READING THE PASTORAL EPISTLES TOGETHER
OCTOBER 2026

What?	1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus are letters written by the Apostle Paul. They are sometimes called the Pastoral Epistles as they are addressed to church leaders. The letters, though, are God-given instruction for the church as a whole – including us.
Who?	Timothy and Titus were coworkers of Paul (Acts 16:1–3, Galatians 2:1–3). At the time of writing, Timothy was in Ephesus and Titus was in Crete.
When?	The letters are undated, but 1 Timothy and Titus were likely written around 62–64 AD, after Paul's release from the imprisonment described in Acts 28. After another period of ministry, Paul was again imprisoned and executed. 2 Timothy is his final surviving letter, written during this imprisonment.
Why?	The letters were written for different reasons, but they all reflect Paul's concern to see healthy churches in Ephesus and Crete, led by faithful leaders. So, he instructs Timothy and Titus to challenge false teaching, to persevere in the truth of the gospel, to encourage their congregations to live in a way consistent with this truth and to appoint godly leaders who can continue the work.

INTRODUCING 1 TIMOTHY

In Acts 20:29–30, Paul warned the elders of the church in Ephesus: "From among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them." By the time of 1 Timothy, this warning had come true. Timothy was charged to restore order in the church in light of this false teaching. A rough outline of the letter's contents:

- Chapter 1 – An exhortation to confront false teaching
- Chapter 2 – Some instructions on church worship
- Chapter 3 – Character qualifications for church leaders
- Chapter 4 – How to be a good servant of Christ Jesus
- Chapter 5 – Honouring different groups in the church
- Chapter 6 – Another exhortation to confront false teaching

INTRODUCING 2 TIMOTHY

At this point, Paul is in prison awaiting execution. Having been abandoned by many, he hopes Timothy will come to see him (4:9). In the meantime, he writes to encourage Timothy to persevere in his faith and in his ministry, even in the face of suffering. A rough outline of the letter's contents:

- Chapter 1 – An exhortation to guard the gospel
- Chapter 2 – Being a good soldier, opposing false teaching
- Chapter 3 – Holding onto the Scriptures in godless times
- Chapter 4 – Final instructions to Timothy, as a minister in Ephesus and as a friend of Paul

INTRODUCING TITUS

Titus was sent to Crete to establish order in the church and appoint leaders. Like Timothy, Titus has to deal with false teachers. The letter is especially concerned with how the truth of the gospel leads to godly lives of good works.

- Chapter 1 – Appointing leaders and confronting deceivers
- Chapter 2 – Godly living that adorns the gospel
- Chapter 3 – Justified by grace and devoted to good works

THE TRUSTWORTHY SAYINGS

Five statements in these letters are described as "trustworthy sayings" (1 Tim 1:15, 3:1, 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Titus 3:8), a phrase Paul doesn't use anywhere else. Have a think: Why are these saying trustworthy? Why are they highlighted?

A SUGGESTED 30-DAY READING PLAN

☐ 1 Tim 1:1–11	☐ 1 Tim 6:1–10	☐ 2 Tim 4:1–8
☐ 1 Tim 1:12–20	☐ 1 Tim 6:11–16	☐ 2 Tim 4:9–22
☐ 1 Tim 2:1–7	☐ 1 Tim 6:17–21	☐ 2 Tim review
☐ 1 Tim 2:8–15	☐ 1 Tim review	☐ Titus 1:1–4
☐ 1 Tim 3:1–7	☐ 2 Tim 1:1–7	☐ Titus 1:5–16
☐ 1 Tim 3:8–16	☐ 2 Tim 1:8–18	☐ Titus 2:1–10
☐ 1 Tim 4:1–5	☐ 2 Tim 2:1–13	☐ Titus 2:11–15
☐ 1 Tim 4:6–16	☐ 2 Tim 2:14–26	☐ Titus 3:1–8
☐ 1 Tim 5:1–16	☐ 2 Tim 3:1–9	☐ Titus 3:9–15
☐ 1 Tim 5:17–25	☐ 2 Tim 3:10–17	☐ Titus review

EXTRA HELP FOR READING THESE LETTERS

There are resources you may find helpful on our website: litchardmission.co.uk/rbt. We also have an online question box, which you can access by scanning this QR code. We will aim to answer these questions in midweek meetings, on Sundays or at our end-of-month discussion times.

FIVE KEY QUESTIONS

You might like to make notes on these questions as you read through the letters.

1. What do these letters teach me about "**our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ**"? (Titus 2:13)

2. How do these letters help me to keep following **the truth of the gospel** in the face of false teaching?

3. What can I learn about "how one **ought to behave in the household of God**"? (1 Timothy 3:15)

4. What will it mean for me to be "**zealous for good works**" this month? (Titus 2:14)

5. How can I pray for local church leaders, that they might be "**good servants of Jesus Christ**"? (1 Timothy 4:6)