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Next Weeks Lesson: "Pure Religion" ([James](#))

Today's Lesson: "I Have Finished My Course" ([1 Timothy](#) and [2 Timothy](#); [Titus](#))

- What is the last race you competed in or watched? What is the difference between *winning* and *finishing* a competitive race? How many winners are there in a typical race? What do you have to do to win?
- How is the course of our life like a race? How is it not like a race? What must we do to finish the race of life successfully?

Let's read [2 Timothy 4:7](#). The Apostle Paul lived in such a way that he could make this declaration toward the end of his life. This lesson discusses several of Paul's teachings that will help us as we strive to finish our course successfully.

Timothy and Titus were trusted associates of Paul who assisted him in preaching the gospel. After Paul's first Roman imprisonment, he resumed his missionary travels. In Ephesus he left Timothy to minister to the Church, and in Crete he left Titus with a similar assignment. As Paul continued his journey, he wrote letters to strengthen these brethren and to counsel them in their responsibilities as pastors or shepherds over the Saints. Hence these letters are often called the Pastoral Epistles.

1. Learn and teach true doctrine. ([1 Timothy 4](#); [2 Timothy 1-4](#); and [Titus 1](#))

- A. What signs of apostasy did Paul describe in his letters to Timothy and Titus? (See [1 Timothy 4:1-3](#); [2 Timothy 3:1-7](#), [2 Timothy 3:13](#); [2 Timothy 4:3-4](#); [Titus 1:10-11](#).) How are these signs of apostasy evident today? (See [2 Nephi 28:3-9](#); [D&C 1:15-16](#).) How can we protect ourselves against these evils?
- B. Why are some people "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth"? ([2 Timothy 3:7](#)). How can we ensure that our learning brings us to a knowledge of the truth?
- C. What did Paul teach Timothy about the responsibilities of people who teach the gospel? (See [1 Timothy 4:6-7](#), [1 Timothy 4:13-16](#); [2 Timothy 2:16](#), [2 Timothy 2:23-25](#); [2 Timothy 3:14-17](#); [2 Timothy 4:2](#), [2 Timothy 4:5](#).) What opportunities do we have to teach the gospel? How can we teach the gospel more effectively?
- D. Paul emphasized the importance of teaching and learning true doctrine ([1 Timothy 1:3](#); [1 Timothy 4:6](#), [1 Timothy 4:13](#); [Titus 2:1](#)). How can learning true doctrine help us guard against apostasy? What are some of the dangers of false teachings? How has learning the true doctrines of the gospel blessed your life?

Speaking of the power of true doctrine, Elder Boyd K. Packer said: "True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve

behavior. ... That is why we stress so forcefully the study of the doctrines of the gospel" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 20; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 17).

- E. How can we be sure that what we teach is true doctrine? (See [Mosiah 18:19-20](#); [D&C 52:9](#).)



Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin counseled: "God has revealed everything necessary for our salvation. We should teach and dwell on the things that have been revealed and avoid delving into so-called mysteries. My counsel to teachers in the Church, whether they instruct in wards and stakes, Church institutions of higher learning, institutes of religion, seminaries, or even as parents in their homes, is to base their teachings on the scriptures and the words of latter-day prophets" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 101; or [Ensign, Nov. 1994, 77](#)).

- F. What did Paul counsel us to do once we have received sound doctrine? (See [2 Timothy 1:13](#); [Titus 1:9](#).) What do you think it means to "hold fast"? (See [1 Nephi 15:23-24](#).)

2. "Be ... an example of the believers." ([1 Timothy 4:12](#))

- A. What do you think it means to be "an example of the believers"? ([1 Timothy 4:12](#)). How have you been influenced by a person who was "an example of the believers"?

List each of the ways Paul admonished Timothy to be an example. Describe how we can be an example in each of these ways.

- Word _____
- Conversation _____
- Charity _____
- Spirit _____
- Faith _____
- Purity _____

3. "Follow after righteousness" and deny ungodliness. ([1 Timothy 6](#) and [Titus 2-3](#))

- A. What did Paul teach about the love of money? (See [1 Timothy 6:7-10](#).) In what sense is the love of money the "root of all evil"? How can we ensure that we do not focus too much on money and other material wealth? (See [1 Timothy 6:17-19](#); [Jacob 2:18-19](#).)



Elder Dallin H. Oaks taught: “There is nothing inherently evil about money. The Good Samaritan used the same coinage to serve his fellowman that Judas used to betray the Master. It is ‘the *love of money* [which] is the root of all evil.’ ([1 Timothy 6:10](#); italics added.) The critical difference is the degree of spirituality we exercise in viewing, evaluating, and managing the things of this world” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, 78; or [Ensign, Nov. 1985, 63](#)).

- B.** In his letters to Timothy and Titus, Paul gave many instructions about living righteously. What counsel did Paul give in the following verses: [1 Timothy 6:11-12](#); [2 Timothy 2:22](#); [Titus 2:1-8](#), [Titus 2:12](#); [Titus 3:1-2](#), [Titus 3:8](#)?

Paul knew he would soon be martyred for his testimony of Jesus Christ. But he also knew that because he had lived the gospel, “there [was] laid up for [him] a crown of righteousness” ([2 Timothy 4:8](#)). It is of utmost importance that we do the right things every day and stay on course so we can say with Paul, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” ([2 Timothy 4:7](#)).