

# **The Thematic Structure of 1 Timothy 3:14 – 4:16**

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## **Abstract**

First Timothy 3:14—4:16 is a discrete substantive and structural unit. Its focus is true godliness versus false godliness, and the section gives detailed descriptions and practical examples of each. In fact, this section may be said to be the central section of the book, which epitomizes or summarizes the entire book. This is particularly clear when 1 Timothy is considered thematically. However, the majority of commentators miss the thematic structure of the section by placing a subsection break between chapter 4 verses 5 and 6 rather than between verses 7a and 7b. This article discusses the theme and centrality of 3:14—4:16 as a whole and why, within chapter 4, for thematic, grammatical-syntactical, and rhetorical reasons, the important subsection break occurs, not between vv. 5 and 6 but between vv. 7a and 7b. By seeing this, our understanding of Paul's argument and train of thought is clarified and enhanced.

## INTRODUCTION

In determining the proper structure of any biblical passage, both substantive theological content and literary markers must be taken into account.<sup>1</sup> With respect to the structure of 1 Timothy, number of different approaches have been advanced and different outlines and organizational structures proposed.<sup>2</sup> The central section of the book, 1 Tim 3:14—4:16 (or at least portions of it), has been recognized as important; nevertheless, not all scholars have recognized that 1 Tim 3:14—4:16 as a whole represents a coherent thematic unity. The thematic unity of the passage is based on the contrasting theme of true godliness versus false godliness. That theme is consistent with the emphasis of the book as a whole and is corroborated by literary markers within the passage itself. Further, in chapter 4 most commentators place a subsection break between 4:5 and 4:6. In fact, the proper placement of the break lies between 4:7a and 4:7b. This paper will explain why.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, with respect to the structure of the book of Revelation see the discussion at Jonathan Menn, *Biblical Eschatology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018), 218-231.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to multiple commentaries, see such articles as the following which concentrate on the epistle's structure: Peter Bush, "A Note on the Structure of 1 Timothy," *New Testament Studies* 36 (1990): 152-56 (emphasizing parallelism); Barth Campbell, "Rhetorical Design in 1 Timothy 4," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 154 (1997): 189-204 (emphasizing Greco-Roman rhetorical principles); Richard Gibson, "The Literary Coherence of 1 Timothy," *The Reformed Theological Review* 55 (1996): 53-66 (emphasizing chiasm); J. T. Reed, "Cohesive Ties in 1 Timothy: In Defense of the Epistle's Unity," *Neotestamentica* 26 (1992): 131-47 (emphasizing textual cohesiveness as revealed by linguistic chains); and the book by Ray Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure in the Pastoral Epistles* (JSNTSup 280) (London: T&T Clark Int'l, 2004).

## THE NATURE OF 1 TIMOTHY<sup>3</sup>

Tim O'Donnell states, "Interpreters of 1 Timothy have struggled to uncover a clear structure in the letter, whether a sustained argument or some series of sections that connect to one another in a coherent way. This difficulty can lead to the conclusion that the text we have is a composite document, but a more common view holds that the letter proceeds in a loose, unsystematic way."<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, 1 Timothy can (more properly) be seen as a tightly organized epistle directed to the

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<sup>3</sup> Although the authorship of 1 Timothy is not particularly germane to the thrust of this paper, a word should be said about that issue. While authorship traditionally has been ascribed to the apostle Paul, and the book begins by identifying itself as being from "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 1:1), "contemporary critical orthodoxy insists that the Pastorals [1-2 Timothy and Titus] were all written by someone other than Paul and at a time considerably later than that of the apostle." D. A. Carson and Douglas Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 555. Reasons for accepting and denying Pauline authorship are discussed at length in most critical commentaries and such other sources as: Carson and Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 554-70; I. Howard Marshall, Stephen Travis, and Ian Paul, *Exploring the New Testament*, vol. 2, *A Guide to the Letters & Revelation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 175-79; James Wood, "Deutero Dipping? The Legitimacy of Criteria Used to Support and Refute Pauline Authorship of the Pastoral Epistles, (Master's thesis, Acadia Divinity College, Acadia University, 2017), *passim*. I accept Pauline authorship but, as noted, resolution of that debate is not particularly relevant to this paper.

<sup>4</sup> Tim O'Donnell, "The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Timothy," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 79 (2017): 455. Representative of those who look at 1 Timothy as a patchwork of traditional materials are J. D. Miller, *The Pastoral Letters as Composite Documents* (SNTSMS 93) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 19-56; Hans Conzelmann and Michael Dibelius, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Hermeneia), trans. P. Buttolph and A. Yarbro (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), 5; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 35A) (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 138; and Anthony T. Hanson, *The Pastoral Epistles: Based on the Revised Standard Version* (NCBC) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 42.

heart of Christian belief and praxis. O'Donnell, for example, contends that "the letter has a coherent rhetorical strategy which evokes a general atmosphere of crisis demanding urgent response and weaves the individual exhortations together in a way that gives the effect of a single appeal rooted in the one true faith."<sup>5</sup> To accomplish this strategy and coherently weave together a wealth of heterogeneous material including theological, ethical, and ecclesiological issues, "the letter adapts several rhetorical techniques and formal patterns from available literary conventions" including the use of pervasive antitheses, carefully constructed pairs of personal examples, and "an ABAB pattern of text units containing mutually reinforcing sections of precept or teaching material and hortatory example."<sup>6</sup> Others have summarized the central concerns of the letter as follows:

- "The emphasis in the epistle is on the contrast between the sound teaching of the deposit of truth, and the challenge offered it by the false teaching of others."<sup>7</sup>
- "Paul wrote to develop the charge he had given his young assistant: to refute false teachings and to supervise the affairs of the growing Ephesian church."<sup>8</sup>
- "The design of the First Epistle was: (1) to direct Timothy to charge the false teachers against continuing to teach other doctrine than that of the Gospel (1 Tim. 1:3-20; cf. Rev. 2:1-6); (2) to give him instructions as to the orderly conducting of worship,

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<sup>5</sup> O'Donnell, "The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Timothy," 456.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 456-57.

<sup>7</sup> David Mappes, "The Heresy Paul Opposed in 1 Timothy," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 156 (1999): 454.

<sup>8</sup> "Theme and Message," *New American Standard Bible*, updated ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 1135. Unless otherwise noted, all biblical quotations will be from the NASB.

the qualifications of bishops and deacons, and the selection of widows who should, in return for Church charity, do appointed service (1 Tim. 2 to 6:2); (3) to warn against covetousness, a sin prevalent at Ephesus, and to urge to good works (1 Tim. 6:3-19).”<sup>9</sup>

Regardless of whether 1 Timothy is genuinely Pauline, pseudonymous, or even a composite document, every letter or epistle has some form of organization and structure. Since 1 Timothy focuses on sound versus false teaching and the effect of teaching on Christian belief and practice, different structural outlines have been proposed. Examples from some of the major commentators are as follows:

**Peter Bush**<sup>10</sup>

- I. Greeting (1:1, 2)
- II. Introductory Background (1:3-11)
  - A. Timothy’s Mission (1:3, 4)
  - B. The Opposition (1:5-11)
- III. The Body of the Letter (1:12-6:21a)
  - A. Inclusio-Passing on the Gospel under Paul’s supervision (1:12-20)
  - B. How to conduct oneself in the household of God (2:1-3:15)
  - C. The Sound Doctrine of Godliness (3:16-4:11)
  - D. Instructions to Timothy about leadership (4:12-6:2)
  - E. Dealing with the Apostasy (6:3-10; 6:17-19)
- Inclusio-Passing on the Gospel under God’s supervision (6:11-16, 20-21a)
- IV. Greeting (6:21b)

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<sup>9</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Practical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1961), 1352.

<sup>10</sup> Bush, “A Note on the Structure,” 155.

**Barth Campbell**<sup>11</sup>

- Exordium (1:1-2)
- Proposition (1:3-7)
- Narration (1:8-20)
- Proof (2:1-6:2)
- Proof A (2:1-15)
- Proof B (3:1-16)
- Proof C (4:1-16)
- Proof D (5:1-6:2)
- Refutation (6:3-10)
- Epilogue (6:11-21)

**Luke Timothy Johnson**<sup>12</sup>

- I. The Greeting (1:1-2)
- II. The Opening Commission (1:3-11)
- III. Thanks for Empowering Mercy (1;12-17)
- IV. The Charge Repeated (1:18-20)
- V. Instructions on Prayer (2:1-7)
- VI. Gender Roles in Worship (2:8-15)
- VII. Qualifications of the Supervisor (3:1-7)
- VIII. Behavior in the Household of God (3:8-16)
- IX. Opposition to Healthy Teaching (4:1-7a)
- X. Modeling Healthy Teaching (4:7b-16)
- XI. Crisis in the Care of Widows (5:1-16)
- XII. More Community Directives (5:17-6:2a)
- XIII. Cravings for Wealth (6:2b-10)
- XIV. Closing Commission (6:11-21)

**Deborah Krause**<sup>13</sup>

- 1 Timothy 1:1-20: Establishing the Pauline Legacy and Addressing the Context
- 1 Timothy 2:1-3:13: Ordering the Community
- 1 Timothy 3:14-4:16: Fighting the Opponents

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<sup>11</sup> Campbell, "Rhetorical Design in 1 Timothy 4," 190n.4.

<sup>12</sup> Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, viii-ix.

<sup>13</sup> Deborah Krause, *1 Timothy* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), vii.

1 Timothy 5:1-6:2b: Instructions on Various Roles in the Church

1 Timothy 6:2c-21: More Regarding the Opponents and Closing Thoughts

**Philip Towner**<sup>14</sup>

I. Opening Greeting (1:1-2)

II. Body of the Letter (1:3-6:21a)

A. Ordering and organizing God's Household: Part I (1:3-3:16)

B. Ordering and Organizing God's Household: Part II (4:1-6:21a)

III. Closing Benediction (6:21b)

**Robert Yarbrough**<sup>15</sup>

I. Greeting (1:1-2)

II. Rallying Timothy's Resolve (1:3-20)

A. Timothy Charged to Oppose False Teachers (1:3-11)

B. The Lord's Grace on Paul (1:12-17)

C. The Charge to Timothy Renewed (1:18-20)

III. Order in Church and Life (2:1-6:2a)

A. Instructions on Worship (2:1-15)

B. Qualifications for Overseers and Deacons (3:1-13)

C. Reasons for Paul's Instructions (3:14-4:16)

D. Subgroup Care: Widows, Elders, Slaves (5:1-6:2a)

IV. Final Clarification and Exhortation (6:2b-21)

A. False Teachers and the Love of Money (6:2b-10)

B. Final Charge to Timothy (6:11-21)

One aspect of these outlines to note is how the commentators view 3:14—4:16. Some see this as a unit (Krause; Yarbrough); others do not (Bush; Campbell; Johnson; Towner). It is my contention that, when looked at thematically, the book divides

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<sup>14</sup> Philip Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), ix-xi.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (PNTC) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), viii-ix.

into four major sections, each of which deals with a major aspect or aspects of the book's overall theme of sound versus false teaching and the effect of teaching on Christian belief and practice:

**1 Tim 1:1—2:15**—False Doctrine vs. Gospel Faithfulness

**1 Tim 3:1-13**—The Qualifications to be a Leader in the Church

**1 Tim 3:14—4:16**—True Godliness vs. False Godliness

**1 Tim 5:1—6:21**—Practical Problems and Issues that Church Leaders Face

One should note how teaching, belief, and practice are interwoven in each of these sections: 1:1—2:15 not only contrasts false doctrine and gospel faithfulness but shows the practical results of each as does Paul's example of his own life. 3:1-13 focuses on the qualifications to be a leader in the church, because the church is only as good, strong, and faithful as its leadership; even here, the qualifications of both overseers and deacons are intimately related to their character, which expresses itself in how they live their lives. 3:14—4:16 addresses true versus false godliness head-on, giving detailed descriptions and practical examples of each. 5:1—6:21 likewise interweaves the theological and practical in addressing five universal issues churches regularly must confront: rebuking/counseling people; meeting the needs of the poor and needy; dealing with church elders; the Christian's relationship to his or her employer; and money.

### **STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF 1 TIM 3:14—4:16**

The focus of this paper, 1 Tim 3:14—4:16, directly relates to the overall theme of the book. Indeed, it epitomizes or summarizes the entire book. First Tim 3:14—4:16 may be outlined as follows:



## **1 Tim 3:14—4:16—True Godliness vs. False Godliness**

### **I. True Godliness (3:14-16)**

**A. Purpose of writing:** How to conduct yourself in the church (3:14-15)

**B. Nature and description of the church (3:15)**

1. Household of God
2. Church of the Living God
3. Pillar and Support of the Truth

**C. Confession of true godliness (3:16)**

1. Christ was revealed in the flesh
2. Christ was vindicated in the Spirit
3. Christ was seen by angels
4. Christ was proclaimed among the nations
5. Christ was believed in the world
6. Christ was taken up in glory

### **II. Apostasy and False Godliness (4:1-7a)**

**A. Introduction:** The Spirit explicitly tells us this message (4:1a)

**B. When apostasy will occur:** in “later times” (4:1a)

**C. Who will fall away:** those who pay attention to deceitful spirits (4:1b)

**D. Source of apostasy:** deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons (4:1b)

**E. Means used to cause apostasy:** hypocrisy and lies (4:2a)

**F. Effect in those who pay attention to the false godliness:** a seared conscience (4:2b)

**G. Examples of false godliness (4:3a)**

1. Forbidding marriage
2. Abstaining from foods

**H. Solution to apostasy and false godliness**

1. Know the Word of God: test doctrine by the Word (4:3b-5)
2. Teach the Word of God: expose false godliness by means of the Word (4:6)

**I. Summary:** Have nothing to do with false godliness (4:7a)

### **III. Disciplines of True Godly Living (4:7b-16)**

#### **A. Discipline yourself for true godliness (4:7b-10)**

1. Bodily discipline has some value **(4:8a)**
2. Spiritual discipline is even more important than bodily discipline **(4:7b-8b)**
  - a. Spiritual discipline holds promise for this life
  - b. Spiritual discipline holds promise for the life to come
  - c. The Life to come is of supreme importance **(4:9-10)**
    - (1) For it we labor and strive
    - (2) For it we have fixed our hope on the living God
    - (3) He is the savior who gives us eternal life

#### **B. Prescriptions of spiritual discipline: ten imperatives (4:11-16)**

1. Prescribe (command) these things **(4:11)**
2. Teach these things **(4:11)**
3. Let no one look down on your youthfulness **(4:12a)**
4. Show yourself an example of those who believe in:
  - a. Speech
  - b. Conduct
  - c. Love
  - d. Faith
  - e. Purity **(4:12b)**
5. Give attention to public reading of Scripture, including:
  - a. Exhortation
  - b. Teaching **(4:13)**
6. Do not neglect your spiritual gift **(4:14)**
7. Take pains with these things **(4:15a)**
8. Be absorbed in these things **(4:15b)**
9. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching **(4:16a)**
10. Persevere in these things, for this will ensure salvation for:
  - a. Yourself
  - b. Those who hear you **(4:16b)**

This section constitutes a clear unit of the book. This is reflected in the rhetoric and imagery Paul uses. As described above, 3:14-16 deals with true godliness. Paul's depiction of the church, which is central to that section, consists of a description ("*church of the living God*") sandwiched between two metaphors ("*household of God*" and "*pillar and support of the truth*"). His discussion of apostasy and false godliness (4:1-7a), however, is devoid of metaphor and imagery.<sup>16</sup> His return to true godliness in 4:7b-16 includes a return to the use of comparative imagery: a comparison of spiritual discipline with physical discipline. In 4:7b-8 Paul uses the Greek term *gumnaze* for "discipline," which is an athletic metaphor that "clearly refers to athletic discipline . . . from which we get 'gymnasium'."<sup>17</sup> Then, as he did in 3:15, Paul uses a double metaphor in 4:10: an employment or work metaphor ("labor") and another term "strive" (Greek = *agōnizomai*) which was associated with athletic contests or fighting with weapons.<sup>18</sup>

In fact, Deborah Krause calls 3:14—4:16 the "central unit of 1 Timothy" (which she entitles "Fighting the Opponents").<sup>19</sup> She

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<sup>16</sup> Although some might think that "*worldly fables fit only for old women*" (NASB) or "*godless myths and old wives' tales*" (NIV) qualify as metaphor or at least imagery, they are not like the imagery Paul uses in 3:15 and 4:7b-10. Gordon Fee states that this is "a sarcastic expression often used in philosophical polemic." Gordon Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (NIBC) (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), 103; see also Campbell, "Rhetorical Design in 1 Timothy 4," 197.

<sup>17</sup> Ralph Earle, "1 Timothy," in *Expositors Bible Commentary*, vol. 11, ed. Frank Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 373.

<sup>18</sup> George Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles* (NIGTC) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 202; Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 309-10.

<sup>19</sup> Krause, *1 Timothy*, 71. J. R. Houlden's short commentary on the pastoral epistles also sees 3:14—4:16 as a major section, which he calls "The Defence of the Faith." J. R. Houlden, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London: SCM, 1976), 81. French Arrington notes the "high doctrine of the church and its character" throughout the Pauline epistles and sees 3:14—4:16 as a discrete section of the book directed to this very subject, which he entitles "The Character of the Church." French Arrington, *Maintaining the Foundations: A Study of I Timothy* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982),

adds, “Its verses contain sentiments that seem most fully to capture the purpose of the entire correspondence.”<sup>20</sup> Similarly, John Welch sees 3:14—4:16 as “the central material,” “the crux of the entire letter” which “epitomizes the entire letter.”<sup>21</sup>

We have characterized this section as the contrast between true godliness and false godliness. Welch, in words similar to those used in the above outline, concludes that:

The crux of the entire letter is, therefore, the sharp contrast which Paul draws at the center between false teachers who work destruction (4:1-5) and the good minister who promotes the promise of life, both in respect to the present existence and future life (4:6-11). Around this contrast, and with it constantly in mind, this entire epistle concertedly revolves.<sup>22</sup>

Ray Van Neste further points out the central role that 3:14—4:16 plays in holding the entire book together.<sup>23</sup> He observes

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5, 91. Robert Yarbrough sees 3:14—4:16 as a section (which he entitles “Reasons for Paul’s Instructions”) that “constitutes the substance of the epistle in terms of specifics to Timothy personally,” although he sees it as a unit within the larger section of 2:1—6:2a. Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 215, ix.

<sup>20</sup> Krause, *1 Timothy*, 71.

<sup>21</sup> John Welch, “Chiasmus in the New Testament,” in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, ed. John Welch (Provo, UT: Research, 1999), 228. Welch adopts a chiastic view of the epistle’s structure. Consequently, 3:14—4:16 is the “central” section in the formal sense that it is the center of the chiasm. However, his analysis makes clear that this unit is central in more than just the formal sense. He states, “It is here that Paul declares his deepest convictions about Christ, reveals his most pressing concerns, charges Timothy with his most critical obligations, and declares his deepest confidence in Timothy’s ability to succeed.” *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* Note that Welch, as with the majority of commentators, places the subsection break between 4:5 and 6, not between 4:7a and 7b as is argued for later in this paper.

<sup>23</sup> Gregory Magee concurs, calling 3:14—4:16 “an interlude between instructions governing specific groups of people in 2:1-3:13 and

that behavior in the church (3:15) connects both with 2:1—3:13 and 4:1—6:21; 3:15 and 4:10 are linked since they contain the epistle’s only references to “*the living God*”; the use of the second person in 3:14-16 links back to 1:3-7, 18-20 and forward to 4:6-16 and 6:3-21; and the focus on the opponents of the true gospel occurs only in 1:3-20, 4:1-5, and 6:3-21. He provides the following comparative table:<sup>24</sup>

<b>1:3-20</b>	<b>3:14-16</b>	<b>6:3-21</b>
<p><b>3</b> – Timothy’s proper corrective teaching Summary of previous instruction to Timothy <b>3-11</b> – FT [false teachers] &amp; Law with rebuttal <b>18-20</b> – exhortation to Timothy (no real shifting contrast)</p>	<p><b>3:14</b> – for Timothy to know right behavior Summary of previous instruction on church (<i>tauta</i>) <b>4:1-5</b> – FT &amp; asceticism with rebuttal <b>4:6</b> – shift to contrasting exhortation to Timothy <b>4:16</b> – a closing call to faithfulness</p>	<p><b>2b</b> – Timothy’s faithful teaching Summary of previous instruction on church (<i>tauta</i>) <b>3-10</b> – FT &amp; greed with rebuttal <b>11-16</b> – shift to contrasting exhortation to Timothy <b>20</b> – a closing call to faithfulness</p>

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5:1-6:2.” Gregory Magee, “Uncovering the ‘Mystery’ in 1 Timothy 3,” *Trinity Journal* 29 (2008): 255 (citing Van Neste); see also Robert Karris, *The Pastoral Epistles* (NTM 17) (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1979), 81 (“Verses 14-16 are like a summit. From their heights, we can look backwards and forwards in 1 Tim. If we look backwards towards 2:1-3:13, we can appreciate the author’s stress on order. . . . If we glance forwards to 4:1-6:21 from the summit of verses 14-16, especially from its vantage point of the church as ‘household,’ we notice further instructions for members of this household.”).

<sup>24</sup> Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure*, 141-42. Van Neste in part draws on Greg Couser, “God and Christian Existence in the Pastoral Epistles Toward *Theological Method and Meaning*,” *Novum Testamentum* 42 (2000): 263-83. Couser’s analysis of the significance of 3:14—4:16 and the parallels between that section and 1:3-20 and 6:2b-21 are found at pages 273-76.

Van Neste summarizes the above data:

Structural similarities in addition to the syntactic, lexical, and thematic parallels previously noted all suggest that 1.3-20, 3.14-4.16, and 6.3-21 can be seen as parallel sections which have a high level of coherence with each other. These three major sections, occurring at the beginning, middle, and end of the letter, then contribute strongly to holding the entire letter together.<sup>25</sup>

When 1 Timothy is considered *thematically*, not only does the centrality of 3:14—4:16 become apparent, but the structure of 3:14—4:16 itself becomes clear. As stated above, 3:14—4:16 consists of three subsections: 3:14-16; 4:1-7a; and 4:7b-16. With respect to 3:14-16, virtually all commentators see this as a unit.<sup>26</sup> Verses 14-15 manifestly are cohesive, and the connection between verses 15 and 16 is seen in that “3.15 closes its discussion of the church by referring to the church’s role in relation to the ‘truth,’ and 3.16 continues by further expounding what the content of this ‘revealed’ truth is.”<sup>27</sup> Further, 3:16 explicates the “mystery of godliness”; the clear ethical overtones of the word “godliness” connects with how one should “conduct himself” in the church as indicated in in 3:15.<sup>28</sup> In the Greek, v. 16 begins with *kai* (“and”), thus cementing its connection with v. 15. Hence, “3.14-16 should be seen as one cohesive unit.”<sup>29</sup> That connectedness between

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<sup>25</sup> Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure*, 142.

<sup>26</sup> Contra Bush, “A Note on the Structure,” 155, who sees 3:14-15 as a “concluding marker” while the material after it “is of a very different nature”; see also H. P. Liddon, *Explanatory Analysis of St. Paul’s First Epistle to Timothy* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1897), 21, 37.

<sup>27</sup> Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure*, 45-46; see also Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 182 (“Having ended the last verse [v. 15] with emphasis on the truth of the gospel, Paul now writes of the confessed grandeur of the gospel in terms of him who is its reality”); Yarbrough, *The Letters*, 220.

<sup>28</sup> Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure*, 46.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

vv. 14-15 and v. 16 and yet their distinctive emphases within this unit are reflected in the thematic outline presented above.

While some have viewed 3:14-16 as the conclusion to what had come before,<sup>30</sup> 3:14-16 also connects to chapter 4. Gordon Fee points out that to view 3:14-16 as some kind of conclusion or major break in the middle of the letter “is to miss the very close tie between chapter 4 and what has preceded.”<sup>31</sup> William Mounce adds that 3:14-16 “put the whole of the epistle into perspective” and “looks forward” to chapter 4, thus serving as a “pivot point” between chapters 3 and 4: “it defines the scope of chaps. 2 and 3 as being that of the church [and] also looks ahead to the error of the opponents . . . from which the church must be protected.”<sup>32</sup>

The Importance of the connection between the Christological hymn of 3:16 and the false teaching Timothy is to reject and oppose in 4:1-7a is that, ultimately, it is the false teachers’ Christology that was in error. David MacLeod notes, “A Christological error is implied by Paul’s placing this Christological hymn immediately before his denunciation of the heretics.”<sup>33</sup> Fee further explains,

First, the double emphasis on humiliation/exaltation, focusing on the present, triumphant glory of Christ [in

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<sup>30</sup> E.g., Earle, “1 Timothy,” 347; Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ix; Tower, *Timothy and Titus*, x; Andreas Köstenberger, “1 Timothy,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., vol. 12, eds. Tremper Longman and David Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 497.

<sup>31</sup> Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 97. Towner similarly observes that “the function of this section [3:14-16] is not exhausted by the backward reference. Similar links forward suggest that it also provides a grounding that anticipates discussions to come.” Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 271.

<sup>32</sup> William Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC 46) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 219, 224.

<sup>33</sup> David MacLeod, “Christology in Six Lines: An Exposition of 1 Timothy 3:16,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 159 (2002): 335.

the hymn], probably stands in some kind of contrast to the Christology of the false teachers. . . . Second, Paul is about to return to a censure of the false teachers, with an exhortation to Timothy to stand in sharp contrast to them. This hymn prepares for that censure by boldly expressing what the truth is all about, as a contrast to their demonic errors.<sup>34</sup>

With respect to chapter 4 itself, most commentators see a paragraph break between vv. 10 and 11, as is reflected in the thematic structure presented here. The primary structural issue in chapter 4 is where an important subsection break occurs in the first half of the chapter. Does it occur between vv. 5-6 as the majority of commentators contend, or does it occur between vv. 7a and 7b as is contended here? The remainder of this paper will discuss why the latter is the correct breakpoint.

### **REASONS FOR THE SUBSECTION BREAK BETWEEN 4:7a AND 4:7b**

The majority of commentators see a subsection break between vv. 5-6 principally because vv. 1-5 warn *against* false teachers, but beginning in v. 6 Paul speaks directly *to* Timothy in the second person singular (which had been absent in vv. 1-5).<sup>35</sup> Although the shift to the second person singular indeed occurs, commentators who stress that are missing the

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<sup>34</sup> Fee, *1 and Timothy, Titus*, 95.

<sup>35</sup> E.g., J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles: Timothy I & II, and Titus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1960), 98; Krause, *1 Timothy*, 87; Thomas Lea and Hayne Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus* (NAC 34) (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 132; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 245; Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 301, Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure*, 47; Yarbrough, *The Letters*, 234-35. Mounce also sees vv. 6-16 tied together by the use of *tauta* ("these things") which occurs in vv. 6, 11, and 15: "its repetition gives a sense of flow throughout the eleven verses." Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 246. He sees vv. 6a and 11 as "transitional" verses which begin two paragraphs and are "structurally parallel" to each other. *Ibid.*



overriding *thematic* structure not only of the book as a whole but of this unit in particular. Even George Knight, who himself sees v. 6 as beginning a new section, acknowledges that while the second person singular beginning with v. 6 “is directed to Timothy (*esē*),” it is not specific or limited to Timothy “but is concerned ultimately for the entire church (*tois adelphois*). We see again what is true of the whole Epistle, namely, that it is written to Timothy but with the intention that its contents be taught to and heard by the church.”<sup>36</sup> Thus, those who emphasize the syntactical shift to the second person singular as the primary reason for beginning a new section or subsection at v. 6 are actually causing the syntax to bear more weight than it was intended to bear. This is corroborated philosophically: the second person singular address to Timothy beginning in v. 6 is an “accidental,” not “essential,” property of the epistle.<sup>37</sup> That the real break occurs between vv. 7a and 7b will be apparent as we consider both the substantive or thematic structure of Paul’s argument and the grammar-syntax-rhetoric Paul uses in 1 Timothy 4 (these two aspects of the text are interrelated).

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<sup>36</sup> Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 193. In commenting on vv. 6-16, Donald Guthrie similarly observes, “What Paul advises Timothy has relevance for all servants of God called on to deal with wrong teaching, although the advice is of special value for dealing with errors similar to those Paul is countering.” Donald Guthrie, “The Pastoral Letters,” in *New Bible Commentary*, 21<sup>st</sup> century ed., eds. D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Moyer, and G. J. Wenham (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 1300. Further, as Ralph Earle points out, the *entire chapter* “consists of instructions to Timothy on various subjects.” Earle, “1 Timothy,” 371.

<sup>37</sup> I.e., “an *essential property of an object* is a property that it must have, while an *accidental property of an object* is one that it happens to have but that it could lack.” Teresa Robertson and Philip Atkins, “Essential vs. Accidental Properties,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2016), n.p. Online: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/essential-accidental>.

## 1. The substantive or thematic structure of Paul's argument in 1 Timothy 4

As outlined above, the major section of 3:14—4:16 comprises three subsections: 3:14-16 focuses on true godliness, beginning by stressing that Timothy should know how one ought to conduct oneself in the church and then describing the bases for godly conduct, namely, the church and Christ; 4:1-7a contrasts this by focusing on apostasy and false godliness, including how Timothy should counter those problems in the church; 4:7b-16 then completes the theme by returning to true godliness, focusing on the practicalities of true godly living, namely, the disciplines of godliness. In light of this we can conclude that, while there indeed is a syntactical shift to the second person singular, v. 6 simply represents a new subparagraph (or, one might argue, at most a new paragraph) within the single subsection of 4:1-7a, because v. 6 is tied to how Timothy is to respond to and counteract apostasy and false teaching in the church; that response to apostasy and false teaching is implicit in vv. 3b-5 and explicit in vv. 6-7a. It is with v. 7b, however, that the shift of thought and direction—highlighted by the stress on the word *eusebeia* (godliness)—occurs. Structurally, therefore, the significance of Paul's addressing Timothy "personally" beginning in v. 6 has been vastly overstated, as v. 6 does not mark the beginning of anything particularly new in Paul's argument or in the overall nature of the chapter (or the book).

It is only by breaking the subsections between vv. 7a and 7b that the overriding thematic structure of the unit is clearly seen. The focus of 4:1-7a is entirely on apostasy and false godliness. Indeed, these verses actually outline a comprehensive theology of apostasy and false godliness. Paul begins by telling us that it is the Spirit who is giving us this message (v. 1a). He then outlines the theology—including the practicalities—of apostasy and false godliness, including: *when* apostasy will occur (v. 1a); *who* will fall away (v. 1b); the *source* of apostasy (v. 1b); the *means* used to cause apostasy

(v. 2a); the *effect* in those who pay attention to false teaching (v. 2b); *examples* of false godliness (v. 3a); the *solution* to apostasy and false godliness (vv. 3b-6); and a *summary* warning concerning this entire issue (v. 7a).

It is important to observe how both vv. 6 and 7a are intimately related to this theme and theology of apostasy and false godliness begun in vv. 1-5. Some commentators who show the subsection break between vv. 5 and 6 mischaracterize the extent of the presumed dichotomy between vv. 1-5 and 6-10. Thus, James D. G. Dunn calls vv. 1-5 “The Wrong Way” and vv. 6-10 “The Right Way.”<sup>38</sup> Donald Guthrie similarly characterizes vv. 1-5 as “The Nature of the Threats” and vv. 6-16 as “How Timothy is to Deal with the Threats.”<sup>39</sup> In fact, however, Paul begins articulating the solution to the problem of false godliness in v. 3b, and that solution continues through v. 6. Thus, verses 3b-5 indicate that to counter the false godliness of the false teachers, one needs to “*believe and know the truth*” and know that the things forbidden by false teachers in fact are “*sanctified by means of the word and prayer.*” In commenting on these verses, Philip Towner specifically points out that vv. 3b-5 begin Paul’s solution to the problem of false godliness:

Having identified these two elements in the false teaching [marriage and food], Paul renders his theological response. It consists of an opening counterassertion (v. 3b) that initiates consideration of God as Creator and also the need for community response to this truth in thanksgiving. Then v. 4 adds a more formal theological basis for the counterassertion that expresses the same two elements: creation and thanksgiving. The importance of the latter response is drawn out in v. 5, where the

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<sup>38</sup> James D. G. Dunn, “The First and Second Letters to Timothy and the Letter to Titus,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 11, ed. Leander Keck (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 811-12.

<sup>39</sup> Guthrie, “The Pastoral Letters,” 1300.

effectiveness of prayer is underlined. Finally, the core of the response is an apostolic interpretation of the early chapters of Genesis.”<sup>40</sup>

Ben Witherington similarly sees that “*to counter what he has heard of the false teaching*, Paul offers a clear, positive, creation theology that entails in this case the premises that both marriage and food are good gifts from God.”<sup>41</sup> Robert Yarbrough notes that in these verses “Paul is reminding Timothy of two primary means of grace by which churches are founded and their members persevere: ‘the word of God and prayer.’”<sup>42</sup> Lea and Griffin even entitle their discussion of v. 4 “An Argument against Asceticism,”<sup>43</sup> and Solomon Andria entitles the entire section of 4:3b-16 “Weapons for Combating False Doctrine.”<sup>44</sup> Knight summarizes, “In short, the truth of the good creation of God, whose purpose is to provide for people’s needs, coupled with an appropriate response and acceptance is the correct teaching and the antidote to the false teaching.”<sup>45</sup> Thus, it is clear that Paul begins his solution to the problem of false godliness not in v. 6 but in vv. 3b-5.

However, Paul’s argument is that it is not enough only to “know” the word. False teachers and false teaching need to be *exposed* (“pointed out”) by means of the word, i.e., “*the words of faith and sound teaching which you have been following*” (v. 6). That is the second part of the solution to the problem of false godliness. Consequently, v. 6 does not begin a new subsection or a new thought in Paul’s argument. Rather, v. 6 flows from and concludes his discussion of the solution to the

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<sup>40</sup> Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 296.

<sup>41</sup> Ben Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians Vol. 1* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 254-55, *emph. added*.

<sup>42</sup> Yarbrough, *The Letters*, 233

<sup>43</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 130.

<sup>44</sup> Solomon Andria, “1 Timothy,” in *Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Nairobi: Word Alive, 2006), 1473.

<sup>45</sup> Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 193.

problem which he began in vv. 3b-5: “these things” (v. 6), which Timothy is to “point out . . . to the brethren,” manifestly are the things which Paul has been saying in the first 5 verses of chapter 4, particularly vv. 3b-5.

Verse 7a provides the summation and capstone of the entire discussion of apostasy, false godliness, and false teaching, namely, “Have nothing to do with it!” The “myths” referred to in v. 7a (translated “worldly fables” by the NASB) “almost certainly refer to the ascetic doctrines of vv. 1-3, since elsewhere in the letters [i.e., the Pastoral Epistles] the term *muthos* is associated with the doctrines and practices of the opponents (see esp. Titus 1. 14).”<sup>46</sup> In this way also v. 7a relates back to the theme of the first several verses of chapter 4. In fact, the wording of v. 7a highlights its relationship to vv. 1-6. Yarbrough points out, “In Greek v. 7 begins with the direct objects: ‘But godless myths and old wives’ tales have nothing to do with.’”<sup>47</sup> Thus, the word order of v. 7a is highlighting both the false teaching discussed in vv. 1-3 and the contrast of such myths with the “words of faith” and “sound doctrine” of the gospel (v. 6).

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<sup>46</sup> Philip Towner, “The Eschatology of the Pastoral Epistles,” *New Testament Studies* 32 (1986): 433. Additionally, Knight cites others who argue that the “bodily exercise” of vv. 7b-8 refers to the asceticism repudiated in vv. 1-5. He states, “It is argued under this view that the reference to *muthoi* [“fables”] in v. 7a also has in view the teachings repudiated in vv. 1-5 . . . and, therefore, that vv. 6ff. are still dealing with the subject matter of vv. 1-5.” Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 195.

<sup>47</sup> Yarbrough, *The Letters*, 237n.537.

## 2. The grammar-syntax-rhetoric Paul uses in 1 Timothy 4

Grammatically, v. 7a is connected with v. 6 (and thereby with what has come before). Nestle-Aland<sup>28</sup> (UBS5) links v. 7a to v. 6 with a semicolon after v. 6, which indicates continuity between vv. 6 and 7a.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, Nestle-Aland<sup>28</sup> (UBS5) has a full stop after v. 7a. Towner explicitly notes the connection of vv. 6 and 7a by stating, “Having affirmed Timothy’s course [in v. 6], at v. 7a *the sentence continues* by shifting to a description of that which he is to avoid.”<sup>49</sup> Barth Campbell connects v. 7a to v. 6 for rhetorical reasons.<sup>50</sup>

Syntactically, verse 7 itself is framed by a “*de . . . de*” construction, which points to a contrast between 7a and 7b. This is no mere technical or minor contrast. Mounce sees that in v. 7 “the two occurrences of *de* (‘but . . . rather’) set up the contrasts made by this verse. The first *de* contrasts the gospel (v 6) with the opponents’ myths (v 7a) while the second contrasts the myths with true godliness (v 7b).”<sup>51</sup> It is v. 7b that commences the counterpart to the discussion of apostasy and false godliness found in vv. 1-7a, namely, “*On the other hand, discipline yourself [gumnaze de seauton] for the purpose of [true] godliness.*” Yarbrough notes that “Rather, train

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<sup>48</sup> I.e., Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo Martini, and Bruce Metzger, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28<sup>th</sup> ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012); Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo Martini, and Bruce Metzger, eds., *The Greek New Testament*, 5<sup>th</sup> rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2014).

<sup>49</sup> Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 304, *emph. added*.

<sup>50</sup> Campbell, “Rhetorical Design in 1 Timothy 4,” 197. Campbell claims that 1 Tim 4:6-10 follows the form of an *expositio* (“a refinement of a topic by one’s comments on it”). Although I disagree with Campbell’s characterization of 4:6-10 as a unit, I cite him to corroborate that, although his reason differs from mine, he nevertheless sees that v. 7a is connected with and relates back to v. 6 and is separate from v. 7b and what follows.

<sup>51</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 250.

yourself' (*gumnaze de seauton*) is a forceful summons to an about-face."<sup>52</sup> The NASB's translation of *de* at the beginning of v. 7b as "On the other hand" is particularly felicitous and recognizes the thematic shift beginning with v. 7b based on the "*de*

. . . *de*" construction of v. 7.

Additionally, v. 7b marks a watershed in Paul's use of the imperative. Thus, again, the thematic shift in v. 7b is marked by a grammatical shift, as Yarbrough explains: "Discipline yourself" (*gumnaze*) "is the first imperative in this epistle that is aimed at Timothy—earlier imperatives pertain to women (2:11) and to deacons (3:10, 12). There are some forty-three imperatives in the epistle; since Paul has waited until this point to adopt this mode of address, it is clear that the verses and chapters ahead will be thick with strong admonition."<sup>53</sup> It is this theme of "disciplining yourself" which comprises the rest of the chapter: vv. 7b-10 speak of the importance of spiritual discipline generally; vv. 11-16 then go on to prescribe ten imperatives for how to spiritually discipline one's life and state the important result (salvation) one will see in one's own life and in the lives of those who hear and heed your words and your example.

Indeed, for reasons similar to these, Luke Timothy Johnson sees the break between vv. 7a and 7b as constituting a *major* section break (between 4:1-7a and 4:7b-16), not just an important subsection break. Johnson states:

It is typical of the *mandata principis* letter [i.e., letter from one in authority to his delegate detailing the latter's responsibilities] to alternate instructions concerning public order with personal exhortations to the delegate concerning his morals and manner of leadership. . . . The

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<sup>52</sup> Yarbrough, *The Letters*, 239.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

two parts of 1 Tim 4 can be read, in fact, as a paraenesis [advice or exhortation, particularly of a moral or religious nature] touching on two aspects of Timothy's presence in the Ephesian community: first, his defense of the noble teaching (4:1-7a), and, second, his own manner of life (4:7b-16). Within this paraenetic framework, we find the typical use of polemic against opponents as a foil to the positive ideal: just as Timothy presents the healthy teaching to the people, so he avoids the teaching of those with cauterized consciences.<sup>54</sup>

Knight acknowledges that "with this part of the verse [i.e., v. 7b] a new section begins that runs through v. 8 (cf. the punctuation in *UBSGNT* and the break in *NA*<sup>26</sup>)." <sup>55</sup> Indeed, *gar* ("for") "joins this verse [v. 8] to v. 7b and provides the grounds for the exhortation of v. 7b."<sup>56</sup> Arrington correctly sees that this unit of the section runs through v. 10.<sup>57</sup>

Jerry Sumney points to another important aspect of vv. 6-7—the specific exhortation given to Timothy—which shows that the *grammatical* shift, beginning with the emphasis on the imperative and resulting in the rhetorical paraenesis, reflects a changed *substantive* shift, not at v. 6 but at v. 7b:

After explicitly discussing the false teachers in 4:1-5, vv. 6-7a give Timothy instructions about his responsibilities to the community as a minister, given the presence of these teachers. At v.7b, attention turns to the conduct of Timothy's own life. Timothy is exhorted to train himself in *eusebeia* [godliness] which is contrasted with physical

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<sup>54</sup> Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 244.

<sup>55</sup> Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 197. Verses 7b and 8 form one sentence, separated only by a semicolon.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Arrington, *Maintaining the Foundations*, 99. He entitles the subsection "Train Himself in Godliness (4:7b-10)." *Ibid.* To the same effect is the analysis of Van Neste, *Cohesion and Structure*, 49-50.



exercise. *Eusebeia* is said to be more valuable because it promises life now and in the time to come. . . . In v.6 Timothy is told to instruct the community with the teaching which refutes the false teachers. Following this, v.7 contrasts the opponents' teaching with the proper manner of life, *eusebeia*. 1 Timothy's proper teaching leads not to superior knowledge, but to piety. *Eusebeia* is a central concept in 1 Timothy. Not only is it mentioned in 4:7b-10, but also in 2:2; 3:16; 6:3, 5-6, 11. It is the summary of all the instructions given in 1 Timothy and the religious ideal to be pursued.<sup>58</sup>

The term *eusebeia* can be taken as both subjectively, as referring to conduct, and objectively, as referring to the content or basis of Christianity.<sup>59</sup> In fact, the term has been described as “the core of the message of salvation.”<sup>60</sup>

In light of this, while 3:14—4:16 is the “central unit of 1 Timothy,”<sup>61</sup> within that section Paul's command to Timothy beginning in v. 7b and his focus on *eusebeia* (the “central concept in 1 Timothy”<sup>62</sup>), which he explicates in vv. 8-10, indicates where the theological center of the book really lies. Sumney states, “3:14-16 is often identified as the theological center of 1 Timothy, indeed of the pastorals as a whole. But, I think, this judgment is the result of a failure to distinguish between an expression of a central practical purpose and the *theological* center. . . . A better passage to begin to see how 1 Timothy does theology is 4:7b-10.”<sup>63</sup> There, *eusebeia* is linked with and provides access to life (*zōē*) both in the present age and the age to come. Because of this crucial linkage, Mark

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<sup>58</sup> Jerry Sumney, “God Our Savior: The Theology of 1 Timothy,” *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 21 (1999): 109-10.

<sup>59</sup> See Macleod, “Christology in Six Lines,” 335-36.

<sup>60</sup> Conzelman and Dibelius, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 61.

<sup>61</sup> Krause, *1 Timothy*, 71.

<sup>62</sup> Sumney, “God Our Savior,” 110.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 109, 111.

Goodwin concludes, “1 Tim. 4:8, with its talk of *eusebeia* and *zōē*, thus presents the central theological note in the section, as is evident from the two subsequent verses (4.9, 10), which refer back to it.”<sup>64</sup> The “mystery of godliness” (*eusebeia mustērion*) was the focus of 3:16; but the central concept of the central section of the book—*eusebeia* as the theological center and focus of our lives—was only introduced in 4:7b.

Consequently, v. 7b is not a minor contrast with v. 7a but begins a major subsection break in contrast to 4:1-7a. This is exactly how the French Bibles *Bible D’Étude du Semeur* and *Traduction Œcuménique de la Bible* show the structure of 1 Timothy 4. Significantly, both versions also include editorially supplied headings before v. 7b, thus highlighting its nature as the beginning of a new subsection or, in the case of *Traduction Œcuménique de la Bible*, a major section.

## CONCLUSION

We have shown that 1 Tim 3:14—4:16 constitutes a major section of the book. Its theme is the contrast between true godliness and false godliness. This theme is central to the book as a whole; therefore, it is no surprise that this is the focus of the central section of the book. We have also shown that within chapter 4 itself a major subsection break occurs between vv. 7a and 7b, not between vv. 5-6 as many believe. This break is apparent for thematic, grammatical-syntactical, and rhetorical reasons. This final subsection (vv. 7b-16) both contrasts with the immediately preceding subsection (vv. 1-7a)

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<sup>64</sup> Mark Goodwin, “The Pauline Background of the Living God as Interpretive Context for 1 Timothy 4.10,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 61 (1996): 69. It should be noted that Goodwin himself apparently sees the section he refers to as 1 Tim 4:6-10. However, his primary interest is on 4:10; v. 6 does not even factor into his analysis, but he begins his analysis with v. 7; he does not discuss the any of the structural or grammatical issues we have discussed in this paper (except the importance of *eusebeia*); and the analysis he actually performs is consistent with what we have stated above.

and completes the thematic circle of true godliness–false godliness–true godliness begun in 3:14-16. By seeing this, our understanding of Paul’s argument and train of thought is clarified and enhanced.

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