**Reflection on 1 Timothy 1: 12-17 – Worth Finding**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Lord, in a broken and hurting world,
we come to worship you as people in need of repair.
Be with us as we worship you,
open our hearts and minds to your grace,
love and forgiveness.
**Amen.**

**Read the passage**

*Consider different ways to read the text. For example, hearing it in more than one version of the Bible.*

1 Timothy 1: 12-17

**Explore and respond to the text**

*Start by reading the Bible notes below. You may want to read them more than once, or pause after each paragraph to reflect on what you have read.*

**Bible notes**

The Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus) were probably not written by Paul but by someone using Paul’s name after his death. They reflect the efforts of second-generation Christians to acclimatise to their environment, recognising that Christ was delayed in returning. The church presented here has an ordered structure, more advanced than that of Paul’s time.

The writer warns his audience of the dangers of false teaching, then goes on to celebrate his own salvation from the sins of his former life. He presents himself in the person of Paul as a ‘lost sheep’, violently persecuting Christians out of ignorance. He goes on to explain that God chose to save him as a test-case sinner, the most resistant of all to God’s mercy and grace (v.16). If God can change his life, God can change anyone – he was worth finding! The beautiful final verse of this passage has many echoes elsewhere in the New Testament, and may consist of fragments of the Early Church’s developing body of worship texts.

**Reflection**

*Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.*

Play a game of trying to hit a target or a bottle on a table or try and get a ball in a bucket. Then discuss how we all miss the mark, just like the author of this letter. We may not blaspheme, persecute others or be insolent, but each of us falls short of what God requires of us. Despite this, we are still loved and cherished by God.

The sheep in the passage had not necessarily done anything wrong, it had perhaps become distracted and wandered away from the rest of the flock. What distracts us from spending time with and for God? What causes us to wander away from God without realising it?

**Questions for reflection**

*You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week’s Bible passage.*

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**Questions**

* How does it feel when you find a lost, treasured item?
* How did you find God – or God find you?
* How can we show people in our community that they are precious to God, and to us?

**Prayer**

Thank you, Jesus, that, even when we go astray,
we are worth finding
and you want us to be part of your flock.
Please help us to be the best we can be,
living how you want us to.
**Amen.**