

Matt Henry  
1 Timothy 1:12-17  
11 Sept 2022

“Tim the Tool Man”

God’s grace and peace to you,

I’ve titled this message Tim the Tool Man, as a way of reaching back to the show Tool Time and Tim Taylor. More tools! More power! Tools lead to installation, don’t they? And Tim you bring with you certain tools and experience that we can use here. Tim, this is your installation day! After today, your only excuse can be, “Hey, I just work here.” We are all very pleased to welcome you and Joy, to get to know you both, and to serve alongside you. I wrote in the notebook, how as a church worker, I don’t normally get to see all the behind the scenes that goes into the call process. Typically, we are on the receiving end of a call. We just show up. But I know God’s been working in your lives and He’s been working here too. And it’s just so interesting to see all of that happen, and how God’s timing is always best. It was ten years ago that this congregation considered your name and some guy named Brett Lindemood. And the congregation didn’t have a clear vote at the time because they had two good guys before them. So, I consider it a very gracious act of God that we could get both—just at the right time. I’m glad God knows not only what He’s doing but when He is doing it. I look forward to serving in ministry with you!

I think you and I are both well aware of the challenges the church at large is up against in terms of youth and family ministry. There are family fractures and a lack of harmony in many homes. The church is generally getting older, not younger. A lot of people don't know the basics of the Bible. Our kids are being lied to incessantly by a world and a deceiver. I said some time ago, that if parents don't want to disciple or catechize their own children, the world will gladly do it for them—just with an entirely different set of values. The world and media is non-stop with its messaging. And on top of that, even in the best instances, the church only has access to youth for an hour or two per week. Yet despite all of that, and much more could be said, you mentioned to me a few days ago, all the research says that parents are still the number one influencer in their children's lives. So then, the question becomes, how can we equip, how can we support? How do we best help to raise up families and followers of Jesus Christ not only in this generation, but for generations to come?

So as I think about Tim the Toolman Taylor...he was an endearing character. Not perfect, but he cared. He enjoyed using his tools. It never went well, but for every job, there's a tool. But it means you gotta know how to use the tools properly. Spiritually, we have tools to use as well.

I've chosen the text of 1 Timothy 1 for you today. It was the epistle for today, but I just want Dinger to know, I preached on Luke 15 this morning. I did not double dip! This is new material! On one hand, I suppose it's almost cutesy to preach on 1 Timothy to a Timothy. But on the other hand, it's actually fitting—not just in name, but in substance, because Paul is setting up Timothy for success in ministry. This is not one of those letters where Paul is writing to someone way over there. No, actually, Timothy is right by his side in Ephesus. So what then is Paul doing? The year is 56 AD and Paul is giving a public farewell address that establishes and affirms Timothy as their leader. Paul is instructing Timothy in front of the whole congregation. This letter we know is a pastoral letter, and it's full of exhortation and guidance. First Timothy emphasizes solid teaching of the faith and true love in the church. That fits with what a DCE is all about.

Now it's so interesting that we not only got one DCE, but we got two DCEs out of this call. Between the two of you, you have made more checklists and eaten more slices of pizza than most people ever will in their lifetimes. Tim, you are a commissioned church worker, a called church worker with all the tools and training that comes with it. DCE, most of us know, stands for Director of Christian Education. But I thought it might be fun to just consider other possible meanings that might pertain also to this position you are taking on today.

DCE...Disaster Control Expert. Oh, there will be days when it feels that way. And so often, the damage we are trying to prevent is relational. But if a few holes get punched in the wall, we'll trust you that there was some awesome activity that went with it.

DCE may also stand for Dependent Care Expense. A lot of parents may see some of the programming as cheap babysitting. But you know what? We'll never take for granted the opportunity to build relationships and speak truth into these kids' lives.

DCE...it stands for Director of Cheap Entertainment. You came from Orange, California. You had Disney, Knott's Berry Farm, professional sports, the beach, everything! There was no way you could out-entertain what was there, especially on a church budget. So what was it that you were offering? You were offering a place to build authentic relationships, you were sharing truth and a worldview, you shined the Light of Christ which is brighter than the lights of entertainment.

DCE...it stands for Director of Counter Espionage. I can't tell you how helpful Brett was to me in terms of fostering unity and the support he gave me as a leader. I've been in other places where the staff was divided and it's not good for the church or anyone. But already we have taken steps as a staff to be on the

same page, to support one another, to be honest with each other and strive for unity. Because the church picks up on that!

Timothy, you are a DCE and that stands for Director of Christian Education. Your job here is to help us make disciples. So how to go about that personally? What's the best thing you can do to make disciples? Show what Christ has done for you. Show us the change it makes in your life as a disciple.

Look at what Paul wrote in verse 15, "This saying is trustworthy and full of acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received this mercy, that in me, as the foremost [sinner], Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life" (v. 15-16).

You know what this means Tim? It means, you and I, and all of us have permission to make mistakes. And when we do, we can say, "Ah, there's that mercy of God again. There's that perfect patience of His on display again." As you teach about the marvelous grace of God that overflows, make sure you apply that same grace to you as well. You are allowed to make mistakes. But when you do, being the family man that you are, don't say shoot. Don't say shoot. We all know it's pronounced Schutte.

Every word I have heard about you has been positive. We know you have the gifts, the tools and the experience. Thank you for using them for the good of the church and the glory of God. God did not lead us to call you from Orange only to get a lemon. We've already seen His hand at work. God was at work long before you showed up, and He'll be at work long after you leave—just through different people. That's what 1 Timothy is about.

So raise up leaders and equip them, keep the faith, make good mistakes and trust God that He has called you here. Be the example of what God's mercy and patience looks like in a person who says to God, "Use me!" With the tools you have, our charge as we get to work, is to equip the saints for the work of ministry! Show them, demonstrate to them, equip them, because we all have work to do. It won't go perfectly, but like an episode of Tool Time, there's always a relationship that's built alongside the task at hand. Use your tools well and let's see what only God can build here and in the homes of our youth and families.

In Jesus' name, Amen.