How to approach studying the Bible

1. *Read the book: Establish author, audience and context (completed)*
2. Read the chapter: Identify the message being communicated
3. Identify questions that you want to have answered: Use resources to find answers.
4. Read the chapter: Identify the message being communicated
5. Map the audience & message: Apply the message to your life
6. Compare your conclusions with others: Trace back any differences to the text

Session 2: Understanding Chapter 1

Objective: Identify the message of Chapter 1 and apply it as God's word spoken into our lives.

Step Two: Read the chapter and identify the message Paul is communicating to Timothy

This chapter seems to be about "the charge":

- What it is (maintain pure doctrine in the church)
- What is the purpose or objective of the charge (love that comes from purity, a clear conscience and sincere faith)
- What we need to know to follow the charge (the law is meant for those who are lawless and disobedient, not those who have been justified)
- What happens when people don't follow the instruction of the charge (Hymenaeus and Alexander have been given over to Satan because they violated the charge)

Paul seems to be pretty straightforward about the charge. However, he gives a definition and some examples of the underlying principle.

- His own transformation from unlawful ("I acted ignorantly in unbelief") to the service of Jesus because of God's grace.
- The example of Hymenaeus and Alexander who lost focus on God's grace and started getting wrapped up in distractions and legal wrangling.

Step Three: Identify and write down any questions that arise out of the chapter. - Use resources to research and answer the questions you've written down.

What is Paul talking about stewarding in v. 4?

- [ESV Study Bible] In the footnotes there is a section on this phrase. The Greek word translated "stewardship' in my text can be also translated as "orderly plan" or "household management, stewardship". I think this means maintaining something in a smooth and orderly fashion. So this could refer to God's orderly plan of salvation, or the orderly pursuit of the assignments entrusted to individuals within the scope of that greater plan. However this is approached, it is

in stark contrast to the myths and speculations which do not fall into the category of "stuff we are on mission for Jesus to do."

What kind of love is the aim of the charge?

- [Blue Letter Bible] This is my favorite online Bible reference site. It has an interlinear reference that allows me to look up the original word that was translated. In this case, Paul uses the word "agape" – which is self-sacrificing love for the benefit of someone else.

What is the history of the trustworthy saying in v. 15?

- I could not find any specific background on these. Only a cross reference in my study Bible that showed that these only appear in Paul's pastoral letters (Timothy and Titus). It seems reasonable that Paul was referencing something that he had said repeatedly in teaching these men, or that he was simply emphasizing the truth of what he was about to share.

What is the back story on Hymenaeus and Alexander?

- [Unger's Bible Dictionary] Hymenaeus was a leader in Ephesus who was a proponent of a heretical faith that the resurrection had already happened (2 Timothy 2:17-18). That Paul mentions him in both letters to Timothy (paired with two different partners) suggests that he was a persistent force against the purity of the gospel.
- [Halley's Bible Handbook] Alexander was an apostate leader who, along with Hymenaeus, opposed the gospel. He may be the same person named Alexander in 2 Timothy 4:14 who opposed Paul when he was in Rome for trial – possibly even testifying against Paul in his trial before Caesar.

What does it mean to be "handed over to Satan"?

- [ESV Study Bible] The footnote describes this as a formula for being put out of the church. It seems like both men were initially included in the church, but because of their divergent beliefs and the impact they were having on others in the church, they were formally removed. This discipline seems to have been done personally by Paul (perhaps thereby explaining Alexander's motivation to oppose Paul in Rome).
- [Unger's Bible Dictionary] In the article on Hymenaeus was a discussion of whether the excommunication also included some sense of physical affliction from Satan or demonic forces. The text is not clear on this, and it is not necessary to the interpretation of the point Paul is making.

Step Four: Read the chapter and refine the message Paul is communicating to 1 Timothy (now that your questions are answered)

Paul had already begun defending true doctrine – all the way to removing Hymenaeus and Alexander for teaching a blasphemous gospel.

1 Timothy - A Bible Study

Now that Paul was gone to Macedonia, it was Timothy's turn to carry on the mission and charge "certain persons" to shape up or ship out – following the example of Hymenaeus and Alexander

The key point was a right understanding of the law and the gospel

- The law convicts sinners of their sin
- The gospel transforms opponents of God into servants of God

Paul's own life was the example of this power in action

The proof is in the fruit:

- Self-sacrificing love as evidence of good gospel doctrine
- Myths and speculation as evidence of bad doctrine

Step Five part 1: Map the Audience (how much and in what ways is 1 Timothy like us today?)

Timothy is UNLIKE me in that he is a companion and protégé of the Apostle Paul. As such, he had experiences and first-hand knowledge that I do not have. He also was the recipient of certain prophecies and confirmations witnessed by Paul and others.

Timothy is UNLIKE me in that he is the leader of a church in Ephesus – I am an attendee of a church in America, but do not have the same leadership responsibility.

Timothy is LIKE me in that he is a believer, saved by the same faith as me, and following the same gospel as me. The same doctrinal truths that are relevant to him are relevant to me in the same way.

Step Five part 2: Map the message to apply to me today

- What commands must I obey?
    - Pursue true doctrine. This is an implied command that comes out of the charge that Paul gives to Timothy. Pure doctrine is a goal of every Christian.
- What truth must I hold dear?
    - The law stands in judgment of sinners.
    - The gospel is the means of salvation for law-judged sinners
    - The goal of my life is self-sacrificing love flowing out of my life, directed toward God and my neighbor.
- What error must I flee?
    - Confusing the gospel with anything else (myths, genealogies, speculations)
- How is God revealed?
    - Through Jesus, who showed grace toward Paul even when he was an insolent opponent of God, transforming him into a servant.
- How is the gospel made clear?
    - Paul's back-story illustrates the gospel. If Paul, steeped in opposition, could be saved, then anyone can be saved.

- What actions can I take in the next 7 days that will demonstrate what I said above is real?
    - Reflection: where in my life am I substituting poor doctrine for the true gospel?
    - Evaluation: what actions are based out of this poor understanding of the gospel?
    - Change: Bring these matters to prayer for clarity and power to change.