

SOMETHING OF GRACE WAS MISSING



Gary Wilkerson January 5, 2015

“As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith” (1 Timothy 1:3-4, ESV).

Paul was urging Timothy to stay in Ephesus even though it appears that he frowned on that idea. The reason Timothy may not have wanted to stay is because of problems the Ephesian church was facing. The people appeared to be living in self-righteousness—trying to look good and appear righteous. When you are self-righteous, however, often you are deceived and this can lead to you becoming greedy and ambitious.

At this very time there was a famine in Macedonia. There was also a famine in Jerusalem and extreme poverty. While Macedonia and Jerusalem were struggling, apparently the economy in Ephesus was good. They had a lot of resources but they were clinging to them for themselves.

Paul says in 1 Timothy 6:17-18: “Charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share.”

Look at Paul’s first word—charge—which means to “command or give strict orders.” In some translations it says, “Command those who are rich in this present age to be generous.”

Why would Paul say something like this—to command people to be generous, to no longer cling to things for themselves? It sounds legalistic and it is—because it’s the Law. The Law shows us where we are off grace, where we are wrong. The command that Paul said Timothy should give to the Ephesians was not to get them just to give an offering but to get them to see that something of grace was missing in their lives.

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