Lesson 41
1 Timothy 4; 2 Timothy 1–4; Titus

These study questions will focus on 1 Timothy 4 and selections from 2 Timothy and Titus. Before looking at 1 Timothy 4, read the last two verses of 1 Timothy 3 to give the next chapter more context.

1 Timothy 3:15–16
When he speaks of “the house of God” (verse 15), does Paul mean the Church as a whole or individual congregations?
How is the Church “the pillar and ground of truth”? What metaphor is Paul using? How does that metaphor help us understand what the Church does?
What does Paul mean when he says “without controversy” (verse 16)?
To what is Paul referring with the word mystery (verse 16)? Why is that the right word? (Verse 16 seems to be another quotation from a hymn.)
What is Paul talking about when he says that Christ was seen by angels?

1 Timothy 4
Verses 1–5: Paul has just finished speaking in chapter 3 of the qualifications of bishops and deacons. How is that topic related to the one that he takes up now, apostasy?
When did Paul and Timothy think the “latter times” would be (verse 1)?

What does it mean to give heed to seducing spirits or doctrines of devils? Can you think of specific examples of doing so? Why is it tempting to do so? Do we ever do so?

The practice of the time was to brand criminals and fugitive slaves. How is that practice related to what Paul says in verse 2?

In verse 3 the Greek word translated meat means “food.” Meat was a general term for food in King James English. How do you square Paul’s teaching here with the Word of Wisdom?

Compare these verses to passages such as Matthew 24:10–12, Acts 20:29–30, 2 Thessalonians 2:3–12, 1 John 2:18 and 4:1–3, and 2 John 7. Why is apostasy an important New Testament theme? Why does that theme matter to us today?

**Verses 6–7:** What is Paul telling his readers to remember (verse 6), everything he has said in this chapter or just what he has said in the verses about food?

However you answer the previous question, how does remembering “these things” make a person “a good minister of Jesus Christ” (verse 6)?

Is Paul making a distinction when he says “the words of faith and of good doctrine” (verse 6)? Are those two different things, or is this a case of hendiadys?

To what might Paul be referring when he speaks of myths and “old wives’ fables”? Is the second of these an instance of the sexism of first-century Palestine?

**Verses 8–11:** Another translation of the first part of verse 8 is “Bodily exercise is somewhat valuable, but godliness is of
value in all things.” How does this verse fit with Paul’s point in these four verses?

Is verse 9 a reflection on verse 8 or an introduction to verse 10? Are verses 9 and 11 intended to be parallel or almost parallel in meaning?

**Verses 12–16:** Some have estimated Timothy to have been about thirty-five at the time of this letter and the personal advice of these verses.¹ Compare 1 Corinthians 16:10–11. What kind of person was Timothy? His weaknesses? His strengths?

In verse 12 the Greek word translated *conversation* means “behavior,” which was also the meaning of *conversation* in King James English. We might say “in speech and behavior” rather than “in word, in conversation.” How does understanding that translation change the meaning of the verse?

Paul speaks often of love and faith, but what does he mean by *purity* (verse 12)? Is he speaking here of sexual purity or of something else?

In verse 13, is Paul reminding Timothy to read his scriptures regularly, or is he admonishing him to take part in the Church’s worship, which had adopted the synagogue’s practice of reading and commenting on scripture as the focus of worship? The word *doctrine* (verse 13) translates a Greek word, *didaskalia*, which means “teaching.” So we could translate the verse as Paul exhorting Timothy “to reading, to exhortation, to teaching.” Does that translation suggest an answer to the question about reading? Which kind of reading would be most parallel to exhortation and teaching? Does the fact that almost no one in this time period knew how to read silently help you understand what Paul means here?
What gift do you think Timothy is not to neglect (verse 14)? (The word *presbytery* means “council of elders.”) Is it his calling as bishop or some other calling?

Rather than “meditate upon these things” (verse 15) the clause might also be translated “work on these things” or “pay attention to these things.” Which translation do you think best fits the context?

What do you think Paul means by *profiting* (verse 15)? Is it progress? Usefulness? Something else? What is it that Paul wants the congregation to see in Timothy? Why?

Paul says “pay attention to yourself and to your teaching” (verse 16). How is that a good summary of what he has said to Timothy?

2 Timothy 2

**Verses 23–26:** What does Paul mean by “unlearned questions” (verse 22)? Can you give examples of “foolish and unlearned questions” that we take up today?

What is wrong with dealing with questions that start quarrels? Notice that the word *strifes* in verse 23 and the word *strive* in verse 24 are variations of the same root, both in English and in Paul’s Greek.

What does it mean to say that the Lord’s servant must be gentle to everyone (verse 24)? How do we preach gently? How can we rebuke gently or exhort gently?

Verse 25 will make more sense if you understand *instructing* to mean “correction” and you put “to him” after the phrase “oppose themselves.”
What does it mean to say that repentance is to or toward a knowledge of truth?

What does the last part of verse 25 together with verse 26 say is the point of preaching and exhortation?

Paul seems to be using repentance and “recover themselves” as parallel terms (verses 25–26). In what way is repentance a recovery of self?

Why does Satan take us captive? How does he do so?

How does the gentleness that Paul recommends to Timothy differ from Satan’s method? How do the results of the two methods differ?

2 Timothy 3

Verses 1–5: Why will the last days, as Timothy understands them, be perilous, in other words, difficult or fierce (verse 1)?

Here is another translation (that of the New International Version) of the list in verses 2–5, compared to the King James Version:

lovers of their own selves = lovers of self

covetous = lovers of money

boasters = boastful

proud = proud

blasphemers = abusive

disobedient to parents = disobedient to their parents
unthankful = ungrateful
unholy = unholy
without natural affection = without love
trucebreakers = unforgiving
false accusers = slanderous
incontinent = without self-control
fierce = brutal
despisers of those that are good = not lovers of the good
traitors = treacherous
heady = rash
highminded = conceited
lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God = lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God

Are there any differences in translation that change the meaning for you? If so, what do you make of those differences? Does this list help you understand the King James Version? Are there any things in this translation with which you disagree?

Look at each item in the list and ask yourself why Paul condemns it. Do we condemn all of these things today? If we do not condemn some, why not? Should we condemn them?

**Verses 15–17:** With regard to what do the scriptures make us wise (verse 15)? Is imparting that wisdom to us the purpose of scripture? Does “wise unto salvation” mean “wise as to what salvation requires,” or does it mean “wise in a way that brings one salvation”?
What is the significance of Joseph Smith’s change in verse 16: “All scripture given by inspiration of God, is profitable”? What burden does that place on those reading scripture?

How is scripture good for doctrine (teaching)? For reproof? For correction? For instruction (training) in righteousness?

In the LDS edition of the Bible, look at the footnote for perfect in verse 17. What does that tell us about how to understand the verse? In what sense does scripture make us perfect?

If you change furnished to equipped and unto to for, the verse will probably be easier to understand. How does scripture equip us for all good works?

### 2 Timothy 4

**Verses 1–2:** Why does Paul begin this part of his instruction to Timothy with a solemn charge?

Why does he use this particular description of Christ, rendered as “the judge of the quick and the dead and the Second Coming” in another translation?

If you read verse 2 as the King James Version has it—“be instant [prepared] in season, [and] out of season”—what does this verse say? Joseph Smith changed the phrase this way: “be instant in season, those who are out of season.” What does that mean? How does his inspired revision change the meaning of the verse?

What does *reprove* mean (verse 2)? What does *rebuke* mean? Are they different? What does *exhort* mean?
**Verses 3–4:** What does it mean to say some “will not endure sound doctrine” (verse 3)? Remember that the word *doctrine* translates a word that could also be translated *teaching.* The word *sound* translates a Greek word that means “healthy.” How is health an apt metaphor for doctrine? What is healthy teaching?

What does “heap to themselves teachers” mean (verse 3)?

What does it mean to say that they heap these teachers to themselves “after their own lusts”?

Whose ears itch (verse 3)? What does the metaphor of itching ears mean? What does Paul say that they are looking for to scratch their itch? How do they think that will remedy their problem?

Does this set of verses describe any in our own day? Does it ever describe us? If so, how so?

What should our response be to those verses in the passages from 1 and 2 Timothy that describe the apostasy that Paul fears?

**Titus 2**

**Verses 1–15:** In verse 1 Paul addresses Titus directly, giving him advice about how to conduct his life, but the King James Version could be misleading. “Things which become sound doctrine” means “things which are becoming or appropriate to sound doctrine.”

Paul follows in verses 2–6 with a list of those who need to be taught: old men and women and young men. Why
does he make young men a separate category of those who need attention but only include young women as those to be taught by the older women?

What does verse 9 mean by “not answering again”?

Is the advice in verses 9–10 about how slaves should relate to their masters of any use to us today? How do employees differ from slaves? Does that difference change how we might or might not use these verses when thinking about the employer-employee relationship?

Explain verse 11. What grace—in other words, gift—has God given? How has that gift “appeared to all men”? (As usual, the King James Version’s men would be translated people in contemporary English. That is the meaning of the Greek word.)

Why should we “live soberly, righteously, and godly” in the world (verse 12)? Why should Christians be anxious for the second coming (verse 13)?

The word peculiar is the translation of a Greek word that means “chosen” or “special.” In what sense are the people of God chosen? Chosen for what? When does that choosing occur? Is being chosen something available to all or only to some?

**Titus 3**

**Verses 7–9:** What does “justified by his grace” mean (verse 7)?

What do those with a hope for eternal life inherit (verse 7)?

The letters to Timothy use some variation of the formula “This is a faithful saying” in several places (1 Timothy 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; and 2 Timothy 2:11), each time to talk about salva-
tion. Why do you think Paul describes his description of the good news of Jesus Christ as a “faithful [trustworthy] saying”?

In verse 8 the King James translators note that they have added some words to make sense of the text as they understand it by italicizing several words: “This is a faithful saying.” Literally the Greek says, “The word is trustworthy [or “faithful”].” The King James translators are right to understand verse 8 to refer back to verses 3–7. But their translation isn’t as strong as the Greek.

What does Paul mean when he says “these things I suffer that thou affirm constantly”? Can you paraphrase that in contemporary English?

In verse 8 “might be careful” means “might give sustained thought to.” Maintain could be translated “to lead in doing.” Do those change the meaning of the verse? Paul uses the same phrase, word for word, in Titus 3:19. For Paul, how are good works related to the good news of salvation?

Verse 9 warns against “foolish questions,” foolish controversies or debates if translated more literally. What kinds of questions or controversies are foolish? How do we recognize them? How do we avoid them?

What is a foolish genealogy?

What does Paul have in mind when he tells Titus to avoid contentions and quarrels about the law (verse 9)? Why are they useless, unprofitable? Is “unprofitable and vain” a hendiadys, or is Paul speaking of two different problems with arguments about the law?

Which law do you think Paul has in mind, the law in general, the Roman civil and penal codes, or the Mosaic law? Explain.