

# 1 Timothy 4:9-11 Commentary

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1 Timothy 4:9: It is a [trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance](#). (NASB: Lockman)

**Greek:** [pistos o logos kai pases apodoches](#) achios;

**Amplified:** This saying is reliable and worthy of complete acceptance by everybody. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NLT:** This is true, and everyone should accept it. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** There is no doubt about this at all, and Christians should remember it. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** This is a trustworthy word and worthy of every acceptance,

**Young's Literal:** steadfast is the word, and of all acceptance worthy

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IT IS A TRUSTWORTHY STATEMENT : [pistos o logos](#):

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**EVERYTHING GOD SAYS  
IS TRUSTWORTHY!**

When God said it that settles it whether I believe it or not!

**Trustworthy** (4103) (**pistos** from **peitho** = to persuade) defines something that can be relied upon or that which is worthy of belief or trust and thus is dependable.

**Statement** (3056) (**logos**) is a communication whereby the mind finds expression. Logos is a general term for speaking, but always refers to rational content.

The "**trustworthy statement**" refers to the preceding truth about the superiority of godliness rather than to what follows. This statement would encourage Timothy and should encourage all believers today that we need not fear to preach, practice and apply

these truths in the presence of those outside of Christ, who have no hope for the future.

The other "**trustworthy statements**" in the Pauline epistles...

1Timothy 1:15 It is a **trustworthy statement**, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

1Timothy 3:1 It is a **trustworthy statement**: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.

2Timothy 2:11 It is a **trustworthy statement**: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him

Titus 3:8 This (the truths in the preceding verses that speak especially of salvation) is a **trustworthy statement**; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men. (see note)

## DESERVING FULL ACCEPTANCE: kai pases apodoches achios

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## GOD'S TRUSTWORTHY WORD RE GODLINESS DESERVES MY FULL ATTENTION

**Deserving** (514) (**axios**) pertains to being correspondingly fitting or appropriate and so worthy or deserving.

**Full** (3956) (**pas**) means *all* without exception. In other words, even (probably especially!) His words which cut deeply into our heart deserve full acceptance!

**Deserving full acceptance** - Paul is saying that this statement is one for which we should **'put out the welcome mat'**. This reminds me of the OT description of those individuals who had hearts that trembled at God's Word. (Isaiah 66:2, Ezra 9:4, 10:3 cp Ps 119:161) Now that's giving the Word wholehearted acceptance!

**Acceptance** (594) (**apodoche** from **apodechomai** = take fully, welcome, from **dechomai**) defines that which receives a favorable reception and includes a sense of approval and appreciation. The idea is "to come to believe something to be true and to respond accordingly, with some emphasis upon the source." (Louw & Nida)

Here is the only other Scriptural use (none in the Septuagint) of **apodoche**...

1Ti 1:15 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full **acceptance**, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

**TDNT** comments that "In the NT two sayings which sum up the gospel are said to be sure and worthy of full acceptance or approval, namely, that Christ came into the world to save sinners (1Ti 1:15), and that godliness has promise both for this life and for the life to come, since it builds on the living God and Savior (1Ti 4:8ff.).

Every saint should **meditate** on this **trustworthy statement** which promises that a "daily investment" (of your time) in exercising yourself for godliness (whatever the cost in self-discipline and self-denial, both of course enabled by the Spirit, not the flesh, for the latter leads to legalism not freedom!) will yield profits not only in the **present** but for **all eternity**!

**Jim Elliot** the martyred missionary said it best "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

**Spurgeon** has a devotional comment on Paul's "**trustworthy statements**"...

Paul has four of these "faithful sayings." The first occurs in 1 Timothy 1:15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." The next is in 1 Timothy 4:8, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance." The third is in 2 Timothy 2:12, "It is a faithful saying—If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him"; and the fourth is in Titus 3:8, "This is a faithful saying, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works."

We may trace a connection between these faithful sayings.

The first one lays the foundation of our eternal salvation in the free grace of God, as shown to us in the mission of the great Redeemer.

The next affirms the double blessedness which we obtain through this salvation—the blessings of the upper and nether springs—of time and of eternity.

The third shows one of the duties to which the chosen people are called; we are ordained to suffer for Christ with the promise that “if we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”

The last sets forth the active form of Christian service, bidding us diligently to maintain good works.

Thus we have the root of salvation in free grace; next, the privileges of that salvation in the life which now is, and in that which is to come; and we have also the two great branches of suffering with Christ and serving with Christ, loaded with the fruits of the Spirit. Treasure up these faithful sayings. Let them be the guides of our life, our comfort, and our instruction. The apostle of the Gentiles proved them to be faithful, they are faithful still, not one word shall fall to the ground; they are worthy of all acceptance, let us accept them now, and prove their faithfulness. Let these four faithful sayings be written on the four corners of my house. (Morning and evening : Daily readings October 27 AM).

**1 Timothy 4:10: For it is for [this](#) we [labor](#) and [strive](#), because we have [fixed](#) our [hope](#) on the [living God](#), who is the [Savior](#) of [all men](#), especially of [believers](#). (NASB: Lockman)**

**Greek:** [eis touto gar kopiomen \(1PPAI\) kai agonizometha, \(1PPMI\) hoti elpikamen \(1PRAI\) epi theo zonti, \(PAPMSD\) os estin \(3SPAI\) soter panton anthropon, malista piston.](#)

**Amplified:** With a view to this we toil and strive, [yes and] suffer reproach, because we have [fixed our] hope on the living God, Who is the Savior (Preserver, Maintainer, Deliverer) of all men, especially of those who believe (trust in, rely on, and adhere to Him). ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NLT:** We work hard and suffer much in order that people will believe the truth, for our hope is in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and particularly of those who believe. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** It is because we realise the paramount importance of the spiritual that we labour and struggle. We place our whole confidence in the living God, the Saviour of all men, and particularly of those who believe in him. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** for with a view to this we are laboring to the point of exhaustion; yes, we are putting forth great efforts against opposition, because we have set our hope permanently upon the living God who is the Saviour of all men, especially of believers.

**Young's Literal:** for this we both labour and are reproached, because we hope on the living God, who is Saviour of all men -- especially of those believing.

**FOR IT IS FOR THIS WE LABOR AND STRIVE : eis touto gar kopiomen (1PPAI) kai agonizometha, (1PPMI)**

- 1 Cor 4:9, 10, 11, 12, 13; 2Cor 4:8, 9, 10; 6:3-10; 11:23, 24, 25, 26, 27; 2 Ti 2:9,10; 3:10, 11, 12; Heb 11:26; 13:13; 1 Pe 4:14,15
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## WHY LABOR AND STRIVE?

Note that KJV has "suffer reproach" in place of "strive" because a different Greek verb is used in the Textus Receptus, the manuscript from which the KJV is translated. The Nestle-Aland which is the source of the NAS and NIV has agonizomai and is accepted by most scholars as the more reliable manuscript.

**For** is a **term of explanation** and is always a profitable place to pause and ponder the passage by **interrogating the text with the 5W/H'S in context**. You will be amazed and excited at the insights your Teacher, the Spirit (Spirit as Teacher/Helper/Comforter- Jn 14:16 Jn 14:26 Jn 15:26 Jn 16:7 1Jn 2:20, 2:27), will illuminate as you stop and **in effect meditate** on the living and active Word!

And if all you did was interrogate every "for" you encountered, you would end up with a treasure trove of truth, *for* (See! There's another "for"! there are more than 7000 occurrences of "for" in the Bible! However, keep in mind that not every use of "for" is as a **term of explanation**, but most of the occurrences at the beginning of a verse are used to explain some truth, the study of which can be quite fruitful! As an aside, if you study Scripture on the computer, it is advantageous to select the **verse mode** rather than the **paragraph mode**, as the former makes it very easy to quickly identify the potentially enlightening uses of "for".

**For it is for this** - Wuest renders it "**for with a view to this**". The question a view toward what? Why do we labor and strive? It is so that the promise (in this present life and throughout eternity) which **godliness** holds forth may actually be fulfilled in us (1Ti 4:8-note). This prize and goal provides motivation for dedication to discipline ourselves for godliness.

Note that Paul now joins Timothy using the first person plural "**we labor... we strive**". Note also that he chooses two very strong Greek verbs to convey the import and the challenge inherent in spiritual exercising. He is saying that spiritual exercise is not easy, no matter who you are. Spiritual discipline calls for intense toil and agonizing effort. Believers who desire to excel in godliness must really work at it, by the grace of God and the Spirit of God for the glory of God.

**Labor** (2872) (**kopiao [word study]** from **kopos** = labor, fatigue) The root word **kopos** is used in secular Greek of "a beating," "weariness" (as though one had been beaten) and "**exertion**," was the proper word for physical tiredness induced by work, exertion or heat. **Kopiao** means to exhibit great effort and exertion, to the point of sweat and exhaustion. To engage in hard work with the implication of difficulty and trouble. **Kopiao** speaks of intense toil even to the point of utter exhaustion if necessary. The work described by **kopiao** left one so weary it was as if the person had taken a beating. **Kopiao** speaks not so much of the actual exertion as the weariness which follows the straining of all one's powers to the utmost.

**Kopiao** is in the present tense which indicates this is their habitual practice and like athletes in training we must continually exert what seems to be our last ounce of energy to "win the race".

**Strive** (75) (**agonizomai [word study]** from **agon** = conflict or the place of assembly for the athletic contests and then a reference to the contests which were held there) was used in secular Greek in the context of public speaking meaning to contend against, as law-term, to fight a cause to the last and to fight against a charge of murder.

The picture conveyed here by **agonizomai** is that of an intense struggle for victory. This word group (agon, agonizomai) is the source of our English word "**agonize**" which means to experience pain so extreme as to cause writhing or contortions of the body, similar to those made in the athletic contests in Greece. To agonize also means to strain, to toil, to suffer extreme pain of body or mind or to suffer violent anguish. **Agonizomai** emphasizes tireless labor and struggles against all manner of setbacks and opposition. And like **kopiao**, the present tense which indicates this is their continual experience.

The reason they continually labored and strived was because of their future focus on a hope or absolute assurance of future good, the certainty of which rests on and is dependent upon God, the only true foundation of unfailing hope. In other words, their hope is not fixed on the dead, empty idols of paganism, but on the true and living God, Who is Himself life and the Fountain of life and as such is ever able to fulfill His promises.

An understanding of these "strong" verbs helps us appreciate the significance of the last words of the great apostle when he declared triumphantly...

I have fought (**agonizomai**) the good fight (**agon**), I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2Ti 4:7-8-note)

**BECAUSE WE HAVE FIXED OUR HOPE ON THE LIVING GOD: hoti elpikamen (1PRAI) epi theo zonti, (PAPMSD)**

- 1Ti 6:17; Ps 37:40; 52:8; 84:12; 118:8; Isaiah 12:2; 50:10; Jer 17:7; Daniel 3:28; Nahum 1:7; Matthew 27:43; Ro 15:12,13; 1 Pe 1:21
- 1Ti 3:15
- [1 Timothy 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MOTIVATION FOR LABORING & AGONIZING

In first Timothy Paul described a wrong way to fix one's hope writing...

Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. (1Ti 6:17)

The **Psalmist** however says "It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man." (Ps 118:8)

**Fixed our hope** (1679) (**elpizo** from **elpis**) means to look forward with confidence to that which is good and beneficial. The **perfect tense** marks this as the continued experience of the believer. When he was saved by placing his faith in the living hope, God set in motion in him a lifelong attitude of hope. The settled, permanent state of the believer is one of hope, **hope** (see word study on **elpis**) being defined in the NT as the absolute assurance that God will do good to us and for us in the future.

**THOUGHT** - Is this not a perfect example of [Vertical Vision](#) looking toward the things of eternity and not the passing pleasures of this passing world (aka "Horizontal Vision.") How's your vision? Is it 20/20? Are you looking with clarity and commitment for the return of the Blessed Hope? If you are then the things of this world will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace! Lord, by Your Spirit, enable our vision to be vertical rather than horizontal, to be looking for Jesus our Blessed Hope. Amen.

**Elpizo** - 31x in 31v - NAS = expect(1), expected(1), fix... hope(2), fixed... hope(2), hope(13), hoped(3), hopes(1), hoping(4), set... hope(2), trust(1). Matt 12:21; Luke 6:34; 23:8; 24:21; John 5:45; Acts 24:26; 26:7; Rom 8:24f; 15:12, 24; 1 Cor 13:7; 15:19; 16:7; 2 Cor 1:10, 13; 5:11; 8:5; 13:6; Phil 2:19, 23; 1 Tim 3:14; 4:10; 5:5; 6:17; Phlm 1:22; Heb 11:1; 1 Pet 1:13; 3:5; 2 John 1:12; 3 John 1:14.

**MacArthur** explains that "The **perfect tense** of the verb indicates something done in the past with continuing results in the present. He constantly labors in the light of eternity. As he was saved in hope (see note Romans 8:24), so he lives and ministers in that hope. His concerns do not relate to the temporal world or earthly fulfillment, but to the realm of eternity and the invisible kingdom. ([MacArthur, John: 1Timothy Moody Press](#))

**W E Vine** - The future fruition of present suffering and toil in service faithfully rendered is fully assured in the hearts of those who engage in it; they know their God will fulfill His promises, and accordingly God Himself is the firm foundation of their hope. It is not merely a trust in God but a hope that rests upon Him. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

**The living God** (2198) is a phrase used frequently in the Old Testament in contrast with dead idols (cf.. 1Sa 17:26; 2Ki 19:4, 16; Ps 42:2; 84:2).

The specific phrase **living God** is used 13 times in the NT - Mt 16:16 26:63 Acts 14:15 Ro 9:26 2C or 3:3 6:16 1Ti 3:15 4:10 Heb 3:12 9:14 10:31 12:22 Rev 7:2 and 15 times in the OT -- Dt 5:26 Jos 3:10 1Sa 17:26, 17:36 2 Ki 19:4 19:16 Ps 42:2 84:2 Isa 37:4, 17 Jer 10:10 23:36 Da 6:20, 26, Hos 1:10

## WHO IS THE SAVIOR OF ALL MEN, ESPECIALLY OF BELIEVERS: os estin (3SPA1) soter panton anthropon, malista piston

- 1Ti 2:4,6; Psalms 36:6; 107:2,6-43; Isaiah 45:21,22; John 1:29; 3:15, 16, 17; 1John 2:2; 4:14) (John 5:24; 1John 5:10, 11, 12, 13
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## HALLELUJAH! WHAT A SAVIOR!

**Savior** (4990) (**soter** from **sozo** = rescue from peril from **saos** = safe; delivered) is one who rescues and thus saves, delivers or preserves

**Soter** - 24x in 24v -

Luke 1:47; 2:11; John 4:42; Acts 5:31; 13:23; Eph 5:23; Phil 3:20; 1 Tim 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; 2 Tim 1:10; Titus 1:3f; 2:10, 13; 3:4, 6; 2 Pet 1:1, 11; 2:20; 3:2, 18; 1 John 4:14; Jude 1:25

**Of all men** - this phrase has led to fruitless discussions that God saves "all men", but even this passage specifies "believers". If that is not sufficient, there are many passages that clearly teach God while being able to save all men, actually saves only those who place their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on Calvary.

For example **Jesus** declared...

"Truly, truly, I say to you, **he who hears My word, and believes** Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does

not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. (John 5:24)

The apostle **John** adds that...

10 The one who **believes in the Son of God** has the witness in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness that God has borne concerning His Son.

11 And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

12 **He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.**(1 John 5:10-13+)

**Guzik** comments that "It isn't that all men are saved in an universalist sense; but that there is only one Savior for all men; it isn't as if Christians have one Savior and others might have another savior. But notice Paul's point: **especially of those who believe**. Jesus' work is adequate to save all, but only effective in saving those who come to Him by faith. ([1 Timothy 4](#))

**John MacArthur** adds that Paul's "point is not that He actually saves the whole world (for that would be universalism, and Scripture clearly teaches not all will be saved). The point is that He is the only Savior to Whom anyone in the world can turn for forgiveness and eternal life—and therefore He urges all to embrace Him as Savior. Jesus Christ is proffered to the world as Savior. ([Master's Seminary Journal Volume 7. Spring 1996](#))

**Believers** ([4103](#)) (**pistos** from **peitho** = to persuade) was used to describe persons who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties.

#### Related Resources:

- [Is universalism / universal salvation biblical?](#)
- [Why doesn't God save everyone?](#)

1 Timothy 4:11 **Prescribe** and **teach these things**. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** **Paraggelle (2SPAM) tauta kai didaske. (2SPAM)**

**Amplified:** Continue to command these things and to teach them. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NLT:** Teach these things and insist that everyone learn them. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** These convictions should be the basis of your instruction and teaching. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** These things be constantly commanding and teaching.

**Young's Literal:** Charge these things, and teach;

**PRESCRIBE:** Paraggelle (2SPAM):

- 1Ti 6:2; 2Ti 4:2; Titus 2:15; 3:8
- [1 Timothy 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A PRESCRIPTION FOR SPIRITUAL HEALTH

What is Timothy to do? To prescribe and teach the truths about godliness, which stand in marked contrast both to the unscriptural prohibitions and practices of asceticism mentioned in the early part of 1 Timothy 4 and the the "old wives' tales".

**Prescribe** ([3853](#)) (**paraggello** from **para** = side + **aggello** = announce, tell, declare) is literally to hand on an announcement from one to the side of another or to pass along a message from one to another. It is easy to under how it evolved to be used especially for the order given by a military commander and passed along the line by his subordinates. It demands obedience from an inferior to the order passed on from the superior. It is a call to obedience by one in authority. It is like giving a mandate, which is an authoritative command. It means to charge by way of proclaiming. It means to to request with a command or charge implied. It designates a command the execution of which is virtually taken for granted.

**Paraggello** refers to the action of directing a person or group of persons with authority, in the sense of instructing, commanding. In other words a person in authority is commanding or giving instructions. When preceded by the negative (me) it meant to "forbid".

In short **paraggello** means to make an announcement about something that must be done - give an order, a charge, a command or an instruction.

**Paraggello** was used in the military indicating an order from an officer to those under his command, with the implication that order called for unhesitating and unqualified obedience. Soldiers were bound to obey the command of their superiors.

**Paraggello** was used in secular Greek as a legal term, as for example an official court summons, the equivalent of a modern subpoena, which to disregard made a person liable to severe punishment and bound by the court's orders

**Paraggello** was used in medicine to describe the doctor's prescription or instruction to the patient. The patient was bound to follow the doctor's instruction if he wanted to get well!

It is notable that every use of **paraggello** included the idea of binding a person to make the proper response to an instruction. Thus the soldier was bound to obey the orders of his superior. A person involved in a legal matter was bound by the court's orders. A patient was bound to follow his doctor's instruction.

With this understanding, one can begin to better appreciate Paul's concentrated use of **paraggello** in his first epistle to Timothy who apparently was pastor of the church at Ephesus.

**Vincent** writes that **paraggello** is "A strong word, often of military orders. Aristotle uses it of a physician: to prescribe... Originally to pass on or transmit; hence, as a military term, of passing a watchword or command; and so generally to command."

Both **prescribe** (command) and **teach** are in the **present imperative**. In other words, Paul is saying that the things just taught in 1Ti 4:6-10 are to be regularly prescribed and taught to those under Timothy.

**Paraggello** 30 times - **NAS** translates as: Prescribe, 2; charge, 1; command, 4; commanded, 4; commanding, 1; direct, 1; directed, 2; gave, 1; give instructions, 1; give... order, 1; giving... instruction, 1; instruct, 2; instructed, 3; instructing, 3; ordered, 3.

Matt 10:5; 15:35; Mark 6:8; 8:6; 16:8; Luke 5:14; 8:29, 56; 9:21; Acts 1:4; 4:18; 5:28, 40; 10:42; 15:5; 16:18, 23; 17:30; 23:22, 30; 1Cor 7:10; 11:17; 1Th 4:11; 2Th 3:4, 6, 10, 12; 1Tim 1:3; 4:11; 5:7; 6:13, 17)

**Paraggello** in the Septuagint (LXX) 15 times for military orders, for summons to an assembly, for official proclamations

Josh 6:7; 1 Sam 10:17; 15:4; 23:8; 1 Ki 12:6; 15:22; 2 Chr 36:22; Ezra 1:1; Jer 46:14; 50:29; 51:27; Dan 2:18; 3:4).

Jesus used **paraggello** to direct a leper (Luke 5:14), to command an evil spirit (Luke 8:29), to order Jairus and his wife (Luke 8:56), and to charge His disciples (Luke 9:21). The officers of the Sanhedrim used the term when they commanded Peter and John "not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus" (Acts 4:18), as did some of the believing Pharisees in Jerusalem who insisted that it was necessary "to direct (Christians) to observe the Law of Moses" (Acts 15:5). Paul used the term frequently of his own commands as an apostle (1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Th 3:4, 6, 10, 12).

The Greek noun **paraggelia** ([3852](#)) and its corresponding verb **paraggello** appear six times in the book of 1Timothy, translated as either "Charge" or "commandment."

1Ti 1:3 As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus, in order that you may **instruct** (command - **paraggelia**) certain men not to teach strange doctrines,

1Ti 5:7 **Prescribe** (present imperative) these things (especially the "regulations" regarding widows and their families) as well, so that they may be above reproach.

1Ti 6:13 I **charge** (**paraggelia**) you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate

1Ti 6:17 **Instruct** (present imperative) those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

In addition to the verb, Paul also uses the noun form, **paraggelia**, writing...

1Ti 1:5 But the goal of our **instruction** is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

1Ti 1:18 This **command** I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may fight the good fight



## AND TEACH THESE THINGS: tauta kai didaske. (2SPAM):

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**Teach** (1321) (**didasko** [word study]) means to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them. To deliver didactic discourse. To instruct or tell someone what to do. To provide instruction in a formal or informal setting with the highest possible development of the pupil as the goal. In secular Greek **didasko** had little religious use, and conveyed a strong intellectual and authoritative bearing.

**Didasko** means to teach a student in such a way that the will of the student becomes conformed to the teaching taught. So the teacher teaches in such a way that as the student is taught, he now changes his mind saying in essence "I won't do it this way, but I will do it this way bc I've learned this doctrine or this teaching." Doctrine determines direction of our behavior, conformed to world or to God?

As noted above teach is in the the **present imperative** which is a command calling for this to be young Timothy's persistent pattern of pastoring! And remember dear preacher or teacher of the Word of Truth and Life, what God commands, He also enables. We need to relinquish self reliance and to continually rely on and avail ourselves of the Spirit's enabling power in teaching just as Jesus instructed for witnessing when He declared to His little flock of followers...

you shall receive **power** (**dunamis** = ability to accomplish the task, in context supernatural ability) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. (Acts 1:8, cp Zech 4:6)

**Didasko** -97x in 91v - NAS = instructed(2), preaches(1), taught(13), teach(33), teaches(5), teaching(43).

Mt 4:23; 5:2, 19; 7:29; 9:35; 11:1; 13:54; 15:9; 21:23; 22:16; 26:55; 28:15, 20; Mark 1:21f; 2:13; 4:1f; 6:2, 6, 30, 34; 7:7; 8:31; 9:31; 10:1; 11:17; 12:14, 35; 14:49; Luke 4:15, 31; 5:3, 17; 6:6; 11:1; 12:12; 13:10, 22, 26; 19:47; 20:1, 21; 21:37; 23:5; John 6:59; 7:14, 28, 35; 8:2, 20, 28; 9:34; 14:26; 18:20; Acts 1:1; 4:2, 18; 5:21, 25, 28, 42; 11:26; 15:1, 35; 18:11, 25; 20:20; 21:21, 28; 28:31; Rom 2:21; 12:7; 1 Cor 4:17; 11:14; Gal 1:12; Eph 4:21; Col 1:28; 2:7; 3:16; 2 Thess 2:15; 1 Tim 2:12; 4:11; 6:2; 2 Ti 2:2; Titus 1:11; Heb 5:12; 8:11; 1 John 2:27; Rev 2:14, 20.

**These things** (3778) (**tauta**) means "this", which serves as a reference to the thing (or person) which is comparatively near at hand in the discourse.

Whenever you encounter phrases like "**these things**", pause and ponder, taking time to interrogate the text (**See interrogate with the 5W/H'S**). For example, one can always ask the simple question "**What things?**" Then observe the **context** for the answer, which is usually relatively easy to discern. As you carry out this simple practice of **inductive Bible study**, you are in effect learning the spiritually profitable discipline (See Ps 1:2-note, Ps 1:3-note, Josh 1:8-note) of **meditation** on the Scriptures.

In this discourse "**these things**" refers to the "things" he has just taught Timothy about the great present and eternal profit of **godliness**. Implicit in Paul's "orders" are the ideas for Timothy to make sure he presents the truth clearly. Make sure it's the pure word you heard from the Commander. Make sure you give it out to those under your charge. In a military battle the lives of soldiers are at stake and depend on the training and insight of their commander. Believers are no less in a war, and even worse our enemy is often not visible! Our Commander has given orders which ultimately will result in victory. We need to carefully read and heed the prescription for victory.

**Pastor Steven Cole** (his sermons are highly recommended) has the following message...

As I watched the 10K runners in the recent Olympics, I sat on my couch thinking, "It sure would be fun to run like those guys do!" And then, to my surprise, an ad came on where the announcer asked, "Would you like to run like these athletes do? This miraculous, proven new pill will enable you to run like a champion! Just take one pill daily and within 30 days, you will run the 10 K in under 30 minutes. Only \$50 for 30 pills!" If I were dumb enough to fall for such an ad, I would deserve to lose my \$50! We all know that there is no effortless, easy way to becoming a champion runner. To make the Olympics, those runners have spent countless hours disciplining themselves for the goal of winning the gold. Any promise of some miraculous way to do what they do apart from years of training and hard work would clearly be bogus.

Yet as Christians we fall prey to hucksters who pitch their spiritual snake-oil, guaranteed to solve all our problems: "Attend this conference and your life will be forever changed." We attend and come away on a



spiritual high that lasts for a while, but the glow wears off. “Have this spiritual experience and you will live on a new spiritual high.” We try it for a while, but then disillusionment sets in. Read this book, or try this method, and you will never struggle again. But none of these panaceas deliver what they claim. What’s our problem? **We’re looking for an easy, quick way to get where we can only go by disciplining ourselves for the purpose of godliness.** We’re shopping for an effortless way to get what the Bible clearly states comes only through hard work and struggle. **There is no way to godliness except through discipline.** In my 24 years of pastoral experience, I have found that, more than any other quality, self-discipline will have the greatest influence on whether you do well spiritually or not. Invariably, defeated Christians are undisciplined Christians.

I know, you didn’t want to hear that! We live in a society that offers a quick fix to every problem. Whether it’s “a miraculous new program to lose weight,” or “a proven, effortless way to learn a foreign language,” we’re suckers. We’ll pay hard-earned cash for the promise of easy answers to tough problems. But mark it well: You will not make it spiritually if you do not become disciplined.

That’s the message Paul is giving to his younger co-worker, Timothy, in 1 Timothy 4:6-10. Maybe you’re thinking, “I’d like to be disciplined, but I try for a while and then fall back to my old ways. What’s the key to becoming disciplined?” The key to discipline is motivation. Why do those Olympic athletes drive themselves relentlessly for years? They’re motivated to win a gold medal. The late Dallas Cowboys coach, Tom Landry, put it, “The job of a football coach is to make men do what they don’t want to do in order to achieve what they’ve always wanted to be” (cited by Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* [NavPress], p. 18). The key to being a disciplined Christian is to be a motivated Christian.

What is it that should motivate us to discipline ourselves for godliness? It’s that eternal issues are at stake. Because eternal issues are at stake, we must discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness. 1. Eternal issues are at stake. Souls live forever. Eternity is the issue. Nothing could be more important! Paul mentions three eternal issues that will motivate us to discipline ourselves for godliness:

#### **A. The fact of eternity itself should motivate us to discipline ourselves for godliness (1Ti 4:8).**

Paul is not despising bodily exercise. Rather, he is making a comparison between bodily exercise and spiritual exercise. It’s fine to discipline your physical body; it will help you for a few years. But it’s far better to discipline yourself spiritually, because it will put you in good stead not only in this life, but also in the life to come. This means that we ought to work much harder at godliness

than we do at our games! Do you?

The great evangelist, George Whitefield, once told of seeing some criminals riding in a cart on their way to the gallows. They were arguing like a bunch of kids going on a trip about who should sit on the right hand of the cart. Here were men condemned to die in a few hours, but their focus was on who got the best seat on the way to the execution!

But isn’t that exactly like everyone who is living for this life rather than for eternity? You see people in our beauty-obsessed culture who are health nuts. They eat all the proper foods. They take vitamins and minerals. They work out to keep in shape. But the fact is, they’re going to die. All their efforts may extend their lives a few years, if they don’t get cancer or die in a car crash or some other way. But they’re foolish because they’re living as if this life is all there is and as if they can extend their lives indefinitely.

One of the reasons we’re so spiritually flabby is that we’re caught up with the temporal. We tend to think that we and others will live forever. But we won’t. The Puritan preacher, Richard Baxter, used to say,

“I preach as though I might never preach again, and as a dying man to dying men.”

The Bible is clear that as members of the fallen human race, we’re all in that cart, on the way to the gallows. We’d better be preparing for what lies beyond. Because eternity is a fact, we should discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness.

#### **B. The fact of the living God should motivate us to discipline ourselves for godliness (1Ti 4:10).**

**“We have fixed our hope on the living God.”**

That is, God is real. He is the **God who is there**, to use Francis Schaeffer’s term. He is not the projection of our minds. He created the universe and all that is in it. Because He is the living God, we can live each day in communion with Him. If that’s not true, we’re wasting our time. If there is no eternity with the living God, then eat, drink, and be merry, because tomorrow you die (1Co 15:32). But if it’s true that God is living, and we have fixed our hope on Him, then it should motivate us to discipline ourselves for godliness.

### **C. The fact of salvation should motivate us to discipline ourselves for godliness (1Ti 4:10).**

**“God is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.”**

What does Paul mean? He does not mean that all people will be saved. If that were so, then why did Paul pour out his life for the gospel? Paul clearly taught that Christ is returning to take His people to be with Him, but also to mete out judgment to those who have not obeyed the gospel (2Th 1:8, 9). Not all will be saved.

There are two main interpretations. Some say that Paul is using the word **‘Savior’** in a general sense with regard to the world, in that God gives protection and provision even to the wicked. But in a special sense He is the Savior of believers, since He not only gives them temporal blessings, but eternal deliverance from His judgment. The problem with this view is that it forces on the word Savior an unusual meaning that does not fit the context.

A better view is that Paul is countering the false teachers, who said that salvation is an exclusive thing for those in the inner circle who had secret “knowledge.” Paul is saying, “No, God wants to save all types of people in every place, from every walk of life. He has made salvation available for all, but it is only applied to those who believe in Christ.” The point is, apart from Christ people are alienated from God, on their way to eternal judgment. But God will save all who will believe. Since we’re called to proclaim that good news, the fact of God’s salvation should motivate us to discipline ourselves for godliness.

So these eternal issues—the fact of eternity itself; the fact of the living God; and, the fact of salvation—should motivate us for the hardship of discipline unto godliness. Then comes the work:

#### **2. We must discipline ourselves for godliness.**

What is discipline? First I’ll sketch what it is. Then I’ll show how to implement it.

##### **A. What discipline is:**

###### **1) Discipline is an ongoing process, not a quick fix.**

The present imperative verb points to a process. This means that you can never say, “I’ve arrived!” It’s like staying in shape physically: You can do it for 25 years, but the day you quit you start getting flabby. You’ve got to keep at it. So, no matter where you’re at spiritually, 1Ti 4:7 applies to you. It’s a lifetime process.

###### **2) Discipline involves hard work.**

**“We labor and strive.”** **Strive** is a word used of wrestlers in an athletic contest, giving every ounce of strength to defeat their opponent. This means that discipline doesn’t come naturally! It’s not a spiritual gift.

By definition, discipline means acting against your feelings because you have a higher goal. We’re being encouraged in our day to live by our feelings. If we violate our feelings, we might do some sort of psychological damage! But if you’re disciplined, even though you feel like that piece of chocolate cake, since your goal is to lose weight, you deny your feelings. Or, you feel like sacking in; but your goal is to be godly, so you roll out of bed, grab your Bible, and spend time with the Lord. It’s not easy and it doesn’t always feel good at the moment!

**Discipline** is something in which both God and you must be involved. “Self-control” is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23- note). That is, when the Spirit of God controls you, He gives you the ability to control yourself. Thus God does it, and yet Paul can tell Timothy, “Discipline yourself.” You have responsibility in the process. The bottom line is, **“Are you willing to pay the price?”** If athletes put themselves through years of hard work and training to get a silly gold medal, shouldn’t we be willing to pay the price to be godly?

###### **3) Discipline means discarding hindrances.**

Paul tells Timothy to “have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women” (1Ti 4:7). Some translate it “old wives’ tales.” It refers to the stories an old woman might pass on to her grandchildren.

Paul was ridiculing the “endless myths and genealogies” of the false teachers (1Ti 1:4). These things may have been interesting, but they did not contribute toward godliness. The Greek word for “discipline” is *gymnazo*, from which we get “gymnasium.” It came from a word meaning “naked,” because the Greek athletes would strip off their clothing so as not to be hindered from their purpose of winning their event. The point is, if we’re going to train ourselves for godliness, there are hindrances we have to strip off. We have to say no to things that hinder us from our purpose. Of course that includes all sin; but also it includes things that may be all right in and of themselves, but they don’t help you grow toward godliness. It certainly means controlling the

TV set and the amount of time you play computer games!

#### **4) Discipline means keeping your eyes on the goal.**

The goal is fairly clear: “godliness” (in the Greek) has the nuance of “reverence for God.” It points to a person who is growing in conformity to God in his character and daily life because he has fixed his hope on God (1Ti 4:10). He takes God seriously and recognizes the practical implications in terms of developing a godly thought life, godly speech, and godly actions. The way we move toward that goal is to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus (Heb. 12:2-note) so that we become more and more like Him, especially as we endure the trials that God uses to make us more like Him.

#### **5) Discipline means managing your time in line with your goals.**

This point is not directly in the text, but it’s a logical necessity. An athlete works his schedule around his goal. He says no to many good activities so that he can say yes to his daily workout. Annie Dillard has said the obvious, “How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives” (Reader’s Digest, [7/92], p. 137).

And how we spend our minutes and hours is how we spend our days. The goal of godliness demands that you spend time each day alone with God in His Word and prayer. It’s not a question of having a schedule. You have one! We all have the same number of hours in our day. We all make time to do what we want to do. The question is, Is your schedule in line with your goal of becoming a godly person?

#### **6) Discipline is not opposed to the grace of God.**

Many people resist discipline by saying, “That’s legalistic!” It can become legalistic if your motive is wrong. But if your motive is to love and please the God who gave His Son for you, it’s not legalistic. Grace doesn’t mean sloppy living (1Cor. 15:10).

Although discipline sounds restrictive, it is the only way to true freedom. Someone who has disciplined himself to play the piano or to speak a foreign language is free to do things that I am restricted from doing. In the verses just prior to this, Paul talks about enjoying God and then moves on to talk about discipline. They go hand in hand. The disciplined Christian enjoys God in ways the undisciplined person cannot.

#### **7) Discipline is not driving yourself relentlessly.**

Some people get obsessed with discipline to the point that they can’t relax or enjoy time off. We need the balance of Scripture, which teaches that God rested after His labor, and so should we. He made our bodies to require sleep. We’re not good stewards if we drive ourselves until we burn out, either physically or emotionally.

Often our problem is that we mess around when we’re supposed to be working, so we feel guilty when we try to relax. A disciplined Christian will work hard when he works and thankfully take time for rest and recreation when it’s needed. As far as the Lord’s work goes, it helps me to remember that God is the Savior of the world; I’m not. By His grace, I can labor and strive for His purpose, but I can also relax and not worry that somehow His purpose will flounder without me.

#### **8) Discipline is not being so rigid that you are insensitive to what God is doing.**

This point also comes from the balance of Scripture, not directly from our text. It’s good to be disciplined for the purpose of godliness, but you can abuse that good goal by becoming so rigid that you miss what God is doing. For example, if you’re having your quiet time and an unsaved friend knocks on your door and wants to talk about spiritual things, you would be too rigid to send him away so that you can finish your quiet time. Jesus always did the Father’s will, but He always had time for people who interrupted Him (Mark 5:21-43).

### **B. How we implement discipline:**

#### **1) By being constantly nourished in the truths of the faith (1Ti 4:6).**

The present tense verb means that we must continually feed on God’s Word, or “sound doctrine.” Spiritual warfare involves your mind, and your mind affects your morals. So it’s crucial that you feed your mind on God’s Word through every means—by hearing it preached; by reading, studying, memorizing and meditating on it. God’s Word shows us what God is like and how He wants us to live.

**There is no such thing as godliness  
apart from constant nourishment from God’s Word of truth.**

If you’re not a reader, learn! God saw fit to record His truth in written form. Almost anyone can learn to read. That may be a necessary step in disciplining yourself for godliness. Also, get the Bible on tape and listen to it

daily. If you don't have a regular time in the Word, set a realistic goal and stick with it. Start out with 15 minutes a day reading the Bible and 5-10 minutes in prayer. When you're consistent, you can increase the time. But you need spiritual nourishment from the Word as much as you need to eat. Also, we implement spiritual discipline ...

## **2) By being obedient to the truths of the faith (1Ti 4:6).**

**"... which you have been following."**

We aren't supposed to learn God's Word so that we can win doctrinal arguments. It should change our lives. So we always should come to God's Word with the prayer, "Lord, show me how this applies to me, and enable me to obey it!" It may be a wrong attitude or thought I need to change. Maybe my speech doesn't honor God. I may need to change my behavior. The Word often confronts my selfishness.

Remember, the goal of the Christian life is not instant happiness and fulfillment. It is eternal joy in God, and that comes through godliness and becoming a good servant of Christ Jesus (1T 4:6). The way to lasting joy and fulfillment is discipline unto godliness, which holds promise both for the present life and for the life to come (1Ti 4:8).

### **Conclusion**

Marla and I both had an Italian sociology professor in college who used to say, "Class, whenever I feel like exercising, I go and lie down for two hours until the feeling goes away." Many of us can identify with that! Exercise is discipline and discipline is hard work, and who likes hard work? And yet, like it or not, discipline is essential for godliness. And godliness is essential because eternity is certain. There are no shortcuts, no easy, effortless ways to godliness. But if you have fixed your hope on the living God who is the Savior, can you do anything less than discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness ([Sermon](#))