



The Authority Behind the Message

1 Timothy 1:1 (NKJV)

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope."

Introduction: The Crisis of Authority

There is a crisis of authority in the modern church. Not a shortage of voices, we have more voices than ever, flooding every platform, podcast, and pulpit with opinions, visions, and spiritual declarations.

The crisis is not quantity but quality.

The question that haunts the church in every age is the same one that confronted the Pharisees when they challenged Jesus.

Matthew 21:23, *Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?"*

Who sent you?

Who gave you the right to stand before God's people and declare thus says the Lord?

The Apostle Paul answers this question before he says anything else.

In the very first verse of his first letter to Timothy, he lays down his credentials. Not to impress, but to establish the divine origin of everything that follows.

- If the authority is right, the message can be trusted.
- If the authority is self-generated, the message is merely opinion dressed in religious clothing.

This opening verse is not a mere formality.

In the ancient world, letters followed a precise formula: **sender, recipient, and greeting.**

Paul follows the form but transforms every element.

- His name is not just a signature it is the name of a commissioned ambassador.
- His title is not self-chosen it is divinely assigned.
- His authority is not ecclesiastical it is apostolic, flowing from the very Godhead.

As we open this series on **1 Timothy**, we begin where Paul begins with the question of authority.

Because everything else in this letter its commands about false teachers, its instructions for prayer, its qualifications for elders and deacons, its guidance for the household of God flows from a single foundational conviction: **this message comes from God.**

I. Paul — The Man behind the Letter

A. Who was Paul before his conversion?

To understand the weight of Paul's apostolic authority, we must first understand the man.

Acts 21:39, *But Paul said, “I am a Jew from Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and I implore you, permit me to speak to the people.”*

Saul of Tarsus Paul's **Hebrew name** was born in Tarsus of Cilicia a cosmopolitan city at the intersection of Greek, Roman, and Jewish cultures.

He was a **Roman citizen by birth**.

Acts 22:28, *The commander answered, “With a large sum I obtained this citizenship.” And Paul said, “But I was born a citizen.”*

An extraordinary privilege that gave him legal protections unavailable to most of the ancient world.

He was educated in Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel.

Acts 22:3, *“I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.*

One of the greatest rabbinical scholars of his age, *'trained in the law of our fathers'* the most rigorous intellectual preparation a first-century Jewish young man could receive.

By his own account which he spelled it in Philippians.

Philippians 3:5–6, *circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*

He was not a peripheral figure in Judaism. He was the rising star a young man who had every human credential to be proud of, and who wielded every one of them against the followers of Jesus.

Paul's persecution of the church was not casual or incidental.

Acts 8:3, *As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.*

The Greek word for 'made havoc' (***elumaineto***) is the same word used for a wild animal tearing at its prey.

Paul himself later testified.

Acts 26:10–11, *This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. ¹¹And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.*

He voted for the death of believers, punished them in every synagogue, and tried to force them to blaspheme. He breathed threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord.

Acts 9:1, *Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest.*

Why does this matter for our study of 1 Timothy 1:1?

Because the man who writes '*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God*' is not a man who would have chosen this path.

He did not drift into apostleship through religious sentiment or spiritual seeking.

He was arrested by the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, blinded, transformed, and commissioned against his every natural inclination.

His apostleship is not a career change, but a divine interruption.

B. The Damascus Road — Apostleship by Confrontation.

Acts 9 records the pivotal moment. Saul, *'still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord' (V 1)*, was travelling to Damascus with letters authorising him to arrest Christians.

Suddenly, a light brighter than the sun blazed around him. He fell to the ground. A voice spoke: *'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?'* And when Saul asked *'Who are You, Lord?'* the answer came: *'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.'*

That single encounter changed everything.

The greatest enemy of the Gospel became its greatest champion. The man who had dragged Christians to prison became himself a prisoner of Christ.

The persecutor became the persecuted.

The self-righteous guardian of Judaism became the herald of the righteousness that comes through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

Acts 9:15-16, *But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. ¹⁶For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."*

God's word to Ananias about Paul that '*he is a chosen vessel of Mine*'.

This is the divine commentary on **1 Timothy 1:1**.

- Paul did not apply for apostleship.
- He did not work his way up through church structures.
- He was chosen.
- He was commissioned.
- He was sent.

This is the meaning of '*by the commandment of God.*'

II. Apostle — The Title and its weight.

A. The Greek word: **Apostolos**.

The word 'apostle' comes from the Greek ***apostolos***, derived from the verb ***apostellein*** to send out, to send on a mission with full authority.

In the Greco-Roman world, an ***apostolos*** was a naval or military envoy, an official representative dispatched by a ruling authority with power to act on that authority's behalf.

When an apostle spoke, it was as if the sender himself was speaking. When an apostle made a decision, it carried the binding force of the one who sent him.

In Jewish culture, the equivalent concept was the ***shaliah*** an agent legally authorized to represent his principal in every matter.

The **Talmud** preserves the principle: *'A man's agent is like the man himself.'*

This is precisely how Paul understood his apostleship.

He was not merely a religious teacher offering spiritual insights. He was the direct representative of the risen Lord Jesus Christ, authorized to speak and act in His name.

The New Testament recognises a specific group as 'the twelve apostles' those who had been with Jesus from the beginning of His ministry, had witnessed the resurrection, and were personally commissioned by Christ (**Acts 1:21–22**).

Paul did not meet these criteria in the normal way, yet he emphatically claimed apostleship.

Why?

Because his commissioning was direct from the risen Christ, not second-hand through other apostles.

Galatians 1:11–12, *But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. ¹²For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

B. Why Paul asserts his Apostleship in every letter?

If you read Paul's letters, you will notice that he almost always opens by declaring himself an apostle even to churches he founded and deeply loves.

To the **Galatians**, to the **Romans**, to the **Corinthians**, to the **Ephesians** the claim is always there.

Why this persistence?

Because Paul's apostolic authority was constantly under attack.

False teachers followed him into his churches, questioning his credentials, undermining his message, and presenting themselves as superior alternatives.

In **2 Corinthians 11:5**, he calls these rivals '*super-apostles*' and spends entire chapters defending his genuine apostleship against their counterfeit claims.

At **Ephesus**, the situation was no different. False teachers had crept in. They were teaching 'a different doctrine' (**1 Timothy 1:3**).

They needed to know that the letter they were hearing came with apostolic weight. This was not Paul's opinion. This was a word from God.

For us today, this has a direct application.

When we read the letters of Paul, we do not read the reflections of a gifted religious thinker. We read the authoritative Word of God, delivered through a chosen vessel by divine commandment. The authority that Paul claims in **V1** is the authority that gives every verse in this letter its binding force for our lives and our churches.

III. By the Commandment of God — The source of Ministry Authority.

A. Commandment: The Royal Decree.

The word Paul uses is not 'permission' or 'invitation' or 'calling' in the soft sense it is *epitagē*, a royal command, a binding decree.

This is the language of imperial edicts, of military orders, of irreversible governmental proclamations. In the Septuagint (the **Greek Old Testament**), this word is used for the authoritative commands of kings.

Esther 1:20, *When the king's decree which he will make is proclaimed throughout all his empire (for it is great), all wives will honour their husbands, both great and small."*

It uses it for the royal edict of King Ahasuerus.

Paul is saying that my apostleship is not a career I chose. It is a royal commandment I received. This changes everything about how he serves.

- He is not in ministry because he finds it fulfilling, though it is.
- He is not a pastor because it suits his personality.
- He serves because the King of kings issued a decree and Paul is not at liberty to refuse.

This has a searching application for every minister and every believer.

- The question is not 'Do I feel called?'
- The question is: '**Has God commanded this?**'

Feeling-based ministry collapses when feelings fail.

Command based ministry endures because its foundation is not in the servant's emotional state but in the Master's unalterable will.

"The call of God is not an offer that may be accepted or declined according to human preference. It is a royal summons that transforms the one it reaches." — John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion.

B. God Our Saviour — The Old Testament Background.

Paul describes God as '*our Saviour*' — a title loaded with Old Testament meaning. Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, God's most celebrated role is as Deliverer and Saviour.

Psalm 106:21, *They forgot God their Savior, Who had done great things in Egypt,*

Psalm 25:5, *Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day.*

Psalm 27:1, *The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?*

Hosea 13:4, *“Yet I am the Lord your God Ever since the land of Egypt, And you shall know no God but Me; For there is no saviour besides Me.*

Jonah 2:9, *But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.”*

Deuteronomy 32:15, *“But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; You grew fat, you grew thick, You are obese! Then he forsook God who made him, And scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation.*

In the intertestamental period, the title 'Saviour' (Greek: Sōtēr) was applied to pagan rulers and deities particularly to the Roman Emperor, who was called '*saviour and benefactor*' of the world.

By using this title for God and for Jesus Christ in the same breath, Paul was making a politically charged theological declaration:

- The true Saviour is not Caesar.
- The true Saviour is not the goddess **Artemis worshipped in Ephesus**.
- The true Saviour is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, now fully revealed in His Son Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 43:3 *"For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in your place."*

That Paul was commissioned by this God, the Saviour God, the covenant-keeping Deliverer means his ministry carried the full weight of redemptive history.

He was not inventing a new religion.

He was proclaiming the culmination of everything God had been doing since He breathed life into Adam and promised a seed to crush the serpent's head (**Genesis 3:15**).

C. The Lord Jesus Christ — Co-Equal source of Authority.

Paul names both God the Father ('*God our Savior*') and Jesus Christ ('*the Lord Jesus Christ*') as joint sources of his apostolic commission.

This is Trinitarian theology embedded in a credential statement.

Paul does not subordinate Christ to the Father in the granting of his apostleship. They are co-equal sources of the same commission.

The title 'Lord Jesus Christ' is itself a theological statement of the highest order.

'Lord' (***Kyrios***) is the Greek translation of the Hebrew **YHWH** the covenant name of God Himself.

When the Septuagint translators rendered the Old Testament, they translated **YHWH as Kyrios** throughout.

When Paul calls Jesus 'Lord,' he is applying the divine name of God to a first-century Jewish carpenter who died on a Roman cross. This is the most radical claim in all religious history.

Paul rests his entire apostolic authority on it.

Philippians 2:9–11, *Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

IV. Our Hope — The Christological Vision.

A. Hope in the New Testament.

Paul's final title in **V 1** is the most tender: *'the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope.'*

The New Testament word for hope (*elpis*) does not carry the uncertain, wishful quality of everyday English hope as in 'I hope it doesn't rain.'

Biblical hope is a confident, joyful expectation of a certain future. It is grounded not in circumstances but in the character and promises of God.

Paul elsewhere describes hope as an anchor for the soul.

Hebrews 6:19, *This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil,*

Though this is from the letter to the Hebrews, it reflects the shared apostolic theology.

Paul tells the Thessalonians that Jesus is the resurrection hope of every believer.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–14, *But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.*

Paul tells the Romans that hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts.

Romans 5:5, *Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

Paul calls the Gospel 'the hope of the glory of God'.

Romans 5:2, *through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

Paul speaks of 'the blessed hope' of Christ's return.

Titus 2:13, *looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,*

For Timothy, serving in the pressure cooker of Ephesus surrounded by false teachers, fighting doctrinal battles, struggling with personal inadequacy (**1 Timothy 4:12**) and perhaps physical illness (**1 Timothy 5:23**) 'our hope' was not an abstract theological category.

It was the lifeline that made ministry possible. Christ is coming back. The battle has an end. The victory is certain.

Colossians 1:27, *"To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."*

B. Hope as Counter-Cultural Declaration.

In the city of Ephesus, hope was a commodity sold by the temple priests of Artemis. The great goddess was worshipped as a provider of fertility, prosperity, and protection from evil. Pilgrims came from across the Mediterranean to present offerings and receive blessings.

The city's entire economy was built on the hope that Artemis could deliver.

Paul's declaration 'Christ is our hope' was a direct confrontation with the Ephesian religious market. The message Timothy was charged to guard and preach was not merely a better version of what the temple offered. It was the only true hope in the universe.

Acts 19 records the scale of this confrontation:

When the Gospel took hold in Ephesus, the silversmiths who made idols of Artemis rioted because of their trade.

Acts 19:27, *So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship."*

Real hope displaces false hope. The Gospel is not an addition to human religion, but it is its replacement.

Acts 19:26, *"Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands."*

C. The Three-Fold Structure of Verse 1.

Biblical scholars have noted the elegant theological structure of this single verse.

Paul mentions three designations of God and Christ:

- ✓ **'God our Saviour'** (pointing to the past what God has done in redemption),
- ✓ **'The Lord Jesus Christ'** (pointing to the present the reigning sovereign of the church), and

- ✓ **'Our hope'** (pointing to the future what we await at Christ's return).

Salvation, sovereignty, and second coming the entire framework of Christian theology condensed into a greeting.

This is not accidental.

Paul was a master theologian who chose every word with precision. He begins this letter to a struggling young pastor with a vision that spans eternity past, present, and future anchored in the God who saves, the Lord who reigns, and the hope that is coming.

The ministry Timothy was called to maintain was not a human institution fighting for relevance. It was a divine enterprise embedded in the flow of redemptive history.

V. Theological Implications for the Church Today.

A. The Danger of Unauthorised Ministry.

The single greatest source of church damage in our generation is not persecution from outside but unauthorised ministry from within.

When men and women appoint themselves to spiritual authority when they 'start a ministry' out of ambition, personal charisma, or wounded church experience they build on sand.

They may gather crowds.

They may produce emotional experiences.

But they lack the foundation that Paul lays in verse 1: **Divine commission.**

The New Testament is clear that legitimate church leadership is called, gifted, tested, and recognised by the body (**1 Timothy 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9; Acts 14:23**).

No person should be in pulpit ministry who has not been examined and affirmed by a community of believers. The lone-ranger minister, accountable to no one, answering to no eldership, is a danger to himself and his followers, however gifted he may appear.

"The ministry is not a profession that any man may take up because he is good at speaking and finds religion congenial. It is a divine calling that the church is responsible to identify, test, and affirm."

B. The Non-Negotiability of the Gospel.

Because Paul's message came 'by the commandment of God,' it was not subject to revision based on cultural pressure, personal preference, or philosophical fashion.

The commandment Paul received was not a general directive to 'spread religion' it was a specific mandate to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ crucified, risen, and returning.

Galatians 1:8–9, *But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.*

The Greek word for accursed is ***anathema*** is the most severe form of divine condemnation. Paul repeats it twice for emphasis.

The Gospel is not a negotiable framework that each generation may update to taste. It is a divine commandment delivered through apostolic commission. To change it is to defy the King who issued it.

Churches that have softened the Gospel's demands its insistence on sin, its requirement of repentance, its exclusivity in Christ have not contextualised the message.

They have disobeyed the commandment.

The result, visible across the churches, is exactly what Paul warned about.

2 Timothy 4:3-4, *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. ⁵But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry.*

C. The Dignity and Gravity of the Called

Understanding this verse rightly produces two qualities in every person called to ministry:

- Profound humility and
- Unshakeable courage.

Humility, because the authority is not theirs, but it flows from God and belongs to God.

- The minister is a steward, not an owner.
- A messenger, not the message.

When **Charles Spurgeon** was asked the secret of his preaching, he reportedly replied: *'I have nothing to say of myself. I am only the trumpet; Christ is the breath that makes it sound.'*

Unshakeable courage, because the one who has been divinely commissioned does not need the approval of men to stand and preach.

Timothy was young (**1 Timothy 4:12**), perhaps naturally timid.

2 Timothy 1:7, *'God has not given us a spirit of fear'*

Here in Ephesus, he is facing fierce opposition.

The first verse of this letter was Paul's way of saying: ***'Timothy, you are here by divine commandment. You do not need their permission. Stand and preach.'***

The same is true for every elder who has been tested and approved, every faithful teacher who has been affirmed by the body, every believer who has been sent into their neighbourhood, workplace, or family with the Gospel.

- You go by the commandment of God.
- You represent the hope of the world.
- Stand.
- Speak.
- Do not be moved.

Paul's claim in **1 Timothy 1:1** does not stand alone. It is part of a consistent New Testament theology of divine commissioning that runs from the Gospels through the Epistles.

The Great Commission opens with the declaration of authority.

Matthew 28:18–20, *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.*

Every missionary, evangelist, and preacher who goes in obedience to this command goes with the full authority of the risen Christ behind them. The Commission does not rest on human initiative, and it rests on divine mandate.

John 20:21, *'As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.'*

The pattern of apostolic sending is modelled on the eternal relationship between the Father and the Son.

Just as the Son came not on His own initiative but was sent by the Father (**John 5:30**), so the apostles were sent not on their own initiative but by the Son.

Ministry authority is always derivative it flows downward from God.

Romans 1:1, *'Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God.'*

Paul opens Romans with the same structure: Called (kletos), separated (aphorismenos) — these are passive verbs.

Things done to Paul, not by Paul. His apostleship was received, not achieved.

Ephesians 4:11–12, *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*

The ascended Christ is the giver of every ministry gift. No gift is self-generated. Every pastor, teacher, and evangelist received their gift from Christ for the benefit of the body.

The commissioning of Paul and Barnabas is illuminating. The Holy Spirit declared.

Acts 13:2–4, *As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”³ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.⁴ So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.*

- The call came from the Spirit.
- The church confirmed this with fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands.
- They were sent out by the Holy Spirit.
- The church confirmed and ratified what God had already initiated. This is the New Testament model.

CONCLUSION: A Story for the Heart

In the year **1727**, a young **Moravian community at Herrnhut** in **Saxony** was in crisis. **Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf** had gathered hundreds of refugees from across Europe — **Lutherans, Calvinists, Anabaptists, Reformed** — all with different traditions, all convinced they were right, all at each other's throats.

The community was fractured. Visitors described it as a religious disaster. Then, on **August 13, 1727**, during a communion service, something broke open. The Holy Spirit fell on that gathering in a way that eyewitnesses compared to Pentecost.

Zinzendorf described it: '**We had a meeting of the whole community... we could not leave off. And we went home with our hearts strangely warmed.**'

From that day, the community launched a prayer meeting that continued without interruption, **twenty-four hours a day, for one hundred years**. And out of that unbroken prayer vigil came the modern missionary movement.

Within twenty-five years, those **Moravian believers** had sent missionaries to more parts of the world than the **entire Protestant church had reached in the previous two hundred years**.

They went to the slaves in the West Indies — some of them selling themselves into slavery to reach those who would not otherwise hear. They went to **Greenland, to Lapland, to Africa**, to the Native Americans of **North America**.

When a young **British Methodist named John Wesley** was sailing back from a failed missionary trip to **Georgia**, defeated and doubting, he encountered the Moravian missionaries on the ship.

*Their calm in the face of **a violent Atlantic storm**, their joyful certainty in the face of death, changed him. He wrote in his journal: 'I came to America to convert the Indians, but who shall convert me?'*

*Three months later, at a **Moravian meeting in Aldersgate Street, London**, Wesley's heart was 'strangely warmed.' He went on to preach to tens of thousands across Britain, spark the **Methodist revival**, and lay the groundwork for the **Great Awakening**.*

*All of this — the prayer meeting, the missionaries, the revivals, the transformed lives — can be traced back to that **August morning at Herrnhut**.*

*And Zinzendorf, asked late in life to explain it, always gave the same answer: '**We did not plan this. We did not organise this. We received a commission. The Holy Spirit commanded, and we obeyed.**'*

Authority matters.

The source matters.

When God issues a commandment, history changes. When His people obey that commandment with everything they have, the world is turned upside down.

You have been given the same commission.

*Not to start a prayer meeting that lasts a hundred years — though God may call some of you to that. But to stand, wherever you have been placed, and to say with Paul: **I am here by the commandment of God our Saviour and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope. Let that be enough. It always has been.***

APPLICATION FOR DAILY LIFE

1. This week, write out in your own words the answer to this question:

'Why are you a Christian?

Who sent you?'

Reflect on the moment or season when God made His call on your life clear.

2. If you are in any form of ministry or leadership, official or informal, examine whether your service flows from divine calling and church affirmation, or from personal ambition.
Be honest before God.

3. Read **Galatians 1:1–12 alongside 1 Timothy 1:1** and note every point where Paul grounds his authority in God rather than men. Let this shape how you relate to your own pastor's authority.

4. Pray daily this week for your church's leaders using the language of verse 1: **'Lord, I thank You that You commissioned our pastor. Strengthen him to serve by Your commandment, not by human pressure. Let Christ be the hope he preaches.'**

5. Identify one area where cultural pressure has caused you to soften or qualify the Gospel in your conversations. Bring that area to God in repentance and ask for the courage of Paul — to speak 'by the commandment of God.'

6. Research the history of one missionary whose calling came clearly from God **Hudson Taylor, Amy Carmichael, William**

Carey. Read about their commissioning and let their example inspire you to take seriously the divine call on your own life.

- 7. Memorise 1 Timothy 1:1** in full. Use it as a daily declaration: **'My faith rests not on human opinion but on the commandment of God our Saviour and the Lord Jesus Christ, my hope.'**