

Lesson  
**41**

# “I Have Finished My Course”

*1 and 2 Timothy; Titus*

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**Purpose** To encourage class members to learn and teach true doctrine and be righteous examples for others.

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**Preparation**

1. Read, ponder, and pray about the following scriptures:
  - a. 1 Timothy 4; 2 Timothy 1–4; Titus 1. Paul describes signs of apostasy. He teaches that learning and teaching true doctrine helps guard against apostasy.
  - b. 1 Timothy 4:12. Paul teaches that we should be “an example of the believers.”
  - c. 1 Timothy 6; Titus 2–3. Paul teaches that we should “follow after righteousness” and deny ungodliness.
2. Additional reading: Bible Dictionary, “Pauline Epistles: 1 Timothy,” 747; “Pauline Epistles: 2 Timothy,” 748; “Pauline Epistles: Epistle to Titus,” 747; “Timothy,” 785; “Titus,” 785–86.
3. If you use the attention activity, prepare wordstrips of the following statements, or prepare to write them on the chalkboard:

*To finish my course, I must:  
Learn and teach true doctrine  
Be an example of the believers  
Follow after righteousness and deny ungodliness*
4. Suggestion for teaching: Vary the materials and methods you use in teaching. For example, you might use pictures or audiovisual materials, a different discussion technique, or a different seating arrangement. Variety can help class members maintain interest in the lessons. See *Teaching—No Greater Call*, pages 56–57 and 96–97, for materials and methods that may be appropriate for your lessons.

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**Suggested Lesson  
Development**

**Attention Activity** As appropriate, use the following activity or one of your own to begin the lesson.

- What is the last race you competed in or watched? What is the difference between *winning* and *finishing* a competitive race? How many winners are there in a typical race? What do you have to do to win?
- How is the course of our life like a race? How is it not like a race? (All people can win the “race” of life.) What must we do to finish the race of life successfully?

Ask a class member to read 2 Timothy 4:7. (You may want to point out that a “race” could also be called a “course.”) Explain that the Apostle Paul lived in such a way that he could make this declaration toward the end of his life. This lesson discusses several of Paul’s teachings that will help us as we strive to finish our course successfully.

Display the wordstrip *To finish my course, I must:*

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Scripture Discussion  
and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

Explain that Timothy and Titus were trusted associates of Paul who assisted him in preaching the gospel. After Paul’s first Roman imprisonment, he resumed his missionary travels. In Ephesus he left Timothy to minister to the Church, and in Crete he left Titus with a similar assignment. As Paul continued his journey, he wrote letters to strengthen these brethren and to counsel them in their responsibilities as pastors or shepherds over the Saints. Hence these letters are often called the pastoral epistles.

**1. Learn and teach true doctrine.**

Discuss 1 Timothy 4; 2 Timothy 1–4; and Titus 1. Invite class members to read selected verses aloud.

- What signs of apostasy did Paul describe in his letters to Timothy and Titus? (See 1 Timothy 4:1–3; 2 Timothy 3:1–7, 13; 4:3–4; Titus 1:10–11.) How are these signs of apostasy evident today? (See 2 Nephi 28:3–9; D&C 1:15–16.) How can we protect ourselves against these evils?
- Why are some people “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth”? (2 Timothy 3:7). How can we ensure that our learning brings us to a knowledge of the truth?
- What did Paul teach Timothy about the responsibilities of people who teach the gospel? (See 1 Timothy 4:6–7, 13–16; 2 Timothy 2:16, 23–25; 3:14–17; 4:2, 5. You may want to list these responsibilities on the chalkboard.) What opportunities do we have to teach the gospel? (Answers may include teaching family members, fulfilling callings in the Church, and discussing the gospel with friends and acquaintances. Point out that each of us is in some way a teacher of the gospel.) How can we teach the gospel more effectively?
- Paul emphasized the importance of teaching and learning true doctrine (1 Timothy 1:3; 4:6, 13; Titus 2:1). How can learning true doctrine help us guard against apostasy? What are some of the dangers of false teachings? How has learning the true doctrines of the gospel blessed your life?

Speaking of the power of true doctrine, Elder Boyd K. Packer said: “True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior. . . . That is why we stress so forcefully the study of the doctrines of the gospel” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 20; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 17).

- How can we be sure that what we teach is true doctrine? (See Mosiah 18:19–20; D&C 52:9.)

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin counseled: “God has revealed everything necessary for our salvation. We should teach and dwell on the things that have been revealed and avoid delving into so-called mysteries. My counsel to teachers in the Church, whether they instruct in wards and stakes, Church institutions of higher learning, institutes of religion, seminaries, or even as parents in their homes, is to base their teachings on the scriptures and the words of latter-day prophets” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 101; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 77).

- What did Paul counsel us to do once we have received sound doctrine? (See 2 Timothy 1:13; Titus 1:9.) What do you think it means to “hold fast”? (See 1 Nephi 15:23–24.)

If you used the attention activity, display the wordstrip *Learn and teach true doctrine*.

## 2. “Be . . . an example of the believers.”

Read and discuss 1 Timothy 4:12.

- What do you think it means to be “an example of the believers”? (1 Timothy 4:12). How have you been influenced by a person who was “an example of the believers”?

List each of the ways Paul admonished Timothy to be an example. Ask class members to describe how we can be an example in each of these ways.

Word

Conversation (may also mean conduct or behavior)

Charity

Spirit

Faith

Purity

If you used the attention activity, display the wordstrip *Be an example of the believers*.

## 3. “Follow after righteousness” and deny ungodliness.

Read and discuss selected verses from 1 Timothy 6 and Titus 2–3.

- What did Paul teach about the love of money? (See 1 Timothy 6:7–10.) In what sense is the love of money the “root of all evil”? How can we ensure that we do not focus too much on money and other material wealth? (See 1 Timothy 6:17–19; Jacob 2:18–19.)

Elder Dallin H. Oaks taught: “There is nothing inherently evil about money. The Good Samaritan used the same coinage to serve his fellowman that Judas used to betray the Master. It is ‘the *love of money* [which] is the root of all evil.’ (1 Timothy 6:10; italics added.) The critical difference is the degree of spirituality we exercise in viewing, evaluating, and managing the things of this world” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, 78; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 63).

- In his letters to Timothy and Titus, Paul gave many instructions about living righteously. What counsel did Paul give in the following verses: 1 Timothy 6:11–12; 2 Timothy 2:22; Titus 2:1–8, 12; 3:1–2, 8? (Summarize class members' responses on the chalkboard. Discuss what these instructions mean and how we can apply them in our lives.)

If you used the attention activity, display the wordstrip *Follow after righteousness and deny ungodliness*.

## Conclusion

Explain that Paul knew he would soon be martyred for his testimony of Jesus Christ. But he also knew that because he had lived the gospel, “there [was] laid up for [him] a crown of righteousness” (2 Timothy 4:8). Bear testimony of the importance of doing the right things every day and staying on course so we can say with Paul, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7).

## Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

### 1. Additional discussion of 1 Timothy

- What counsel did Paul give about prayer in 1 Timothy 2:1–3? Why should we pray for all people? How can we do this meaningfully? Why should we pray particularly for the leaders of nations?
- In 1 Timothy 3:1–7 Paul set forth the qualifications of a bishop. Why are these qualities important for a bishop?
- What did Paul teach in 1 Timothy 5:8 about caring for our families? Why do you think Paul spoke so strongly against those who do not fulfill this responsibility?

### 2. “God hath not given us the spirit of fear” (2 Timothy 1:7)

Ask a class member to read 2 Timothy 1:7.

- What are some things that people fear in the world today? What assurance did Paul give Timothy about “the spirit of fear”? How have you found this assurance to be true in your own life?

### 3. Being good employees

Read and discuss Titus 2:9–10.

- How does Paul’s counsel to servants in these verses apply to employees? (Point out that the word *purloining* means stealing or misappropriating.) How do employees sometimes steal from their employers? (Answers may include embezzling, taking supplies for personal use, or not giving a full day’s work.)
- What did Paul say we should do instead of purloining? (Show “good fidelity,” or be faithful and trustworthy.) What results have you seen of showing “good fidelity” in the workplace?