the early church.

In the early church the *"house of God"* was the people.

They are the “*house of God.*” And so the “*house of God*” are people not a place here. And he is speaking of people who are in relationship. Now let me give you a couple of verses to help explain this.

Ephesians 2:21-22

“In whom the whole building being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.”

We’re related to each other. We are intimately locked into one another as bricks in a building. And so we are the “*house of God*”. And then individually we are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

“What? Don’t you know? that you are not your own? You’ve been bought with a price. Your body is not your own. You are the temple of the living God.”

He dwells in us. And so we’re not talking about a place, we’re talking about people.

We support one another. We encourage one another, we become strengths for one another's weaknesses, and we make up our weaknesses in the strength of someone else. We're locked in together.

Gary Collins wrote a book called *You Can Make a Difference*. He tells the story, I think, that illustrates pretty graphically what we're trying to say when we're talking about the "house of God."

Captain Timothy Lancaster was at the controls of his aircraft as it rose slowly over the rolling green hills of southern England and headed in the direction of Malaga. Strapped in their neat rows of seats, many of the passengers on the airliner were eagerly looking forward to relaxing vacations in the warm sun on the Spanish riviera. But their journey was interrupted. Silently and without warning, the left windshield in the cockpit popped out. The cabin quickly lost air pressure, oxygen masks dropped from their hiding place above the seats, and Captain Lancaster was pulled out of his loosened seat belt and sucked through the open window.

Without hesitation, a member of the cockpit crew grabbed one of the captain's feet—and hung on. An alert cabin attendant dashed to the cockpit, strapped himself tightly into the captain's chair, and firmly grasped the other foot. The co-pilot took over the controls and headed the plane toward the nearest airport.

As the giant airliner inched gently toward the ground, each minute seemed like an eternity to the fully-conscious pilot dangling over the nose of the aircraft. Meanwhile, shocked passengers sat helplessly in their seats, unable to see the drama unfolding a few yards in front of them.

Next morning, newspapers around the world carried pictures of the pilot sitting in the hospital between two rescuers, telling reporters that he was fine and he was ready to go back to work.

You know, that's the Body of Christ. It's when a crisis and an emergency takes place we flow together, we are the house of God. We are the temple of the living God.

Let's go back to the verse 15. The next phrase.

v. 15a *"If I am delaying, you may know how it is necessary for men to be conducting themselves in the house of God."*

How's it described?

v. 15b *"Which is the assembly (ekklesia) the assembly (of the what?) living God."*

This church, the body of Christ, is an assembly of brothers and sisters and were part of the living God.

I think Paul emphasizes that because Ephesus was famous for its dead idols. The temple for Diana, Artemis, the great temple, one of the 7 wonders of the world, was there in Ephesus. And he is contrasting their dead idols to the living God. We are the *"assembly of the living God."*

When Paul writes to the Thessalonian church and says, *"I want to tell you, I thank God that you turned from idols to serve the living and the true God and to wait for His Son from heaven."*

First of all, the church is an assembly. And it is a band of brothers and sisters locked together by a love for the Savior. But secondly, and he turns to an architectural picture here in these last two words, the church is *a pillar and a support of the truth.*

Let's look at this architectural image for just a minute. When he uses the term "*pillar*" the distinctive thing about this temple, the seventh wonder of the world, is that it had 127 marble pillars that had been given as gifts from various kings of various countries. And these pillars were pure marble. Many of them had beautiful gold leaf on them as well as precious jewels. So it was indeed a treasure house. When he talks about the church being pillars he's talking about the church holding it all together.

You can also use the same word to describe "*pedestal*." Now what do you use a pedestal for? You put a bust on a pedestal. You put something there that you want to put on display. The church is a pedestal for Jesus Christ. Our individual lives are pedestals to put truth on display. Hold up Christ so all the world can see Him. When Christ lives in a person that person develops a Christ-like character.

Charisma without character leads to chaos. And when Christ is the center of one's life, that character provides a basis for leadership. We are a pedestal. We are a pillar. We are people who have Christ on display in our lives.

The second word is the word “*support*.” And that word is only used here in the New Testament. And the word can be translated “foundation.” It is the support for the pillars and for the building. And Jesus Christ is that support. The Word of God is that support. You could say, the written Word and the Living Word is that support.

So we're “*the assembly of the living God*.”

We are a pillar.

We're putting Jesus Christ on display.

And a “*support of the truth*.”

The truth refers both to the Word of God.

And the truth also refers to Jesus Christ. He said,

“*I am the way, the truth, and the light*.”

Now, that sets the stage for the key verse. And the key verse is verse 16.

V. 16 “And most certainly great is the mystery of godliness: Who was made visible in the flesh, proved to be right by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”

Here is the heart of the gospel!

It all resides in this verse.

Let’s break it apart. “*Most certainly*” this means without controversy by common consent.

You don’t preach this, you ponder this.

You don’t question it, it is beyond dispute, beyond question.

The Greek translation for the word *great* is mega.

It’s big, it’s tremendous, it has to be important.

“Great is the mystery of godliness.”

Let’s talk about the *mystery*. We had the verse last week in 1 Timothy 3:9, “*holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscious.*”

**We said we would hold off until this week to discuss
“*mystery.*”**

The Bible’s definition of the term “*mystery*” always refers to something that has never been revealed but is now being revealed by divine revelation.

It wasn’t revealed in the Old Testament but now it’s revealed in the New Testament.

And the term “*mystery*” always refers to that.

Something planned before eternity but was not revealed until at this time. And that demands a revelation from Scripture for that to be true.

There are 6 “*mysteries*” in the New Testament.

Ephesians 5:32

“This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.”

Let’s look at these 6 “*mysteries*” to see how the word is used. It’s used of the “*mystery of godliness*” here in 1 Timothy 3:16.

Secondly, it speaks of the *mystery* of the union of Christ with His church. And that’s in Ephesians 5:31-32.

How is Christ related to His church?

The “*mystery*” is, He’s the head. And we are the body.

Christ’s relationship, we are in Christ. He is the vine, we are the branches. We are in living union with Christ when we become Christians. And that’s the exciting thing about New Testament truth that is not made known in the Old Testament

Third “*mystery*.” Is the “*mystery*” of the calling of the Gentiles into the body of Christ. And that’s Ephesians 3:4-6. You see, the Gentiles were out. It was just the Jews. Israel. It was God’s covenant people. But, as a result of Christ’s death on the cross the whole world has an opportunity to be brought into this union. And so the beauty of Gentiles coming into Christ is a “*mystery*” that has now been revealed.

The fourth “*mystery*” is in Romans 11:25-26.

And that “*mystery*” is the future program of God for Israel. Will Israel be restored to the place of blessing after the times of the Gentiles is finished.

Romans chapter 11 makes it quite clear there is a future for Israel.

And that revelation again is a “*mystery*” that was not revealed in the Old Testament but now is revealed in the New Testament.

The fifth “*mystery*” is the rapture of the church. We’ve got to have some way for the church to get out of here. And so the “*mystery*” is recorded in 1 Corinthians 15: 51-54.

“Behold I show you mystery. We shall not all sleep. We shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. The trumpets are going to sound and the dead in Christ are going to rise.” And we’re going to be out of here. Fast. Just like that. That’s a “*mystery*”.

And the sixth “*mystery*” is the “*mystery*” of lawlessness. 2 Thess. 2:7 and that’s the man of sin. That is Satan’s false messiah.

Now, what is the “*mystery of godliness.*”

How does a person become godly?

How do we become more and more like Jesus Christ?

Do I do it by studying the Bible?

Do I do it by praying?

Do I do it by going to church?

No! It comes from Christ having the total freedom to live out His life in me. And the life of Christ flowing through the branch brings forth the fruit.

That's the "*mystery of godliness.*"

Godliness is a person not a performance.

Godliness is a relationship not religion.

And the beauty of this "*mystery*", it is great.

Godliness is nothing more than Christ manifested in our conduct and our conversation.

Godliness is the result of a genuine work of God in an individual's life and he's never the same after that.

And by their fruit you shall know them.

Now there is a tragedy. 2 Timothy 3:5 says:

"While having an outward form of godliness, they are strangers to its power."

You can act it. You can play the game. But, it's not real. Now the beauty of this passage. It's without controversy, it's great, mega, "*is the mystery of godliness.*"

And then it's defined in 6 beautiful phrases.

**Some people believe that this an early church hymn.
And that the saints in the early church sang this.
They sang their creed. There are six special statements:**

**God's going to come down in statement #1.
And in statement #6, He's going back up again.**

**I've taken these 6 statements and broken them apart to
show you the "*mystery of godliness.*"**

**The focus of godliness is on Christ. Jesus Christ is adequate
for your eternal salvation. Because of His death on Calvary's
cross He will take the full responsibility for your eternal
salvation. But guess what? It doesn't stop there. He'll also
take the full responsibility for your godliness, your
sanctification, right now**

The "*mystery of godliness*" involves 6 STEPS.

Step #1. "*Who was made visible in the flesh.*"

We're talking about the incarnation of God in human flesh in this first phrase.

John 1:14

“The word became flesh and dwelled among us. And we beheld His glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.”

He emptied Himself, took the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men.

Listen to this list.

He is Jesus.

He is God.

He is man.

He's the Son of David.

He's the Son of God.

He's the Son of man.

Messiah,

the Christ,

the servant of God,

the Good Shepherd,

the Divine Physician,

**the Savior,
the Prophet,
the Priest,
the King,
the Stone,
the Bridegroom,
the Bread of Life,
the Light of the World,
the Door,
the Vine,
the Way,
the Truth,
the Life,
the Resurrection,
the Judge,
the Lamb,
the Scapegoat,
the Apostle,
the Forerunner,
the Surety,
the Mediator,
the Leader,
the Beloved One,**

**the Only Begotten One,
the Chose One,
the Just One,
the Amen,
the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end,
the Head,
the Image of God,
the Christ of Creation,
the Firstborn,
the Bright and Morning Star,
the Lord,
the Word,
the Master,
and the Teacher.**

Step #2. *“Prove to be right by the Spirit.”*

**It was attempted and it was accomplished. At the end of His
33 years He’s proved to be right in the Spirit.
When did that happen? I think when He prayed on the cross.**

He said, “*Father, into Your hands (what?) I commend My spirit.*” He said, “*Father, from here on it’s Yours. If I’m gonna be raised from the dead You’re going to have to do it. I commend My spirit.*” And the Holy Spirit, and God the Father raised Christ from the dead and the resurrection. And so He was proved to be right by the Spirit in the fact that He was risen from the dead.

Step #3. “*Seen by Angels.*”

You know, when you study the life of Jesus and His relationship to angels it’s really exciting!

He was announced by angels and then at the temptation He’s ministered to by angels after the forty day and the forty nights in the wilderness.

And then on that resurrection morning the angels were there at the tomb to say, “*He is not here for He has risen.*”

Step #4. “*Proclaimed among the nations.*”

Let’s go to Matthew 28:18-20

“*And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*”

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Acts 1:8 (His last words were):

"You shall witness unto Me."

Step #5. *"Believed on in the world."*

"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right or the authority to become the sons of God." (John 1:11-12)

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

Step #6: *"Taken up in glory."*

That's the *mystery of godliness.*

God came down and He's taken back.

Acts 1

“He ascended into the clouds.”

Charles Stanley in his book *Confronting Casual Christianity* says:

I repeat: there is no such thing as partial commitment. When the pilot of a giant airliner is speeding down the runway, there is a certain point where he cannot decide to remain on the ground. When he crosses that line, he is committed to the air, or either the plane crashes disastrously to the ground. That pilot cannot change his mind when the plane is two-thirds of the way down the runway.

Unfortunately, our churches are filled with members who “have never left the ground.” They’ve been sitting there for years and years gunning their engines. “Vrooomm. Vrooomm. Vrooomm.” They are always “prepping,” getting ready. They’re going to get busy. They’ve been planning on it, meaning to, wanting to, trying to, going to, aiming to, hoping to. But tragedy of tragedies, they never get off the ground.

That grieves the heart of God Almighty: God has blessed you, equipped you, gifted you. You have good health, material possessions, plenty to keep you alive and kicking.

You have sunshine. You have rain. You have a free country. You can travel anywhere you please, and you're luxuriating in the blessings of the Lord. It breaks His heart to see you sitting on the runway and revving up your engines all these years. You never left the ground.

There are 10 lessons that come out of this study.

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: Paul's life was always flexible because he was following in the steps of His Lord.

LESSON #2: When we become believers, we are part of "the assembly of the living God."

LESSON #3: We are to be "a pillar and support of the truth."

LESSON #4: Jesus Christ is "the mystery of godliness."

LESSON #5: Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God who was "made flesh and dwelt among us."

LESSON #6: Jesus Christ was vindicated in His mission and ministry at the resurrection.

LESSON #7: Angels were on constant alert status during His thirty-three-year mission.

LESSON #8: We are to be witnesses of Him among the nations.

LESSON #9: The single condition of salvation is believing on Him.

LESSON #10: Christ was received into glory at the successful completion of His work. We, too, shall experience the same if we know Jesus Christ as Savior.

STUDIES IN THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

PART I — 1 TIMOTHY 1-3

"The Laws of Leadership"

LAW NUMBER EIGHT - Jesus Christ Is the Great Model of Leadership

1 Timothy 3:14-16

Key verse 3:16

Notes

v. 14 These things I am writing to you, hoping to come to you quickly;

v. 15 but if I am delaying, you may know how it is necessary for men to be conducting themselves in the house of God, which is the assembly of the living God, a pillar and support of the truth.

v. 16 And most certainly great is the mystery of godliness: Who was made visible in the flesh, proved to be right by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Read 1 Timothy 3:14-16 and summarize in your own words what Paul is saying in this section.**
- 2. What is Paul's hope, according to verse 14?**
- 3. If Paul happens to be delayed, what is his comfort?**
- 4. In what two ways does Paul characterize the church in verse 15?**
- 5. What "mystery" is Paul talking about in verse 16?**
- 6. What person is Paul talking about in verse 16?**
- 7. What six things does he say about this person in verse 16?**
- 8. When was Jesus taken up in glory?**
- 9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?**
- 10. What lesson have you learned from this study?**