

a synopsis of 1 TIMOTHY

A mighty oak tree comes from a tiny acorn. That doesn't surprise us. But we are caught off-guard when a seemingly insignificant event gives birth to a mighty movement. Dwight L. Moody, founder of the Moody Bible Institute, led Wilbur Chapman to the Lord. Billy Sunday, an outfielder in the National League, had an encounter with Christ that changed his life one Sunday afternoon while standing in front of a Chicago bar listening to Wilbur Chapman. Billy Sunday is widely considered the most influential American evangelist during the first 2 decades of the 20th century—scheduling crusades across America. In one of Billy Sunday's meetings a young man by the name of Mordecai Hamm accepted Christ and became a great evangelist in the Southeastern United States. One night in one of those large crowds, a young man and his friend came forward to Christ. One was Billy Graham.

But that's not the whole story. You have to go back to Boston on a Saturday afternoon when a Sunday School teacher visited every boy in his class to make sure they knew Christ as their Savior. It was in a stockroom of a shoe store that Edward Kimball led Dwight L. Moody to Christ. Ah, but what of the pastor who encouraged Kimball to be a faithful participant in ministry? Maybe the most encouraging part of the story is that none of us know the name of that pastor (adapted from *Shepherding the Church into the 21st Century* by Joseph M. Stowell). I wonder if he ever dreamed that his life made so much of a difference in thousands, maybe millions of peoples' eternities.

What caused Paul to make Timothy—a half-Jew (Acts 16:1-3; 2 Timothy 1:5)—an understudy? It seems that Timothy was “wired” to be a trustworthy but not a forceful character (1 Timothy 4:12); timid (2 Timothy 1:6-8), perhaps sickly (1 Timothy 5:23). We don't know if Paul was instructed to call Timothy as a fellow missionary by the Holy Spirit, or if he was just a good judge of character. I tend to believe it was the latter. Paul was so dependent on the Spirit's guidance that he believed the Spirit could re-direct him if he had judged wrongly (see Acts 16:7). A careful reading of 2 Timothy 4 shows that Paul made a good decision. Timothy faithfully pastored the church at Ephesus—and eventually went to prison for the sake of Christ (Hebrews 13:23). What an inspiration Timothy has been for billions!

A working outline of 1 Timothy might look like this adaptation of Tom Wright, *Paul for Everyone, the Pastoral Letters*.

The Teaching about the Truth (1:1-7)	Get into Training! (4:6-10)
The Purpose of the Law (1:8-11)	Pay Attention to Yourself and Your Teaching (4:11-16)
Paul: Example of God's Saving Grace (1:12-17)	Human Families and God's Family (5:1-8)
The Battle of Faith (1:18-20)	Widows (5:9-16)
Prayer for the World (2:1-7)	Elders (5:17-25)
Women Must Be Allowed to Be Learners (2:8-15)	Slaves, Masters, and Sound Teaching (6:1-5)
The Character of an Elder (3:1-7)	Godliness and Contentment (6:6-10)
The Character of Deacons (3:8-13)	The King's Royal Appearing (6:11-16)
The Mystery of Godliness (3:14-16)	What to Do with Money (6:17-21)
Beware of False Teaching (4:1-5)	

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