

# THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

## 1 TIMOTHY 1-2

The eye of a hurricane is a strange phenomenon.

Hurricane winds spin in a circle up to 180 mph. My wife is from South Florida and lived through a number of hurricanes. She recalls how her dad picked coconuts from the trees and boarded up windows. The family huddled together as the storm let loose its fury.

But at the center - the eye of the hurricane - a strange phenomenon occurred. The winds died down, and an eerie calm was felt. Kathy's father opened the doors and led the family out to experience the serenity.

They had just braved a fierce storm and soon they'd be back in its teeth, but the eye of the storm provided a brief reprieve - a chance to lick their wounds and catch their breath. **The eye was nature's intermission.**

1 Timothy was written in the eye of a hurricane. Paul had just experienced a frightening storm, and unbeknownst to him, he was headed right back into its fury... but for the moment there was a calm.

Paul had gone to Rome to be tried before Caesar Nero. He'd stood in the lion's mouth and escaped. The Emperor set him free, but his freedom was short-lived.

For just two years later, in 65 AD, Paul was arrested again - this time for the last time. A year later, Paul was beheaded - martyred for his faith in his Lord Jesus.

At the moment, a fierce storm was behind him, a fiercer storm was ahead of him - and Paul was in the backyard

enjoying the calm... In the eye of a hurricane, he writes two letters: 1 Timothy and Titus. His second letter to Timothy is penned in the final, fatal storm.

Up to this point in your Bible, Paul's letters are to churches, but his next four are written to individuals.

Timothy, Titus, and Philemon were church leaders or pastors. Thus, we call these letters "The Pastoral Epistles." They teach us the priorities of a pastor. How a leader should live his life and conduct his ministry.

We can title this section: "Lessons for Leaders."

Chapter 1, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope..." The term "apostle" means "ambassador." We'll talk about the apostolic office later, but the term refers to a man "sent as a representative."

And this colored all Paul was, and did, and said.

He was always conscious that he represented realities bigger than himself. He stood for *God, His Lord Jesus, the Gospel, the Church, God's grace...*

He writes "to Timothy, a true son in the faith..."

It reminds me of Billy, the pastor's 6-year-old son. At church, Billy would always introduce himself as "Billy Allen, Pastor Allen's son." One night his mom suggested he drop the "Pastor Allen's son" - be his own man - introduce himself as just "Billy Allen."

The next Sunday a visitor asked Billy his name.

Following his mom's advice, he replied, "I'm Billy Allen." The man replied, "Billy Allen, oh, you must be Pastor Allen's son." Billy answered, "Well, dad says so, but my mom isn't so sure." Well, unlike Pastor Allen's wife, Paul had no qualms about advertising the father-son relationship he had with this young man, Timothy.

According to Acts 16, Timothy's natural father was not a believer in Jesus. And though his mother, Eunice, and his grandma, Lois, were Christians and godly examples... *a mom's influence only goes so far...*

Here's a startling statistic... "When a father is an active believer, 75% of the time his kids become active believers. But when mom is the only active believer in the family the odds decrease to 15%." The *father factor* is crucial in a son or daughter's spiritual formation.

This is why Eunice jumped for joy when Paul took her son under his wing. Paul was a spiritual dad to Tim.

And Timothy became Paul's *faithful friend and troubleshooter*. He put out fires in Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, Ephesus. He became a capable pastor.

Paul greets Timothy, "Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord." When Paul writes to churches, he greets them with "grace and peace." But when he writes to pastors, he adds "*mercy.*"

And I can tell you firsthand, a pastor's *job is harder*, his *responsibilities are greater*, his *judgment will be stricter...* that means he really needs God's "*mercy.*"

In Acts 19, Paul started the church in Ephesus. It was a strong, healthy church - and when Paul moved to his next assignment, he turned its leadership over to Timothy. Here he writes to his protege, “As I urged you when I went into Macedonia - remain in Ephesus...”

Needless to say, Timothy had some big shoes to fill.

Pastoring in the wake of Paul was like taking over for Bear Bryant - or filling in for Billy Graham... And you'll notice *Tim* was a bit *timid*. That's why Paul “urged” him to *stick with it, stay at it*. Timothy needed a holy nudge.

Throughout this letter, Paul follows a pattern. He **urges Timothy** - then **praises God**. He challenges Timothy to *press on* by getting him to *look up*. And the first thing Paul urges Timothy to do is “*remain*.”

As the pastor of the same church for 39 years, to my surprise, longevity has brought with it great rewards.

In fact, I think in almost every venue “longevity” is an underrated virtue. Whether it's a job, a marriage, a community, a church you'll find some blessings come only from longevity. They accrue when you “*remain*.”

In verse 3, Paul also urges Timothy to “charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.”

Apparently, **falsehoods** and **speculations** were seeping into the church - and Timothy needed to resist them both. *And this is still the central job of any pastor.*

**Falsehoods** *deny* the truth. **Speculations** *distract* from it. They take people down irrelevant rabbit trails.

Bible Codes, and 666 interpretations, and Antichrist identifications, and conspiracy theories... are all just speculation. **And they divide rather than edify.** Paul is telling Tim to never let *tabloid* overshadow *truth*.

Our focus should be on the Scriptures. For verse 5 tells us its end result... **“Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith...”** Christian truth produces love for God and man... *not arrogance... not fear... not elitism... not combativeness... but love!*

That's why every preaching point, if it doesn't increase my love for God and you; it doesn't deserve my attention! It might be clever and curious, but if it doesn't cause me to love from a pure heart, a good conscience, a sincere faith it doesn't merit my focus.

Verse 6, **“from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.”** There were legalists in Ephesus.

Rather than preach God's grace, they forced the believers to jump through legalistic hoops. They had all kinds of *rules* and *rituals* and *requirements* that went far beyond the Gospel's demand for simple faith.

*Heard of hula hoops?* Beware of *holy hoops*... you got to worship on a given day, or speak in tongues, or be baptized by our formula, or read from a specific Bible version, or vote

for a particular political party, or educate kids the way we do, or eat or drink our way...

Do this, avoid that - *or you're a second class Christian*. The legalist says, *"Follow our stipulations or you'll never know God's best..."* That's just not true. Faith is not about *toeing a line*, but *following Jesus*.

Recall verse 5, *"the purpose of the commandment is love."* This was true of the OT Law - its stories, and codes of conduct, and rituals - **were all about love**.

The Law taught us that God loves us enough to provide a sacrifice... Even the genealogies reveal a God who cares enough about His people to call each one by name... The Law God gave to Moses was all about how to *love God* and how to *love one another*.

Verse 8, *"But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully..."* Realize, *it's possible to use the Bible in unbiblical ways*. You can use God's law unlawfully!

Once a man fell on hard times. He turned to the Bible, closed his eyes, and plopped his finger down on the page. It read *"olive oil."* He took it as a sign. He invested in Texas oil wells and earned millions.

But soon his wells dried up, so once more he turned to the Bible. Put his finger on the page, and read, *"Paul was placed in the stocks."* It was a sign! He invested in the stock market, and once again became a millionaire.

But not soon after the market took a dramatic dive that cost him his fortune. So once again he opened his Bible. This time his fingertip landed on, *"Chapter 11."*



Hopefully, this last “*sign*” caused him to realize Bible roulette is not a reliable way to find God’s will.

Twist enough - cut and paste - and a person can make the Bible say whatever he wants. We need to interpret the Bible in context - use the Law Lawfully.

In 2 Timothy 2:15, Paul tells Timothy to study the Bible so that he can “*rightly divide the word of truth.*”

Paul comments on the correct use of the Law in verse 9, “*Knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane...*” The person with *rebellion in his heart* is the one who needs *boundaries for his hands*.

You need *dos and don'ts* if you lack proper *wants*.

But a Christian has been made a new creation and given new desires. Rather than *bound by the Law*, a believer in Jesus needs to be *released to love*.

Remember, the Law is like an X-ray. It *shows* the break in the bone, but it can’t fix the break. “*What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus!*”

We gain God’s favor and forgiveness **by faith and faith alone**. *Why live with the Law looking over my shoulder when the Holy Spirit now fills my heart?*

People live far more godly lives when they’re bathed in God’s grace than when they’re flogged by the Law.

Paul says the Law is not for the righteous, but “for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers...” These are people full of hate, not love.

The law is “For fornicators, for sodomites...” It’s not love to use a person for sexual gratification with no regard for what’s morally and spiritually best for them.

The long arm of the Law is “for kidnappers” - Love doesn’t steal another person’s freedom and force them to comply against their will.... And it’s “for liars, for perjurers...” Love doesn’t deceive or distort the truth.

Laws are necessary where people lack love.

“And if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.” And this is why when the Gospel arrives the Law becomes irrelevant, for *sound doctrine* produces great love.

And notice Paul calls it “*the glorious gospel.*” I’m sure when he thought of the Gospel it brought a tear to his eye... He shares a bit of his testimony with Timothy...

“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man (literally, *a bully*); but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.”

Notice Paul’s words, “*I was formerly...*”



What if you wrote a letter and you used those same words, *what would follow?* I was **formerly** “**a druggie... an adulterer... a hothead... a pervert... a hypocrite...**”

There's a line in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Christian is told, “**You must know that Forgetful Green is the most dangerous place in these parts.**”

“**Forgetful Green**” is that grassy bluff where you relax and forget *who you were* and *what you would be* apart from Christ. It's the place you get *bluffed*! Don't forget.

*And Paul doesn't!* Verse 15, “**This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.**” In his former life, Paul hated Christ and killed Christians.

Now he says, “**However, for this reason, I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.**” With Paul, God set a marvelous precedent... He found the meanest, vilest sinner on the block and cut him down to size.

On the Damascus off-ramp, Jesus knocked Paul off his high horse with a bright light. He reached as low as He could go - *turned* the chief of sinners to prove He can *turn* anyone. After *Paul*, there's now hope for us *all*.

And Paul erupts in praise to God! Verse 17, “**Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.**”

Why remain at your post? Why represent God well?

*Because the King is worthy!* He's timeless. He's incorruptible. He's intangible. He's wise and wonderful.

Again, notice the pattern in Paul's letter... Here's Timothy's duty, for here is God's glory. God's honor is the reason Tim should conduct his ministry honorably.

And now in verse 18, he gives him a new challenge.

**"This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare..."**

Notice, Paul couches Timothy's ministry in military terminology. The word translated **"charge"** speaks of a **"combat assignment"** - **"orders from headquarters."**

The Christian life is *a battleground, not a playground.*

We learn from these letters that Timothy is a bit timid.

He loved Jesus, but when met with resistance, he tended to *shrink back* rather than *rise up* - *cower* rather than *power*. Here Paul supplies a needed reminder...

Apparently, when God called Timothy to ministry, He gave to him a few personal, predictive promises.

And **promises from God are powerful.** They cast vision and establish direction. They become anchors in the storm, reflectors in the dark, signs along the road. They fan the fire when you start to run out of steam.

And here's my question, *what personal promises has God made to you?* Do as Paul encourages Timothy...

Don't shirk from those promises.

Don't conveniently forget them. **Recall them, embrace them** - rise up in faith, and use those old promises as new motivation to keep up the fight.

Timothy needs to hold fast. Verse 19, **“Having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.”**

Wars have casualties, including the spiritual battle. And Paul mentions two men who **“suffered shipwreck.”**

Hymenaeus and Alexander denied the faith and got the right foot of dis-fellowship. They were *booted from the body*. The fastest way to learn to appreciate what you've been given is to be forced to live without it.

Thankfully, only a few times in the 39 years I've been a pastor have we had to remove folks from the church - and when it *had to happen*, it was done biblically.

1 Timothy is going to talk a lot about membership in the Body of Christ - *its safeguards, its privileges, its obligations*. And there are times, like with Hymenaeus and Alexander, that those **safeguards and privileges** have to be removed to remind the person of the **obligations**. **Tough love has a place in church life.**

Chapter 2, **“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men...”** It's our job to pray. But for whom should we pray? Paul says, **“All men.”**

This has incredible implications. It means no human being on earth is outside the influence of prayer.

God wouldn't have told us to pray for "*all men*" if there were *some men* for whom our prayers had no effect. This is why it's wrong to write anyone off...

**No one is beyond the reach of our prayers!**

And notice the four types of prayer...

First, "*supplication*" is a felt need - an open wound. It's a spontaneous heart cry brought to the Healer!

The next word translated, "*prayers*," speaks of a reverence for God. This is more of a deliberate posturing before God. It's coming with a humble heart.

Third, "*Intercession*" is a request on behalf of another person... Fourthly, "*giving of thanks*." Should anyone ever approach God apart from a grateful heart?

Thus, our prayer life should consist of all the above... *cries of the heart - personal and frequent humblings - help for others - and of course, always gratitude!*

Pray for all men, and especially, "*kings and all who are in authority...*" Realize as Paul pens these words the most evil tyrant the world has ever seen sits on the throne in Rome. Emperor Nero was *the kissing cousin of Adolph Hitler. He made Stalin and Mao look like a babysitter.* Nero was a certifiable nut... *but not a nut that couldn't be cracked if the church chose to pray!*

I don't care what you think of *President Trump*, or of *President Obama* before him, but biblically speaking we shouldn't talk *about him* until we've prayed *for him*.

And how should we pray for our authorities? Verse 2 outlines the Church's political agenda. Here's what to expect from government - and quite frankly, *it's not much*. We should hope **"that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence."**

Realize, a government that allows the right to vote, enacts moral laws, even laws that reflect Christian values, and affords the church tax breaks... this is the icing on the cake. Paul's expectations were more modest.

He says just be thankful when the government stays off your back. If you can **"lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence..."** Be thankful if you can live and worship without government interference...

It's helpful to remember **the goal of the Church in society isn't the Christianization of institutions, but the evangelization of individuals.** Let's pray for government to stay out of our lives, and let us share our faith freely.

Verse 3, **"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."**

Some people think God's salvation targets a select few - *that idea is foreign to the NT*. The Marines want *a few good men*, but God **"desires all men to be saved..."**

And He's appointed a middleman to broker our salvation. **"For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus..."**

In the midst of all his suffering Job felt the huge chasm that separated him from God. In 9:33 he cried, “Nor is there any mediator between us, who may lay his hand on us both.” Job needed help to reach God.

This is a universal realization. Everyone knows deep inside that they can’t reach a holy God on their own.

This is why people carry a rabbit’s foot, or consult mediums, or wear crystals, or pray the rosary, or hail Mary... they’re reiterating the cry of Job. They need a Mediator - a go-between - someone who can bridge the gap between *God’s love* and *their lostness*.

It reminds me of Ernie. When the hospital attendant wheeled him back from surgery, she inadvertently forgot to place the call button within his reach.

As he shook off the anesthesia, Ernie’s pain became excruciating. He couldn’t reach the button, and he couldn’t walk over to get it... *so he found a mediator.*

Ernie picked up his cell phone and called the hospital switchboard. The operator connected him to the nurse’s station on his floor and immediately help arrived.

If you want God’s forgiveness and His healing... if you want to know God... you need to find someone close to God who can solicit His help on your behalf...

And neither the Buddha, nor Muhammad, nor Moses, nor Mary, nor the saints, nor Oprah - can help you with this. There is one Mediator between God and man - **and only one** - He is “the Man Christ Jesus...”



And here's why Christ Jesus can broker salvation - because He **"gave Himself a ransom for all..."**

He came as a man to die in the place of all men.

Jesus died not as a *criminal*, or a *victim*, or a *political pawn* - but as a **"ransom."** His *sinless blood* was the price required for our *sinful life*. The Man Christ Jesus is the ransom God paid for *all the sins*, of *all mankind*.

One of the five points of the theological system known as Calvinism is **"limited atonement"** - that Jesus died for a select few. But Paul denies that theory.

He tells us Jesus **"gave Himself a ransom for all!"**

Sadly, in the end, not everyone will be saved - but if they're not - they won't be able to blame God! Verse 4 tells us God **"desires all men to be saved."** The blood of Jesus Christ was shed for **all men in all times.**

And now Paul points to Jesus. Paul had been a Pharisee in love with the rules of Judaism, but he *gave up* religion when he realized Jesus **"gave Himself a ransom to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle - I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying..."** It's amazing, that Paul was now preaching the faith he once persecuted.

And he adds to his resume **"a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth."** As a Jewish rabbi, Paul hated Gentiles, but Jesus had won his heart with love, and now directed Paul's focus to the people he once hated.

Paul has been talking about “*all men*,” but “*all men*” come in two varieties - **male** and **female**. And now in the last half of Chapter 2, Paul is going to instruct both men and women regarding the specific roles each should play in church life. **Our gender matters to God.**

He begins in verse 8, “*I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere...*” I’m sure Paul wants women to pray, but here he makes special mention of the men.

Men are called to *lead*, and *good leaders* pray.

Men should pray, “*lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting...*” Stick a gun in my face, *and what happens to my hands?* They shoot straight up!

I surrender!... This is the attitude that men should possess - total surrender to the will and direction of God. If men want to lead they need to bow to God.

Verse 9 is a word to women, “*In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.*”

I like this paraphrase, “**Women who claim to be devoted to God should make themselves attractive by the good things they do.**” That puts it in the positive.

Real beauty is about virtue bubbling up on the inside of a woman, not adornments hanging on the outside.

Yet a Christian woman **IS** responsible for how she dresses. The idea regarding jewelry and hairstyle is to accentuate her inner beauty, not her outer appearance.

I like the motto, “**Modest is hottest.**” Rather than draw attention to her curves and cleavage, a Christian woman dresses to highlight her spiritual, inner beauty.

Then in verse 11, “**Let a woman learn in silence with all submission.**” From here through Chapter 3, Paul deals with the qualifications for church leaders.

And they fall into three categories... **character, giftedness, and gender.** Sadly, today’s church stresses *giftedness*. Yet the only *giftedness* Paul mentions is “**apt to teach.**” His priority is on *character* and *gender*.

And Paul says of women that they should “**learn in silence with all submission.**” First, let me say, I don’t believe this verse is advocating a strict, absolute silence... that a sister can never speak up in church.

In fact, there are other places in the NT where women participate vocally... In I Corinthians 11:5, ladies pray and prophesy in church... Acts 21:9, Philip has four virgin daughters who prophesy... In Titus 2:4, Paul tells us older women should teach younger women...

And recall, the very first announcement - girls were **the women** who came to the empty tomb - were first to see the risen Christ - and go back to tell His disciples.

Here, Paul’s intention isn’t to forbid Christian women from ever speaking in church. Rather, the “**silence**” sought is the attitude that flows from a submitted spirit.

Paul adds in verse 12, “**And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.**” Here’s what a lot of ladies don’t realize, women have to show restraint if they want men to lead.

Wives, if you’re always asserting - and doing the talking - and taking over - your man won’t fight you for the leadership... He’ll let you lead *and just go fishing*.

Men are taught early on... **never fight with girls**. If a woman is determined to lead, her man will let her.

Here’s the biblical mandate... **In the church and in the home, the man is to lead and hold final authority, while the woman is to support and follow the man.**

In the eyes of God, men and women are equal in **righteousness** and **worth** and **gifting** - but they have different **roles** to play in the church and in the home.

Some of the best Bible teachers I’ve known are women. Kay Smith, my pastor’s wife, was a better Bible teacher than her husband, Chuck, but men were not allowed into her class. They tried to attend, but Kay would run them off. She understood the biblical roles.

This word in verse 11 translated, “**submission**” means “**to rank under.**” Everyone who’s ever served in the military has met someone of a higher rank who had lesser skills and smarts than you, *but due to military order, you submitted*. A bigger purpose was in play.

And this is what God is asking from the females in the Christian fellowship. They’re to allow the men to lead, not

because men are better, or braver, or brainier. In fact, it's usually just the opposite. Most often men are denser than women. But God has a bigger purpose in play. It's not as *logical* as it is *biblical* and *metaphorical*.

In the church and home, God wants men to lead and women to follow so the world can see a picture of the relationship between Christ and His church.

Men are called to assume the role of Jesus - *and lovingly lead*. Ladies are commanded to act like the Church - *and willingly follow...* **God wants both sexes to complement each other, not compete with one another.**

And realize, God's issue with this role-play between the sexes doesn't apply to business or government.

I have no problem with a godly woman for president or a qualified female CEO, but in the church and home God is painting a picture, and we all have roles to play.

When a wife submits to her husband - or when a qualified female teacher stands down in favor of a male leader - it makes a radical statement. Folks perk up and ask why. It's our opportunity to share the Gospel.

Perhaps you've heard of the famous missionary, Jim Elliot? Jim was martyred taking the Gospel to the Auca Indians in the Amazon. His wife, Elisabeth, was left in charge of the Indians in their village who'd been won to Christ by Jim. Without him, they needed a pastor, and the most qualified person among them was Elisabeth.

But Elisabeth believed 1 Timothy 2 granted authority in the church to men, not women. She wanted to obey.

So instead of teaching herself, Elisabeth gathered the men Jim felt had leadership potential and worked with them on the weekly sermon. Here was her thinking, “They would get up and preach-not a very good sermon. I could have done better. But I felt it was not my job to take over the church simply because I was competent to do it. It was my job to encourage these men so that they would become competent.”

Here was a woman secure enough in her own skin to see God’s bigger purpose and cooperate with Him.

And please don’t buy into the liberal dribble that the God-given roles were only applicable to the oriental culture of the first century and don’t apply to us today.

Paul anticipates this argument in verses 13-14. The biblical roles of male and female transcend cultural, for he traces them back to the creation - to the very first couple... “For Adam was formed first, then Eve...”

Adam was “formed first,” and like the Oriental title of “firstborn,” this carried with it special privileges, and authority, and responsibility. God made Adam the head of the human race. The man received “headship.”

Yet how quickly both the man and woman violated their roles. They both bucked God’s will. Paul states, “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.” Eve sinned when she usurped her husband’s authority and negotiated with the devil. Adam on the other hand, was weak and failed to lead. And because of their mutual rebellion, sin entered the world. All of humanity has suffered since.



Yet in the wake of Eve's disaster women were consoled by God with a promise of the coming Savior.

Paul explains in verse 15, "Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing..." A literal translation would be, "THE childbearing." In other words, a single, specific childbirth. Here's God's promise, a woman got us into this mess, and a woman will help get us out.

Sin came into the world when Satan tempted Eve.

But salvation - ultimately the Messiah - will also enter the world through a woman - a virgin named Mary.

And it's through "THE childbearing" - the miracle of Jesus' incarnation - that you and I can be saved.

And what's expected of us... not just a one-time pledge. Verse 15 exhorts us to "continue in faith." We need to persevere in faith, and in the fruits of living out that faith... in "love, and holiness, with self-control."