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 5: Understanding Chapter 4

Objective: Identify the message of Chapter 4 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

First Paragraph:

Paul reveals a truth that he has received directly from the Holy Spirit:

- [What] Some people (who look like Christians) will leave the church (faith) by clinging to lying spirits and infernal (lying, twisted) teaching
- [How] They will be led astray by teachers who are not sensitive to the truth and create rules about aesthetic living (regarding food and sex)
- [The Truth] Everything God created is good and appropriate if received properly. It is good because God declares it so, and if the receiving spirit of thankfulness is grounded in prayer (God-oriented, not self-oriented).

Second Paragraph:

Teaching this truth to the church is the mark of a "good servant" of Jesus.

When dealing with the church

- Avoid getting entangled in silly myths (see 1:4 and the problems they are causing)
- Focus on training in godliness which is of value in EVERY WAY now and into eternity
- Toil and stive for godliness because your hope is set on Jesus

Third Paragraph:

Don't get caught up in externalities (your age) but:

- Be an example (x5)
- Devote yourself to scripture, teaching and exhortation
- Follow your gift (we both know it's real)
- Practice all these things so everyone can see your progress

- Monitor yourself and what you teach (to be certain you don't trip up)
- Keep doing all these things.

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 "things" is Paul referring to in verse 6?

- [ESV Study Bible] Footnotes on the verse list this as a debated topic. At a minimum it refers to the paragraph which came before but could refer to the entire book which precedes it.

What saying is Paul referring to in verse 9?

- [ESV Study Bible] Footnotes on the verse indicate this is probably referring to the statement about the value of godliness. There is no obvious connection to an extra-biblical contemporary quote.

What does Paul mean when he says "especially of those who believe" in verse 10?

- [BlueLetterBible] Using the Greek interlinear tool, I looked up the word "especially" and learned that it is an Adverb grammatically, and the superlative form of an adverb that means "very". So, we could think of it as "the most" or "the highest or maximum amount". This seems to align with the translation of "especially". As an adverb, it modifies a verb, so the closest verb: is (the Savior). Therefore we could read it as "is absolutely the Savior (of those who believe)"
- [BlueLetterBible] Using the Greek interlinear tool, I looked up the word "all" (people). Not surprisingly it meant "all". But some of the notes suggested that "all" could be applied individually (every single one) or collectively (some of all the types) – the latter would allow us to read the phrase "Savior of all people" to mean "Savior of all the peoples (such as Jews and Gentiles as different classifications of people, but all included under the Savior reach of Jesus).
- Paul doesn't seem to mean that Jesus saves everyone, because he goes on to indicate a different grouping of "those who believe" implying different results from the opposite "those who do not believe."
- [ESV Study Bible] The same general idea as the above was indicated in the footnote on the verse.

What do we know of Timothy's gift as referenced in verse 14?

- Not very much. Paul mentioned them in 1:16 and again in 2 Timothy 1:6 But we don't have much more knowledge than the fact that Timothy had gifts.
- [ESV Study Bible] Study notes highlight the confirmation of Timothy's spiritual gifts:
    - It was prophetically confirmed - the prophecy being words spoken "from God" not as a prediction.

    - It was confirmed by the church leaders (although we don't know which church or which leaders, except that Paul admits to doing it in 2 Timothy 1:6) in a commissioning ceremony similar to the commissioning of the first Deacons in Acts 6:6.
- The focus seems to be that the gift is legitimate and not to be doubted, therefore Timothy is to use it. Since it's in the section about commanding, teaching, devoting himself, practicing things and persisting, the emphasis on not doubting but doing seems strong.

What is the benefit of godliness in this life?

- [ESV Study Bible] By looking at cross references on that phrase, I was led to Psalm 37:4, 9, 11, Proverbs 19:23 and others where there are promises of blessing for those who live godly lives. It brought to mind the sermon on the mount and the Beatitudes – blessings for those who live properly before God. The blessings might not be material, but relational.

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

Paul sets off this section with the word "Now". This sets apart what is to follow from what comes before. Chapter 3 ends with Paul's desire to come and visit Timothy. This chapter begins a new topic with instruction as direct revelation from the Holy Spirit.

Through Paul, the Holy Spirt sets Timothy's expectation that some will fall away from the faith. Implicit in this revelation is the expectation that Timothy will not be able to save or redeem every member of the flock at Ephesus. Some will go and there is nothing that he can do about it, even though the reasoning and the process are plainly expressed.

I believe Paul offers an explanation of what the Spirit says starting in verse 4 with the word "For". That offers a reason for what came before.

- Everything created by God for our enjoyment is good
- Nothing God created for good should be rejected if it is received with the right spirit (one of thanksgiving and recognition of God's provision)
- FOR (again) God's declaration (word) and our attitude of prayer and supplication makes it holy or set apart for God's use.

This then becomes the sermon series that Paul exhorts Timothy to deliver to the church. Paul lays out 3 arguments for the importance of teaching "these things" (6, 11, 15). Each of these arguments follows a similar pattern:

- A positive command or statement (do)
- A negative warning (do not)
- A result or outcome that should occur

In each case, the phrase "these things" refers to the truth Paul draws from the statement of the Holy Spirit. From this we can conclude that the gnostic/ascetic distortion of the gospel was prevalent in the

culture and the church. By the same way we can expect that we also deal with similar distortions in our culture and our churches today.

The first argument:

- If you share "these things" with the church, then you will be a good servant of Jesus and your training and good doctrine will be evident.
- Do not get involved with irreverent silly myths. Paul already condemned them in 1:4 where Paul delivers the charge to Timothy.
- Instead pour all your energy into godliness which is good now and also in eternity. Paul adds an illustration from his own ministry in which all of his energy (toil & striving) is poured into proclaiming Christ.

The second argument:

- Command others to follow "these things". Teach them how.
- Don't let anyone make light of you or the message you deliver for reasons of your age (this isn't about human wisdom which we expect to come with time, but revelation that comes through godliness).
- Instead put your own life on display as the example everyone else should imitate. Paul adds a personal aside that tells Timothy that he needs to do these things until Paul comes and gives him further instructions. Further he needs to be "all in" and not hold back any parts (the gift) that might make it uncomfortable for him – those parts are real, having been affirmed by God and the church elders.

The third argument:

- Practice "these things" yourself in your own life. Show everyone what growth looks like (note, Timothy was not expected to operate out of a place of expertise where no change was required on his own part. He was expected to grow himself in the same areas where he preached).
- Don't take your eye off the ball. Examine your own life and what you teach to make sure it aligns to this truth.
- If you do this, then you will save yourself and your church from the warning that the Spirit gave at the beginning of the chapter. It's interesting to note that Timothy himself needs to be saved from the error that was slipping into the life of his church – lest his testimony and ministry be compromised, and he fall prey to apostasy.

These three arguments generally progress from the *external* (sharing) to the *internal* (demonstration) to the *personal* (show your own growth).

1 Timothy - A Bible Study

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

In this chapter, the mapping that seems most relevant is:

Timothy is unlike me in that he is the leader of the church in Ephesus – I am an attendee of a church in America. However I do have leadership responsibilities and I am obligated to use that leadership influence to the same ends as Paul instructs Timothy

Paul is delivering these instructions to Timothy so that they can be properly passed on to the rest of the church at Ephesus. So, in this I am very like the church in Ephesus who would be receiving the teaching from Timothy.

In this, I judge myself as relatively close, and the exhortations given to Timothy are ones that would quite directly apply to me.

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

- What commands must I obey?
    - All the commands to resist departing the faith
    - Be an example in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity.
    - Do not neglect my own gift (even if I didn't receive a prophetic confirmation). It has been confirmed by enough people that I have no doubt of it.
    - Practice the truth and let me life – through my growth – be a testimony of the truth of God
- What truth must I hold dear?
    - What God created as good is meant to be enjoyed in an attitude of thanksgiving and prayer. Focus more on the attitude an prayer and a little less on the enjoyment.
- What error must I flee?
    - The pursuit of silly myths
    - Being led away from the truth by deceitful spirits and demonic teachings
    - Neglecting the gift that God has given me.
- How is God revealed?
    - The Holy Spirit shows up directly and speaks through Paul regarding the danger of apostacy and being led astray.
- How is the gospel made clear?
    - The goodness of God is on display
    - Very directly in verse 10. Our hope is set on the living God who is the only point of salvation.

- What actions can I take in the next 7 days that will demonstrate what I said above is real?

For me two things ring strongest:

1. To seek enjoyment and ground it in prayer and thanksgiving rather than ingratitude and self-boasting
2. Not trying to coast, but to pursuing my own growth and progress in faith.