

# 1 Timothy 4 Commentary

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GODLINESS AND PASTORAL CARE  
 Click chart to enlarge  
 Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
 Another Overview Chart - [1 Timothy](#) - Charles Swindoll

THE PASTOR'S PRIMER: PAUL'S PRACTICAL PASTORAL INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING THE LOCAL CHURCH				
1 Timothy 1	1 Timothy 2-3	1 Timothy 4	1 Timothy 5	1 Timothy 6
TIMOTHY'S CHARGE...	TIMOTHY'S INSTRUCTIONS...			
Concerning Sound Doctrine	Concerning Prayer & Church	Concerning Last Days Apostasy	Concerning Widows & Elders	Concerning Conflict & Contentment
Danger of False Doctrine	Public Worship Church Officers	Antidote for Apostasy	Pastoral Duties Toward Others	Instructions for the Man of God
Warning	Worship	Wisdom	Widows	Wealth
Written in Macedonia Circa 62-64AD				

(Source: [Swindoll's Insights on 1 Timothy](#))

Possible Route of Paul's "Farewell Tour" after release from his first Roman imprisonment. (see notes below)

**Key Verses:** 1 Ti 1:15, 1 Ti 3:15-16, 1 Ti 6:11, 1 Ti 6:12

**Key Words -- Key Words** -- see importance of [key words](#) - learn how to [mark key words](#) and the associated discipline of how to [interrogate them with 5W/H questions](#). Practice "interrogating" key words as well as [term of conclusion](#) (therefore), [term of explanation](#) (for), [terms of purpose or result](#) (so that, in order that, that, as a result), [terms of contrast](#) (but, yet), [expressions of time](#) (including [then](#); [until](#), after) and [terms of comparison](#) (like, as). You will be amazed at how your Teacher, the Holy Spirit, will

illuminate your understanding, a spiritual blessing that will grow the more you practice! Be diligent! Consider the "5P's" - **Pause** to **Ponder** the **Passage** then **Practice** it in the **Power** of the Spirit. See also [inductive Bible study](#) - [observation \(Observe With a Purpose\)](#) , [Interpretation \(Keep Context King, Read Literally, Compare Scripture with Scripture, Consult Conservative Commentaries\)](#), and then be a doer of the Word with [Application](#). Do not overlook "doing the word" for if you do you are deluding yourself, and are just a "smarter sinner," but not more like the Savior! As Jesus said "blessed are those who hear the word of God, and observe it." (Lk 11:28+, cf James 1:22+)

**1 Timothy 4:1 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, (NASB 1995 - Lockman)**

KJV 1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

- **the Spirit** John 16:13; Acts 13:2; 28:25; 1 Cor 12:11; 1 John 2:18; Rev 2:7,11,17,29; Rev 3:6,13,22
- **expressly** Ezekiel 1:3
- **the latter** Nu 24:14; Deut 4:30; 32:29; Isaiah 2:2; Jer 48:47; 49:39; Ezekiel 38:16; Daniel 10:14; Hosea 3:5; Micah 4:1; 2 Ti 3:1-9; 1 Pe 1:20; 2 Pe 3:3; Jude 1:4,18
- **fall away** Daniel 11:35; Mt 24:5-12; 2 Th 2:3; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 4:4
- **deceitful** Genesis 3:3-5,13; 1Ki 22:22-23; 2Chr 18:19-22; 2 Cor 11:3,13-15; 2 Th 2:9-12; 2 Timothy 3:13; 2 Pet 2:1; Rev 9:2-11; 13:14; 16:14; 18:2,23; Rev 19:20; 20:2,3,8,10
- **and doctrines** Da 11:35-38; 1 Cor 8:5,6; 10:20; Col 2:18; Acts 17:18; Rev 9:20

**Related Passages:**

John 16:13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

1 Samuel 16:14 Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him.

1 Kings 22:22-23 "The LORD said to him, 'How?' And he said, 'I will go out and be a **deceiving spirit** in the mouth of all his prophets.' Then He said, 'You are to entice him and also prevail. Go and do so.' 23 "Now therefore, behold, the LORD has put a **deceiving spirit** in the mouth of all these your prophets; and the LORD has proclaimed disaster against you."

2 Chronicles 18:19-22 "The LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab king of Israel to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said this while another said that. 20 "Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.' And the LORD said to him, 'How?' 21 "He said, 'I will go and be a **deceiving spirit** in the mouth of all his prophets.' Then He said, 'You are to entice him and prevail also. Go and do so.' 22 "Now therefore, behold, the LORD has put a **deceiving spirit** in the mouth of these your prophets, for the LORD has proclaimed disaster against you."

**Related Resource:**

- [Why did God use a lying spirit to deceive Ahab? | GotQuestions.org](#)

1 John 2:18+ Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.

2 Thessalonians 2:3+ Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

Hebrews 3:12+ Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.

John 8:44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and **does not stand in the truth** because there is **no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.**

1 John 4:1-6+ Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God,

because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. 4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. 5 They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. 6 We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

## PAUL WARNS TIMOTHY OF APOSTASY

**Guthrie** observes: Having pointed out the exaltation of Christ and the future prospects of the church, the apostle next comes to opposing elements. Whenever truth flourishes error will raise its head, and the apostle is concerned that Timothy should deal rightly with this insidious opposition. ([Pastoral Epistles](#))

**Brian Bell** - Note this comes right after Paul gave us that beautiful hymn of 6 solid points of Christology! (1 Ti 3:16) Wherever the light of the gospel shines, the shadow of false doctrine lurks closely behind. There's always a danger of people adding or subtracting from the gospel message. 2.2.2.1. Which is John's final warning at the end of the Rev. ([1 Timothy 4](#))

**Lenski** says: A reading of this chapter will convince one that it is a unit. Timothy is to be prepared to meet the apostasy foretold by the Holy Spirit. The particle *de* is merely transitional and is inserted because Timothy is to warn also the churches and their officers against the coming danger....One must certainly be struck by the resemblance between 2 Thess. 2 and Paul's present statements. There the whole great apostasy which is headed by the great antichrist is revealed and we are shown how it shall be blasted by the word and shall finally be utterly destroyed by the Lord's Parousia. (BORROW [St. Paul's Epistles to Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus and Philemon: Interpretation of the New Testament](#))

**Hiebert** says: With 1 Timothy 4 we begin the 3rd main division of the epistle. Here Paul offers Timothy some constructive advice in carrying out the charge committed to him. The advice relates to his personal work in view of the coming apostasy (1 Ti 4:1-16), as well as to his official work with various groups within the churches (1 Ti 5:1-6:2). ([1 Timothy](#))

**Barnes** says: The leading object of this chapter is to state to Timothy certain things of which he was constantly to remind the church. And having done this, the apostle gives him some directions about his personal deportment. ([1 Timothy 4 Commentary](#))

**But** - Term of contrast which takes us back to: 1 Ti 3:13 "For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus."

**Guy King** - Great and glorious things have been unfolded at the close of the previous chapter. Here it is all so different. It is as if we had been traversing a lovely road full of fine houses and beautiful gardens and then turned a corner into a lane of dirty, tumbledown slum property, abounding in weeds and rank disfigurement. "But" is to me always, for good or ill, the corner word of scripture. Timothy will find much of good cheer and encouragement in his oversight, but let him beware, there will be also things that are ugly and evil. ([A Leader Led](#))

**Hiebert** says: The opening "but" introduces a contrast between the sublime mystery of redemption which the church confesses as the norm of Christian faith (1 Ti 3:16) and the coming departure from the faith of which the Spirit warns. Timothy must carry on his work in the clear consciousness of this grim prospect. ([1 Timothy](#))

**The Spirit** ([pneuma](#)) **explicitly** (clearly, unmistakably, distinctly made known) (present tense - continually) **says** - Paul pens the words, but they are inspired by the Holy Spirit (cf 2 Pe 1:21+) **Explicitly** is **retos** used only here and means expressly ("without disguise" like the deceiving spirits!) and pertains to what the Spirit has stated as being precisely the case (passages like Da 7:25+ may be in view). "The Spirit was saying this expressly in stated terms but Paul does not give the specific means by which the prediction was made.. There was neither doubt nor vagueness about it." (Hendriksen) Jesus gave a similar warning to His disciples in Mt 24:4-12+ (cf 2 Th 2:3-12+). The fact that the Spirit continually speaks would suggest that this could be a reference to His speaking through the apostles. Either way, it is a warning calling for watching!

**Barnes** says: It was not by mere hints and symbols and shadowy images of the future. It was in an open and plain manner, in so many words. The object of this statement seems to be to call the attention of Timothy to it in an emphatic manner and to show the importance of attending to it. ([1 Timothy 4 Commentary](#))

**A T Robertson** - The reference is to the Holy Spirit, but whether to O.T. prophecy (Acts 1:16) or to some Christian utterance (2 Thes. 2:2; 1 Cor. 14:1ff.) we do not know. Parry recalls the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:10, 24. ([1 Timothy 4 Commentary](#))

**Pulpit Commentary** - It was, doubtless, on account of these prophetic warnings of a falling away from the faith, that the apostle gave the preceding heads of Christian doctrine in such a terse and tangible form, and laid such a solemn charge upon Timothy. (For examples of these prophetic utterances, see Acts 11:28; 13:2; 20:23; 21:11; Acts 28:25, 1 Cor 12:8; 14 etc.) ([1 Timothy 4 Commentary](#))

**Paul** had warned the Ephesian elders

(Acts 20:29-30+) "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

**That in later times (kairos)** - This time phrase begs a When question. Similar phrases are found in 2 Ti 3:1; James 5:3; 1Pe 1:5; 2 Pe 3:3; Jude 1:18) **Vine** says **times** "denotes seasons, i.e., periods characterized by some spiritual or moral feature, as distinct from chronos which marks a period as to its length." ([Collected Writings](#))

**Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible** – The phrase "latter times" (husterois **kairos**) means a little later on, not far out in the future. That is, false teachers were to arise within the church almost immediately and continue on through our day and on to the end of time. The point is well made: the church and the genuine believer have to be constantly on guard against false teaching. The terrible danger of false teaching always confronts the church and believer. And note: this is a revelation of the Spirit of God Himself. It is not the idea of some preacher seeking recognition because of his novel idea. It is the warning of God's Spirit. The Spirit has spoken *expressly* (rhētōs), that is, in specific terms, in plain words, distinctly, so that there can be no question about what is being said. False teachers will arise in the latter times. (1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon)

**MacArthur** says this time phrase refers to "The period from the first coming of Christ until His return (Ac 2:16, 17; Heb 1:1, 2; 9:26; 1Pe 1:20; 1Jn 2:18). Apostasy will exist throughout that period, reaching a climax shortly before Christ returns (cf. Mt 24:12)." (BORROW [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Explicitly** (4490)(**retos/rhetos**) adverb; expressly, explicitly, in these exact words. In a manner precisely and clearly expressed. BDAG - pert. to what is stated or has been stated as being precisely so, expressly, explicitly. Only in 1 Ti 4:1

**Liddell-Scott** - ητός, ή, όν, ( ρ ) stated, specified, covenanted, μισθ πι . II.21.445; παρε ναι ς χρόνον . Hdt.1.77, cf. Aeschin.3.124; ν μέραις . Th.6.29; π ητο ς γέρασι πατρικα βασιλε αι Id.1.13; . ρύριον a stated sum, Id.2.7, 4.69; π ητο σι, Att. π ητο ς, on stated terms, on certain conditions, according to covenant, Hdt.5.57, E.Hipp.459, Th.1.122, And.3.22, al.; παρεσεσθαι ε ς . μέραν X.HG3.5.6; . πόκρισις a distinct, definite answer, Plb.32.6.7: κ τ μ μ ητι (sc. μέρ ), perh. from those which do not fall on a stated day of sacrifice, IG2.1357a.25 (403/2 B.C.), cf. Hsch. s.v. ητήν, ητόν, τό, compact, treaty, Inscr.Cret.4.197.17 (τι . η]τι ι ii B.C.), fixed date for a lawsuit, PSI4.463.14 (iii B.C.), etc.; π ετο ν perh. in the aforesaid manner, Hesperia33.385 (Eretria, ν B.C.), Adv. ητ ς expressly, distinctly, Plb.3.23.5, SIG685.77 (ii B.C.), Phld.Rh.1.105 S., 1Ep.Ti.4.1, Gal.17(2).427: Sup. ητότατα S.E.M.7.16. 2. spoken of, famous, ητοί τ' ρρητοί τε Hes.Op.4. 3. of language, in common use (= συνήθης), A.D.Pron.113.18; φράσις Id.Synt.39.15. Adv. -τ ς Phld.Rh.1.161 S. II. that may be spoken or told, ε ητόν, φράσον A.Pr.765; ητόν; ο χ θεμιτ ν λλον ε δέναι; S.OT993; α δ ν νόσι' ο δ ητά μοι ib. 1289; ρρητόν τ' πο ς Id.OC1001; δειν ν γάρ, ο δ . Id.Ph.756; cf. ρρητος III. 3. 2. that can be spoken or enunciated, συλλαβή Pl.Tht.202b, cf. 205d. e; διάλεκτοι Phld.Rh.1.110 S.; ο . κατ' δία ν α γκλιπικαί A.D.Pron.36.30; communicable in words, Pl.Ep.341c. III. Math., rational, of magnitudes, opp. surds (λογα), ητ πρ ς λληλα Id.R.546c, Hp.Ma.303b, cf. Euc.10 Deff.3 and 4, Hero Deff.128; in Metric, . πού ς, opp. λογος, Aristid. Quint.1.14; v. ρρητος IV. IV. τ . the precise, literal contents of a document, the letter of the law, S.E.M.2.36, etc.; ητός literal, opp. allegorical, Ph.1.69, al. V. = μα I. 3, even of a living thing, Hebr. dâvâr, LXXEx.9.4.

**Later** (5306)(**husteros** from basically means what is behind or after in space or time. (1) as an adjective; (a) used as a comparative - the last named, the latter, the second one (Mt 21.32); (b) used as a superlative as the final in a series of times last; possibly later, future times (1Ti 4.1); (2) neuter as an adverb; (a) in a comparative sense in the second place, later, afterward ( Mt 4.2); (b) in a superlative sense finally, lastly (Mt 21.37); u[steron pa,ntwn last of all (Mt 22.27) Used 3x in NT - Matt. 4:2+; Lk. 20:32+; 1 Tim. 4:1 ([Friberg - Analytical Lexicon](#))

**Times** (season, opportunity, epoch, proper time) (2540) **kairos** means a point of time or period of time, time, period, frequently with the implication of being especially fit for something and without emphasis on precise chronology. It describes the period as especially appropriate and favorable (the right time). Stated another

way **kairos** is distinguished from *chronos* (time) because **kairos** views TIME from the aspect of the strategic opportunity it provides, and not simply a change from the past into the present into the future, not mere duration. ([Trench](#)) Something that lasts for a season and so is transient, temporary or enduring only for a specific period of time. Kairos is a period which is especially appropriate - a favorable time (at the right time). **Kairos** in Pastoral Epistles - 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 Tim. 4:1; 1 Tim. 6:15; 2 Tim. 3:1 = that in the last days difficult times will come; 2 Tim. 4:3; 2 Tim. 4:6; Titus 1:3

**Some will fall away** ([aphistemi](#)) from (desert, depart) **the faith** ([pistis](#) - see note) - Note that this is a Holy Spirit inspired prophecy - and so it **WILL** come to pass! Who are the **some**? They are fakers, professors, not genuine possessors of truth faith in Christ. They mouth orthodoxy but do not carry out orthopraxy (so to speak, pun intended). They say they believe but their lives belie their belief and their falling away (instead of persevering to the end - Heb 3:6+, Heb 3:14+ - see also [Perseverance of the Saints](#)) is clear evidence of the unregenerate ("uncircumcised") state of their heart.

**Fall away** ([aphistemi](#)) gives us our English "[apostatize](#)" meaning to abandon one's previous position or belief. The middle voice (initiate the action and participate in results thereof) indicates that this is not an unintentional falling away, but a deliberate (volitional, choice of their will) withdrawal from **the faith** once professed. In short, **some** will deliberately abandon what they had formerly professed to believe. As Paul explains they fall away when they fall for false teaching he describes below. If you want to read a story of falling away which will break your heart see [The Tragic Tale of Charles Templeton](#).

**The faith** ([pistis](#) - see note) is not the subjective aspect (believing) but the objective aspect (that which is believed, the essential teachings of the Christian faith, especially the Gospel) as in 1 Timothy 3:9+ where Paul writes "holding to the mystery of **the faith** with a clear conscience." (Cf "he has denied the faith" 1 Ti 5:8, "wandered away from the faith" 1 Ti 6:10+, cf Acts 6:7+, Acts 14:22+, Col 1:23+, Jude 1:3+). As a side note there are some who teach that a genuine believer can stop believing in Christ. I strongly disagree. The faith that saves us is the faith that keeps us and both are gifts of God and so our perseverance to the end (and our continuing to belief) is a gift of and power of God working in us through His indwelling Holy Spirit. (Read Romans 8:31-39+)

**Hiebert** has an interesting note - An apostate is not one who gives up his profession of being a Christian, but one who forsakes the truth of the Christian life. ([1 Timothy](#))

**John** describes a similar pattern of professors...

1 John 2:19+ They **went out from us**, but they **were not really of us**; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us ([Perseverance of the Saints](#)); but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.

**Guzik** - Because of the danger of the latter times, if Timothy were to remain a faithful minister to God's people, he must keep a dead reckoning on the truth – the faith. If this were lost, not much else really mattered. A June 1997 article in U.S. News and World Report described a Virginia pastor who "Would rather preach on 'Bosnia, justice, or world peace' than on Bible stories or personal salvation." This is an example of a man who departed from the faith and followed his own direction. ([1 Timothy 4 Commentary](#))

**Lenski** - How Satan himself gets hold of a man's spirit we see in the case of Judas (Luke 22:3; John 13:27; comp. Jn 6:70). (BORROW [St. Paul's Epistles to Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus and Philemon: Interpretation of the New Testament](#))

**Wiersbe** has a surprising comment noting that "This is the only place where demons are mentioned in the pastoral epistles. Just as there is a mystery of godliness concerning Christ (1 Tim. 3:16), so there is a mystery of iniquity that surrounds Satan and his work (2 Thess. 2:7). Satan is an imitator (2 Cor. 11:13-15). He has his own ministers and doctrines and seeks to deceive God's people and lead them astray (2 Cor. 11:3). The first test of any religious doctrine is what it says about Jesus Christ (1 John 4:1-6). It comes as a shock to some people that Satan uses professed Christians in the church to accomplish his work, but Satan once used Peter to try to lead Jesus on a wrong path (Matt. 16:21-23), and he used Ananias and Sapphira to try to deceive the church at Jerusalem (Acts 5:1-12). Paul warned that false teachers would arise from within the church (Acts 20:30). ([Bible Exposition Commentary - New Testament](#))

**Bible Knowledge Commentary** says: Some people will abandon the faith. Spiritual error is seldom due to innocent mistakes. It is more often due to the conscious strategies of God's spiritual enemies.

**Fall away** (depart, desert, withdraw) (868) ([aphistemi](#) from **apo** = separation of one thing from another + **histemi** = stand and is the root of our English = apostasy) literally means to stand off from means to withdraw, to stand off, to forsake, to depart from or to remove oneself from. To apostatize or to fall away from. To withdraw from a place, an association or a relationship. This is defined in Joshua 22:23 as a "turning away from following Jehovah," and in Hebrews 3:12 as "falling away from the living God," as Israel did in the

wilderness, Acts 7:39–41 14v - Lk. 2:37; Lk. 4:13; Lk. 8:13; Lk. 13:27; Acts 5:37; Acts 5:38; Acts 12:10; Acts 15:38; Acts 19:9; Acts 22:29; 2 Co. 12:8; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 2:19; Heb. 3:12

**Faith** (4102) **pistis** is synonymous with trust or belief and is the conviction of the truth of anything, but in Scripture usually speaks of belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it. "The term implies both knowledge and action. One may receive knowledge of a certain truth and may even offer verbal agreement, but "trust" or "confidence" is not said to be present until one's behavior reflects that truth." (Swindoll) It has well been said that **faith** is not believing in spite of evidence—that's superstition—but obeying in spite of circumstances and consequences. As **faith** relates to Christ it represents a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through Whom we obtain eternal salvation and entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. Stated another way, eternal salvation comes **only** through belief in Jesus Christ and no other way.

**Faith** is a **key word** in the Pastoral epistles - 1 Tim. 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:4; 1 Tim. 1:5; 1 Tim. 1:14; 1 Tim. 1:19; 1 Tim. 2:7; 1 Tim. 2:15; 1 Tim. 3:9; 1 Tim. 3:13; 1 Tim. 4:1; 1 Tim. 4:6; 1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Tim. 5:8; 1 Tim. 5:12; 1 Tim. 6:10; 1 Tim. 6:11; 1 Tim. 6:12; 1 Tim. 6:21; 2 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2 Tim. 2:18; 2 Tim. 2:22; 2 Tim. 3:8; 2 Tim. 3:10; 2 Tim. 3:15; 2 Tim. 4:7; Titus 1:1; Titus 1:4; Titus 1:13; Titus 2:2; Titus 2:10; Titus 3:15;

Turning their minds away from truth, they begin to pay attention to error.

(Present tense = continually) **paying attention** (**prosecho**) to **deceitful** (**planos** seducing) **spirits** (**pneuma** - same word used for the Holy Spirit) **and doctrines** (**didaskalia**) **of demons** (**daimonion**) - Note that here we see teaching which is calculated to affect the mind, the way one thinks and the way one thinks determines the way one behaves. The point is that apostasy always begins in the mind. The battle field is always the mind and the battle is over truth. Note that the verb **paying attention** means more than simply giving attention but actually conveys the sense of attaching one's self to or clinging to. In the present context the **deceitful spirits** are almost certainly demonic spirits (recall Satan is father of lies and no truth is in him - Jn 8:44) and they in some way interact with and influence the nominal (name only), professors either directly (cf flaming arrows - Eph 6:16+) or through the lies propagated by false teachers who themselves have also wandered away from the truth. The best way to not fall for lies is to bow before the Truth (Jn 14:6), giving heed to the Spirit of Truth rather than seducing spirits.

**Deceitful** carries the idea of that which causes one to wander away (in this case from the Truth). It follows that the best "defense" is to immerse one's self in the Word of Truth! These spirits are the absolute antithesis of "the Spirit of truth...(Who) will guide you into all the truth." (Jn 16:13) One recalls Paul's parting words to Timothy that "evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, (actively) deceiving and (passively) being deceived.." (2 Ti 3:13+) **Doctrines of demons** is not "**demonology**" but "-ology" taught by the demons! And where are their classes held? My guess is in many seminaries across the country, including seminaries we would normally call "conservative!" "Demons are theology majors, and have systems of doctrine." (Guzik) Recall the first lying demon in Genesis 3:4-5+

The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! (**LIE**) 5 "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God (**LIE**), knowing good and evil."

**Comment** - The implication of be like God is that we can live independently of God and His righteous restraints! It is a lie from the pit of hell!

**Paul** commands believers to...

**Put on** (**aurist imperative** see **our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey**) the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes (see **methodeia** - see similar idea in 2 Cor 2:11, cf 2 Cor 4:4, 2 Cor 11:3, 2 Cor 11:13-15) of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:11-12+)

**Hiebert** has a good word for all of us - It has well been said that man never stands isolated. If he is not subject to the influence of the Holy Spirit, he at once falls under the power of seducing spirits.(**1 Timothy**)

**MacArthur**- To sit under such teaching is to hear lies from the demonic realm (Eph 6:12; Jas 3:15; 2Jn 7-11). The influence of demons will reach its peak during the Tribulation (2Th 2:9; Rev 9:2-11; 16:14; 20:2, 3, 8, 10). Satan and demons constantly work the deceptions that corrupt and pervert God's Word. (BORROW **The MacArthur Study Bible**)

**Guy King** says: These impious beings are expert in the unholy art of seducing, choosing their victim and their moment with cunning precision. They come to a man at a time of intellectual doubt, or of devastating sorrow, or of spiritual failure, or even of bodily weakness--and they insinuate the seed of what is false, which becomes in course of time, the very ruin of a soul, the catastrophe of

a life, as in the instance of these unfortunate persons of whom Timothy is here warned. Let none of us suppose that we are to be immune from such attacks or free from such dire results. It behooves us all to exercise eternal vigilance. ([A Leader Led](#))

**Demarest** says "Though the final outcome of Christ's struggle has been secured through His victory over sin and death, guerilla warfare continues until He shall come in glory. Resistance to His love continues, and some will even depart from the faith--an act known as apostasy. (BORROW [The communicator's commentary. 1, 2 Thessalonians, 1, 2 Timothy, Titus](#))

**Hendriksen** says: Though the church be ever so glorious, reflecting the radiance of its precious Lord and Savior (1 Tim. 3:15, 16), apostasy is just around the corner, for not all who belong outwardly to the church belong to it inwardly. The present chapter deals with this apostasy. (BORROW [Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles](#))

**Wiersbe** says: Paul had warned the Ephesian elders that false teachers would invade the church (Acts 20:28-31), and now they had arrived. The Holy Spirit had spoken in specific terms about these teachers and the prophecy was starting to be fulfilled in Paul's time. Certainly it is fulfilled in our own time. We can recognize false teachers by the description Paul gave in this paragraph. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - New Testament](#))

**Guzik** has an interesting comment - It is hard to say if there is more false teaching today, or if it is merely a case of modern technology being able to spread the lie better. But the old saying is certainly true today: a lie travels express, the truth goes on foot – and more people within the church are following these doctrines of demons. ([1 Timothy 4 Commentary](#))

One is reminded of [Jim Jones](#) and also the [Waco situation with David Koresh](#) when it comes to the power of deception and the horrible consequences that result.

**Paying attention** (beware) ([4337](#)) **prosecho** from **pros** = before, toward + **echo** = hold) means literally to hold to, toward or before. Originally it was followed by the word "the mind" (nous) but at times "the mind" was omitted but still the idea of "the mind" was implied. To apply one's self to. To attach one's self to. **Prosecho** means to moor a ship, to tie it up. **Prosecho** was also used to mean "to remain on course". Figuratively (see also below) the idea is to hold one's mind before then to take heed, to pay attention, to give heed, be in a state of alert, to watch out for or to be on guard. The word implies the giving one's consent, as well as one's attention. When used in this manner **prosecho** always warns of some type of danger (usually spiritual danger but occasionally physical)! **Prosecho** is not a call simply to notice or sense something, but to be on guard against it because it is so harmful (eg, the danger of practicing your righteousness for others to see, the danger of false prophets, false teachers and false teaching, the danger of the Pharisees and Sadducees). The idea is to turn one's mind or attention to a thing by being on one's guard against it. 14v - Lk. 2:37; Lk. 4:13; Lk. 8:13; Lk. 13:27; Acts 5:37; Acts 5:38; Acts 12:10; Acts 15:38; Acts 19:9; Acts 22:29; 2 Co. 12:8; 1 Ti 4:1; 2 Ti 2:19; Heb. 3:12

**Deceitful** ([4108](#))(**planos**) wandering, leading astray (adj.), a deceiver (subst.). It is used metaphorically for deliberately and deceptively leading people away from the right path, lying to people about God or about the reality of life and thus getting them off course. Used in 1 Ti 4:1 as an adjective and in the other 3 NT uses (Mt. 27:63 "that Deceiver" referring to Jesus Who is The Truth!; 2 Co. 6:8 = "deceivers"; 1 2 Jn. 1:7 = "deceivers...deceiver") as a noun. **Septuagint** = Job 19:4 and Jeremiah 23:32 ("led My people astray by their falsehoods and reckless boasting;") where Jeremiah denounces prophets who led Israel astray. **Planos** is in a family of words that means "wander off" or "lead astray." In classical Greek the verb planaō (3966) means "to wander about" or "to lead (someone) astray." planētēs, is used in combination with astēr, "star," to designate a star that has no fixed position but "wanders," that is, a planet.

**Liddell-Scott** - 1. Act., leading astray, deceiving, π. κατέσειον δωδόν the bait, Theoc.21.43, cf. AP7.702 (Apollonid.); π. δ ρα, γρα, Mosch.1.29, Fr.1.10; πνεύματα 1Ep.Ti.4.1.

2. Pass., wandering, roaming, fickle, π οικίλον πρ γμ' στ κα πλάνον τύχη Men.Kith.Fr.8; π. φέγγη planets, Man.4.3.

II. Subst. πλάνος, , = πλάνη, wandering, roaming, S.OC1114, E.Alc.482, etc.: in pl., Ar.V.873 (Iyr.), etc.

b. κερκίδος πλάνοι, of the act of weaving, E.Ion1491 (Iyr.).

2. metaph., φροντίδος πλάνοι wanderings of thought, S.OT67; π. φρεν v wandering of mind, madness, E.Hipp.283; π. τε καρδί προσισταται Id.Fr.1038; πλάνοις uncertain fits, of a disease, S.Ph.758; = πλάνη II. 1, Pl.Phd.79d.

3. digression, Id.Ep.344d.

4. error, Ceb.25, Diog.Oen.26; grammatical mistake, A.D.Pron.84.11.

III. of persons, πλάνος, , vagabond, impostor, Nicostr.Com.34, Dionys.Com.4, D.S.34/5.2.14, Ev.Matt.27.63.

**Spirits** (breath, wind)(4151) **pneuma** from **pneo** = to breath). the spirit, i.e. the vital principal by which the body is animated, the disposition or influence which fills and governs the soul of any one. In 1 Ti 4:1 we see a clash between Holy Spirit and unholy spirits!

**Doctrines** (teaching, instruction) (1319) **didaskalia** from **didasko** from **dáo** = to know or teach) is either the act of teaching or the thing taught and in this use denotes doctrine or what is taught. The character and quality of the **didaskalia** or doctrine is absolutely critical as it can cause one to be tossed and carried about if false (Eph 4:14), some such false doctrines being actually demonically inspired! (1Ti 4:1). Sound doctrine is necessary to nourish our souls as taught by Paul in (1Ti 4:6) 21v - Matt 15:9; Mark 7:7; Rom 12:7; 15:4; Eph 4:14; Col 2:22; 1 Tim 1:10; 4:1, 6, 13, 16; 5:17; 6:1, 3; 2 Tim 3:10, 16; 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1, 7, 10

**Technical note** - "Doctrines of demons" is a subjective genitive and does not mean doctrines **about** demons (that would be "objective genitive"), but the doctrines which demons teach.

**SATAN fired a missile of:**

- TEMPER at MOSES,
- LUST at DAVID,
- TOTAL DEVASTATION AND SUFFERING at JOB,
- FEAR at PETER,
- A THORN OF SUFFERING IN THE FLESH of the APOSTLE PAUL,
- DISHONESTY at ABRAHAM,
- DEPRESSION at ELIJAH,
- PRIDE at SAUL,
- IDOLATRY at GIDEON,
- GREED at JUDAS.

**Demons** (1140) **daimonion** see detailed discussion of **daimonion**. **Daimonion** is used 63 times in the NT and all but the use in Acts 17:18+ are translated demon or demons! And so it is most **ironic** that **daimonion** is used most often to describe demons or fallen angels under the dominion of the head fallen angel, Satan! The irony of course is that demons were behind these idols worshiped by the Greeks in Acts 17:18! (cf 1 Cor 10:20, 21+). The true and living God is Jesus Whom these "foolish philosophical babblers" (another irony!) classified as "daimonion"!

#### **Related Resources:**

- [What is apostasy and how can I recognize it? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Are there different types of demons? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does the Bible say about demons? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Where do demons come from? What is the origin of demons? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Do demons exist? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Can demons attach themselves to non-living/inanimate objects? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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1 TIMOTHY 4:1–2—Does this verse indicate that the early church would fall into total apostasy, thereby pointing to the need for a restoration?

MISINTERPRETATION: This passage says that in the latter days "some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits, and doctrines of demons" (NKJV). Mormons say this is a prophecy of a total apostasy of the entire church (McConkie, 1977, 205).

CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION: Though this verse speaks of apostasy, it does not speak of a total apostasy of the entire church. Notice that the text does not say, "in the latter times all shall depart from the faith." Rather it says, "some shall depart from the faith."

The apostasy of 1 Timothy 4:1–3 is a particular kind of apostasy related to Gnostic dualism. This school of thought said spirit is good and matter is evil. Apparently, there were some false teachers who believed that all appetites relating to the (material) body—including sex and food—were evil and should be avoided. Hence these false teachers forbade people to get married and ordered them to abstain from certain foods. The apostasy to which Paul referred occurred specifically in Timothy's day (see use of present tense in vv. 2–3). The phrase last days often means the period beginning with Christ's first coming (cf. Acts 2:16–17; Heb. 1:1) and extending to his second coming (2 Peter 3:3–4), or any era of it. Even if this were a reference to the later apostasy of the whole church, it would not thereby justify the Mormon claims that the text of the Bible was corrupted and/or that Mormonism is the true restoration of the New Testament church. (Norman Geisler - [When Cultists Ask](#))



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## David Reed - Mormons Answered Verse by Verse - 1 Timothy 4:1, 2

To a Mormon the many Bible passages foretelling false teachers and false teachings are all proof that true Christianity disappeared from the earth centuries ago and was restored by Joseph Smith in the early 1800s. However, such passages do not say that Christianity would disappear entirely, or that all would depart from the faith. Rather, as in the case of the verses quoted here from 1 Timothy, they predict that "some shall depart from the faith." But others kept the faith and kept preaching the true message of Christianity. As Peter promised, "the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:25). (BORROW [Mormons : answered verse by verse](#))

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**GOING FORWARD IN A BACKWARD WORLD** Much of the world we live in rotates on Satan's standards, which are backwards from the Christian standpoint. See John 14:30, Isa. 55:8. It's a challenge to think and live biblically in this world. Biblical success involves servanthood (Matt. 20, Phil. 2). Biblical power comes from being yielded to God's [standards] given us here (Luke 12:13-34 and 1 Tim. 6:6-19, Phil. 4:12). Biblical pleasure comes from doing right, and brings peace and joy. (Psalm 1, John 15). "Going forward in a backward world" by Joseph M. Stowell

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**A POWERFUL ADVERSARY** If you go to Wartburg, they will show you a dark spot on the old walls which they say was caused by the breaking of an ink bottle that Martin Luther supposedly threw at the devil. Skeptics say it was just the rats inside of the wall that Luther heard. Whether the evil one caused the actual physical disturbance, we do not know. What is important is that Luther recognized that Satan sets himself in opposition to those who champion the Word, and that he never hesitated in fighting him.

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**THE GREAT IMPOSTOR** Nature provides us with an illustration that closely parallels the insidious tactics employed by our adversary. According to scientists, Arctic polar bears feed almost entirely on seals. To enjoy such a meal, they sometimes resort to a cunning bit of trickery. If the hole through which the seal gets his food is near the edge of the ice, the polar bear will take a deep breath and swim under water to its exact location. Remaining below the surface, he will then make a tiny scratching sound imitating a fish. When the charmed seal hears this, he dives in for a quick supper, only to find himself suddenly entrapped in the huge, hungry embrace of his predator.

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**Growing More Like Jesus** by Richard L. Strauss - Satan's attacks can be ferocious. And we are weak and vulnerable; we need protection. It is the Word of God that provides our major defense against Satan's assaults. "Thy word have I treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against Thee" (Psalm 119:11). The apostle Paul reminded us that in order to stand against the schemes of the devil, we need to take "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17). There is Scripture to help us handle every temptation Satan hurls at us. If you will begin to saturate your mind and soul with the Word, as Jesus did, you will begin to enjoy victory.

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**DON'T GET HOOKED!** It's a quiet spring morning. The mists are still rising as the fisherman glides to his favorite fishing spot. He's after one of those giant bass that hide among the weeds and sunken logs. Now, this fisherman is probably an honest man who wouldn't cheat on his taxes. But when he's fishing, he's a cunning deceiver. He is out there to snare and to capture. To do that, he's not going to throw a bare hook in the water. That wouldn't fool the fish. So he disguises it with an attractive lure. He may even hide it with that old reliable--the night crawler. He wants the fish to take the bait without noticing the hook. By that time it will be too late. A skilled angler will give just the right jerk and set the hook. And that's the end of the fish's freedom. Satan is also fishing. We are the fish. And the bait is whatever will lure us to take the hook. It usually appeals to a natural desire--such as our need for intimacy or success or security. He uses legitimate needs to hide his real intent, which is to get us to disobey God. He knows that to entice us to take the bait, he has to hide the hook. And he'll make it look as appealing as he can. Satan is a cunning deceiver. Don't be fooled by his tactics.

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## CHRISTIANITY AND SIN 1 Timothy 4:1-16 (Croft Pentz)

### I. THE CARELESSNESS—vv. 1-5

1. Sinfulness—v. 1. Following those with devilish ideas. A fourfold threat against Christianity is: a) Communism, b) Cults, c) Catholicism, d) Compromise. These are the greatest enemies of Christianity.

2. Sensual—v. 2. They will harden their consciences and do wrong without feeling convicted.

3. Selfish—v. 3. They will teach it is wrong to marry and to eat meat. They will twist the Bible to teach "their own" doctrine.

4. Sanctification—vv. 4-5. All things made by God are good to eat, if we are thankful for them.

### II. THE CONSECRATION—vv. 6-11

1. Remembrance—v. 6. A good minister will explain the evils of vv. 1–5, and expose all sin.
2. Rejection—v. 7. Do not waste your time in arguing with people about spiritual matters. Let your life speak God's truth to mankind.
3. Renewing—v. 8. Practice holy and godly living.
4. Reproach—vv. 9–11. Be willing to suffer for the sake of Christ.

### III. THE CONCERN—vv. 12–16

1. Example—v. 12. More people are won to Christ through example than words. Example in our life, love, faith and our thoughts.
2. Exhort—v. 13. Read God's Word. Encourage others to read it. Teach God's Word to others.
3. Enduement—v. 14. The presbytery laying hands upon those who would be preachers. This was after they had proven themselves.
4. Examination—vv. 15–16. Put your abilities to work for the Lord. Hold nothing back from Him.

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#### Question - [What are doctrines of demons in 1 Timothy 4:1?](#)

**Answer:** In many places, Scripture warns us against false doctrine. One such place is 1 Timothy 4:1: "The Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons" (NASB). The KJV words it as "seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons." A doctrine is a teaching or a set of principles. The "doctrines of demons," then, are things that demons teach.

There can be good and bad doctrines. The word *doctrine* can refer to the biblical teachings of a church or a pastor. Or, in the case of 1 Timothy 4:1, the ungodly teachings of Satan. Those who follow the doctrines of demons "will fall away from the faith." That is, heeding the doctrine of demons is a serious matter because it involves a departure from the truth of Christ's gospel.

How are the doctrines of demons promulgated? They are delivered through human instructors: "Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4:2). These [false teachers](#) are hypocritical; that is, their lives do not evidence the holiness they seemingly espouse. They are liars; that is, they deal in falsehood and knowingly lead others into [apostasy](#). And they are beyond the reach of conscience; that is, they have found a way, in their own minds, to justify their lies. These false teachers may be personable, charming, and persuasive, but they do not receive their message from the Holy Spirit; rather, they spout the suggestions of evil spirits, whose work it is to lead people astray.

What exactly are the doctrines of demons? The immediate context gives an idea of the teachings to look out for: "They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer" (1 Timothy 4:2–5). According to this passage, we should not follow any person or group that forbids marriage or that places restrictions on certain foods. Any person or group that says holiness comes through a select diet or complete sexual abstinence is lying.

In the Garden of Eden, Eve encountered the doctrines of demons as the serpent spoke to her: "He said to the woman, 'Did God really say, "You must not eat from any tree in the garden"?''" (Genesis 3:1). At the beginning of the conversation, Satan questioned the teaching of God, and, as they continued to talk, he substituted his own teaching for God's. Satan has continued to use deception, doubt, and subtlety to lead people astray. Satan is the father of lies and a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44), and the doctrines taught by his demons through the agency of willing human accomplices continue to separate people from God and His blessing.

Satan knows how to manipulate us, and that is why the doctrines of demons are so effective. We can identify the doctrines of demons by immersing ourselves in the truth. We must read and study our Bibles. When we know what God says on any given subject, then any deviation from that teaching will send up a red flag. When we are in tune with God's Word, aberrations from that keynote will ring hollow and off-key. [GotQuestions.org](#)

#### Related Resources:

- [Should Catholic tradition have equal or greater authority than the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why do so many preachers' kids walk away from the faith? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why are so many young people falling away from the faith? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### 1 Timothy 4:1-10 Legalism

We have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe. - 1

Some rules have changed on many Christian college campuses over the past few decades. There was a time when few Christian colleges permitted students to watch movies, play cards, or leave campus in the evening. Most enforced a stricter dress code. Now many colleges have relaxed these policies, and some lament a creeping moral laxity among Christians. Others celebrate the move away from what they call legalism.

Christians struggle to define the “gray” areas of Christian conduct. We easily commit errors of either permitting too much or too little. Today we read about one of those extremes, the tragic consequences of legalism in the church.

Chapter four begins with a reference to “later times,” but Paul obviously believes these problems have begun in the Ephesian church. False teachers have told believers to avoid marriage and certain foods in order to grow spiritually (1Ti 4:3). And that’s usually the formula of legalism: restrictions of external behavior without regard for the sins of the heart.

The effects were devastating. When we are tempted to think that legalism is a minor error, we should be warned that it’s one of Satan’s greatest strategies in the church. The teachers had become desensitized to sin. Those who followed their teaching had and would soon “abandon the faith” (1Ti 4:1). Legalism keeps us from many of God’s blessings that He intended us to receive with thanksgiving (1Ti 4:4). And it fails to ensure greater holiness!

Timothy received instructions from Paul to avoid these errors and keep his hope in Jesus. By Christ and in Christ, we are saved and sanctified. This is the message of Scripture where we find the sum of all “the truths of the faith” (1Ti 4:6). We must stick with the message of the Bible, avoiding formulas or rules and restrictions as a method to get us closer to God, instead embracing a living faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

**Related Resource:**

- [Excellent Sermon by Ray Stedman on Legalism](#)

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**1 Timothy 4:1-11 Faith And Medicine**

By Dennis J. De Haan

Several years ago a young boy died of an illness because his parents refused to call a doctor. They believed that to use medicine implied a lack of faith in God. After the boy’s death, they said, “It is God’s will.”

In 1 Timothy 5:23, Paul advised Timothy to take wine for his stomach’s sake and for his “frequent infirmities.” Bible scholars aren’t sure what Timothy suffered from. Some say he had a nervous condition. Others say that Paul advised wine as a substitute for unsafe drinking water. Whatever the problem, Paul was recommending that Timothy take wine as a remedy for a physical or emotional condition.

Earlier Paul had told Timothy that every created thing is good and is not “to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer” (1 Tim. 4:4-5). This assures us that God approves of our using available means to promote health, including medicine. But there is one important requirement: We must pray about it and receive it with thanksgiving.

How grateful we can be for medical advances that improve the quality of our lives and give us more years to serve Him! But let’s always remember that with or without medicine, God is the source of all healing. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The God who graciously imparts the skill  
To hands that practice healing arts is still  
The solitary source of every breath,  
And He alone delivers us from death.  
—Gustafson

Asking God for miracles is no substitute for using God-given means.

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1 Timothy 4:1-5a

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure. - Hebrews 13:4

TODAY IN THE WORD In a recent issue of Worldwide Challenge magazine, Mike Clapper tells of a decision he made before his

marriage in August 1999. “As I grew in my faith, I developed a strong desire to honor the woman I would marry. What would make my wife feel special? I would think. It occurred to me that saving my first kiss for my wife (not just my fiancée) would make her feel special. I came to believe that unless I actually committed myself to a woman for life, I had not earned the right to kiss her.” Clapper kept his pledge; his wedding-day kiss to his wife Lauri was their first.

A commitment like this is certainly out of the ordinary, yet we need to see this young man’s deep desire before God to honor his marriage and his future partner. This desire reflects God’s will concerning the value of marriage. God wants all of His people to give a high degree of honor to the marriage covenant.

Paul affirmed the honorable nature of marriage in the middle of a serious warning to his spiritual son, Timothy. Although marriage was not the apostle’s main subject here, he used it as a prime example of a gift that God had ordained and blessed and that false teachers tried to distort.

These pseudo-disciples picked out marriage as something to be renounced for no reason other than their attempt at self-righteousness by replacing God’s standards with man-made regulations. This kind of false religion is useless; it carries no weight with God.

The Bible affirms that marriage is one of God’s good gifts, to be enjoyed with thanksgiving. The people about whom Paul was writing denigrated and dishonored marriage by their teaching. It’s fair to say we are living in the “later times” (v. 1), and we have seen this brand of false spirituality in several cults over the past few years.

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### **1 Timothy 4:1-5 Know Your Limits - Dennis J. De Haan**

Dogs are intelligent, but Charles Medley of Rockford, Illinois, had some doubts about his dog Bullet. Whenever Bullet heard a squirrel, a rabbit, or a person, he would take off like a shot in the direction of that sound. It didn’t matter that he was tied up. By the time he reached the end of his rope, he’d be traveling at maximum velocity, heading straight for his target. But in an instant, his strong rope would pull taut and jerk Bullet to a jarring, sprawling halt. That beagle never learned his limits.

God has built into us a moral tug on the soul whenever we go beyond what is good for us. It’s called conscience. Unlike Bullet’s rope, however, it doesn’t stop us from going too far. Furthermore, conscience can be deadened when we violate it repeatedly, and it can be programmed with wrong information so that we may feel guilty when no real guilt exists, or we may be guilty and not feel it.

We must learn the moral limits God places on us for our own good and then choose to live within them. By reading God’s Word and trusting His Spirit to teach us, our conscience becomes attuned to God’s standard of right and wrong. This helps us to know our limits and to experience the freedom and joy that living within them brings. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

My conscience must be well-informed  
From God’s own sacred Word;  
For conscience may be much deformed  
When standards pure are spurned.  
—Fraser

Conscience can be our compass if the Word of God is our chart.

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### **1 Timothy 4:1-11 [Training For Life](#)**

By David C. McCasland

When Dean Karnazes completed the 26.2-mile New York Marathon in November 2006, it marked the end of an almost impossible feat of endurance. Karnazes had run 50 marathons in 50 states in 50 days. This exceptional athlete’s ultra-endurance feats include: running 350 continuous miles, mountain biking for 24 hours straight, and swimming across San Francisco Bay. That level of fitness requires relentless, dedicated training.

Spiritual fitness, Paul told Timothy, also takes much more than a relaxed approach to live a God-honoring life. In a culture marked by false teaching, along with extreme forms of self-indulgence and self-denial, Paul wrote: “Exercise [train] yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1 Tim. 4:7-8).

Our bodies and our minds are to be dedicated to God and prepared for His service (Rom. 12:1-2). The goal is not spiritual muscle-flexing but godliness—a life that is pleasing to the Lord. Vigorous study of the Word, focused prayer, and bodily discipline are all part

of the process.

How well we train greatly affects how well we run our race of life. [Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Just as the body grows in strength  
With exercise each day,  
Our spirit grows in godliness  
By living life God's way.  
—D. De Haan

Godly exercise is the key to godly character.

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1 Timothy 4:1-5b

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. - Psalm 24:1

TODAY IN THE WORD On March 26, 1997, police discovered the dead bodies of 39 people in a large mansion in southern California, all of whom had apparently committed suicide. For most people, news of this horrific event was the first time that they'd ever heard of the Heaven's Gate cult and its bizarre leader, Marshall Applewhite. He taught that the earth was about to be wiped clean and the presence of the Hale-Bopp comet in 1997 was the sign that his followers had to leave "their earthly containers." The cult stressed hatred of this world, including one's own body. They practiced extreme forms of self-denial, including giving away most of their possessions and renouncing anything considered to be indulgent.

Although the final events of the Heaven's Gate cult shocked many people, their grotesque practices and strange beliefs aren't new. Apparently some in Ephesus were teaching similar ideas. This explains the context of Paul's comments to Timothy, who was shepherding the Ephesian church. In his letter to the young pastor, Paul indicates clearly that the source of all such teaching is ultimately demonic. The individuals who teach these deceptions have completely rejected the truth and their consciences have become seared.

No doubt these heretics taught that their fanatical practices, including the prohibition of marriage and severe dietary restrictions, were the path to true spiritual knowledge and life. But Paul exposes this deception for what it truly is—a fundamental denial of God's creation. As we saw at the beginning of our study, the Garden of Eden is a depiction of God's perfect provision of humanity's need. Paul affirms this truth in verse 4. True spirituality can never come from denying any part of God's good creation. All that God has created is to be received gratefully. This truth is related to what we read in Romans 1 at the beginning of our study. Those who refuse to give thanks to the Creator God end up in deception and perversity.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY Today's passage reminds us to receive gratefully all that God gives. Perhaps you regularly give thanks before meals. This is an excellent way to remind ourselves that everything comes from God. If you've let this habit slip in the midst of a hectic schedule, today would be a good time to start it up again. Why not consider thanking the Lord after each meal as well! As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

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1 Timothy 4:1-8

For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving. - 1 Timothy 4:4

TODAY IN THE WORD Washington D.C.'s famous cherry trees gloriously signal the coming of spring. Every year at the end of March or the beginning of April, the National Cherry Blossom Festival attracts thousands of visitors, who come to see the annual profusion of pink and white blossoms on the city's 3,700 cherry trees.

This incredible beauty was a gift. In 1912, Japan presented a gift of cherry trees to the United States--more than 3,000 cherry trees from twelve different strains. The first two trees, which are still standing today, were planted on the north bank of the Tidal Basin, near what is now Independence Avenue.

Today's reading shows that all genuine pleasure and beauty are gifts from God. In thinking about the Christian life, we sometimes gravitate to the ideas of suffering and sacrifice, but there are other truths that complete the picture. "God's will" is not some nasty medicine we must swallow--He has prepared pleasures for us in the here-and-now as well as eternity. Ecclesiastes advises, "I commend the enjoyment of life, because nothing is better for a man under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany him in his work all the days of the life God has given him under the sun" (Eccl. 8:15).

Paul warned Timothy about legalists and gnostics who rejected this truth. For example, God gave sexual pleasure as a gift within

marriage, but some taught against it. And He gave food as well, but some had made rules about it. Such people are condemned in very strong language here!

APPLY THE WORD Paul exhorted us, “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children” (Eph. 5:1).

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1 Timothy 4:1-8

TODAY IN THE WORD Working in the early 1970s, engineers Irwin Lachman, Ronald Lewis, and Rodney Bagley designed a catalytic converter for automobiles. The ceramic converter, with which almost all cars today are equipped, turns toxic fumes into water vapor, nitrogen, and carbon dioxide. In the last 30 years, this device has kept an estimated three billion tons of pollutants out of the atmosphere. Last spring, President Bush awarded each of the men a National Medal of Technology. Fighting environmental pollution is part of our stewardship of creation. Analogously, the Bible fights spiritual pollution in our lives as believers.

Since God's Word is true, anything that deviates from it is false. Through Paul, the Spirit warned the church about false teachers, who “follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons” (v. 1). Clearly, part of spiritual warfare is discerning truth from error. These false teachers earned a harsh description—“hypocritical liars” with hardened consciences (v. 2). What teachings deserved such strong words? Legalistic prohibitions against marriage and certain foods (v. 3).

Since God's Word is holy, it consecrates not only marriage and food, but also “everything God created” (vv. 4-5). God's purpose is that we enjoy His created blessings, receiving them as blessings with thankful hearts. We believe and know the truth that He is the giver of all good gifts (James 1:17). To reject this is not merely a “lifestyle choice,” but blasphemous opposition to His purposes. This truth is integrally connected to a godly life and must be clearly taught by pastors and elders (vv. 6-8).

Despite the Fall and gnostic heresies, God's material creation remains “good” and “very good” (Gen. 1). The truth of the Word gives us the right orientations: first, a grateful focus on the Giver rather than the gift; and second, a submissive attitude to the King rather than a possessive or self-centered attitude toward His world.

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### 1 Timothy 4:1-5 [Thanks](#)

By Haddon W. Robinson

A small boy visited his friend's home for dinner. When the youngster sat down at the table, he bowed his head and waited for someone to give thanks for the meal. The others at the table, however, began passing the food. The boy looked up and said, “You guys are just like my dog. You start right in!”

Writing to counter false teachers who prohibited the eating of certain foods, the apostle Paul told Timothy that all food is to be received with appreciation to God (1 Tim. 4:4-5). Food has been given to us for our nourishment and enjoyment. Our expression of thanks acknowledges that what we eat is a gift from God.

When Paul wrote to his friends in Rome, he singled out the sin of ingratitude among the pagans. He said, “Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful” (Rom. 1:21).

What does it say about our society when people sit down to a full table, while pictures of starving masses flicker on their TV screens, and never bow their heads to express appreciation for their food?

A word of thanks is always appropriate for those of us who know that our daily bread comes not only from the grocery store but ultimately from God. ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

The world says, "I've earned all these delights!  
By my own hand I'm clothed and kept well-fed";  
But Christ our Lord looked up to loftier sights  
And gave His Father thanks for daily bread.  
—Gustafson

Gratitude is a mark of godliness.

**1 Timothy 4:2 by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,**

KJV 1 Timothy 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

- **liars** 1 Kings 13:18; 22:22; Isaiah 9:15; Jer 5:21; 23:14,32; Daniel 8:23-25; Mt 7:15; Mt 24:24; Acts 20:30; Romans 16:18; Eph 4:14; 2 Timothy 3:5; 2 Pet 2:1-3; Rev 16:14
- **their** Romans 1:28; Eph 4:17-19

### Related Passages:

Romans 1:28+ And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,

Ephesians 4:17-19+ So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; 19 and they, having become **callous** ([apalgeo](#) in perfect tense = their state of ceasing to feel pain, loss of sensitivity, dead to all feeling, feeling no shame), have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

Romans 16:17-18+ Now I urge you, brethren, (present tense - continually) keep your eye ([skopeo](#) - "scope" them out!) on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. 18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech **they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.**

Colossians 2:8+ **See to it** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

Titus 1:16+ They (present tense - continually) profess to know God, but by their deeds they (present tense - continually) deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.

Hebrews 13:9+ **Do not be carried away** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

## THE HUMAN INSTRUMENTS WITH DEADENED CONSCIENCES & DEMONIC COMMUNICATIONS

**By means of** (influenced by) **the hypocrisy** (insincerity) **of liars** - "Influenced by the underhanded tactics of liars" (1Ti 4:2 MIT) **Hypocrisy** depicts the various forms of pretense (counterfeit acts) to which deceit (cf "deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons") resorts in its endeavor to throw the hearer of the lies off guard. They were hypocrites because they claimed to be devoted followers Christ, but were in reality tools of the devil having been ensnared by him to do his will (in effect they were little "antichrists") (2 Ti 2:26+).. **Liars** is **pseudologos** (only here in Bible) and means one who speaks falsely. **Robertson** (quoting Parry) says **pseudologos** is "A good classical word for liars on a large scale." These purveyors of falsehood were in effect the "mouthpieces" for the deceitful demonic messages. They are not necessarily speaking overt lies (that would be too easily detected) but half truths, especially about the Gospel.

**Brian Bell** - As God speaks truth & uses people to share it; so Satan speaks lies & uses people to share it! Never does material read, "Danger: Satanic Doctrine Enclosed. Open at your own risk!" No, false teaching is often accompanied by people well dressed, well manicured, attractive, friendly, & convincing. That's why we need to know the Scriptures so we can discern truth from error. ([1 Timothy 4](#))

**Pulpit Commentary** - In the Gospels, the speech of the devils, and of those possessed by devils, is often interchanged, ase.g. Luke 4:33, 34, 41; Mark 1:23, 24. ([1 Timothy 4 Commentary](#))

**Barclay** - "It was from these evil spirits and demons that this false teaching came. But though it came from the demons, it came through men....Now here is the threatening and the terrible thing. We know that God and God's Spirit are everywhere looking for men to use. God is always searching for men who will be His instruments, His weapons, His tools in the world. But here we come face to face with the terrible fact that the forces of evil are also looking for men to use. Just as God seeks men for His purposes, the forces of evil seek men for their purposes. Here is the terrible responsibility of manhood. Man can accept the service of God, or the

service of the devil. Man can become an instrument of the Supreme Good or the Supreme Evil. Men are faced with the eternal choice—to whom are we to give our lives, to God or to God's enemy? Are we to decide to be used by God, or are we to decide to be used by the devil?" ([1 Timothy 4 Commentary](#)) The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, p.107).

**Explore the Bible Commentary on hypocrisy** - It describes a play actor who wore a mask and pretended to be someone he was not. The false teachers in Ephesus looked like strong representatives of God but actually were leading people to believe a lie

Paul described the opposite state of **conscience** in 1 Ti 1:5 writing that "the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good **conscience** and a sincere faith."

**Seared** ("scarred") **in their own conscience as with a branding iron** - They lied so much that they had in effect **seared their own consciences!** In effect they had come to believe their own lies! **Seared** is **kausteriazō** (used only here in Scripture - English [cauterize](#) as we do in surgery to stop bleeding) and is a verb meaning to brand with a red-hot iron. It described the marking of a slave with the owner's brand. That is an interesting secular use, as these men were in effect slaves to their sinful passions! One commentator (Guthrie) even says that these men are "branded" indicating ownership by Satan! (cf 2 Ti 2:26+). Quite a contrast with Paul who bore on his "body the **brand-marks** ([stigma](#)) of Jesus!" (Gal 6:17+). The idea is that the **conscience** is so destroyed that they refuse to listen any longer to their conscience! This reminds me of lepers who have had their sensory nerve endings destroyed by the leprae bacilli and as a result can no longer feel pain which results in frequent injury including burns which they cannot feel. Pain is a protective mechanism and a "pained" conscience is also a moral/ethically protective mechanism. **Seared** is in the perfect tense depicting this their continuing condition or state. The fact that their consciences were seared allowed them to teach the falsehoods without any hesitation, reservation or regret.

My conscience must be well-informed  
From God's own sacred Word;  
For conscience may be much deformed  
When standards pure are spurned.  
--Fraser

CONSCIENCE CAN BE OUR COMPASS IF THE WORD OF GOD IS OUR CHART.

**Don Anderson** - When a person has fallen prey to a CAUTERIZED CONSCIENCE, he does not even realize that: HE IS LYING, or that HE IS A DRUNK, or that HE IS LIVING AN IMMORAL LIFESTYLE, or that HE IS GREEDY, or that HE IS SELFISH. ([Study Notes](#))

**Guy King** - Their conscience, once so sensitive, is now "seared," as flesh would be by the application of a "hot iron", rendering it almost dead. Time was when they would shrink in horror from the uttering of a "lie", but now that conscience is silenced, they can do it without blushing, with the tongue of "hypocrisy" in their cheek. How, if unchecked, evil grows in a man, on a man! ([A Leader Led](#))

**Wiersbe** has a good word - The word "**seared**" means cauterized. Just as a person's flesh can be branded so that it becomes hard and without feeling, so a person's conscience can be deadened. **Whenever we affirm with our lips something that we deny with our lives, whether people know it or not, we deaden our consciences just a little more.** (ED: READ THAT AGAIN!) Jesus made it clear that it is not religious talk or even performing miracles that qualifies a person for heaven, but doing God's will in everyday life (Matthew 7:21-29+). An apostate is not just **wrong doctrinally**, he is **wrong morally**. **His personal life became wrong before his doctrines were changed.** In fact, it is likely that he changed his teaching so that he could continue his sinful living and pacify his conscience. **Believing** and **behaving** always go together. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - New Testament](#)) (Bolding added)

**New Testament Background Commentary on seared** - The imagery pictures 'crime punished with a branding mark on the perpetrator'

**Guzik** - Paul knew what it was to have a dead, burned conscience. Before he surrendered his life to Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, he felt completely justified in his persecution of Christians and hatred of Jesus. He could feel justified because his conscience was seared and needed a wake-up call – which the Lord graciously provided. ([1 Timothy 4 Commentary](#))

**What the Bible teaches** – These are human agents, moved by evil spirits, marked by hypocrisy (ED: A STRIKING CONTRAST WITH TRUE PROPHETS WHO WERE "moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." - 2 Pet 1:21+). Their acts of devotion and hyper-spirituality are only a specious mask. They wore a mask of holiness derived from false asceticism and abstinence from things legitimate. (What the Bible teaches – 1 Thessalonians through Titus)

**Explore the Bible Commentary** – These teachers practiced their deception to the point of no longer being aware of or caring about the difference between right and wrong, truth and error. Their consciences were seared, burned as with a hot iron. Such a



burn destroys nerves and leaves an insensitive scar. The meaning is that their consciences were dead or insensitive. The twisted moral nature of these false teachers prohibited them from knowing or caring about the difference between the ways of God and the ways of evil. How can the church defend against evil forces that lead people away from God? Teaching sound Christian doctrine is a key defense. Regular and systematic teaching of biblical truths from pulpits and classrooms helps Christians to grow in correct understanding and belief. When people know biblical teachings, they are less likely to be sidetracked by error.

**Thomas Lea** - By teaching what was actually false, they had been branded by Satan as his possession and therefore did his will. This shade of meaning emphasizes that the false teachers were willing tools of Satan. Since the context had already emphasized demonic involvement in spreading error, this likely was Paul's chief emphasis. ([New American Commentary – Volume 34: 1, 2 Timothy, Titus](#))

**Hypocrisy** (5272) (**hupokrisis/hypokrisis** from **hupo** = under + **krino** =to judge;cf **hupokrites**) refers literally to delivery of a speech, along with interpretive gestures and imitation. The word **hypocrisy** comes from the Greek theater and referred to the practice of putting on a mask and playing a part on stage. This person was the actor on the Greek stage, one who took the part of another. The Pharisees were religious actors, so to speak, in that they pretended to be on the outside, what they were not on the inside. It referred originally to one who judged from under the cover of a mask, thus, assuming an identity and a character which he was not.. The NT gives **hupokrisis** only a negative connotation referring to hypocrisy, duplicity (the quality of being double - belying of one's true intentions by deceptive words or action), insincerity, dissimulation (hiding under a false appearance; hiding or disguising one's thoughts or feelings - don't we all do this from time to time?!). The idea is to pretend, to act as something one is not and so to act deceitfully, pretending to manifest traits like piety and love. It means to create a public impression that is at odds with one's real purposes or motivations, and thus is characterized by play-acting, pretense or outward show. It means to give an impression of having certain purposes or motivations, while in reality having quite different ones.

**Conscience** (4893) **sunēidesis** is derived from **sun/syn** = with + **eido** = know) literally means a "knowing with", a co-knowledge with oneself or a being of one's own witness in the sense that one's own conscience "takes the stand" as the chief witness, testifying either to one's innocence or guilt. It describes the witness borne to one's conduct by that faculty by which we apprehend the will of God.

#### **Related Resources:**

- [In Depth Discussion of Conscience - including multiple quotes, illustrations, etc related to conscience](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Conscience](#)
- [What is the conscience? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I get a clear conscience? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What are the causes and solutions for a hardened heart? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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**KNOW YOUR LIMITS** . . . some will depart from the faith . . . , having their own conscience seared with a hot iron. --1 Tim. 4:1, 2  
Dogs are intelligent, but Charles Medley of Rockford, Illinois, had some doubts about his dog Bullet. Whenever Bullet heard a squirrel, a rabbit, or a person, he would take off like a shot in the direction of that sound. It didn't matter that he was tied up. By the time he reached the end of his rope, he'd be traveling at maximum velocity, heading straight for his target. But in an instant, his strong rope would pull taut and jerk Bullet to a jarring, sprawling halt. That beagle never learned his limits. God has built into us a moral tug on the soul whenever we go beyond what is good for us. It's called conscience. Unlike Bullet's rope, however, it doesn't stop us from going too far. Furthermore, conscience can be deadened when we violate it repeatedly, and it can be programmed with wrong information so that we may feel guilty when no real guilt exists, or we may be guilty and not feel it. We must learn the moral limits God places on us for our own good and then choose to live within them. By reading God's Word and trusting His Spirit to teach us, our conscience becomes attuned to God's standard of right and wrong. This helps us to know our limits and to experience the freedom and joy that living within them brings. --D.J.D.

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**MY CONSCIENCE, MY FRIEND** I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men. --Acts 24:16  
Paul viewed his conscience as his friend. As he lived before God and his peers, he listened to this inner voice because he knew that a clear conscience is essential to a happy Christian life. Many people, however, wrongly think of conscience as a fun-killer, a nuisance. That's how Willie in the Moon Mullins comic strip thought of it. In the first picture he is slumped in a chair in front of the TV set, his coffee cup resting on his pot belly, as he says, "You're awful quiet this morning, Mamie." She replies, "I've decided to let your conscience be your guide on your day off, Willie." The next picture shows Willie outside washing a window, the lawnmower and rake in the background. He mutters, "Every time I listen to that blame thing, I end up ruinin' my relaxin'!" From my own experience, I would say that Willie had a better day than he would have had if he had rejected the message of his conscience. Paul worked at keeping

on good terms with his conscience. In Romans 14:23 he said that whatever is not from faith is sin. This tells us that when we do something we feel is wrong, we sin. Let's begin seeing our conscience as our friend. --HVL The conscience of a Christian man Can be a guiding light, Befriending him through life's short span To stand for truth and right. --Fraser A CLEAR CONSCIENCE IS ONE OF THE BEST FRIENDS YOU WILL EVER HAVE.

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#### Question - [What does it mean to have a seared conscience?](#)

**Answer:** The Bible speaks of a **seared conscience** in 1 Timothy 4:2. The [conscience](#) is the God-given moral consciousness within each of us (Romans 2:15). If the conscience is "seared"—literally "cauterized"—then it has been rendered insensitive. Such a conscience does not work properly; it's as if "spiritual scar tissue" has dulled the sense of right and wrong. Just as the hide of an animal scarred with a branding iron becomes numb to further pain, so the heart of an individual with a seared conscience is desensitized to moral pangs.

Paul identifies those who have a seared conscience in 1 Timothy 4:1–2: "The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron." In this passage, we learn three things about [false teachers](#) who lead others into apostasy: 1) they are mouthpieces for evil spirits, since they promulgate "things taught by demons"; 2) they are hypocritical liars, since they wear a mask of holiness but are full of falsehood; and 3) they are unscrupulous, since their consciences have been cauterized. This explains much. How can false teachers lie with no shame and spread deception with no compunction? Because they have seared consciences. They are past feeling that lying is wrong.

Earlier in the epistle, Paul speaks of the "good conscience" as opposed to the seared conscience. "Advancing God's work," he says, comes by faith, and love "comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Timothy 1:4–5). A good conscience has the capability to tell right from wrong and is free from guilt. A person with a good conscience maintains his integrity. He enjoys fellowship with those who "walk in the light, as [Jesus] is in the light" (1 John 1:7). The lies of the devil are anathema to the one with a good conscience. Rather than follow the lies of apostates, he will "fight the battle well, holding on to faith and a good conscience" (1 Timothy 1:18–19).

Proverbs 6:27 asks a rhetorical question to illustrate the consequences of adultery: "Can a man scoop fire into his lap / without his clothes being burned?" To paraphrase the question in relation to false teaching, "Can an apostate dispense the fiery lies of hell without his conscience being seared?" [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### Question - [What does the Bible say about hypocrisy?](#)

**Answer:** In essence, "hypocrisy" refers to the act of claiming to believe something but acting in a different manner. The word is derived from the Greek term for "actor"—literally, "one who wears a mask"—in other words, someone who pretends to be what he is not.

The Bible calls hypocrisy a sin. There are two forms hypocrisy can take: that of professing belief in something and then acting in a manner contrary to that belief, and that of looking down on others when we ourselves are flawed.

The prophet Isaiah condemned the hypocrisy of his day: "The Lord says, 'These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men'" (Isaiah 29:13). Centuries later, Jesus quoted this verse, aiming the same condemnation at the religious leaders of His day (Matthew 15:8-9). John the Baptist refused to give hypocrites a pass, telling them to produce "fruits worthy of repentance" (Luke 3:8). Jesus took an equally staunch stand against sanctimony—He called hypocrites "wolves in sheep's clothing" (Matthew 7:15), "whitewashed tombs" (Matthew 23:27), "snakes," and "brood of vipers" (Matthew 23:33).

We cannot say we love God if we do not love our brothers (1 John 2:9). Love must be "without hypocrisy" (Romans 12:9, NKJV). A hypocrite may look righteous on the outside, but it is a façade. True righteousness comes from the inner transformation of the Holy Spirit not an external conformity to a set of rules (Matthew 23:5; 2 Corinthians 3:8).

Jesus addressed the other form of hypocrisy in the Sermon on the Mount: "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:3-5). Jesus is not teaching against discernment or helping others overcome sin; instead, He is telling us not be so prideful and convinced of our own goodness that we criticize others from a position of self-righteousness. We should do some introspection first and correct our own shortcomings before we go after the "specks" in others (cf. Romans 2:1).

During Jesus' earthly ministry, He had many run-ins with the religious leaders of the day, the Pharisees. These men were well versed in the Scriptures and zealous about following every letter of the Law (Acts 26:5). However, in adhering to the letter of the Law, they actively sought loopholes that allowed them to violate the spirit of the Law. Also, they displayed a lack of compassion toward their fellow man and were often overly demonstrative of their so-called spirituality in order to garner praise (Matthew 23:5–7; Luke 18:11). Jesus denounced their behavior in no uncertain terms, pointing out that “justice, mercy, and faithfulness” are more important than pursuing a perfection based on faulty standards (Matthew 23:23). Jesus made it clear that the problem was not with the Law but the way in which the Pharisees implemented it (Matthew 23:2-3). Today, the word pharisee has become synonymous with hypocrite.

It must be noted that hypocrisy is not the same as taking a stand against sin. For example, it is not hypocrisy to teach that drunkenness is a sin, unless the one teaching against drunkenness gets drunk every weekend—that would be hypocrisy.

As children of God, we are called to strive for holiness (1 Peter 1:16). We are to “hate what is evil” and “cling to what is good” (Romans 12:9). We should never imply an acceptance of sin, especially in our own lives. All we do should be consistent with what we believe and who we are in Christ. Play-acting is meant for the stage, not for real life. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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### **Tabletalk - The Defiled Conscience (1 Tim. 4:2).**

The reason people do not live by the law of God is because of sin. Sin is the disrupter of all that is good, and as Paul says, the law is good. But the law has no power to change the heart of sinful man. Only the Spirit can transform our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh.

Even though sin disrupts that which is good, unbelievers do not act on every evil impulse. In some, the conscience is more intact than in others. While sin reigns in us, the conscience can still function. It can cause someone who has never been enlightened by the Spirit of Christ to live an exceptionally moral life. Such a person can be easily deceived by their own “righteousness,” thinking they do not need salvation. Because of this danger, those who live moral and upright lives must be warned about the depth of sin in their hearts, as Jesus warned the rich, young ruler.

Sin blinds us to the truth of God's ways, and only by the proclamation of the law from the Scriptures can we be confronted by the truth that we are already held accountable to know. This is why Paul could say he would not have known what it meant to covet unless the law had revealed it to him. But even when the law is proclaimed from without, our evil desires can sear our consciences. And the more we allow those desires to gain strength, the more our consciences will grow silent. James Buchanan wrote, “The conscience becomes weaker in proportion as sin grows stronger in the soul, till the sinner may arrive at a point of degeneracy at which he is wholly given over to a reprobate mind, and so far from being condemned by his conscience, he may dare to justify his wickedness by ‘calling good evil, and evil good.’ Instead of being ashamed of his guilt, he may even ‘glory in his shame.’ ”

The more a person gives into his sin, the more the restraints of church, family, and the legal system are ignored through corruption or apathy, the more that person's conscience will be defiled. When this happens on a societal level, it can create a shameless, sin-infested environment very much like that in the days before the flood and in Sodom when men pursued every desire of their evil hearts.

CORAM DEO Read the passages below. Will God judge both those who have not heard the law and those who have heard it? While both will be held accountable, who will be more accountable? Have you turned a deaf ear to certain commandments? If so confess it to God, ask Him to make your conscience tender that you might keep His ways.

### **1 Timothy 4:3 men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.**

KJV 1 Timothy 4:3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

- **Forbid** Daniel 11:37; 1 Cor 7:28,36-39; Hebrews 13:4
- **abstaining** Romans 14:3,17; 1 Cor 8:8; Col 2:20-23; Hebrews 13:9
- which Genesis 1:29,30; 9:3; Ecclesiastes 5:18; Acts 10:13-15; 1 Cor 6:13
- with 1 Ti 4:4; 1 Samuel 9:13; Mt 14:19; 15:36; Luke 24:30; John 6:23; Acts 27:35; Romans 14:6; 1 Cor 10:30,31; Col 3:17
- believe 1 Ti 2:4; John 8:31,32; 2 Th 2:13,14

### **Related Passages:**

Colossians 2:16-23+ Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day— 17 things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ. 18 Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God. If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, 21 “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!” 22 (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? 23 **These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence**

1 Timothy 6:17+ 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.**

Revelation 4:11+ (GOD HAS CREATED) “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for **You created** ([ktizo](#)) all things, and because of Your will they existed, and **were created** ([ktizo](#)).”

## **BEWARE OF LEGALISTIC TEACHING**

**Men who** (Present tense = continually) **forbid marriage and advocate** (Present tense = continually) **abstaining** ([apechomai](#)) **from foods which God has created** ([ktizo](#)) **to be gratefully shared** ([eucharistia](#)) **in by those who believe** ([pistos](#)) **and know** ([epiginosko](#) in perfect tense - settled state of belief in) **the truth** ([aletheia](#)) - **Abstaining** is used in a positive sense by Peter calling on saints to **"abstain** from fleshly lusts which wage war against our souls." (1 Pe 2:11+) In this setting the false teachers were advocating avoiding marriage to achieve higher levels of holiness. However bodily disciplines do not automatically advance spiritual life and if practiced from a spirit of legalism actually diminish spiritual life. Note first reason for not abstaining - **God has created to be gratefully shared**

Many writers feel these prohibitions point to "incipient Gnosticism" (see so-called "[Christian gnosticism](#)") which considered spirit good but matter evil.

**Brian Bell** - How to spot them?—They might teeter towards Asceticism[self-denying] ([1 Timothy 4](#))

**Vine** - two Jewish sects, the Essenes and Therapeute, were already advocating abstinence from marriage as meritorious, and the warning would perhaps be especially against their doctrines. The apostle makes clear that such teaching was antagonistic to the ordinance of God. These earlier sects were the precursors of the monastic system of Christendom. In the first period of the fourth century, the insistence of the celibacy of the clergy in the Romish system was put forward tentatively, ere long it became rigidly enforced. Whilst the apostle's prediction was a wider scope than this particular form of celibacy, it is not without a bearing upon it. The verb *kōluō* more usually signifies to hinder or restrain. Certain cults, such as that of Spiritism, advocate the abandonment of the marriage bond, an indication of the lawlessness of the last days. (Abstaining from foods) The cults increased in number, and Chrysostom (in the latter part of the fourth century) speaks in this connection of the Manicheans, the Encratites and the Marcionites, all of which advocated this and other forms of asceticism. ([Collected Writings](#))

**MacArthur** - The deception comes in seeing those as essential elements of salvation. The devising of human means of salvation is a hallmark of all false religion. The teaching that self-denial on the physical level was essential for true spirituality characterized the Essenes. They were a Jewish sect that appeared in Palestine as early as the second century b.c. They formed the Qumran community, near the Dead Sea, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. They practiced asceticism, denying marriage and enforcing special dietary regulations. It is possible their influence was being felt in Ephesus. (See [1 Timothy MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Fernando**: "Asceticism appeals to certain Christians who are troubled by their failures in the spiritual life. They are looking for something extra which they can do to speed their growth in godliness. Asceticism seems to provide an answer to this quest. The struggling Christian reasons that it is because of desires for earthly things, such as sex, food, and clothing, that he keeps falling into sin. So, he tries to do away with these evil desires and join that superior band of Christians who have chosen to go 'all the way' in their commitment to Christ."

**Stedman**: "The reason is that at the heart of asceticism is a conviction that self-denial somehow pleases God. It can be very earnest, very sincere. Often Christians fall into this error in their early Christian days, thinking that if they deny themselves in some way God is going to be pleased, and their status in his sight will be advanced. That is why some Christians love to get up early in the

morning, or memorize hundreds of verses of Scripture, or pray on their knees for long periods of time, etc. These practices, which in themselves are not wrong, nevertheless become wrong because their motive (that of gaining God's favor by self-denial) is wrong. (See also [Excellent Sermon by Ray Stedman on Legalism](#))

**Constable** - The teaching of the apostates Paul warned Timothy and the Ephesians to watch out for was asceticism. Asceticism is the idea that abstinence from physical things is essential for spiritual purity. Specifically these teachers forbade marriage and the eating of some foods. Probably Gnostic teaching that later achieved its most influential strength in the second century A.D. had influenced them. Gnosticism taught that matter was evil and people should try to live with as little contact with physical things as possible. Judaism appears to have been another root influence on these teachers since it taught that some foods were fit (Heb. *kosher*) and others unclean. There may be physical reasons for not eating certain foods (e.g., allergies, too high fat content, etc.), but there are no spiritual reasons. Likewise there may be physical reasons why in individual cases marrying may not be wise or desirable (e.g., passing on genetic defects, the demands of a particular ministry, etc.). Nevertheless God has approved the institution of marriage.

**Barclay** - Gnosticism was that spirit is altogether good and matter altogether evil. One of the consequences was that there were men who preached that everything to do with the body was evil and that everything in the world was evil. In Ephesus this issued in two definite errors. The heretics insisted that men must, as far as possible, abstain from food, for food was material and therefore evil; food ministered to the body and the body was evil. They also insisted that a man must abstain from marriage, for the instincts of the body were evil and must be entirely suppressed. ([Commentary](#))

**Bible Knowledge Commentary** - These are forerunners of the gnostics. They held to a dualism: the spirit is good and matter is evil. All appetites relating to the body are evil and should be rooted out, including normal desires for sex and food. ([Bible teaching resources](#))

**Hendriksen** says: Principles bear fruit. The false teachers who are here described probably accept as one of their starting principles the thesis "anything physical or sensuous is contaminating." It is not difficult to see how such a principle would in course of time cause the errorist to frown on marriage. Foods too would be condemned, though, of course, not absolutely. Fasting would be praised. (BORROW [Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles](#))

**Guthrie** says: To insist on the reception of God's gifts with thanksgiving is a typically pauline theme. Such a note must never be absent from the believer's attitude, either to material or spiritual realities. As Scott rightly remarks, "The question at stake is that of our whole conception of God. Are we to think of Him as grudging us our earthly life? Or are we to find in it a continual proof of His presence and goodness?" ([Pastoral Epistles](#))

**Guzik** - This describes the legalistic teaching of those who have departed from the faith. They taught that it was by following this list of man-made rules that one was justified in God's sight – that you would be more holy to God if you didn't marry, and if you did not eat certain foods. There have always been those in the church who regard themselves as more spiritual than God Himself, and have a stricter set of rules for living than God does. ([1 Timothy 4 Commentary](#))

**William Barclay** - This was an ever-recurring heresy in the Church; in every generation men arose **who tried to be stricter than God**. When the [Apostolic Canons](#) came to be written, it was necessary to set it down in black and white: "If any overseer, priest or deacon, or anyone on the priestly list, abstains from marriage and flesh and wine, not on the ground of asceticism (that is, for the sake of discipline), but through abhorrence of them as evil in themselves, forgetting that all things are very good, and that God made man male and female, but blaspheming and slandering the workmanship of God, either let him amend, or be deposed and cast out of the Church. Likewise a layman also" (Apostolic Canons 51). Irenaeus, writing towards the end of the second century, tells how certain followers of Saturninus "declare that marriage and generation are from Satan. Many likewise abstain from animal food, and draw away multitudes by a feigned temperance of this kind" ([Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 1, 24, 2](#)). This kind of thing came to a head in the monks and hermits of the fourth century. They went away and lived in the Egyptian desert, entirely cut off from men. They spent their lives mortifying the flesh (**ED: WHICH PAUL SAYS IS FUTILE! See Col 2:23+ = "of no value against fleshly indulgence."**). One never ate cooked food and was famous for his "fleshlessness." Another stood all night by a jutting crag so that it was impossible for him to sleep. Another was famous because he allowed his body to become so dirty and neglected that vermin dropped from him as he walked. Another deliberately ate salt in midsummer and then abstained from drinking water. "A clean body," they said, "necessarily means an unclean soul." The answer to these men was that by doing things like that they were insulting God, for He is the creator of the world and repeatedly his creation is said to be good. (Genesis 1:31). ([Commentary](#))

**Lange** says: Whoso will shun false spirits must first beware of his own spirit. False teachers use for their craft hypocrisy and the appearance of sanctity. They go about in sheep's clothing and inwardly are ravening wolves. It is a sad evidence of the blindness and pride of the sinner that when God has freed him by grace from a law that can only condemn him, he will not rest until he has again put himself under the yoke of a law fashioned by himself. So eager are we to build up a righteousness of our own before God, so loath simply to be blessed by free grace; self-righteousness always remains the fond idol of the natural man, nor does he

perceive that he must thus fall into new and worse unrighteousness.

**Forbid** (prevent) (2967) **koluo** from **kólos** = docked, lopped, clipped, **kolazo** = curtail) means to cut off, to cut short, to weaken and generally to hinder, to prevent, to check, to restrain or to forbid by word or act. The idea is to cause something not to happen. **Koluo** can describe the keeping back of something from someone (Acts 10:47). To hinder means to make slow or difficult the progress of something by interfering in some way with the activity or progress thereof. In short **koluo** means to make it difficult for someone to do something or for something to happen.

**Abstaining** (keeping away from, avoiding)(568) **apechomai or apecho** from **apó** = away from - conveys the idea of putting some distance between; serves as a marker of dissociation, implying a rupture from a former association + **écho** = have) means to be away or be at a distance. **Apechomai** is **apecho** in the **middle voice** (reflexive = the subject initiates the action and participates in the results)

**Believe** (4103) **pistos** from **peitho** = to persuade - induce one by words to believe, have confidence) is something or someone who is worthy of faith or keeps promises and is applied to God, humans, His Word, etc. **Pistos** means dependable (worthy of reliance or trust), trustworthy, steadfast, unswerving. **Marvin Vincent** summarizes of the meaning of **pistos** (1), of one who shows Himself faithful in the discharge of a duty or the administration of a trust (Mt 24:45). Hence, trustworthy (2Ti 2:2). Of things that can be relied upon (2Ti 2:11). (2), Confiding; trusting; a believer (Gal 3:9; Acts 16:1; 2Cor 6:15; 1Ti 5:16)"

**Truth** (225) **aletheia** from **a** = indicates following word has the opposite meaning ~ without + **lanthano** = to be hidden or concealed, to escape notice, cp our English *"latent"* from Latin = to lie hidden) has the literal sense of that which contains nothing hidden. **Aletheia** is that which is not concealed. **Aletheia** is that which that is seen or expressed as it really is. The basic understanding of **aletheia** is that it is the manifestation of a hidden reality. **Uses in pastoral epistles** - 1 Tim. 2:4; 1 Tim. 2:7; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Tim. 4:3; 1 Tim. 6:5; 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Tim. 2:18; 2 Tim. 2:25; 2 Tim. 3:7; 2 Tim. 3:8; 2 Tim. 4:4; Titus 1:1; Titus 1:14; H

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STUFFED "One night I dreamed I ate a five-pound marshmallow, and when I woke up the next morning my pillow was gone."

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WHEN DO WE EAT? She:"It's only six o'clock. I told you to come after dinner." He: "That's what I came after."

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Leaders Are One of Satan's Primary Targets - 4:1-5 SATAN fired a missile of: TEMPER at MOSES, LUST at DAVID, TOTAL DEVASTATION AND SUFFERING at JOB, FEAR at PETER, A THORN OF SUFFERING IN THE FLESH of the APOSTLE PAUL, DISHONESTY at ABRAHAM, DEPRESSION at ELIJAH, PRIDE at SAUL, IDOLATRY at GIDEON, and GREED at JUDAS.

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#### Question - [Does the Bible teach the celibacy of priests?](#)

**Answer:** This is an interesting question to answer, as the Bible does not even teach that there are to be "priests" in the New Covenant established by Christ. Please read our articles on the ["priesthood of believers"](#) and ["confession of sin to a priest"](#) for more information. The Bible addresses the celibacy of church leaders, but not celibacy of priests.

In regards to celibacy of church leaders, in 1 Corinthians chapter 7, the apostle Paul teaches, "An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs — how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world — how he can please his wife — and his interests are divided" (1 Corinthians 7:32-34). In some instances, celibacy has a positive impact on ministry. If a church leader is free from spousal and familial responsibilities, he can better focus on ministering to others. Jesus mentions some becoming "eunuchs" for the kingdom of God (Matthew 19:12). Celibacy is definitely allowed for church leaders, and to a certain degree, it is encouraged. However, Scripture nowhere requires celibacy for those serving in positions of church leadership.

In 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:6-9, the Apostle Paul seems to assume that elders, bishops, overseers, and deacons will be married. Notice the phrases "the husband of one wife" (1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6), "he must manage his own family well" (1 Timothy 3:4,12), and "his children obey him with proper respect" (1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:6). On a related issue, please read our article on whether these Scripture mean that a [church leader must be married and have children](#). While these Scriptures are not a requirement for church leaders to be married, they most definitely present an allowance for church leaders to be married. It is therefore anti-biblical for any church to require celibacy of its leaders.

Why, then, does the Roman Catholic Church (and a few other Christian denominations) require celibacy of priests /church leaders? The celibacy of priests has an interesting history. The first official church statements requiring celibacy appeared at the Councils of

Elvira (A.D. 306) and Carthage (A.D. 390), although clerical celibacy, to a lesser degree, definitely predated these councils. Ultimately, though, celibacy became the official requirement of the Roman Catholic Church due to the practice of [nepotism](#). Church leaders were giving their children positions in the church, despite a lack of any qualifications or training. Further, church leaders were giving church property to their descendants. As a result, the Roman Catholic Church mandated celibacy in order to keep its priests from having familial attachments which made nepotism attractive.

Again, the Bible encourages, but does not demand celibacy of priests / church leaders. In fact, Paul recognizes that most church leaders will be married. The Roman Catholic requirement of celibacy is a sad example of the Church taking something that the Bible encourages and transforming it into a requirement in order to protect its own interests. Sadder still is the damage that has been done as a result of the Roman Catholic Church's anti-biblical requirement. Men whom God has not gifted or called to be celibate (1 Corinthians 7:7) are being required to be celibate, and the result is tremendous failures in the areas of adultery, fornication, and the sexual abuse of children. [GotQuestions.org](#) (See also [What is the cause of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church?](#))

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#### **Question - [What is the Christian view of asceticism / monasticism?](#)**

Answer: Asceticism and monasticism are two religious disciplines designed to de-emphasize the pleasures of the world so the practitioner can concentrate on the spiritual life. Both asceticism and monasticism have been adopted by worshipers of various faiths. In general, asceticism is the practice of strict self-denial as a means of attaining a higher spiritual plane. Monasticism is the state of being secluded from the world in order to fulfill religious vows. While most monks are ascetic, ascetics do not have to be monks.

Asceticism comes from the Greek word *askesis*, meaning "exercise, training, practice." Ascetics renounce worldly pleasures that distract from spiritual growth and enlightenment and live a life of abstinence, austerity, and extreme self-denial. Asceticism is common in Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam. Asceticism is not to be confused with Stoicism. Stoics believed that holiness can reside only in the spiritual realm, and all physical matter is evil. Ascetics do not necessarily believe that the flesh is evil, but they do go to great lengths to deny the flesh in order to transform the mind or "free" the spirit. Historically, asceticism has involved fasting, exposing oneself to heat or cold, sleep deprivation, flagellation, and even self-mutilation. Asceticism is usually associated with monks, priests, and yogis.

The voluntary Nazarite vow could be seen as a mild form of asceticism. People of the Old Testament who took the vow consecrated themselves to God and refrained from drinking wine and cutting their hair (Numbers 6:1-21). Modern Christian ascetics use passages such as 1 Peter 2:11 and 1 Corinthians 9:27 to support their lifestyle, and they exhibit their austerity in different ways. Some choose to be celibate. Others practice religious disciplines such as meditation, keeping vigil, and fasting.

Monasticism is similar to asceticism, but with a slightly different focus. Whereas ascetics practice extreme self-denial, monks seclude themselves from all earthly influences in an attempt to live a godly life and to keep their personal religious vows. Christian monasticism is based on an extreme interpretation of Jesus' teachings on perfection (Matthew 5:48), celibacy (Matthew 19:10-12), and poverty (Matthew 19:16-22). Monks and nuns attempt to control their environment and surround themselves with like-minded devotees. Many followers of Eastern religions also practice monasticism, the Buddhist monk perhaps being the most recognizable.

Christian monasticism draws from the influence of Judaic tradition. The Essenes, a Jewish mystical sect, were similar to monks. They were as devout as the Pharisees but lived in isolation, often in caves in the wilderness. It's possible that John the Baptist was an Essene, and many scholars believe the Dead Sea Scrolls were written by Essenes. Monasticism in Christianity became popular during the time of Constantine. With the government's endorsement of Christianity, many believers found it more difficult to live a godly lifestyle. Some of them turned their backs on society and fled to the desert, where they believed that quietude and self-induced hardship would make following Jesus easier. Today, most Western monks and nuns are Catholic, although there is a movement among Protestants for individuals and families to live communally.

Followers of Christ are told to deny self (Luke 9:23), but asceticism takes this command to an extreme. The Bible never suggests that a Christian should purposely seek out discomfort or pain. On the contrary, God has richly blessed us "with everything for our enjoyment" (1 Timothy 6:17). The Bible warns of those who "forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods" (1 Timothy 4:3); thus, it is erroneous to believe that celibates who abstain from certain foods are "more holy" than other people. We are under grace, not under the law (Romans 6:14); therefore, the Christian does not live by a set of rules but by the leading of the Holy Spirit. Christ has set us free (John 8:36). In many cases, the ascetic practices self-denial in order to earn God's favor or somehow purge himself from sin. This shows a misunderstanding of grace; no amount of austerity can earn salvation or merit God's love (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Monasticism is not biblical in that it ignores our responsibility to go into all the world and preach the gospel (Matthew 28:19). While we are not part of the world, we are in it, and the church was never intended to be isolated from people in need of Christ (1 Corinthians 5:9-10). [GotQuestions.org](#)

Related Resources:

- [Should a Christian be a monk? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**1 Timothy 4:4 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude;**

KJV 1 Timothy 4:4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:

- **everything** Genesis 1:31; Deuteronomy 32:4
- **and** Acts 11:7-9; 15:20,21,29; 21:25; Romans 14:14,20; 1 Cor 10:23,25

**Related Passages:**

Deuteronomy 32:4 "The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.

1 Corinthians 10:30; 31+ If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks? 31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Titus 1:15+ To the pure (BELIEVER PURIFIED BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST), all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.

## **GOD'S GOOD CREATIONS ARE NOT TO BE REFUSED**

Here Paul states the reason for his opposition to these teachers who forbid marriage and who teach abstinence from certain foods.

**For everything created by God is good** ([kalos](#)) - This is the second reason for not abstaining (first -**God has created to be gratefully shared**) Paul counters the false teachers affirming the essential goodness of God's creation. And appreciation of this truth is a strong safeguard against the legalistic [asceticism](#) in the previous passage. As Apple says "[Asceticism](#) is not compatible with Biblical Creationism." Food is good and marriage is good (see Paul's discussion in 1 Cor 7:1-9+). As Moses wrote "God saw all that He had made, and behold, **it was very good.** (Septuagint = [kalos](#)) And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. (Genesis 1:31, cf Ge 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25,)

James 1:17+ Every good ([agathos](#)) thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

Ecclesiastes 3:13 moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor—it is the gift of God.

**Barnes** says: It is good in its place; good for the purpose for which he made it. But it should not be inferred that a thing which is poisonous in its nature is good for food, because it is a creation of God. It is good only in its place, and for the ends for which he intended it. Nor should it be inferred that what God has made is necessarily good after it has been perverted by man. As God made it originally, it might have been used without injury. ([1 Timothy 4 Commentary](#))

**Created** ([2938](#)) [ktisma](#) from [ktizo](#) = to create, form or found) describes that which is created. A created thing. A creature. **BDAG** - product of creative action, that which is created (by God), creature (created by God)."**Vine** adds "[ktisis](#) is the usual word; [ktisma](#) especially marks the creature as the concrete thing, the product of a creative act; [ktisis](#) often has this meaning, but primarily stresses the creative act in its process, e.g., Romans 1:20 and Galatians 6:15. **Ktisma** is probably used here to lay stress on the creature as being the handiwork of God." 4v - 1 Tim. 4:4; Jas. 1:18; Rev. 5:13; Rev. 8:9

**And nothing is to be rejected if it is**(present tense = continually) **received with gratitude** - **Nothing** is [oudeis](#) meaning absolutely nothing. **Rejected** is the verbal adjective **apobletos** (only here in Scripture - apo = away from + ballo = to throw) which literally means thrown off or thrown away as worthless. Instead of being **rejected** it is to be **received** with an attitude of **gratitude** ([eucharistia](#)), a rendering of thanks. This passage gives a vindication for saying grace at meals.

**Vine** points out that "The commandments issued by the errorists against whom the apostle is speaking were a slur upon God's



character, and a hindrance to the full enjoyment of the effects of the believers' relation to Him." ([Collected Writings](#))

**Vine on received with gratitude** - the Lord invariably gave thanks before giving food to others, e.g., Matthew 15:36; Mark 8:6; John 6:11, 23, where the repetition marks it with special emphasis; cp. Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24. That this was the invariable practice of believers to do so for their food, as received from God, is clear from Acts 27:35; Romans 14:6; 1 Corinthians 10:30, and here in 1 Timothy 4:4, 5 it is laid down as the will of God and as conditional for His blessing. Let no believer ever fail to do so in public or private, and let not the thanksgiving be a mere repetition of customary words, or a formal thing degenerating into lip-service, but let it be the outpouring of the heart in deep gratitude to the giver. ([Collected Writings](#))

Mark 7:15+ there is **nothing** ([oudeis](#)) outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man.

Romans 14:14+ I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that **nothing** ([oudeis](#)) is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

**MacDonald** - He instituted marriage for the propagation of human life (see Gen. 1:28), and food for the sustaining of life (Gen. 9:3). (BORROW [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

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DO YOU EAT HOLY FOOD? For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving (v. 4). Two men grew up in rural America side by side. One sold his farm and became a successful businessman. He invited his friend from the farm to dine with him. The farmer bowed his head and thanked God for his food. His friend remarked, "We don't do that." "I also have some at my place who don't pray before eating," said the farmer. "Oh," said his friend, "they must be the enlightened ones; who are they?" "My pigs," replied his friend. Our giving of thanks to God for our daily food is more than reciting memorized words. It acknowledges God as the giver. Whatever our food may be, plain or exquisite, if it is received with a thankful heart, it can be "holy food." In a world where hunger and famine strikes millions, the Christian knows that his thanksgiving also calls for giving. Only as we share can the food we eat remain "holy food." Father in heaven, giver of every good and perfect gift, give me a thankful heart with which to receive--and share-- your blessings. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

### 1 Timothy 4:4 Earthworms And Fruit

Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused. —1 Timothy 4:4

Have you ever wondered why God made a particular creature, like mosquitos or snakes? I've often wondered about earthworms. Why did God form such creepy crawlers?

Actually, worms have an indispensable function to fulfill. Amy Stuart, in her book *The Earth Moved: On The Remarkable Achievements of Earthworms* tells us that in an average acre of ground there are countless earthworms continually breaking up the soil. Their silent and invisible activity is absolutely essential—no worms, no vegetation.

What, then, can we learn from earthworms? Not only in nature but also in our lives there are invisible forces at work. There is the silent and unseen work of prayer by those who are concerned about our well-being. There is the work of our own spiritual discipline, as we pray and meditate on God's Word. And there is the vital work of the Holy Spirit, breaking up the clogged soil of our souls and producing in us the Christlike fruit of "love, joy, peace, longsuffering ..." (Galatians 5:22, 23).

In our lives and in our world, God has ordained unseen influences that bear fruit. Whether it's the lowly earthworm or the crown of God's creation—the human race—there is so much more at work than meets the eye. —Vernon C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

All things bright and beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful,  
The Lord God made them all.  
—Alexander

God's unseen work in our hearts produces fruit in our lives.

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### F B Meyer - 1 Timothy 4:4 Every creature of God is good ... if it be received with thanksgiving.

We must be very careful in applying these words. Intoxicating liquor, for instance, is sometimes described as "a good creature of God." But surely that term is not legitimate. Whatever grounds there may be for defending its use, can this text be alleged as one? For there is a great deal of human manipulation in its preparation. Before it reaches our lips, it is greatly altered by the process of

fermentation. It can hardly be called God's good creature.

When we are quite sure that we are dealing with one of God's pure and unadulterated gifts, such as human love, friendship, the beauties of nature, wholesome food, fresh young spirits, the innocent mirth of the Christmas home-gathering; we must distinguish between God's gifts and our abuse of them; between his creation and our distortion of it, There are things in our lives which are not his creation or gift, and which we must resolutely refuse and put away. There are others which come to us clearly and absolutely from his hand.

Rejoice in every good thing which the Lord gives. — Rejoice! Do not enjoy things as though under the sword of Damocles, suspended by a thread.

Be careful to maintain the spirit of thanksgiving and prayer. — What you can thank God for or use in his name and for his glory; what lifts you from the gift to the Giver, or is capable of being prayed over, with no shadow of misgiving, is innocent and healthy.

Watch only against the intrusion of self. — Whatever you place between yourself and God, or rest on apart from God, or make the aim and centre of your life, is hurtful and must pass through the fire. The way to rid yourself of its poison is to insist on making it a subject of thanksgiving.

### 1 Timothy 4:5 for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.

KJV 1 Timothy 4:5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

- it 1 Ti 4:3; Luke 11:41; 1 Cor 7:14; Titus 1:15
- the Luke 4:4

#### Related Passages:

Genesis 9:3 "Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant.

Mark 7:19 because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?" (Thus He declared all foods clean.)

Acts 10:14-15 But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean."15 Again a voice came to him a second time, "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy."

1 Corinthians 10:25-26 Eat anything that is sold in the meat market without asking questions for conscience' sake; 26 FOR THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL IT CONTAINS.

**for** Paul is now stating the reason for the expression of thanksgiving mentioned in verse 4. It explains what Christian thanksgiving does. Vine says this for " introduces the third reason for resisting the errors specified." ([Collected Writings](#))

**Hiebert** says: With the opening "**for**" of verse 5, Paul explains what Christian thanksgiving does as these things are thankfully received. They are sanctified through the word of God in prayer. Thanksgiving is not a magical formula which changes the nature of these things but it gives a sacred value to them as gifts whose source might otherwise be overlooked. The additional clause "through the word of God in prayer" defines the two-fold sanctifying medium. By "the word of God," Paul may mean that the scriptures justify our use of these things by direct sanction. Others think the reference is to the use of scriptural language in the expression of our thanks. "Prayer" translated "intercessions" in 2:1 denotes prayer as free and open speech with God. The reference is not to any specific prayer formula but rather to that constant habit of referring everything to God as "the giver of every good and perfect gift." ([1 Timothy](#))

**it is** (present tense = continually) **sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer - Sanctified** means set aside, set apart for the use of believers. Food and marriage are set apart by the word of God (see the Word of God [above](#)). Prayer is enteuxis (only here and 1 Ti 2:1) which literally is a meeting with someone for the purpose of visiting with them, hence a conversation and in this context a form of prayer (of thanksgiving). Is this not a beautiful picture of prayer to our Father in Heaven.

**Fernando**: "The ascetic says we must destroy the flesh. The hedonist says we must indulge the flesh, so he dedicates himself to the pursuit of pleasure even at the cost of his principles. The biblical Christian says we must consecrate the flesh by 'the word of God and prayer.'... To consecrate the flesh is to surrender it to God and let him direct us into using it according to his will. The flesh becomes a means of fulfilling the will of God, which is the best way to use the flesh, for the will of God is 'good, pleasing and perfect' (Ro 12:2)."

**Barclay** - Always there is to be grace before meat. The Jew always said his grace. He had a grace for different things. When he ate fruits he said: "Blessed art thou, King of the Universe, who createst the fruit of the tree." When he drank wine he said: "Blessed art thou, King of the Universe, who createst the fruit of the vine." When he ate vegetables he said: "Blessed art thou, King of the Universe, who createst the fruit of the earth." When he ate bread he said: "Blessed art thou, King of the Universe, who bringest forth bread from the ground." The very fact that we thank God for it makes a thing sacred. Not even the demons can touch it when it has been touched by the Spirit of God. The true Christian does not serve God by enslaving himself with rules and regulations and insulting his creation; he serves him by gratefully accepting his good gifts and remembering that this is a world where God made all things well and by never forgetting to share God's gifts with others. ([1 Timothy 4 Commentary](#))

**Bible Knowledge Commentary** says: Ordinary becomes extraordinary as they are consecrated by the word and prayer. In the light of the scriptures a Christian recognizes God's good hand behind the things provided and offers thanksgiving to the Lord. In this way the ordinary things, so easily taken for granted, become sanctified as occasions for worship and praise.

**Sanctified** (hallowed) (37) **hagiozo** from **hagios** = holy, set apart) means to set apart for God, to sanctify, to make a person or thing (in the OT altars, days, priests, etc were set apart) the opposite of koinos, which means profane or common. The primary meaning of sanctify is "to set apart, to consecrate," but it also carries the thought of the resultant holiness of character in the consecrated.

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### **SANCTIFY IT BY PRAYER. For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. —1 Timothy 4:5**

Sanctify. Make holy. Separate. Consecrate. Dedicate. Set apart to be used exclusively by God.

It. What's "it?" It is anything and everything. It is anyone and everyone.

It is anything you are about to do or say. Before you do it, make certain in prayer that the Father has told you to do it. Before you say it, be sure by prayer that the Father has told you to say it.

It is everything you think, feel or will. It is everything you plan, wish for or dream about. Some people refuse to go outside before checking out the weather on the TV or radio. Some people refuse to invest any of their money until they have checked with their broker. Some athletes and authors will not sign a deal until they have talked with their agent or attorney.

What about you? Who sets things apart in your life? Who gives approval before you take the next step? True surrender means that everything in life is sanctified by prayer. No trip, no purchase, no decision, no word or action is taken without first sanctifying it by prayer. E.M. Bounds asserted that nothing happens without prayer.

By prayer, the believer hears from God first and then communicates with others.

By prayer, the believer sanctifies or dedicates everything to God's use. A.W. Tozer counseled us to "own nothing." If everything including possessions has been consecrated to God by prayer, then we have surrendered all rights and become stewards instead of owners. A steward knows that everything in his hand including his own life belongs to another.

Once "it" is sanctified by prayer, you can no longer pick it up, claim it, use it, or neglect it according to your own volition. It belongs to God. (Larry Keefauver - Seventy-Seven Irrefutable Truths of Prayer)

**1 Timothy 4:6 In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.**

KJV 1 Timothy 4:6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

- **In pointing out these things to the brethren** Acts 20:31,35; Romans 15:15; 1 Cor 4:17; 2 Timothy 1:6; 2:14; 2 Pet 1:12-15; 3:1,2; Jude 1:5
- **a good** Mt 13:52; 1 Cor 4:1,2; 2 Cor 3:6; 6:4; Eph 6:21; Col 4:7; 1 Th 3:2; 2 Timothy 2:15
- **nourished** Jer 15:16; Eph 4:15,16; Col 2:19; 3:16; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 1 Pet 2:2
- **sound doctrine** 1 Ti 1:10; 1Ti 4:16; 1Ti 6:3; Ps 19:7; \*marg;; Proverbs 4:2; John 7:16,17; 2 Timothy 4:3; Titus 2:1,7-10; 2 John 1:9
- thou hast Philippians 3:16; 2 Timothy 3:14

## Related Passages:

Romans 15:15 But I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again, because of the grace that was given me from God,

1 Timothy 1:10 and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to **sound teaching**,

1 Timothy 4:16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

1 Timothy 6:3 If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with **sound words**, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness,

Paul now shifts from the previous warning of false teachers and focuses on the true teacher Timothy. Vine summarizes it this way "While giving admonition to others concerning the things which had been mentioned, Timothy himself was now exhorted to fulfill in his own life the practical piety which the truths of the faith are designed to effect. The exercise of godliness would reap its own benefit in this life and its reward hereafter (vv. 6–8). The discharge of his duty in ministering to, and caring for, the saints would need courage, backed up by a godly example in character and conduct (vv. 11, 12). Three particulars of his oral ministry received special notice, the public reading of the Scripture, exhortation, and teaching. This required diligence and devotedness, with resulting manifest progress (vv. 13–15). By constantly taking heed to himself and his teaching he would save both himself and his hearers (v. 16)." ([Collected Writings](#))

**In pointing out these things to the brethren - Pointing out ([hupotithemi](#))** means literally putting under. What **things**? The dangers of false teaching (legalism, asceticism) in the previous passages. A good pastor or teacher won't run from false teaching but will expose it. {point it out, help others to see it} : "We often shy from this so we don't come across as negative, or as know-it-alls, or just afraid of offending someone. Don't be afraid to say, "that's wrong & here's why."" (Bell)

**Mounce on pointing out** - The verb is a gentle one and carries the idea of suggesting rather than ordering. The best kind of leadership is not dictatorial but, as the word suggests, lead-ership. Men are motivated most strongly by what emerges from within, not what is demanded from without. A real leader helps others arrive at what they instinctively know is best. Note the family affection in the word "**brothers**." The church is not rigidly structured like an unwieldy corporation with levels of management. It is primarily a family of believers who have committed themselves to God and to one another. (Pass it On)

**Pointing out** ([5294](#))([hupotithemi](#) from **hupo** = under + **tithemi** = to place) has two general senses (1) to place under (Ro 16:4) and (2) to set before one, offer, suggest. To bring forward and present to the mind. to bring under the mind or notice of someone, suggest, put in mind of, as a teacher or otherwise In the only other NT use in Ro 16:4 "who for my life **risked** ([hupotithemi](#)) their own necks." pictures laying down one's neck as under the sword or axe of the executioner and thus to hazard one's life

**Brethren** ([80](#)) [adelphos](#) from **a** = denotes unity + **delphus** = a womb) literally means brother referring to a physical brother or figuratively can refer to a brother in the spiritual sense. In this context this describes them as believers.

**you will be a good servant (minister) of Christ Jesus** - "This should be the goal of all ministers." (Bell) **Good** ([kalos](#)) means useful, sound, fit. A good servant need good "food" which Paul goes on to describe.

**Brian Bell** - Often times a pastor is evaluated by his eloquent speech, level of education, air of professionalism, or his busyness. But God wants to know, "Are you my servant?" But, all Christians are ministers(or servants). There is no higher goal in ministry than this! ([1 Timothy 4](#))

**Servant** (minister, deacon) ([1249](#)) [diakonos](#) focuses on the rendering or assistance or help by performing certain duties, often of a humble or menial nature. **Diakonos** has the idea of "serviceability," or "usefulness." Those who serve Christ are called to excellence in their usefulness to His cause.

*constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound (beautiful) doctrine - Amplified* = "ever nourishing your own self on the truths of the faith and of the good [Christian] instruction" **Nourished** is [entrepo](#) which describes the process of educating and training from childhood (used only here in NT) This pictures continually feeding with the idea of reading and inwardly digesting. The principle is clear that Timothy was to be continually **nourished by words of the faith**, the basic objective truths of Christian faith, especially the Gospel. This is to be the lifetime endeavor of every good servant (minister)! And the practical reason for intake of **sound doctrine** is that you cannot point out **false doctrine** if you are not maintaining a steady diet of truth yourself!

**Sound** ([2570](#))([kalos](#)) describes that which is inherently excellent or intrinsically good, providing some special

or superior benefit. It signifies the absolute worth of a thing. **Kalos** is good with emphasis on that which is beautiful, handsome, excellent, surpassing, precious, commendable, admirable.

**Doctrine** (teaching, instruction) (1319) **didaskalia** from **didasko** from **dáo** = to know or teach) is either the act of teaching or the thing taught and in this use denotes doctrine or what is taught. A key word in the pastoral epistles - 1 Tim. 1:10; 1 Tim. 4:1; 1 Tim. 4:6; 1 Tim. 4:13; 1 Tim. 4:16; 1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Tim. 6:1; 1 Tim. 6:3; 2 Tim. 3:10; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Tim. 4:3; Titus 1:9; Titus 2:1; Titus 2:7; Titus 2:10

**THOUGHT** - You can mark it down -- If you are not anchored in sound doctrine based solely on the Word of Truth, you will be vulnerable to counterfeit truth. Spiritual leaders of the church must uncompromisingly minister the Word of Truth, sound doctrine, to the saints in the church so the saints can minister this life giving Word in a world dead in trespasses and sins. Does this description accurately describe your church?

**Which you have been following** - Timothy had been following Paul's teaching with concentrated attention, the perfect tense indicating this was Timothy's state. Paul used the same verb in 2 Ti 3:10 writing to Timothy "Now you **followed** (**parakoloutheo**) my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance." (As an aside this is **a clear picture of Paul discipling Timothy** in accord with Jesus' command in Mt 28:19+) In his second letter Paul wrote "that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Ti 3:15+)

**Have been following** (3877) (**parakoloutheo** from **para** = near + **akolouthéo** to follow) means literally to follow closely or to accompany side by side. **Parakoloutheo** combines the idea of understanding with that of practicing perseveringly. 4v in NT - Mk. 16:17; Lk. 1:3; 1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Tim. 3:10

**Matthew Henry** - Verses 6-10. Outward acts of self-denial profit little. What will it avail us to mortify the body, if we do not mortify sin? No diligence in mere outward things could be of much use. The gain of godliness lies much in the promise; and the promises to godly people relate partly to the life that now is, but especially to the life which is to come: though we lose for Christ, we shall not lose by him. If Christ be thus the Saviour of all men, then much more will he be the Rewarder of those who seek and serve him; he will provide well for those whom he has made new creatures.

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**AN INSTRUCTED CONSCIENCE** If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ. --1 Timothy 4:6 Some new Christians feel no guilt about a wrong until their conscience is instructed. For example, two young college students were living together, though they were not married. When they received Christ as their Savior, they continued their same lifestyle until they learned that it was sinful. They believed that it's all right to live together if you really care about each other. But when they discovered what the Bible teaches, they got married. Some believers, on the other hand, live with continual guilt feelings for no good reason. A woman told me she is often miserable after returning from a social gathering. She said, "I wondered, should I have mentioned that about Mary and Bob? Did I tell it right? Was I too outspoken?" This woman isn't dishonest, or rude, or a gossip. She has an overly sensitive conscience. It too needs to be instructed from the Word of God. In the early church, people with a seared conscience were emphasizing man-made rules instead of God's requirements (1 Tim. 4:2-3). Paul told Timothy to instruct believers with good doctrine so that they could differentiate (v. 6). We need that too--a conscience instructed by the truth of what the Bible says is wrong and what is not wrong. --HVL ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

My conscience must be well-informed  
From God's own sacred Word;  
For conscience may be much deformed  
When standards pure are spurned.  
--Fraser

CONSCIENCE IS A TRUSTWORTHY COMPASS WHEN GOD'S WORD IS YOUR CHART.

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### **Gary Staats - 1 Timothy 4:6–16**

Also in 1 Timothy 4, Paul defines what a good minister of Jesus Christ should look like. In chapter 4 he defines the type of ministry of a good minister of Jesus Christ. They should follow words of faith, good doctrine, and teaching that would not lead people astray (2 Tim. 4:6–9). They are to exercise themselves unto godliness knowing that bodily exercise has a little profit but godliness is profitable for all things (4:8). The pastor is to be toiling and working in a way that he is exercising his spiritual body as it were and he is to be an example of the believers in word, in love, in faith, and in purity (4:12). The godly pastor should have good speech and a proper life, and should be a person of love, vitality, and purity to the Lord. Paul further says to Timothy "until I come give attention to the reading (4:13)." The minister should be reading the Word on his own and in the congregation in a public way. The Pastor should not neglect the gift given to him, but needs to give attention to the reading of the Word publicly, to exhortation, to teaching, and be

constantly at these things (4:13–15). They are to be constantly growing in their walk with the Lord, Paul says, so that their advancement as a minister might be manifest to all (4:15). Paul says to Timothy in verse 16: “give attention to yourself and to the teaching abide continually in them.” So a faithful pastor/teacher is to be in the Word personally for his spiritual growth and to abide in it and by doing these things a pastor will save himself and those who hear him (4:16).

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### **Guarding Ourselves Warm-up: 1 Timothy 4:6–16 - Dave Roper**

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Acts 20:28

We can expect attacks on the sheep—savage wolves from without and wolves in sheep’s clothing from within. So, as Paul warns, “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock. . . .” Guarding others begins with guarding ourselves. On this preoccupation everything depends. As the wise man said, “Above all else, guard your heart” (Proverbs 4:23).

Søren Kierkegaard wrote in his journal that “would-be theologians . . . must be on their guard lest by beginning too soon to preach they rather chatter themselves into Christianity than live themselves into it and find themselves at home there.”

What he writes about would-be theologians remains an occupational hazard for all of us: How easy it is to chatter on about a God we do not know and traffic in un-lived truth. We should heed James’ warning about speakers being more likely to be hypocrites than anyone else (James 3:1–12).

Paul said to Timothy, “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Timothy 4:16). It’s vital to stay in touch with God. The alternative is to do damage to ourselves and to those we want to help. If our personal lives are disordered, others’ lives will also be in disarray. We must take care of ourselves first. By doing so we take the first step in saving others.

Life drains us. There is the ministry itself—working with others, planning activities, studying, thinking, preparing messages. There’s the monotony of doing the same things day after day—dozens of tedious endeavors. And then there is our own everyday job of fighting temptation, suppressing our passions, working with God to correct our faults. Our work gets to be wearisome and our energy ebbs away. We need perpetual renewing of our original impulse, drive, and desires; like a spring-driven clock we need to be wound up again.

And so we need our solitude, not mere privacy and time alone, but time alone with God, a regular, specific time and place to read His Word, to pray, to worship, a beginning place from which we can practice God’s presence through the day. “Without solitude,” Henri Nouwen wrote, “it is virtually impossible to live a spiritual life.” Solitude begins with a time and place for God, and Him alone. If we really believe not only that God exists but that He is actively present in our lives—healing, teaching, and guiding—we need to set aside a time and space to give Him our undivided attention. Jesus said, “Go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen” (Matthew 6:6).

Oswald Chambers said, “The only way to survive in ministry is to steadfastly refuse to be interested in ministry and to be interested only in Jesus Christ.” Without that preoccupation, we have nothing to say and no reason to serve.

But how do I manage it? Something or someone always opposes me; my best resolutions go awry; I find it hard to get to that secret place and shut the door.

When I was a much younger man, I met with an earnest friend who invited me to join him in developing a “consistent quiet time,” as he put it. I knew that prayer and worship was my primary task, and I wanted more than anything else to learn how it was done, but his plan never worked for me. I couldn’t get the hang of it.

I’d stay with his scheme for a week or two, rising very early each morning to agonize my way through a regimen of prayer. It was a discipline I imposed on myself—somewhat like devoting oneself to doing fifty push-ups every day. I knew the program would be good for me, but I hated the drill and in time I gave it up, believing that I wasn’t one of those destined for meditation and prayer.

It wasn’t until much later that I stumbled across something that changed my mind—something David said: “My heart says of you, ‘Seek his face! Your face, LORD, I will seek’” (Psalm 27:8). I realized for the first time that the first move was God’s. He was taking the initiative to meet with me! Those deep longings to be alone with Him were not mine at all, but His. My desire to meet with God was His voice calling out to me, saying, “Seek my face.”

And then I recalled what Jesus said to the woman at the well—almost a throw-away line—about the Father seeking us to worship Him (John 4:23). It’s that idea of God wanting me, seeking me, missing me that renewed my soul.

And so He calls to me—His depths to mine. Deep within God and within me, it seems, there is a place for just the two of us, and without that fellowship we both ache in loneliness and emptiness.

And so I have come to believe that worship is not a matter of my trying to get God's attention, but of my listening for the call of God. I am not the seeker, He initiates my love. Worship is my response to Him as He reaches out to me, speaking to me. And, as a friend once said, "It's up to me to be polite enough to pay attention."

G. K. Chesterton said that the whole Bible is about the "loneliness" of God. That's a new way of thinking about Him—to believe that what He always wanted was my love; that though He knows every urge of my mean little heart, He still likes me and wants to be my friend (cf. John 15:15); that in some mysterious way, He not only wants me but actually needs me and calls me to seek His face. The idea that my longing is actually His voice calling—that idea alone—has changed the way I look at my quiet moments with God. They are now neither duty nor discipline, but rather an answer to one who wants to know me and to be known.

The Psalter Hymnal includes this wise anthem:

I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew  
He moved my soul to seek Him, seeking me;  
It was not I that found, O Savior true,  
No, I was found of Thee.  
Thou didst reach forth Thy hand and mine enfold;  
I walked and sank not on the storm-vexed sea,  
'Twas not so much that I on Thee took hold,  
As Thou, dear Lord, on me.  
I find, I walk, I love, but O the whole  
Of love is but my answer, Lord, to Thee:  
For Thou wert long beforehand with my soul,  
Always Thou lovest me.

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## A GOOD MINISTER 1 TIMOTHY 4:6

INTRODUCTION. There are three things absolutely necessary if a man is going to be a good minister of the Lord Jesus.

I. THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT HE MUST KNOW.

- A. He must know that he is saved. 1 John 5:13.
- B. He must know that he is called of God to preach. 1 Tim. 1:12.
- C. He must know that men are lost. John 3:18.
- D. He must know God's remedy for the lost—namely the Gospel. 1 Cor. 15:1–4.

II. THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT HE MUST DO.

- A. He must preach the Word. 2 Tim. 4:2—This involves study, 2 Tim. 2:15—prayer, 1 Tim. 2:8; without fear, 2 Tim. 1:6–8.
- B. He must practice what he preaches. 1 Tim. 4:7, 1 Tim. 4:12; 6:11.
- C. He must love people. 1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Cor. 13.

III. THERE ARE SOME THINGS HE MUST REMEMBER.

- A. He must remember that time waits upon no one. 1 Cor. 7:9; James 4:14.
- B. He must remember that Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world." Matt. 5:14.
- C. He must remember that he is going to stand at the judgment seat to give an account. 2 Cor. 5:10.

**1 Timothy 4:7 But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;**

KJV 1 Timothy 4:7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.

**have nothing to do with** 1 Ti 1:4; 6:20; 2 Timothy 2:16,23; 4:4; Titus 1:14; 3:9

**discipline yourself** 1 Ti 1:4; 2:10; 3:16; 6:11; Acts 24:16; 2 Timothy 3:12; Titus 2:12; Hebrews 5:14; 2 Pet 1:5-8

[Click here for in depth exposition of 1 Timothy 4:7.](#)

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## Waiting For The Weekend

Exercise yourself toward godliness. —1 Timothy 4:7

Today's Scripture: 1 Timothy 4:6-11

"Good morning! Only 1 more day until Friday!" Our local traffic reporter counts down to the weekend for his morning radio audience. Many in his audience are likely thinking all week about hitting the bike trail, heading for the beach, or teeing off in the morning mist.

Paul told Timothy that physical exercise does profit us "a little" (1 Timothy 4:8). Regular exercise and recreation can help to restore our perspective, to tone up our muscles, and to recharge our batteries. But Paul said that "godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come" (v.8).

The trouble is that many Christians today emphasize physical exercise almost to the exclusion of spiritual exercise. Paul also said, "Exercise yourself toward godliness" (v.7). Regular spiritual exercise such as prayer, Bible study, walking in the Spirit, sharing Christ with others, serving others, and living a pure and holy life are "profitable" for both time and eternity.

Looking forward to the weekend is fine. And there's nothing wrong with biking, swimming, golfing, or other forms of recreation. But remember, the greatest profit comes from exercising "toward godliness." By: David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

A healthy body, healthy mind,  
Should be the Christian's goal;  
But it is more important still  
To exercise the soul.  
—Bosch

To keep spiritually fit, feed on God's Word and exercise your faith.

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### **Strengthening the Heart**

It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace. Hebrews 13:9

Today's Scripture & Insight: 1 Timothy 4:6–11

The neighborhood fitness center where I have worked out for years closed down last month, and I had to join a new gym. The former place was a warm, friendly facility, patronized by those who liked to socialize while they worked out. We hardly ever broke a sweat. The new gym is a hard-core facility filled with serious men and women, earnestly invested in building better bodies. I watch these people strain and toil. Their bodies look strong, but I wonder if their hearts are being strengthened with grace.

The heart is a muscle—the muscle that keeps the other muscles going. It's good to build and tone our other muscles, but the essential thing is doing whatever keeps the heart strong.

So it is with our spiritual heart. We strengthen and tone the heart through the Word of truth by receiving its message of God's goodness and grace. Keeping our spiritual heart strong and fit must be our first priority, the one thing we do above all others.

Paul would agree: "Train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come" (1 Tim. 4:7–8 esv). By: David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

May I feed on Your goodness every day, Lord, so my heart will grow stronger through the Spirit.

God's training is designed to grow us in faith.

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### **Jerry Bridges - THE PLACE OF PERSONAL DISCIPLINE**

Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. 1 TIMOTHY 4:7

It is possible to establish convictions regarding a life of holiness, and even make a definite commitment to that end, yet fail to achieve the goal. Life is strewn with broken resolutions. We may determine by God's grace to stop a particular sinful habit—entertaining lustful thoughts, criticizing our Christian brother, or whatever. But alas, only too frequently we find we don't succeed. We do not achieve that progress in holiness we so intensely desire.

Jay Adams puts his finger on the problem when he says, "You may have sought and tried to obtain instant godliness. There is no such thing....We want somebody to give us three easy steps to godliness, and we'll take them next Friday and be godly. The trouble is, godliness doesn't come that way."



Adams goes on to show that the way to obtain godliness is through Christian discipline. But the concept of discipline is suspect in our society today. It appears counter to our emphasis on freedom in Christ and often smacks of legalism and harshness.

Yet Paul says we are to train or discipline ourselves to be godly (1 Timothy 4:7). The figure of speech he uses comes from the physical training that Greek athletes went through. Paul also said, "Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training" (1 Corinthians 9:25). He said this was an attitude of his life, and one that each Christian should have (1 Corinthians 9:24–27). If an athlete disciplines himself to obtain a temporal prize, he said, how much more should we Christians discipline ourselves to obtain a crown that lasts forever.

As these verses indicate, discipline is structured training. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary lists as one definition of discipline, "training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character." This is what we must do if we pursue holiness: We must correct, mold, and train our moral character.

Discipline toward holiness begins with the Word of God. Paul said, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). The last item he mentions is training or discipline in doing righteousness. This is what the Scriptures will do for us if we use them. Jay Adams says, "It is by willing, prayerful and persistent obedience to the requirements of the Scriptures that godly patterns are developed and come to be a part of us."

We read in Scripture, "You were taught...to put off your old self...to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:22–24). Where are we taught these things? Only in the Word of God. Discipline toward holiness begins then with the Scriptures—with a disciplined plan for regular intake of the Scriptures and a disciplined plan for applying them to our daily lives.

Here our cooperation with the Holy Spirit is very clear. A diagram of our interaction with the Spirit looks like this:

The Holy Spirit has already done a good part of His work by providing us with the Scriptures to discipline us. And as we learn them, He will faithfully bring them to our minds as we need them to face temptations. As we seek to apply His Word to daily situations, He will work in us to strengthen us. But we must respond to what the Holy Spirit has already done if we are to expect Him to do more.

So we see that we must discipline our lives for a regular healthy diet of the Word of God. We need a planned time each day for reading or studying the Bible. Every Christian who makes progress in holiness is a person who has disciplined his life so that he spends regular time in the Bible. There simply is no other way.

Satan will always battle us at this point. He will try to persuade us that we are too sleepy in the morning, too busy during the day, and too tired at night. It seems there is never a suitable time for the Word of God. This means we must discipline ourselves to provide this time in our daily schedules. I have found the early morning hour before breakfast to be the most profitable time for me to read the Bible and pray over areas of concern and need. That is also the only time of day when I can be consistent in my principal means of exercise—jogging. To do all this before breakfast requires that I get up at five o'clock. And since I need about seven hours of sleep each night, that means I must be in bed—lights out—by ten P.M. That is hard to do. It can only be done by disciplining my evening hours.

Some wives may not find this time before breakfast practical, especially if they have very young children or must get the rest of the family off to work or school at an early hour. In this case they may find the time immediately after breakfast to be most suitable for time alone with God. This, too, requires discipline to take time when the responsibilities of the day are demanding attention.

Whether before breakfast or after, morning or evening, the point is we must all arrange our schedules to provide for this daily intake of the Word of God.

A disciplined intake of the Word of God not only involves a planned time; it also involves a planned method. Usually we think of methods of intake as falling into four categories—hearing the Word taught by our pastors and teachers (Jeremiah 3:15), reading the Bible ourselves (Deuteronomy 17:19), studying the Scriptures intently (Proverbs 2:1–5), and memorizing key passages (Psalm 119:11). All of these methods are needed for a balanced intake of the Word. Pastors are gifted by God and trained to teach the "whole counsel of God." Reading the Scripture gives us the overall perspective of divine truth, while study of a passage or topic enables us to dig more deeply into a particular truth. Memorization helps us retain important truths so we can apply them in our lives.

But if we are to pursue holiness with discipline, we must do more than hear, read, study, or memorize Scripture. We must meditate on it. God said to Joshua, as he was assuming leadership over Israel, "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it" (Joshua 1:8). To meditate on the Scriptures is to think about them, turning them over in our minds, and applying them to our life's situations. Few of us practice meditation on the Scriptures. Somehow the idea of meditation sounds like something medieval monks did in monasteries. Yet Joshua, a very busy commander-in-chief of the army of Israel, was told to meditate on the law of God day and night.

The practice of meditation on the Word of God—simply thinking about it and its application to life—is a practice we develop through

discipline. Most of us think we don't have time for this, but there are blocks of minutes during the day when we can meditate if we develop the habit.

I am something of a "bug" for the daily news and I enjoy listening to the news on the radio as I drive to and from work or elsewhere. One day I was challenged by the example of a friend to use that time to meditate on Scripture verses. Now I am surprised at how many minutes I can use to think about Scripture passages and their application to my life. You may not have the same opportunity I have to meditate as you drive, but if you prayerfully think about it, you will probably find other opportunities in your schedule.

The objective of our meditation is application—obedience to the Scriptures. This too requires discipline. Obeying the Scriptures usually requires change in our patterns of life. Because we are sinful by nature, we have developed sinful patterns, which we call habits. Discipline is required to break any habit. If a boy has developed the wrong style of swinging a baseball bat, he cannot just decide to change instantly. He has developed a certain habit, and much discipline—much correction and training—is required to break that bad habit and develop a new one.

In the same way, our patterns of disobedience to God have been developed over a number of years and are not broken easily or without discipline. Discipline does not mean gritting your teeth and saying, "I'll not do that anymore." Rather, discipline means structured, planned training. Just as you need a plan for regular Bible reading or study, so you need a plan for applying the Word to your life.

As you read or study the Scriptures and meditate on them during the day, ask yourself these three questions:

1. What does this passage teach concerning God's will for a holy life?
2. How does my life measure up to that Scripture; specifically where and how do I fall short? (Be specific; don't generalize.)
3. What definite steps of action do I need to take to obey?

The most important part of this process is the specific application of the Scripture to specific life situations. We are prone to vagueness at this point because commitment to specific actions makes us uncomfortable. But we must avoid general commitments to obedience and instead aim for specific obedience in specific instances. We deceive our souls when we grow in knowledge of the truth without specifically responding to it (James 1:22). This may lead to spiritual pride (1 Corinthians 8:1).

Suppose you were meditating on 1 Corinthians 13, the great love chapter. As you think about the chapter, you realize the importance of love, and you also see the practical outworkings of love: Love is patient and kind and does not envy. You ask yourself, "Am I impatient or unkind or envious toward anyone?" As you think about this, you realize you are envious toward Joe at work who seems to be getting all the breaks. You confess this sin to God, being very specific to name Joe and your sinful reaction to his good fortune. You ask God to bless him even more and to give you a spirit of contentment so that you will not continue to envy Joe, but will instead love him. You might memorize 1 Corinthians 13:4 and think about it as you see Joe at work. You even look for ways to help him. Then you do the same thing tomorrow and the next day and the next till finally you see God working a spirit of love in your heart toward Joe.

This is discipline toward holiness. You will never put to death that spirit of envy toward Joe without a definitely structured plan for doing it. That plan is what we call discipline.

You can readily see that this structured training in holiness is a lifelong process. So a necessary ingredient of discipline is perseverance.

Any training—physical, mental, or spiritual—is characterized at first by failure. We fail more often than we succeed. But if we persevere, we gradually see progress till we are succeeding more often than failing. This is true as we seek to put to death particular sins. At first it seems we are making no progress, so we become discouraged and think, What's the use? I can never overcome that sin. That is exactly what Satan wants us to think.

It is at this point that we must exercise perseverance. We keep wanting instant success, but holiness doesn't come that way. Our sinful habits are not broken overnight. Follow-through is required to make any change in our lives, and follow-through requires perseverance.

Jonathan Edwards, who resolved never to do anything he would be afraid to do if it were the last hour of his life, also made this resolution: "Resolved, never to give over, nor in the least to slacken, my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be." At first glance these two resolutions seem somewhat contradictory. If Edwards had resolved never to do anything he shouldn't do, then why talk about never giving up the fight regardless of how unsuccessful he might be? Was he not sincere in making the first resolution? Yes, he was sincere, but he also knew there would be much failure and that perseverance was required. So he first resolved to seek to live a holy life, then to persevere despite the failures he knew would come.

A verse of Scripture I often use in the face of failure with my own sins is Proverbs 24:16: "For though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity." The person who is disciplining himself toward holiness falls

many times, but he doesn't quit. After each failure he gets up and continues the struggle. Not so with the unrighteous. He stumbles in his sin and gives up. He has no power to overcome because he does not have the Spirit of God at work in him.

One of the chapters in the Bible we have the most trouble with is Romans 7. Christians are always trying to "get out of Romans 7 and into Romans 8." The reason we don't like Romans 7 is because it so accurately mirrors our own struggle with sin. And we don't like the idea that we have to struggle with sin. We want instant victory. We want to "walk in the Spirit and let Him win the victory." But God wants us to persevere in discipline toward holiness.

Some feel that such statements of Paul's as "For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do" (Romans 7:15) are too strong for a Christian walking in the Spirit. But what Christian can deny that this is often his own experience? The truth is, the more we see the holiness of God and His law revealed to us in the Scripture, the more we recognize how far short we fall.

Isaiah was a prophet of God, walking in the righteousness of God's commandments. Yet on seeing the Lord God in His holiness, he was compelled to cry out, "Woe is me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty" (Isaiah 6:5).

As we grow in the knowledge of God's holiness, even though we are also growing in the practice of holiness it seems the gap between our knowledge and our practice always gets wider. This is the Holy Spirit's way of drawing us to more and more holiness. This is illustrated by the following graph:

As we progress in holiness, we come to hate sin (Psalm 119:104) and to delight in God's law (Romans 7:22). We see the perfection of God's law and the rightness of all He requires of us. We agree that "his commands are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3), but are "holy, righteous, and good" (Romans 7:12). But during all this time we also see our own inner corruption and our frequent falls into sin. We cry out with Paul, "What a wretched man I am!" (Romans 7:24), and we want to give up. This we dare not do. If we would succeed in our pursuit of holiness we must persevere in spite of failure. (BORROW [The pursuit of holiness](#) - HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

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### Spiritual Exercise Read 1 Timothy 4:7–16

For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. 1 Timothy 4:8

Clergyman and author Phillips Brooks said, "The great purpose of life—the shaping of character by truth." Godly character and conduct are far more important than golf trophies or home-run records, though it is possible for a person to have both. Paul challenged Timothy to be as devoted to godliness as an athlete is to his sport.

As an athlete must control his body and obey the rules, so a Christian must make his body his servant and not his master. When I see high school football squads and baseball teams going through their calisthenics under the hot summer sun, I am reminded that there are spiritual exercises that I ought to be doing (Heb. 5:14). Prayer, meditation, self-examination, fellowship, service, sacrifice, submission to the will of others, witnessing—all of these can assist me, through the Spirit, to become a more godly person.

Spiritual exercise is not easy; we must "labour and suffer reproach" (1 Tim. 4:10 KJV). A Christian who wants to excel must really work at it, by the grace of God and to the glory of God.

Something to Ponder

What are some of the ways you labor and strive in your spiritual endeavors? (Warren Wiersbe - BORROW [Pause for power : a 365-day journey through the Scriptures](#))

**1 Timothy 4:8 for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.**

KJV 1 Timothy 4:8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

- **bodily** 1 Samuel 15:22; Ps 50:7-15; Isaiah 1:11-16; 58:3-5; Jer 6:20; Amos 5:21-24; 1 Cor 8:8; Col 2:21-23; Hebrews 13:9
- **little** . Hebrews 9:9,10
- **godliness** 1 Ti 6:6; Job 22:2; Titus 3:8
- **holds** Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Job 5:19-26; Ps 37:3,4,16-19,29; 84:11; 91:10-16; Ps 112:1-3; 128:1-6; 145:19; Pr 3:16-18; Eccl 8:12; Isaiah 3:10; 32:17,18; Isaiah 33:16; 65:13,14; Mt 5:3-12; 6:33; 19:29; Mark 10:19,20; Luke 12:31; Luke 12:32; Romans

[Click here for in depth exposition of 1 Timothy 4:8.](#)

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## Getting In Shape

Bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things. —1 Timothy 4:8

Today's Scripture: 1 Timothy 4:4-16

Getting in shape can be dangerous. According to one report, the two most hazardous methods middle-age Americans use to stay in good condition are riding a bike and playing basketball. In one year, 201,000 people were hurt on their bikes and another 164,000 were sidelined with an injury they sustained on a basketball court.

Why do people risk injury to stay or to get physically fit? Because they see some benefit, like feeling better, maintaining the body structure they want, or living longer. They are willing to endure the sweat and tears it may take to get that heart pumping and those weak muscles working.

The Bible says bodily exercise profits us a little, but it also says our greater responsibility is to exercise spiritually (1 Timothy 4:8). Do we have the same determination as those bikers and hoopsters who are risking pain and injury to get in shape?

The real danger comes when we don't get in shape spiritually. Unless we experience some gain in our relationship with the Lord, we'll know the pain of broken fellowship and lack of spiritual effectiveness.

The good thing about spiritual exercise is that it helps us in this life and in the life to come (v.8). — Dave Branon [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Thinking It Over

What steps can you take to get in shape spiritually?

What food makes for a healthy spiritual diet?

How can you exercise your faith today?

Spiritual fitness comes from "working out" your faith.

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## **Wise Buy**

Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. —1 Timothy 4:8

Today's Scripture: 1 Timothy 4:6-16

I read with interest the newspaper ad about a thermostat that automatically adjusts the temperature of a house to the appropriate level, day or night. If what the ad claims is true, the thermostat will pay for itself in energy savings within 1 year. When I multiply that savings by the projected life of the unit, it is obviously to my advantage to buy it. Yet interestingly enough, I find that I'm hesitant to spend the money today to purchase the unit. But why, if it is such a value?

This question has a spiritual counterpart. I find that at times I can be slow to expend the faith needed to make wise long-range spiritual investments. Even though I know God stands behind every claim He makes, my reluctance to trust Him reveals how self-centered I can be.

Because even believers in Christ can become spiritually shortsighted and unwilling to pay the price of commitment to the Lord, Paul reminded Timothy to make every effort to be an example to the believers "in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (v.12). That requires effort and discipline, but the apostle was convinced that anyone who chooses to invest in godliness will find that his decision more than pays for itself both in this life and in the life to come (v.8). By: Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What holds me back? Some earthly tie? A thirst for gain?

A strange entanglement with life? A pleasure vain?

Dear Lord, I cast it all aside so willingly;

The path of true discipleship I'll walk with Thee.

—Adams

Following Jesus costs more than anything — except not following Him.

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## THE VALUE OF GODLINESS - James Hastings - Great Texts of the Bible

Bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.—1 Tim. 4:8.

THE figure here employed is a favourite one with St. Paul. It is that of the gymnasium, the athletic contest, that physical training which played so large a part in the education of Greece. Sometimes it is the race; sometimes the wrestling or boxing match. "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air." "Every one that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." In these and many other passages, St. Paul would have us learn that life must be taken seriously and in earnest. It is a fight for the mastery, a race for a crown. In this passage he teaches by a contrast—the contrast between "bodily exercise" and "exercise unto godliness." The one is profitable "for a little," the other "for all things." The one has a promise for this life, the other both for this life and for that which is to come. We can see at once that over against what is at best but partial, the Apostle places that which is complete and eternal.

Bodily exercise, St. Paul says, profiteth somewhat, or rather (as R.V.) is profitable for a little. It is as if an old man were writing to a young man to-day, and should begin by saying: "Do not neglect your bodily health; take exercise daily; go to the gymnasium." But spiritual exercise, this writer goes on, has this superior quality, that it is good for both worlds, both for that which now is and for that which is to come. Therefore, "exercise unto godliness." "Take up those forms of spiritual athletics which develop and discipline the soul. Keep your soul in training. Be sure that you are in good spiritual condition, ready for the strain and effort which life is sure to demand."

### I THE VALUE OF BODILY EXERCISE "Bodily exercise is profitable for a little."

1. Two views have been held as to the meaning of the words "bodily exercise." Many refer it exclusively to those ascetic practices the excess of which St. Paul so severely condemns, such as forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats. If we take that meaning, then we learn that "bodily exercise," in the sense of the discipline of the flesh, has its use and its proper place in every Christian life. We cannot do without it. It is "profitable—for a little." That is to say, it is useful within narrow limits; but it is only a means to an end, a part of a much larger whole; the great thing is "exercise unto godliness." This is undoubtedly part of the lesson, but it can hardly be the exclusive meaning. To those to whom St. Paul wrote, the words "bodily exercise" would convey just the same meaning as they convey to us, viz., that exercise which is necessary for our bodies, which helps to develop our physical powers for useful ends.

In ancient times training of the body formed a larger part of general education. To excel in the gymnasium or to win the prizes at the games was to some men the highest ambition. Such an ambition, St. Paul tells us, is excellent in its way. It "is profitable for a little." It has its use. But it is not everything. There is a higher aim than this, one which does not exclude this lower one, but which dignifies it, regulates it, and places it in its right relation to all other aims and ideals. The aim of all aims is godliness. For that let us exercise ourselves, and then bodily exercise will fall into rank along with the exercise of mind, of conscience, of spirit, taking its noble part in enabling us to present the entire man, all his complex powers and energies, as a whole burnt-offering to be consumed in the service of God.

¶ In old days the masters of an English public school concerned themselves with the work of the boys only, and did not trouble their heads about how the boys amused themselves out of school. Vigorous boys organized games for themselves, and indolent boys loafed. Then it came home to school authorities that there was a good deal of danger in the method; that lack of employment was an undesirable thing. Thereupon work was increased, and, at the same time, the masters laid hands upon athletics and organized them. Side by side with this came a great increase of wealth and leisure in England, and there sprang up that astonishing and disproportionate interest in athletic matters which is nowadays a real problem for all sensible men. But the result of it all has been that there has grown up a stereotyped code among the boys as to what is the right thing to do. They are far less wilful and undisciplined than they used to be; they submit to work, as a necessary evil, far more cheerfully than they used to do; and they base their ideas of social success entirely on athletics. And no wonder! They find plenty of masters who are just as serious about games as they are themselves; who spend all their spare time in looking on at games, and discuss the athletic prospects of particular boys in a tone of perfectly unaffected seriousness.

2. "Bodily exercise is profitable for a little.

"Therefore, as it is profitable, it must not be forgotten. "A sound mind in a sound body": there is no really sound and satisfactory thinking to be got from those whose bodily health is depressed by neglect or asceticism; a good constitution is a great endowment to be able to place at the disposal of the Master. Therefore we may make our very bodily exercise part of a sacred curriculum. Nothing is more sorrowful, it is true, than to see a man who is only a well-developed animal; nothing is more delightful than to see a man who

combines with enjoyment of every healthy pursuit of recreation and physical training a noble ambition to be possessed of a well-disciplined and fully-developed soul. For “godliness is profitable for all things.” We are building an eternal fabric. We are perfecting that which, when the house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, will inhabit “an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

The word here translated “exercise” is the word for gymnastic training. A man is to grow strong and sound and agile by spiritual athletics. He is to exercise his spirit. He is to practise godliness. He is to practise self-denial, for instance. He is to habituate himself to pray and to think. He is to cultivate his gifts in the sacred service. He is not to let his talents rust, not to bury them, but to employ them profitably. There is about this advice all the suggestion of real, thorough, steady discipline. This is no game to be played at. The training will be severe and exacting. The moral fibres are to be firmly knit; the relaxed will is to be braced and invigorated; the weakly, sentimental, emotional nature is to be strengthened and toned. The mind and the heart alike are to receive a sturdy and masculine development, until the Christian man is formed, as a very spiritual athlete, capable of fighting the good fight of faith and the battle of life, and coming out more than conqueror through Christ.

¶ “Bodily exercise” may stand for all disciplines of man and his actions, in the name of religion, that are of an outward kind. Of course, in our current sense of the words, bodily exercise is a very good thing; and so, in the above sense, is it good if it be a godly exercise; if the end be not mere restraint, nor mere outward regulation, in the complex exactitude of which we find a satisfaction because of its parade, and because it occupies an else weary leisure.

¶ Some have begun to think that in English schools and universities too much time is given to athletic sports, and that they absorb too largely the thoughts and interests of the English youth. Edward Bowen, however, attached the utmost value to games as a training in character. He used to descant upon the qualities of discipline, good-fellowship, good-humour, mutual help, and postponement of self which they are calculated to foster. Though some of his friends thought that his own intense and unabated fondness for these games—for he played cricket and football up to the end of his life—might have biassed his judgment, they could not deny that the games ought to develop the qualities aforesaid. “Consider,” he writes, “the habit of being in public, the forbearance, the subordination of the one to the many, the exercise of judgment, the sense of personal dignity. Think again of the organizing faculty that our games develop. Where can you get command and obedience, choice with responsibility, criticism with discipline, in any degree remotely approaching that in which our social games supply them? Think of the partly moral, partly physical side of it, temper, of course, dignity, courtesy.... When the match has really begun, there is education, there is enlargement of horizon, self sinks, the common good is the only good, the bodily faculties exhilarate in functional development, and the make-believe ambition is glorified into a sort of ideality. Here is boyhood at its best, or very nearly at its best. *Sursum crura!*... When you have a lot of human beings, in highest social union and perfect organic action, developing the law of their race and falling in unconsciously with its best inherited traditions of brotherhood and common action, you are not far from getting a glimpse of one side of the highest good.”

## II THE SUPERIOR VALUE OF GODLINESS “Godliness is profitable for all things.”

1. The beginnings of agnosticism were accompanied by a very widespread tendency towards profitless and more or less baseless religious speculation. St. Paul is quite sure that there are a great many things that we cannot know, and into which it is profitless to inquire. He would restrain the attention of Christians and fix it upon those things which are certainly disclosed and certainly profitable. And what he means by godliness, especially in this Epistle to Timothy, is what we can best call practical religion, which is profitable, he declares, for two things. Having promise of the life which now is, it is able in infinite ways to redeem it, consecrate it, enrich it, and fill it with new and high hopes and joys and a sense of power. And it has also the promise of the life which is to come: not that this other-worldliness was to reduce to insignificance the things of here and now, but, on the contrary, that the sense of the infinite extension of the forces of good and evil which are at work amongst us in our present experience should give to Christians both an infinite awe and an infinite hope, a sense that it was worth while to do our best because the value of life was raised to infinite power by infinite possibilities.

¶ It is not the things of life that make life; it is life itself—its action, the doing of things. Healthy, physical, intellectual, and spiritual energy is life indeed, and not what you and I possess. These might be shut off from us, and we could still worship and work in enjoyment without them. There is a line of poetry I often repeat to myself, because I think it conveys one of Christ’s finest truths—“How good is life, the mere living!” The mere exercise of function is ample enjoyment; the doing of things that give pleasure to others will yet be found sufficient. One would not want anything else to live for in a world filled with such action. It would be sufficient happiness. Christ saw that men were smothered under the incidents of life; that they had hidden its real meaning and use; that, instead of rejoicing in heroic, brave, clean lives, men were crushed down under the

abundance of the things they possessed. Their interests were so many, life itself—not only the future life, but this life here—had lost its meaning for them. They had lost the joy, the health, the spontaneity of true life—the grandest things a man could possess. As He said, “they had lost their own souls.” We mistake position, rank, wealth, connexions, and honours—all incidents—for life. We are in bondage; and you know how often our Saviour uses the expression, and promises us freedom by the truth. He says the truth shall make you free—the truth about life, the reality of that, shall free you from the bondage of these incidents, shall make all of them take their proper places, and possess their proper proportions.

2. This is the goal to which all exercise in godliness must tend—godly habits, a godlike character, and a fitness for the work which God has for us to do. It was for this that Jesus Christ lived and died. It was to redeem us from all iniquity, to bring us to God, to conform us to His own likeness. We must live much in the life of Jesus Christ; we must meditate more often on His character and work; we must stay our souls more constantly on His great sacrifice for us, and let the love of His atonement melt and warm our hearts. We shall then find in such contact with Him a new motive and a new power, and we shall need both if we are to succeed. For the best of efforts, the most noble self-denial, will be in vain unless we are in touch with Jesus Christ as the sole source of power. Then only will the “promise” spoken of in the text be fulfilled; then only shall we secure in this world what life promises to man. Everything in existence lives for some use; that use is its promise to the world. The sun is fashioned to give light by day, and it promises light. The world is formed to be the habitation of God’s children; it is adorned as a king’s palace, and all the resources of wealth and pleasure which it is capable of affording it promises to man. All things give their promises according to the faculty that is in them; and as they redeem their promises they manifest the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord. A worldly state of mind and spirit limits the range of our faculties and finally destroys them, while it dissolves the harmony which God has established between us and all things around us—in a word, sin robs life of its promise. A godly state of mind secures the promise, makes life joyful, and cements the harmony of souls. Godliness is to a man’s spirit, even in this life, what the warm bright air of a summer morning is to the birds and flowers. This is the atmosphere in which they can most freely expand themselves, which moves and tunes their songs of praise. We know what the glow of health is in the body. To enjoy this life truly, there must be a glow in the soul. Godliness sets the vivid blood rushing through its channels, and makes every act and utterance musical with joy.

¶ The old language in which the Gospel comes to us, the formality of the antique phrasing, the natural tendency to make it dignified and hieratic, disguise from us how utterly natural and simple it all is. I do not think that reverence and tradition and awe have done us any more grievous injury than the fact that we have made the Saviour into a figure with whom frank communication, eager, impulsive talk, would seem to be impossible. One thinks of Him, from pictures and from books, as grave, abstracted, chiding, precise, mournfully kind, solemnly considerate. I believe it in my heart to have been wholly otherwise, and I think of Him as one with whom any simple and affectionate person, man, woman, or child would have been entirely and instantly at ease. Like all idealistic and poetical natures, He had little use, I think, for laughter; those who are deeply interested in life and its issues care more for the beauty than the humour of life. But one sees a flash of humour here and there, as in the story of the unjust judge, and of the children in the market-place; and that He was disconcerting or cast a shadow upon natural talk and merriment I do not for an instant believe. I think that the Christian has no right to be ashamed of light-heartedness; indeed I believe that he ought to cultivate and feed it in every possible way. He ought to be so unaffected, that he can change without the least incongruity from laughter to tears, sympathizing with, entering into, developing the moods of those about him. He must be charming, attractive, genial, everywhere; if he affects his company at all, it must be as innocent and beautiful girlhood affects a circle, by its guilelessness, its sweetness, its appeal. I have known Christians like this, wise, beloved, simple, gentle people, whose presence did not bring constraint but rather a perfect ease, and was an evocation of all that was best and finest in those near them.

3. Now exercise means effort, often painful effort.

No athlete is crowned unless he strives; and he that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. As Charles Simeon, whose influence was so great at Cambridge in the early years of the nineteenth century, quaintly put it: “My dear young friends, you can’t go to heaven in an arm-chair.” For exercise unto godliness means effort. It means self-denial, the practice of self-discipline. Every athlete, we know, goes into training. So must the man who will exercise himself unto godliness. There are many things which are harmless, and at times even useful, but the man in training avoids them that he may win the prize. He keeps under the body and is temperate in all things. We have, it is true, come to appreciate exercise so far as concerns the body, and any healthy-minded young man to-day is almost ashamed of himself if he has not a well-developed body, the ready servant of an active will. We have even begun to appreciate the analogy of body and mind, and to perceive that the exercise and discipline of the mind, like that of the body, reproduces its power. And yet it remains true that a great many people fancy that the soul can be left without exercise; that indeed it is a sort of invalid, which needs to be sheltered from exposure and kept in-doors in a sort of limp, shut-in condition. Now the apostolic doctrine is this: “You do not grow strong in body or in mind without discipline and exercise. The same athletic demand is made on your soul.” All through the writings of this vigorous, masculine, robust adviser of young men, we find him taking the athletic

position. Now he is a boxer: "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air." Now he is a runner, looking not to the things that are behind, but to the things before, and running, not in one sharp dash, but, with patience, the race set before him. It is just as athletic a performance, he thinks, to wrestle with the princes of the darkness of this world as to wrestle with a champion. It needs just as rigorous a training to pull against circumstances as to pull against time. It appears to him at least not unreasonable that the supreme interest of an immortal soul should have from a man as much attention and development as a man gives to his legs, or his muscle, or his wind.

¶ Another name which is exceedingly precious to me, I cannot forbear to mention here—that, namely, of Philip Edward Pusey—Dr. Pusey's only son. Disabled from taking Holy Orders by reason of his grievous infirmities (he was deaf and a cripple), his prevailing anxiety was to render God service in any way that remained to him; and, by his father's advice, he undertook to edit the works of Cyril of Alexandria. In quest of MSS., he visited with indomitable energy every principal library—in France, Spain, Italy,—Russia, Germany, Turkey,—Greece, Palestine, Syria. At the Convent of S. Catharine at the foot of Sinai, the monks remembered him well. They asked me (March 1862) if I knew him. "And how is Philippos?" inquired the monks of Mount Athos of their next Oxford visitor. With equal truth and tenderness Dean Liddell (preaching on the occasion of his death) recalls "the pleasant smile with which he greeted his friends; his brave cheerfulness under life-long suffering; his delight in children; his awe and reverence for Almighty God. Most of you must have seen that small emaciated form, swinging itself through the quadrangle, up the steps, or along the street, with such energy and activity as might surprise healthy men. But few of you could know what gentleness and what courage dwelt in that frail tenement. In pursuing his studies, he shrank from no journey, however toilsome; and everywhere won hearts by his simple engaging manner, combined with his helpfulness and his bravery. To such an one death could have no terror: death could not find him unprepared."

### III THE PECULIAR PROFIT OF GODLINESS

"Having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come."

#### 1. "Having promise of the life which now is."

That does not mean that the godly man is invariably the successful man. Looking only to the individual life of men, it would be absurd to maintain that there is any invariable connexion between religion and outward prosperity and happiness, or that prosperous infamy and goodness crushed by poverty and misfortune are sights seldom or never seen. It is easy to adduce innumerable instances in which health, wealth, worldly success, all the gifts of fortune seem to be showered on the selfish and the base, and the life of the best and noblest is embittered by ill-health or grinding poverty, or darkened by care, anxiety, and disappointment. But the answer is that, in judging of the ameliorating influences of religion, it is impossible to test its inherent power by looking only to the lives of individual men. For no individual, however good and holy, can isolate himself from others, or keep off from himself those outward ills that are the fruit not of his own but of other men's sins. If we take not individual instances but the general experience of mankind, we shall find that from all the constituents and surroundings of human life a higher and richer profit is to be extracted than that which pertains to our outward welfare and happiness. And that profit has not only relation to a future world and our preparation for it; it is to be got here and now. It is a harvest of inestimable good which is to be reaped from and amidst the life that now is. It is the good or godly men who make the most of life—who extract the richest profit out of life.

¶ In the early part of 1868, a Christian business man wrote to me for advice in his peculiarly difficult business affairs. His letter showed that he had a desire to walk in the ways of the Lord, and to carry on his business to the glory of God; but his circumstances were of the most trying character. I therefore wrote to him to come to Bristol, that I might be able to advise him. Accordingly he undertook the long journey, and I had an interview with him, through which I saw his most trying position in business. Having fully conversed with him I gave him the following counsels:—

- (1) That he should day by day, expressly for that purpose, retire with his Christian wife that they might unitedly spread their business difficulties before God in prayer, and do this, if possible, twice a day.
- (2) That he should look out for answers to his prayers, and expect that God would help him.
- (3) That he should avoid all business trickeries, such as exposing for sale two or three articles marked below cost price, for the sake of attracting customers, because of its unbecoming a disciple of the Lord Jesus to use such artifices: and that if he did so, he could not reckon on the blessing of God.
- (4) I advised him, further, to set apart out of his profits week by week a certain proportion for the work of God, whether his income was much or little, and use this income faithfully for the Lord.
- (5) Lastly, I asked him to let me know month after month how the Lord dealt with him.

The reader will feel interested to learn that from that time the Lord was pleased to prosper the business of this dear Christian brother, so that his returns from the 1st March 1868, up to 1st March 1869, were



2. But to induce a man to become religious out of regard to the ulterior advantages of religion would be to base religion on a motive which destroys it. No man is even at the threshold of the religious life so long as he has an eye to anything to be gained or got by religion—indeed we may even say, till there is nothing else he would not be ready to sacrifice rather than renounce or prove faithless to it. Integrity, purity, justice, goodness are things we should choose, even if no pleasure or profit come of them, even at the cost and sacrifice of all the pleasant things of life. A conscientious man is not one who does his duty because, or so long as, it promotes his interests. There are innumerable things in the world he may dearly prize; but when these and duty clash, when it comes to be a question whether he shall give up these or be a liar or a knave, can he retain the faintest title to the name of a good man if he be not prepared to sacrifice all the world holds dear rather than be betrayed into baseness and dishonour? And if godliness or religion means love to God, reverence and devotion to the infinite Truth and Righteousness, love and loyalty to Him who was its highest manifestation on earth—must not this, above all others, be a principle which needs no prop of external profit to secure its dominion over the soul?

¶ There is no resource for it, but to get into that interminable ravelment of Reward and Approval, virtue being its own reward; and assert louder and louder,—contrary to the stern experiences of all men, from the Divine Man, expiring with agony of bloody sweat on the accursed tree, down to us two, O reader (if we have ever done one Duty),—that virtue is synonymous with Pleasure. Alas! was Paul, an Apostle of the Gentiles, virtuous; and was virtue its own reward, when his approving conscience told him that he was “the chief of sinners,” and if bounded to this life alone, “of all men the most miserable”?

¶ My dear friends, dwell in humility; and take heed that no views of outward gain get too deep hold of you, that so your eyes being single to the Lord, you may be preserved in the way of safety. Where people let loose their minds after the love of outward things, and are more engaged in pursuing the profits and seeking the friendships of this world than to be inwardly acquainted with the way of true peace, they walk in a vain shadow, while the true comfort of life is wanting. Their examples are often hurtful to others; and their treasures thus collected do many times prove dangerous snares to their children. But where people are sincerely devoted to follow Christ, and dwell under the influence of His Holy Spirit, their stability and firmness, through a Divine blessing, is at times like dew on the tender plants round about them, and the weightiness of their spirits secretly works on the minds of others. And though we may meet with opposition from another spirit, yet, as there is a dwelling in meekness, feeling our spirits subject, and moving only in the gentle, peaceable wisdom, the inward reward of quietness will be greater than all our difficulties.

3. “That which is to come.” The promise of heaven does not throw the interest of life wholly into the future; it rather brings the future to us than tells us coldly to tarry for the future. “Heavenly things” are of the highest secular value. For as health lightens labour and makes pleasure keener, so a cheerful goodness, which thinks of the end often while on the way; counts love the chief treasure in the midst of any abundance; likes to have a neighbour, to help him, and to be helped by him—this cheerful goodness will be the most patient and prosperous worker, and relish most its reward. It is obvious that the will of God, when regarded by us with true confidence, must infuse both temperance and vigour into our action; obvious that peace with God, and a thankful acknowledgment of Him, must sweeten pleasure; and obvious, yet again, that submission to His will, as not only firm but good, must alleviate present distress. When, anxiously, we watch by the bed-side, and listen for a breath, and wonder whether the scarcely-moving tide of life will ebb utterly away, or return once more, with the prayer “Thy will be done” there is mingled a sense that, if that Will ordain death, it will conduct through death into life. Thus, when the promise can no more affect the life of one departing, in giving a hope for the future, it gives, too, a benefit for the life of those who must yet remain here awhile. In last hours, in lowest fortunes, in loud confused scenes, in unwitnessed privations, in the strong man’s battle with his foes, and the weak man’s battle with his infirmities—it is a fact, that faith in God has been, not only the alleviator of distress, but its conqueror. The love that comprehends and transcends all earthly love, the supreme motive of self-surrendering, self-abnegating love and devotion to God in Christ, lends a consecration to the humblest, lowliest life on earth, and sheds an invisible glory over all the acts that spring from it, so that all the world and all life is a field from which love is for ever reaping its golden harvest of profit.

¶ “The Will of God!” Let us, to animate and endear every thought of it, remind ourselves often of its blissful purposes. True, it is sovereign; let us bow low before its sovereignty, its irresponsible and unknown ways. But in all its infinite range it is the will of Him whom we know in Jesus Christ, and who has told us such gracious things about it through Jesus Christ. If it wills for us immediately toil and trial, contradictions, disappointments, tears—as it sometimes does, as it once did for our Lord and Life—what does it always will ultimately, and with infinite skill and power to attain its end? It wills, He wills, “that not one of his little ones should perish.” He wills, “that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him should have everlasting life, and be raised up again by Christ Jesus at the last day.” He wills “our sanctification.” He wills, as His Son wills, that they whom He has “given” to His Son should “be with him where he is, to behold his glory.” In belonging to such a God, for every

part and detail of our lives, is there not both peace and glory? In accepting, loving, bearing, doing, the will of such a God, is there not a blissful light upon every step of our road home? That road, even step by step, was trodden before us by the Son of Man, who took on Him the form of a bond-servant, of a slave—the Apostle boldly uses the word—the slave of the will of His Father. As He came down to tread it, He said, “I delight to do thy will, O my God.” As He trod it, He said, “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Not my will but thine be done.” And it is He who by His Spirit dwells in us, and we in Him. Lord Jesus Christ, who thus workest in me, work on and evermore, work now, both to will and to do; to will now not my choice but Thine; to do now Thy will from the soul. Amen.

Author of man’s mystic lot,  
God, Thy ways as ours are not:  
Thou hast destined us to be  
Seized by death, yet safe in Thee:  
Love Immortal casting out  
Feverish fear, and freezing doubt.

In the spaces of the night,  
In the depths of dim affright,  
Jesus, with our trials tried,  
Do not Thou forsake my side!  
Childlike on Thy faithful breast  
Hold my heart, and bid me rest.

Like a sword above my head  
Death is hanging by a thread;  
Yet, O gracious Lord on high,  
Surely Thou wilt hear my cry,  
By Thy life laid down for me  
Turning death to victory!

Only this can light the grave,  
Thou hast died:—and Thou wilt save:—  
Thou by lying low in earth  
Hast assured our second birth,  
Bidding in the sunless tomb  
Amaranthine roses bloom.

If the spirit shivering shrink  
From annihilation’s brink,  
Through the soul like sunshine come,  
“Death is but another womb:  
Born through woe to human breath,  
Ye are born to God through death.”

Nearer than the nearest by,  
Be beside me when I die!  
With Thy strength my weakness nerve  
Ne’er through fear from faith to swerve;  
So, Death’s storm-vex’d portal past,  
Safe in Thee to sleep at last.

**1 Timothy 4:9 It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance.**

KJV 1 Timothy 4:9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.

- 1 Ti 1:15

[Click here for in depth exposition of 1 Timothy 4:9.](#)

**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.**

KJV 1 Timothy 4:10 For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

- therefore 1 Cor 4:9-13; 2 Cor 4:8-10; 6:3-10; 11:23-27; 2 Timothy 2:9,10; 3:10-12; Hebrews 11:26; 13:13; 1 Pet 4:14,15
- because 1 Ti 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; Mt 27:43; Romans 15:12,13; 1 Pet 1:21
- the living 3:15
- the saviour 1 Ti 2:4,6; Ps 36:6; 107:2,6-43; Isaiah 45:21,22; John 1:29; 3:15-17; 1 John 2:2; 4:14
- specially John 5:24; 1 John 5:10-13

[Click here for in depth exposition of 1 Timothy 4:10.](#)

**1 Timothy 4:11 Prescribe and teach these things.**

KJV 1 Timothy 4:11 These things command and teach.

- 1 Ti 6:2; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 2:15; 3:8

[Click here for in depth exposition of 1 Timothy 4:11.](#)

### **PAUL'S PRESCRIPTION FOR A HEALTHY MINISTRY!**

**Prescribe and teach these things** - Both verbs are commands in the [present imperative](#) calling for Timothy to make these his habitual practice. And to accomplish this he would [need to continually depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)

**Pastor Steven Cole** writes that "William Carey, often called the father of modern missions, was a shoe cobbler by trade before he went to India. He kept a map of India in his shop, stopping every so often to study and pray over it. Sometimes, because of his preaching ministry, his shoe business suffered. One day a friend admonished him for neglecting his business. "**Neglecting my business?**" said Carey, looking at him intently. **'My business is to extend the kingdom of God. I only cobble shoes to pay expenses.'** No matter what your occupation, every Christian should have Carey's mentality: **'My real business is to extend God's kingdom; I just work to pay expenses.'** In other words, every Christian is in the ministry. Ephesians 4:11-12 states that God gave to the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers **"for the equipping of the saints for the work of service (ministry), to the building up of the body of Christ."** My job is to equip you to do the work of the ministry. If you are a saint (= "holy one," true of every believer) then you're in the ministry! Some may be supported so that they work full-time in their ministry. But every Christian, like William Carey, should see their main business as serving God. **Since that is the clear teaching of the New Testament, it ought to be of great concern to every Christian to know how to fulfill the ministry God has entrusted to him or her.** It seems as if there are droves who are either **burning out** on ministry because they are exhausted, or **bombing out** of ministry because of moral failure. Timothy's danger was that he would just fade out of the ministry because his timid personality had a tendency to want to avoid conflict. The fact is, you can't preach God's truth without confronting error and offending some people. So Timothy was in danger of neglecting his ministry (1 Ti 4:14). Some of you are not involved in any kind of ministry for the Lord. Maybe you burned out, bombed out, or just faded out. Frankly, ministry is battle, and who likes war? The tendency of the flesh is to let someone else do it, especially if it's a hassle. Maybe you justify your lack of involvement by thinking, "I'm not all that gifted anyway." But remember, in the [parable of the talents](#), it was the guy with only one who buried it and was rebuked by his master because he didn't use it to further the master's interests. If you know Christ as Savior, you're called to serve Him in some capacity. In our text, Paul gives us a basic lesson of Christian service that will enable us to fulfill our God-given ministries: **Your walk with Christ is the necessary basis for your work for Christ.** "Pay close attention to yourself [your walk] and to your teaching [your work]" (4:16). It's the same principle Paul imparted to the Ephesian elders when he said, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock" (Acts 20:28). First, your walk; then, your work. Your work for the Lord must always be the overflow of your walk with the Lord. I define ministry as being full of Jesus Christ and slopping over onto others. That means that your ministry will be backed by a life of integrity;

you are imparting to others what you have because you walk in reality with Christ. If we all would learn this simple but profound principle, that our walk with Christ is the necessary basis for our work for Christ, we would avoid burning out, bombing out, and fading out in the work He has given us to do. ([Your Walk and Your Work for Christ](#))

**Prescribe** (direct, instruct, order) (3853) **paraggello** from **para** = beside, alongside, near by, at the side of + **aggelos** = messenger, **angelo/aggello** = to announce) means to hand on or pass on an announcement from one to another who is at one's side, such as to what must be done, usually with the idea of a command or charge. **Paraggello** often was used in the context of a military command and demanded that the subordinate obey the order from the superior and required unhesitating and unqualified obedience. (cp Lk 5:14, 8:29, Lk 9:21KJV, Acts 1:4, 4:18; 5:28KJV; Acts 15:5KJV; 1Th 4:11). It is like a mandate (an authoritative command) or a call to obedience from one in authority. **Vincent** adds that **paraggello** was "A strong word, often of military orders. Aristotle uses it of a physician: to prescribe. Originally (paraggello meant) to pass on or transmit; hence, as a military term, of passing a watchword or command; and so generally to command." **MacArthur** says paraggello conveyed "the idea of binding a person to make the proper response to an instruction. The soldier was bound to obey the orders of his superiors; a person involved in a legal matter was bound by the court's orders; a person of integrity was bound by moral principles; a patient was bound to follow his doctor's instruction if he wanted to get well; and a successful writer or speaker was bound by the standards of his craft."

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### 1 Timothy 4:11 TODAY IN THE WORD

Although Jill believes in having family devotions, they never seem to turn out the way she thinks they should. She easily identifies with the mother whose daughter once asked, "Mommy, when are we going to get together and have family commotions?"

"Family commotions" seem to be a good description of what happens when Jill suggests that it's time for her family to study the Bible. "Can't we do it later?" someone will ask. "I'm watching television" another will complain. All too often the children seem bored, the dog barks, or the phone rings.

Spending time together in God's Word is a challenge for most families today. How good to learn, then, that God's plan doesn't limit the family's spiritual life to a single method. Instead, it prescribes a holistic approach to training children in spiritual matters. God does indeed command Christian parents to pass on the truths of the faith to their children, but the strategy He prescribes is a flexible one. Parents are called to explain spiritual truths to their children in the context of ordinary life. Instead of demanding that family devotions be observed at a specific time, this subject is to be the focus of family discussion throughout the day. Biblical principles should be so naturally woven into the fabric of our daily lives that it seems as if they were written on the doorframes of our houses and inscribed on our gates (Deut. 6:9).

**APPLY THE WORD** When was the last time you discussed God's Word together as a family? If you have a plan for family devotions, try not to limit your spiritual conversations to just these formal occasions. If your approach to your family's spiritual life is more informal, be careful not to let the subject of God's truth become pushed aside by the rush of the day.

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### 1 Timothy 4:11-16 Knute Rockne on Practicing

We who teach will be judged more strictly. - James 3:1

Knute Rockne, head coach of the Notre Dame football team from 1917 to 1931, once said, "One player practicing sportsmanship is far better than fifty preaching it." He understood that integrity on the playing field demands a certain behavior, not just nice-sounding words.

In our passage today we read Paul's admonition to Timothy about integrity in ministry, exhorting him to "watch your life and your doctrine closely" (v. 16). The Ephesian elders who had loved and respected Paul (see Acts 20:17-38) seemed skeptical of young Timothy and unreceptive of the message he had to bring to the church. That's why Paul instructed Timothy to not only preach the Word but to live it. A godly life can be a more persuasive tool in ministry than even the most powerful sermon.

In order to fulfill his call to the ministry, Timothy needed to keep in mind four aspects of effective leadership. The first, as we've mentioned, is the importance of example. Timothy would gain credibility for his teaching to the extent that he practiced what he preached. As Kent Hughes says in his commentary on 1 Timothy, "Godly character creates moral authority." Second, Timothy was called to remain faithful to Scripture, which was to serve as the content for all his preaching and teaching (v. 13). Unlike the false teachers who had strayed from faithful instruction found in God's Word, Timothy was to speak God's Word to God's people. Third, Timothy had to use his spiritual gift (v. 14). When he needed reminding that he could do the job to which he had been called, he

needed only to think back to the time when the elders laid their hands on him.

Receiving a gift isn't enough—it needed to be exercised and nourished, not neglected. That's why Paul's final thoughts challenge Timothy to work hard in his ministry. “Be diligent,” “give yourself wholly,” “watch,” and “persevere” were all words to remind Timothy that ministry doesn't happen simply because one is gifted, but rather because one is committed!

It's not just preachers who need to watch their “life and doctrine.” Parents need to set an example of godly character before their children. Teachers should extend the respect they demand from their students. Employers have to model conscientiousness and integrity for their employees. Also, young people need to consider the example they set before their friends. No matter what your age or life circumstance, your integrity matters to God and others!

**1 Timothy 4:12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.**

KJV 1 Timothy 4:12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

- no Mt 18:10; 1 Cor 16:10,11; 2 Timothy 2:7,15,22
- be thou 1 Cor 11:1; 1 Th 1:6; 2:10; 2 Th 3:7-9; Titus 2:7; 1 Pet 5:3
- in word 2 Cor 6:4-17; Philippians 4:8; 2 Timothy 2:22; James 3:13,17; 2 Pet 1:5-8

**[Click here for in depth exposition of 1 Timothy 4:12.](#)**

**Hiebert** - “The rendering of the King James, an example of believers is better.” ([1 Timothy](#))

**Calvin** - “Thus we learn how foolish and ridiculous it is for people to complain that they receive no honour, when in fact there is nothing about them that is worth honouring, but rather they expose themselves to contempt by their ignorance, the example of their impure lives, their lightmindedness and other faults. The only way to win respect is by outstanding virtues which will protect us against contempt.”

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Be such a man and live such a life that if every man were such as you and every life such as yours this earth would be Paradise.

Be what you wish others to become. Let yourself, and not your words, preach for you. AMIEL.

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### **1 Timothy 4:12-16 Sarah Winchester**

SARAH Winchester's husband acquired a fortune by manufacturing and selling rifles. After he died of influenza in 1918, Sarah moved to San Jose, California. Lonely for her husband, Sarah consulted a medium to help her contact him in the afterlife. The medium told her, "As long as you keep building your home, you will never face death." Sarah believed the advice, so she bought an unfinished seventeen-room mansion and started to expand it. The project continued until she died at age 85. The mansion has 150 rooms, 13 bathrooms, 2,000 doors, 47 fireplaces, and 10,000 windows. In addition, Mrs. Winchester left behind enough materials so that workers could have continued building for another eighty years.

Today that house stands as more than a tourist attraction. It is a silent witness to perseverance of the wrong kind. Sarah Winchester's perseverance was motivated by the fear of death. The Christian's motivation is the love of God. "For the love of Christ compels us, ... that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15). The only way to avoid the fear of death is to live for the one who has overcome it.—V C Grounds ([Copyright. Used by permission of Our Daily Bread](#))

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### **John Bennett - 1 Timothy 4:12–16 NEGLECT NOT THE GIFT THAT IS IN THEE**

One of the problems that Timothy would inevitably face was that of his age. When challenged by men of long experience who may oppose and look down upon him, he is to be resolute. But, as Paul states, what will confirm the truth of his message is his own ability to live that message. He is, as GUY KING puts it, to ‘offset the fewness of his years by the richness of his character’. He is to manifest all the graces of an ideal believer in his public teaching, in his general conduct, in his sacrificial love to others, spiritually and morally. What a tremendous responsibility for a relatively young man!

If, like Timothy, we are to be examples, we must obey the six imperatives in relation to the Word of God in this section. First, in

verse 13, 'give attendance to' three things: the public reading of the scriptures, the application of the truth read to encourage the saints to right living, and the teaching of doctrine or exposition of truth. Systematic teaching is of paramount importance in any man of God. Second, in verse 14, 'Neglect not the gift that is in thee'. This does not imply that Timothy was negligent but that the maintenance of a gift is the responsibility of the person to whom the gift is given. A fire that is not fed soon dies! Thirdly, in verse 15, 'Be diligent in these things', RV. Paul stresses the need for diligence in the personal practice of all the things taught. He is keen to ensure that Timothy's personal testimony should be unassailable and the means whereby that testimony is maintained would be equally apparent to all. Hence, fourthly, verse 15, 'give thyself wholly to them'. The only useful testimony is that of an out-and-out believer. Fifthly, verse 16, 'Take heed unto thyself'. How important that his personal testimony bore out the truth that he was seeking to impart. A man of God cannot say, 'do as I say but not as I do'. Apply the truth of God to yourself before you seek to apply it to others! Finally, verse 16, 'Continue in them'. If you meet opposition from false teachers, if your youth is despised and your ministry disparaged, don't give up. Stick to the truth! Fulfil the ministry that God has given you. A man of God is a man who can stay the course!

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1 Timothy 4:12 Set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.

**TODAY IN THE WORD** Last November, Dutch scientists created the largest digital panoramic photo in the world. They began by programming a camera to take 600 individual pictures of their city, Delft. Then they fed the results into five PCs that worked over three days to stitch the photos together into a seamless whole. The result was a single 2.5 billion-pixel panorama of the Delft skyline.

Talk about "seeing the big picture"! In today's reading, Paul wanted to give Timothy the "big picture" of what the Christian life is all about. We've skipped forward in time to about 65 A.D. Timothy, then in his 30s, was a pastor in the church at Ephesus. Paul had seen his young protégé grow from a godly teenager into a gifted church leader, and they logged many ministry miles together. Within this friendship and their shared passion for Christ, Paul wrote as a mentor to encourage Timothy and summarize the key points of a life well-lived.

One key was the necessity of truth. We cannot live a purpose-filled life without it! Timothy was to live out the truth and guard doctrinal purity against, for example, false teaching that failed to accept thankfully the blessings of God's creation (vv. 4-5). This extended beyond his individual life, for as a minister he was to exercise his gift of preaching and teaching in order to serve and edify the church. Another key was the necessity of training. Godliness doesn't just happen—one must pursue it in the same way an athlete trains to win a gold medal. Timothy was in fact commanded to set the pace, serving as an example for the other believers (v. 12). As a leader, he lived in a glass house, which meant that his actions would be seen by all. A final key was the necessity of holding on to hope. As believers, our trust is in a living God who is the Savior of the world. Living in this hope takes courage—we must "fight the good fight of faith" (6:12).

If you persevere in these God-given purposes, Paul told his friend, "you will save both yourself and your hearers" (v. 16).

**APPLY THE WORD** Storing the treasure of God's Word in your heart is always a wise application (Ps. 119:93). Today, make it your goal to memorize two verses—any two verses you choose—from 1 Timothy 4. Verses 4-5 might be a good choice to build up our thankful hearts, or verse 8 as an exhortation to godliness, or verse 10 as an encouragement to hope in the Lord. If you're feeling ambitious, you could memorize this entire short chapter during the coming week or month.

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### **1 Timothy 4:12 Walk The Walk By Bill Crowder**

The preacher was speaking tongue-in-cheek when he complained, "My wife is absolutely unreasonable. She actually expects me to live everything I preach!" It's so much easier to tell someone what is right than to practice it personally.

When my son and I play golf together, I can tell him exactly how to play the hole and hit the shots. But my own ability to hit those shots is sadly limited. I suppose this is what is meant when we refer to athletes who "talk the talk, but don't walk the walk." Anyone can talk a good game, but actually performing well is far more difficult.

This is particularly true in the challenge of following Jesus Christ. It is not enough for us to talk about faith—we must live out our faith. Perhaps that is why Paul, after giving instructions to his young protégé Timothy about how to preach, included this reminder: "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity... Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them" (1 Tim. 4:12,15).

As Christ's followers, we do not have the luxury of just talking a good game—we must live lives of exemplary faith in Jesus Christ. We must walk the walk. ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Do others know from how we act  
At home, at work, at play,  
That we have Jesus in our heart  
And live for Him each day?  
—D. De Haan

We please God when our walk matches our talk.

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## Let And Set

READ: 1 TIMOTHY 4:11-16

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12

Timothy had been given a very difficult task. By this time he was in his mid-thirties, having spent fifteen years traveling with the apostle all through the Roman Empire. Back in those days, you were not considered to be over the hill until you got to forty at least, and that is why Paul tells Timothy, Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young. But it was a difficult situation, because Timothy had to minister with men who had already been elders of the church in Ephesus for a number of years. The apostle Paul had taught these men himself, and yet Timothy was expected to correct some of the things that were going on in the church. That was a tough assignment for a young man. Timothy had to know how to go about it in a way that would not arouse the ire and opposition of others.

There are two things the apostle tells Timothy to do, and both are highlighted by two similarly sounding words, the monosyllables let and set Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers . . . When Paul says, Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, he does not mean, of course, that Timothy is to go around and take issue with anybody who does not like him. He means, rather, that Timothy is to be concerned about and aware of how he comes across to people; he is to be sensitive to how others see him.

How then is a young man to proceed? The apostle says by setting a good example in two areas--speech and conduct--and three qualities ought to come through--love, faithfulness, and purity. Those are the things that ought to characterize every young preacher: loving, faithful, pure speech and loving, faithful, pure behavior.

A young preacher must first of all be loving rather than arrogant, rude, censorious, critical, cruel, or sharp in either word or deed.

And he must be faithful to his commitments, not toadying and flattering, using insincere words. He must not be irresponsible, unreliable, or a promise breaker.

The third quality is purity. I do not know anything that has destroyed more young ministers than impurity. Ephesus was a city given over to sexual immorality, yet Timothy was expected to maintain a pure standard in the midst of that. There was to be no vulgar, obscene, or profane words in his speech; no dirty stories or double meanings; and no sexual misconduct, including indulging in pornography on the side. A pure life is the platform from which an effective ministry proceeds; without that all the words mean nothing.

Lord, in both my speech and my conduct teach me to be loving, faithful, and pure.

Life Application Persons who exemplify purity in speech and action are truly an endangered species. The need for such is critical. Are we seriously aiming to be this kind of example? ([Ray Stedman](#))

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## PROGRESSIVE FOLLOWERS

BE DILIGENT IN THESE MATTERS . . . SO THAT EVERYONE MAY SEE YOUR PROGRESS. —1 Timothy 4:12–16

I'm reminded of the husband who gloated that he and his wife didn't have a perfect relationship, but he was certainly doing his part. Like the typical male, he was totally self-deceived. "Perfect" is what God will make us when we step across the threshold into heaven. What Christ is looking for is "progress." But if we feel that we are just about perfect and that the few faults in our lives are attributable to everyone else, we make little or no progress.

I am so thankful that perfection is not what God expects. Progress is something I can get my life and hands around. It doesn't have to be dramatic. It just has to be progress. And, I might add, there is power in progress. Whether we are parents, pastors, leaders in

the marketplace, or in any way an influencer of others, progress is our main asset. While most of us recoil from admitting our imperfections, the real power is in admitting that we are not perfect and showing those who are around us that we are making progress.

I love to be around people who are farther down the road with Jesus than I am. They stimulate my heart to say, I want to grow like they are. Their progress is magnetic and it gives me hope that I too can grow. When I envision perfection, I shrug my shoulders and say, "I can't get there!" But progress motivates me.

Followers who are making progress humbly admit their failures, refuse the mediocrity of getting stuck in the same faults, make friends with followers who are out in front of them, and ask for the grace, wisdom, and courage to grow in accelerated ways toward the likeness of Jesus. We will know that we are making progress when people say of us, "You know, they're more like Christ today than they were six months . . . two years ago."

Has anyone noticed the progress you have made in your life recently . . . or are you stuck? (Joe Stowell - Strength for the Journey)

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### **1 Timothy 4:12a Preaching With Your Life**

Be an example to the believers... in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity

Believers exert a positive influence on others by setting a good example with the consistency of their lives. Will Houghton, president of Moody Bible Institute during the 1940s, was such a person.

Before Houghton became president of Moody, he pastored a church in New York City. An agnostic living there was contemplating suicide, but he decided that if he could find a minister who lived what he professed, he would listen to him. Since Will Houghton was a prominent figure in the city and a pastor, the man chose Houghton for his case study. He hired a private detective to watch him. When the investigator's report came back, it revealed that Houghton's life was above reproach. The agnostic went to Houghton's church, accepted Christ, and later sent his daughter to Moody Bible Institute.

Nehemiah was another believer who dramatically affected the lives of those around him. Even rich nobles and high officials listened respectfully as he rebuked them. Why? Because of the quality of his life. Whatever he asked of others, he was willing to do himself. And because Nehemiah joined in the hard work and refrained from using his position to accumulate wealth, the leaders couldn't help but listen to what he said.

An exemplary life awakens spiritual and moral sensitivity in those who observe us, and it gives power to our words of witness. —H V Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We can preach a better sermon with our lives than with our lips.

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### **1 Timothy 4:12 [Be An Example](#) By David C. McCasland**

A high school senior honored as one of the "Best & Brightest" in our community has provided a forceful demonstration of integrity. When his school team was given the word auditorium in a regional spelling bee, Brady Davis glanced down to ponder his response and noticed that the word was printed on the microphone stand. He called this to the attention of the judges who responded with a more difficult word. Brady did what he knew was right whether others noticed or not.

We don't know when our actions might become an example to others. But if we live each day to honor Jesus, our behavior will model His righteousness, no matter who is watching.

Idealism and enthusiasm are often best expressed by the young. But uprightness and honor should be goals for Christians of every age. Paul told his young protégé Timothy: "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12).

Brady Davis says his goal in life is to change the world around him while never compromising himself. We would do well to join him in that pursuit of life, integrity, and exemplary behavior. ([Copyright. Used by permission of Our Daily Bread](#))

I would be true, for there are those who trust me;

I would be pure, for there are those who care.

I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;

I would be brave, for there is much to dare.

—Walter

A good example always makes a good sermon.



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## 1 Timothy 4:12 [A Walk In The Woods](#) By David H. Roper

A friend of mine wrote to me about certain “reservations” in his life—areas of secret sin that he reserved for himself and into which he frequently withdrew.

These “reserves” are like the large tracts of wilderness in my home state of Idaho. It may sound exciting to wander around these untamed regions by oneself, but it’s dangerous.

So too, each journey into sin takes its toll. We sacrifice our closeness with God, forfeiting His blessing (Psalm 24:1-5), and we lose our influence on others that comes from purity of mind and body (1 Timothy 4:12).

The wild areas in us may never be fully tamed, but we can set up perimeters that keep us from wandering into them. One perimeter is to remember that we are dead to sin’s power (Romans 6:1-14). We do not have to give in to it.

The second perimeter is to resist temptation when it first attracts us. Initial temptation may not be strong, but if we entertain it, it will in time gain power and overwhelm us.

The third perimeter is accountability. Find a person who will commit to ask you each week, “Have you ‘taken a hike in the wild’? Have you gone where you should not go?”

Impurity is ruinous, but if we long for holiness and ask God for help, He will give us victory. Press on! [Copyright. Used by permission of Our Daily Bread](#))

O Lord, help us to recognize  
When we begin to compromise;  
And give us strength to follow through  
With what we know is right and true.  
—Sper

Beware—the more you look at temptation, the better it looks!

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### [Impact For Christ](#)

Be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, . . . in faith, in purity. —1 Timothy 4:12

Today's Scripture: 1 Timothy 4:10-16

Over the past several years, I’ve been privileged to travel with teenagers on eight mission trips. One thing I’ve learned in those excursions is that teens are not too young to make an impact for Jesus—either on me or on others whose lives they touch.

I’ve also noticed that the teens who make the biggest impact for Christ match the characteristics Paul told Timothy about in 1 Timothy 4:12. Trying to convince Timothy that his relative youth did not have to be a deterrent to his ministry, Paul told him to “be an example to the believers” in several areas.

In word: Young people who make a difference for Christ control what they say, avoid negative talk, and speak words that honor God. In conduct: Teens who practice discretion in their behavior shine for all the world to see. In love: By taking heed of Jesus’ words to love God and their neighbor (Matt. 22:37-39) teens please Jesus and touch hearts. In faith: Those who put their faith into action change lives. In purity: It’s tough to be morally pure and doctrinally sound, but kids who are can set the bar for the rest of us.

Paul’s words aren’t just for the young generation. All of us should be an example in word, conduct, love, faith, and purity. That’s how we make an impact for Christ. By: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O Christians, remember, you bear His dear name,  
our lives are for others to view;  
You’re living examples—men praise you or blame,  
|And measure your Savior by you.  
—Anon.

The most valuable commentary on the Bible is a godly life.

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### [Following Our Example](#)

Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers. —1 Timothy 4:12

Today's Scripture: 1 Timothy 4:12-16

Alyssa, who is 6 and just learning to read, often saw her parents and grandparents reading their Bibles in the morning. Early one day, she woke up before everyone else. Grandma found her sitting on the couch, with her Bible and a devotional booklet on her lap. She wanted to follow the example of spending time with God at the beginning of the day.

Timothy, a young pastor, faced heavy responsibilities in the church at Ephesus—training believers, leading in worship, countering false doctrine. The older, experienced apostle Paul gave him instruction on leading the church in these areas, but he also mentioned the importance of personal conduct. He said, “Be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12).

Paul challenged Timothy: “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine” (v.16). If he paid attention to his own spiritual life and to solid doctrine, he would be a godly example to the church family.

We all have others who are observing us. Even little Alyssa has younger siblings watching her. Let's live our lives in such a way that those who follow our example will help others in their walk with God. By: Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, help me live a godly life  
Of faith and love and purity  
So those who follow what I do  
Will grow in their maturity.  
—Sper

A good example has more value than good advice.

**1 Timothy 4:13 Until I come, give attention to the [public] reading [of Scripture], to exhortation and teaching.**

KJV 1 Timothy 4:13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

- **I come** 1 Ti 3:14,15
- **to reading** Deut 17:19; Joshua 1:8; Ps 1:2,3; 119:97-104; Prs 2:4,5; Mt 13:51,52; John 5:39; Acts 6:4; 17:11; 2 Ti 2:15-17
- **to exhortation** Romans 12:8; 1 Cor 14:3; Titus 2:15
- **to teaching** 1 Ti 4:6,16; 1 Cor 14:6,26; 2 Ti 4:2

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 17:19 “It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes,

Colossians 4:16+ When this letter is read among you, **have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans;** and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea.

1 Thessalonians 5:27+ I adjure you by the Lord **to have this letter read** to all the brethren.

2 Ti 4:1-2 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: 2 **preach** the word; **be ready** in season and out of season; **reprove, rebuke, exhort**, with great patience and instruction. (Paul gives 5 "staccato-like" commands to his young charge!)

## A BALANCED APPROACH TO EXPOSITIONAL PREACHING

[Click here for more exposition of 1 Timothy 4:13.](#)

**Martyn Lloyd-Jones** “The work of preaching is the highest and the greatest and the most glorious calling to which anyone can ever be called.” Lawson comments that “Because the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of the living God, the call to proclaim the Word is the highest calling known to mankind.”

**Hendriksen** commented, "A minister should strive to effect a proper balance [among] the reading of Scripture, exhorting, and teaching. Some never exhort. Others never teach. And the reading of Scripture is prone to be regarded merely as a necessary preface to what the preacher himself is going to say!" (BORROW [Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles](#))

**Steve Lawson** reminds us that "**Public reading** of Scripture in the corporate gathering of the church's worship, a practice dating back to the time of Ezra when he read the Scriptures in the revival at the Water Gate in Jerusalem (Neh. 8:1–8). This practice was eventually incorporated in the worship service of the ancient Jewish synagogue (Luke 4:16–17; 2 Cor. 3:14). With the birth of the church, this Old Testament practice of publicly reading the Scriptures was adopted by the early believers in their New Testament worship". ([Famine in the Land](#))

**Until I come give attention** (devote yourself, focus on, give priority) **to the reading** - This is not an afterthought, an option or a suggestion but a command in the **present imperative** calling for this to be Timothy's continual duty. The phrase **until I come** would have given Timothy a sense of "help is on the way!" Or the "calvary is coming to the rescue!" There are 3 aspects of ministry that demand Timothy's continual attention. And as an aside recall that almost all of the imperatives in the NT are a call (or should be a call) not to seek to fulfill the command in one's own natural strength but to jettison self-reliance and rely wholly on the Holy Spirit's enabling power. [See discussion of the Need for the Holy Spirit to obey NT commands](#) (or "How to Keep All 1642 Commandments in the New Testament!")

**NET Note** comments that "The **public reading of scripture** refers to reading the scripture out loud in the church services. In a context where many were illiterate and few could afford private copies of scripture, such public reading was especially important. "

**Steve Lawson** says "Timothy was "to apply himself" or "devote himself" with undivided allegiance to this foundational ministry of biblical preaching and teaching....He was to preach when it was convenient as well as when it was inconvenient ("in season and out of season")....Before he gave attention to anything, he must devote himself to preaching. This same vigil is absolutely necessary for all ministers today. Men of God are to give themselves fully to their preaching. Nothing less will suffice." ([Famine in the Land](#))

**Gardiner Spring** stated, "The great object of every minister of the Gospel ought to be to give the services of the pulpit the pre-eminence over every other department of ministerial labor

**Warren Wiersbe** wrote, "Ministering the Word was not something Timothy was to do after he had done other things; it was to be the most important thing he did." ([Bible Exposition Commentary - New Testament](#))

**Guzik** - He must give attention to these things in both his private life and in his public ministry. ([1 Timothy 4 Commentary](#))

**Calvin** observed that Paul "places reading before doctrine and exhortation; for, undoubtedly, the Scripture is the fountain of all wisdom, from which pastors must draw all that they place before their flock."

The Old Testament was regularly read in synagogue worship, Luke recording "After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, "Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it." (Acts 13:15+)

**Give attention** (4337)(**prosecho** from **pros** = before, toward + **echo** = hold) means literally to hold to, toward or before. Originally it was followed by the word "the mind" (nous) but at times "the mind" was omitted but still the idea of "the mind" was implied. To apply one's self to. To attach one's self to. **Prosecho** means to moor a ship, to tie it up. **Prosecho** was also used to mean "to remain on course" which would certainly be Paul's intent for Timothy. Don't veer off course! **Prosecho** is used 5 times in the pastoral epistles - 1 Tim. 1:4; 1 Tim. 3:8; 1 Tim. 4:1; 1 Tim. 4:13; Titus 1:14

Figuratively **prosecho** has the idea is to hold one's mind before then to take heed, to pay attention, to give heed, be in a state of alert, to watch out for or to be on guard. The word implies the giving one's consent, as well as one's attention. When used in this manner **prosecho** always warns of some type of danger (usually spiritual danger but occasionally physical)! **Prosecho** is not a call simply to notice or sense something, but to be on guard against it because it is so harmful (eg, the danger of practicing your righteousness for others to see, the danger of false prophets, false teachers and false teaching, the danger of the Pharisees and Sadducees). The idea is to turn one's mind or attention to a thing by being on one's guard against it.

**To the reading of** (320)(**anagnosis** from **ana** = again + **gnosis** = knowledge) is related to **anaginosko** which means to know certainly and hence to read. There are only 3 uses in the NT and 2 refer to the reading of the OT in a Jewish context = Acts 13:15 and 2 Co. 3:14 = "the reading of the old covenant". The third use here in 1 Ti 4:13 refers to reading of the Scripture in the context of the Church. There is one related word (anaginosko) used in the **Septuagint** of Neh 8:8 "They **read** (Lxx = anaginosko) from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading" which God used to bring about revival

(Neh 8:1-18). In 1 Ti 4:1 it is used in a negative sense to describe those who are "paying attention to deceitful spirits." (cf similar negative use in 1 Ti 1:4 = "to myths and endless genealogies.") Devotion to the **public reading of Scripture** would serve to combat these paying attention to deceitful spirits, myths and endless genealogies.

**Peter** tells us "we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do **well to pay attention** as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts." (2 Pe 1:19)

**Steven Lawson** writes that "the ultimate goal of Bible exposition is changed lives. Preaching must do more than simply inform the mind; it must grip the heart and challenge the will. The entire person—mind, emotion, and will—must be impacted. Thus, exposition is not merely for the transmitting of information; it is for the effecting of transformation. It presses for a decision and calls for a verdict." (Famine in the Land)

**R. W. Dale** writes of Jonathan Edwards' preaching, "In the elaborate doctrinal part of Jonathan Edwards' sermons, the great preacher was only getting his guns into position; but in his applications, he opened fire on the enemy. There are too many of us, I am afraid, who take so much time getting our guns into position that we have to finish without firing a shot."

**Marshall** writes, "Timothy is to summon his hearers, to respond to the Scripture that has been read. Whether he does so in exhortation or in comfort will depend on the message of the passage, but common to these two senses is the noted encouragement" (The Pastoral Epistles, 208).

**John Stott** - It was taken for granted from the beginning that Christian preaching would be expository preaching, that is, that all Christian instruction and exhortation would be drawn out of the passage which had been read. We note, however, that the public reading of Scripture came first, identifying the authority. What followed was exposition and application, whether in the form of doctrinal instruction or of moral appeal, or both. Timothy's own authority was thus seen to be secondary, both to the Scripture and to the apostle. All Christian teachers occupy the same subordinate position as Timothy did. They will be wise, therefore, especially if they are young, to demonstrate both their submission to the authority of Scripture and their conscientious integrity in expounding it, so that their teaching is seen to be not theirs but the word of God. (BORROW [Guard the truth : the message of 1 Timothy & Titus](#))

**To exhortation ([paraklesis](#)) and teaching ([didaskalia](#))** - The NIV translates it "preaching and teaching." **Teaching** is more literally "the teaching." The text is explained, giving meaning to the text which has been read publically.

**Earle** comments that **exhortation** "is an important part of every pastor's duties. He must not only read the Word of God to his people, but also exhort them to obey it." (1,2 Timothy, Titus)

**MacArthur** wrote, "**Exhortation** challenges people to apply the truths they have been taught. It warns people to obey in light of the blessing to come to them if they do, and the judgment if they do not. Exhortation may take the form of rebuke, warning, counsel, or comfort, but always involves a binding of the conscience." (See [1 & 2 Timothy MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**William Barclay on exhortation** - The Christian message must always end in Christian action. Someone has said that every sermon should end with the challenge: "What about it, chum?" It is not enough to present the Christian message as something to be studied and understood; it has to be presented as something to be done. Christianity is truth, but it is truth in action. ([1 Timothy 4 Commentary](#))

**Lawson** - True expository preaching is always doctrinal preaching. While "**exhortation**" is more application-oriented, "**teaching**" is more doctrine-oriented. The former deals with the building up of lives; the latter focuses on the establishing of sound doctrine....Diligent study is entirely necessary if the true meaning of the biblical text is to be conveyed. (cf 2 Ti 2:15) ([Famine in the Land](#))

**Thomas Lea** writes "Teaching makes an appeal to the intellect and informs listeners about the truths of the Christian faith." (1, 2 Timothy, Titus)

**Philip Ryken** - The systematic exposition of Scripture remains the most effective means for the conversion of sinners and the confirmation of the saints. It is the most effective means because it is God's chosen means. Indeed, it must be doubted whether worship which does not preserve a central place for preaching and teaching the Bible is proper Christian worship at all. (REC - 1 Timothy)

**Exhortation** ((3874)([paraklesis](#) from [parakaléo](#) = beseech <> [para](#) = side of, alongside, beside + [kaleo](#) = call) refers to calling to one's side or one's aid which can be for the purpose of providing solace, comfort, consolation, exhortation, encouragement. The primary sense in the NT is to urge someone to take some action, especially some ethical course of action. Even when it is translated **exhortation** as here it always has at the root the idea of enabling a person to meet some difficult situation with confidence and with

gallantry. **Paraklesis** - 28v - appeal(1), comfort(13), consolation(1), encouragement(6), exhortation(7), urging(1). Lk. 2:25; Lk. 6:24; Acts 4:36; Acts 9:31; Acts 13:15; Acts 15:31; Ro 12:8; Ro 15:4; Ro 15:5; 1 Co. 14:3; 2 Co. 1:3; 2 Co. 1:4; 2 Co. 1:5; 2 Co. 1:6; 2 Co. 1:7; 2 Co. 7:4; 2 Co. 7:7; 2 Co. 7:13; 2 Co. 8:4; 2 Co. 8:17; Phil. 2:1; 1 Thess. 2:3; 2 Thess. 2:16; 1 Tim. 4:13; Phlm. 1:7; Heb. 6:18; Heb. 12:5; Heb. 13:22

**Teaching** (instruction, doctrine) (1319)(**didaskalia** from **didasko** from **dáo** = to know or teach) is either the act of teaching or the thing taught and in this use denotes doctrine or what is taught. **Didaskalia** - 21v - Note concentration in the pastoral epistles! Dear pastor please teach doctrine! (Be warned - Heb 13:17) Matt. 15:9; Mk. 7:7; Rom. 12:7; Rom. 15:4; Eph. 4:14; Col. 2:22; 1 Tim. 1:10; 1 Tim. 4:1; 1 Tim. 4:6; 1 Tim. 4:13; 1 Tim. 4:16; 1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Tim. 6:1; 1 Tim. 6:3; 2 Tim. 3:10; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Tim. 4:3; Titus 1:9; Titus 2:1; Titus 2:7; Titus 2:10

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1 Timothy 4:13, 14, 16, 6:11 (Oswald Chambers)

Keep Bright by Use: General Maxims

- (a) If you lack education, first realise it; then cure it.
- (b) Beware of knowing what you don't practise

### **Cultivate Mental Habits**

1 Timothy 4:13 Give attendance to reading)

If we wish to excel in secular things, we concentrate; why should we be less careful in work for God? Don't get dissipated; determine to develop your intellect for one purpose only—to make yourself of more use to God. Have a perfect machine ready for God to use. It is impossible to read too much, but always keep before you why you read. Remember that "the need to receive, recognise, and rely on the Holy Spirit" is before all else.

### **Constantly Aim at the Highest**

1 Timothy 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine

Remember that preaching is God's ordained method of saving the world (see 1Corinthians 1:21). Take time before God and find out the highest ideal for an address. Never mind if you do not reach the ideal, but work at it, and never say fail. By work and steady application you will acquire the power to do with ease what at first seemed so difficult. Avoid the temptation to be slovenly in your mind and be deluded into calling it "depending on the Spirit." Don't misapply Matthew 10:19, 20.

Carelessness in spiritual matters is a crime.

### **Concentrate on Personal Resources**

1 Timothy 4:14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee.

In immediate preparation don't call in the aid of other minds; rely on the Holy Spirit and on your own resources, and He will select for you. Discipline your mind by reading and by building in stuff in private, then all that you have assimilated will come back. Keep yourself full to the brim in reading; but remember that the first great Resource is the Holy Ghost Who lays at your disposal the Word of God. The thing to prepare is not the sermon, but the preacher.

### **Constrain Yourself to Be Spiritually Minded**

1 Timothy 6:11 Follow after righteousness

It is possible to have a saved and sanctified experience and a stagnant mind. Learn how to make your mind awake and fervid, and when once your mind is awake never let it go to sleep. The brain does not need rest, it only needs change of work. The intellect works with the greatest intensity when it works continuously; the more you do, the more you can do. We must work hard to keep in trim for God. Clean off the rust and keep bright by use (BORROW [Chambers, Oswald: Approved Unto God](#))

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**Steven Lawson gives an illustration of John Calvin's "giving attention" to Biblical preaching** -One noted expositor who "gave attention" to biblical preaching was the monumental reformer of Geneva, John Calvin. His passionate commitment to Word-centered, text-driven preaching remains second to none. For twenty-three years (1541–1564), this Swiss pastor carefully expounded God's Word to his congregation. Calvin preached from the New Testament twice each Sunday, and every other week he expounded portions of the Old Testament each weekday evening. Before this long period of extended ministry, Calvin had been missing from his pulpit ministry, banished on Easter Day 1538 by the Geneva city council. Yet upon his return from a three-year exile, Calvin entered

his Geneva church (in September 1541) triumphant and resumed his exposition exactly where he had stopped three years earlier—on the next verse. Later, Calvin became seriously ill in the first week of October 1558 and did not return to the pulpit until Monday, June 12, 1559—an absence of eight months. But when he resumed his ministry, he commenced again at the very next verse in the Book of Isaiah. He was consumed with a passion for expository preaching. In fact, Calvin was so devoted to preaching through books in the Bible that his expositional series often took several years to complete. For example, his weekly preaching through the Book of Acts took over four years. He then preached 46 sermons on 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 186 sermons on 1 and 2 Corinthians, 86 sermons on the Pastoral Epistles, 43 sermons on Galatians, and 48 sermons on Ephesians. In his latter years he began preaching a harmony of the Gospels in the spring of 1559 and continued to do so until he died five years later, on May 27, 1564. During this same time he preached 159 sermons on Job, 200 on Deuteronomy, 353 on Isaiah, 123 on Genesis, along with other expositions as well. John Calvin's meaty sermons were of such substance that his expositions eventually became the basis of his luminous commentaries. Through his pulpit preaching, he produced commentaries on twenty-three Old Testament books (including ten of the twelve Minor Prophets books), a harmony of the Gospels, Acts, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus. The great majority of this vast, rich legacy flowed out of his faithful expository preaching. Is biblical preaching relevant? When one considers that Calvin's expository preaching dramatically influenced two continents—both religiously and culturally—the answer must be affirmative. What could possibly be more relevant than the life-changing power of preaching God's Word? The famed Genevan Reformer towers over the centuries as an example worth emulating in the passionate pursuit of biblical exposition. ([Famine in the Land](#) - Recommended Read for Pastors)

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### [Read It Aloud](#)

Give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. —1 Timothy 4:13

Today's Scripture: 1 Timothy 4:6-16

We are blessed with many wonderful translations of the Bible these days, so it's hard for us to realize that for more than 350 years one version was used by much of the English-speaking world. Today some people recoil at the King James' "thees," "thous," and "verily." Yet there is something beautiful about hearing it read aloud, especially familiar passages like the 23rd Psalm.

In God's Secretaries, author Adam Nicolson chronicles the King James translators' sensitivity to sound. He says that the 12 men sat around the room listening to the text being read aloud. They felt that what governed the acceptability of a particular verse was not only accuracy to the original language, but a pleasant sound of the words.

Paul understood the power of the spoken Word. To the young pastor Timothy he instructed public Bible reading: "Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Timothy 4:13).

The Word of God stirs the heart when it enters the believer's ear. So whatever version you're reading in your quiet time, in family devotions, or in a church service, remember the power of the spoken Word. Look for opportunities to read it aloud. By: Dennis Fisher ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We need to take the time each day  
To read God's Word and pray,  
And listen for what He might say  
To guide us on our way.  
—Sper

God speaks through His Word—take time to listen.

**1 Timothy 4:14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery**

KJV 1 Timothy 4:14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

- **Neglect** Mt 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-26; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Th 5:19; 2 Timothy 1:6; 1 Pet 4:9-11
- **which** 1:18
- **with** 1 Ti 5:22; Acts 6:6; 8:17; 13:3; 19:6; 2 Ti 1:6

**Related Passages:**

Romans 12:6-8 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

1 Peter 4:9-11 Be hospitable to one another without complaint. 10 **As each one has received a special gift**, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

## USE YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT!

**Do not neglect** ([ameleo](#)) the spiritual gift ([charisma](#)) within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance ([propheteia](#)) with the laying on of hands by the presbytery - **Do not neglect** is a [present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#). Paul commands Timothy to either stop doing this or do not start doing this.

**Lawson** - In essence, Paul challenged this young preacher, "No matter what difficulty is being thrown at you, keep on preaching!"...Regardless of what might prompt a moment of weakness, Timothy was exhorted to endure faithfully in his preaching. Every preacher today must exhibit such unwavering resolve to preach the Word, no matter what may oppose him. The commitment must be constant and intentional. (Ibid)

**MacArthur** writes, "Each believer's gift is a God-designed blend of spiritual capacities, which acts as a channel through which the Spirit of God ministers to others. Timothy's gift included evangelism, preaching, teaching, and leadership." ([1 & 2 Timothy MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Guzik** makes an interesting (convicting) point - This shows that there was definitely the possibility that gifts and abilities in him could be wasted for eternity. As with the parable of the talents, we should not bury what abilities God has given. (**Ed**: I know a man who knew in his 30's he was called to preach and refused the call and he was miserable when I met him in his 60's. Dear reader, I plead with you do not waste this one life God gives you as you cannot imagine the glorious reward you will receive for effectively, actively, intentionally using your spiritual gift or gifts - remember everyone has at least ONE.) ([1 Timothy 4 Commentary](#))

**Do not neglect** (272) ([ameleo](#) from "a" = without + **melo** = to care for, to show concern, forethought or interest) means literally without care and thus showing no concern. Paul is commanding ([present imperative with a negative](#)) Timothy to stop being (or don't start) careless, unconcerned about or caring nothing about his spiritual gift.

**Spiritual gift** (5486) **charisma** from **charis** = **grace** + the ending **--ma** which indicates the result of something, in this case the result of grace, "the subjective grace that works within and shows itself in its result" [Wuest] is a Pauline word (with exception of [1Peter 4:10](#)) which literally means a **gift of grace** or a free gift. Considering that the root is **charis** (**grace**) the favor or gift which one receives is without any merit of one's own. Stated another way, whatever spiritual gift a man has comes from God, and should be no cause for personal pride or praise. It is something given to a man by God which the man himself could not have acquired or attained.

In his second letter Paul wrote "**For this reason** ("What reason?" see 2 Ti 1:5+) **I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.**" (2 Ti 1:6+) In other words, fan the flame (so to speak), stirring up your gift to new life, exciting fresh activity. The picture is the remains of a fire, the ember by which the fire is kindled anew or lit up as when blown on by bellows.

**THOUGHT** - This command begs the applicational question. What are you doing with the **spiritual gift** God has given you? You do realize you have at least one (possibly more) gift don't you? 1 Cor 12:11+ says "one and the same Spirit works all these things, **distributing to each one individually** just as He wills." You have a gift that is needed in the local Body of Christ you attend. Think about it this way -- if you are let's say a "foot," in your assembly, the function of the Body without a working foot will be "handicapped!" Not only that, but the gift is like a stewardship that God is entrusting to your care and wise use. You will be held responsible for how you used God's gracious gift. How sad to arrive at the Bema Seat and not hear "Well Done, my good and faithful servant." Life is short and eternity is long. Don't waste your once in a lifetime opportunity to use the spiritual gift

God has give you. You will not regret it in time or eternity! "God's gifts groan under our disuse or misuse."  
(John Trapp) **Alan Redpath** observed that a Christian might have a *saved soul* but a *wasted life*—but no follower of Jesus should ever be content with such a sad state.

**Kent Hughes** writes, "Paul charges Timothy to remember that electric moment in the past, somewhere with Paul in his travels when the man knelt, and Paul and the local elders fixed their hands on him, intoning prophecies and prayers about his giftedness and future ministry." (BORROW [1 & 2 Timothy and Titus : to guard the deposit](#))

**H A Ironside** - "It is evident that the elders of the church at Lystra and Derbe had met together with the apostle Paul when Timothy was about to launch out into full-time service and had laid their hands on him, commending him to God in prayer."

#### **Related Resource:**

- See chart on [Spiritual Gifts](#)
- See Commentary on 1 Corinthians 12, 1 Corinthians 13, 1 Corinthians 14

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**Ron Teed** - The reading of Scripture was followed by an exposition, which means to give a verse by verse explanation of the passage read so that the hearers could understand it.<sup>1</sup> 2 Anything that needed to be clarified would be explained. In our day, when we are culturally, geographically, linguistically, philosophically, and historically far removed from biblical times, exposition is essential.<sup>2</sup> 3 We pastors must be certain we have done everything possible to help people understand what the Word of God is really saying to them.

**Exhortation** says, "Take these truths that you have been taught and apply them to your own lives. You had better obey if you want the blessing and the reward that goes with obedience. Otherwise you may lose your reward. And if you are a nonbeliever and do not accept these truths, you will be judged and sent to Hell." Exhortation informs people and strongly urges them to obey the Word they have heard from the Lord; but it also encourages them to do so by strengthening their hearts and giving them hope and confidence that God will keep His promises to them.

**Teaching involves explaining the Word of God.** This is called expository preaching or teaching, and that is what we do at Village Church. We are therefore endeavoring to be obedient to the kind of preaching and teaching that God told Paul to pass along to ministers. This can be accomplished individually, in small group Bible studies, or by preaching to the entire church. The bottom line here is that a good minister will use every possible means available to provide solid biblical teaching to his flock

From its earliest years, the church has been committed to the teaching of God's Word. Writing in the middle of the second century, the apologist Justin Martyr described a typical worship service of his day:

"On the day called Sunday there is a meeting in one place of those who live in cities or the country, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. When the reader has finished, the president in a discourse urges and invites us to the imitation of these noble things. Then we all stand up together and offer prayers. And, as said before, when we have finished the prayer, bread is brought, and wine and water, and the president similarly sends up prayers and thanksgivings to the best of his ability, and the congregation assents, saying the Amen."

The reading and explanation of the Word was central to the worship service. The fourth-century bishop of Constantinople John Chrysostom was nicknamed "golden-mouthed." John R. W. Stott described him in this way:

"He is generally and justly regarded as the greatest pulpit orator of the Greek church. Nor has he any superior or equal among the Latin Fathers. He remains to this day a model for preachers in large cities.

"Four chief characteristics of his preaching may be mentioned. First, he was biblical. He was an expository preacher and punctuated his teaching with references to other Bible verses related to the passage he was preaching on. Secondly, his interpretation of the Scriptures was simple and straightforward. Thirdly, his moral applications were down to earth. Fourthly, he was fearless in his condemnations. In fact, 'he was a martyr of the pulpit, for it was chiefly his faithful preaching that caused his exile.'"

The Reformers (during the Protestant Reformation) were deeply committed to the expository teaching of Scripture. Martin Luther often preached four times on Sundays. Every quarter of the year he would teach a two-week series on doctrine using a catechism.<sup>5</sup> 6 Calvin ministered in Geneva from 1541 until his death in 1564. He preached twice each Sunday, and every other week preached each weeknight.<sup>6</sup> 7 The harder a man/woman works at teaching the Word, the more honorable he/she is according to: 1 Timothy 5:17

Remember what we talked about last week about the importance of "practicing what you preach"? When each of us is careful to live



out what the scripture teaches, we have “worked hard at preaching and teaching.” This hard work also involves diligent study and research so that one remains faithful to what the Bible is actually saying. It requires the full attention of the pastor-teacher.

“Preaching and teaching is the highest calling of a minister. It is tragic that so many in our day have been diverted from that. They spend their time on nonessentials, and their people end up spiritually impoverished.”

Warren Wiersbe has put it this way:

“There can be no real pioneer advance in one’s ministry unless there is total dedication to the task. “No man can serve two masters” (Matthew 6:24). “While I do not want to sound critical, I must confess that I am disturbed by the fact that too many pastors and Christian workers divide their time and interest between the church and some sideline. It may be real estate, trips to the Holy Land, politics, civic duties, even denominational service. Their own spiritual lives suffer, and their churches suffer, because these men are not devoting themselves wholly to their ministry. “This one thing I do” was Paul’s controlling motive, and it ought to be ours too (Phil. 3:13). ‘A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways’ (James 1:8).” (from Ron Teed - [Use Your Spiritual Gift](#))

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## **Dare to use your Gift**

“Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.”—1 Timothy 4:14

Some great Christian work has been done under less than ideal conditions. John Bunyan was wrongfully jailed and then wrote *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Sir Walter Scott authored some of his most famous classics at an advanced age because he had to pay off more than a half million dollars of debt for which he was not legally responsible. William Carey had no formal schooling after twelve years of age yet he is considered the father of modern missions. Martin Luther was hiding from enemies in Wartburg Castle when he translated the Bible into German. Mary Slessor was born into extreme poverty to an alcoholic father. Although she was a single woman, Slessor became a missionary to Africa.

Beethoven composed some of his best symphonies when he was totally deaf. John Calvin continued to write and preach while suffering from tuberculosis. Blind from childhood, Fanny Crosby became one of the most prolific hymn writers in history. Today, Joni Eareckson Tada, a quadriplegic from her youth, is an outstanding artist, author, and speaker.

What gifts has the Lord given to you? Everyone has at least one spiritual gift to build up the body of Christ. Don’t let circumstances prevent you from using the gift Christ has given you. Today in prayer ask the Lord to open doors for you to use your spiritual gifts.

“Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God.”—William Carey (Peter Kennedy - *From Generation to Generation*)

Stephen Olford - “Do not neglect the gift that is in you.” – 1 Timothy 4:14

1 Corinthians 12 makes it very plain that every believer has a gift given by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, this exhortation comes home to every heart, and indeed, my heart. “Do not neglect the gift that is in you.”

The Lord Jesus told a very sad parable of the man who buried his talent in the ground. This is possible in my life and possible in any life. “Look to yourselves,” says John, “that we do not lose those things we worked for” (2 John 1:8). The apostle Paul warns also, saying, “Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown” (Rev. 3:11), “Stir up the gift of God which is in you” (2 Tim. 1:6), and “Do not neglect the gift that is in you” (1 Tim. 4:14).

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## **A W Tozer - Tune the Strings**

Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. —1 Timothy 4:14–15

I have been forced to admit that one of the things hardest for me to understand and try to reconcile is the complete aimlessness of so many Christians’ lives...

Probably the worst part of this situation among us is the fact that so many of our Christian brothers and sisters have unusual gifts and talents and capacities—yet they have not exercised this discipline of girding up the mind and spiritual potential in order to make the necessary progress in the Christian life.

Why should a pastor have to confess total failure from year to year? Why should he have to go from one church to another, starting something, trying something—only to admit failure again?

I don't think he has ever really girded himself. He has abilities but they are not disciplined. He has a fine mind but it is not girded up. He is like a man with a treasured Stradivarius violin that has never been put in tune. He has never taken time to sit down and tune that priceless instrument, therefore he gets no melody and harmony from it.

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## Use Your Gift!

Do not neglect the gift that is in you. —1 Timothy 4:14

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

God never gives a person a task without also providing him with what's necessary to perform the responsibility.

W. W. Dawley, referring to this truth, says, "God gave Moses a rod, David a sling, Samson the jawbone of a donkey, Shamgar an oxgoad, Esther the beauty of person, Deborah the talent for poetry, Dorcas a needle, and Apollos an eloquent tongue—and to each the ability to use that gift. In so doing, every one of them did most effective works for the Lord."

Our heavenly Father has given at least one spiritual gift to each of us as believers, and He provides all we need to carry out our individual responsibilities (1 Cor. 12:6-7). We are all essential in the body of Christ (vv.14-27). Acknowledging these truths is not only a source of comfort and encouragement, but it is also a sobering reality, for it places before us an important obligation. God's gifts to us must not be squandered! They must be fully used, because someday "each of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12).

What has the Lord given you? Are you using your spiritual gift for His glory and the blessing of others? Don't waste your gift! Use it!

By: Richard DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord God, I humbly ask of You

The strength to do Your will;

I give to You my talents now

Your purpose to fulfill.

—Bierema

God's call to a task includes His strength to complete it.

**1 Timothy 4:15 Take pains with these things; be *absorbed* in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.**

KJV 1 Timothy 4:15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

NIV 1 Timothy 4:15 Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress.

NLT 1 Timothy 4:15 Give your complete attention to these matters. Throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone will see your progress.

- **Take pains** Joshua 1:8; Ps 1:2; 19:14; 49:3; 63:6; 77:12; 104:34; 105:5; 119:15,23,48; Ps 119:97,99,148; 143:5
- **be** Acts 6:4; 1 Cor 16:15; 2 Cor 4:14; 8:5; Titus 2:14
- **that** 1 Ti 4:6; Mt 5:16; Philippians 2:15,16

## KEEP ON GROWING IN CHRIST-LIKENESS

Timothy's advancement in spiritual life and ministry should be described as progress and not arrival. It is a race that he has not finished. The goal line is sure, but he has not reached it yet. ([Third Millennium](#))

**Take pains** ([meleto](#) [present imperative](#) - Be diligent, give your complete attention) **with these things; be** ([present imperative](#)) *absorbed* (immerse yourself, throw yourself into, devote yourself, give yourself wholly) **in them, so that** ([hina](#) purpose clause) **your progress** ([proskope](#)) **will be evident** ([phanerós](#)) **to all - Amplified** - Practice and cultivate and meditate upon these duties; throw yourself wholly into them [as your ministry], so that your progress may be evident to everybody." **Wuest** - "Be diligently

attending to these things; be constantly engrossed in them, in order that your progress may be evident to all." ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#)) **Take pains** is a command in the [present imperative](#) calling for this to be Timothy's lifestyle. [See discussion of the Need for the Holy Spirit to obey NT commands](#) (or "How to Keep All 1642 Commandments in the New Testament!")

**Guthrie** puts it: "The methods by which the gift may be nurtured are carefully delineated. The first requisite is diligence (Be diligent in these matters). The verb used (*meletaō*) can also mean 'to ponder', implying careful reflection on the matter in hand. Diligence would fit in well with the athletic metaphor which seems to have been in the writer's mind. But the idea of reflection would be quite apt since these matters, referring back to 1 Tim 4:13, would need a constant application of mind. Whichever was Paul's intention, it is clear that Timothy is to become so closely acquainted with these injunctions that they become second nature to him. He is to give himself wholly to them (*en tous isthi*, literally 'be in them', a construction which vividly brings out absorption in anything), a fitting reminder of the exacting nature of the Christian calling. The mind is to be as immersed in these pursuits as the body in the air it breathes. ([Pastoral Epistles](#))

**Guzik** - Paul called Timothy to meditation on God's Word and the work of God in his life. This is not emptying our minds (the goal of Eastern meditation), but filling our minds with God's Word. ([1 Timothy 4 Commentary](#))

**Swindoll** points out that "there's no more effective means of spiritual leadership than a **growing minister**. Paul urged Timothy to show himself an example (1 Ti 4:12) and to let his **progress** be evident to all (1 Ti 4:15). When a pastor or other Christian minister becomes steeped in biblical truth and grows in wisdom and godliness, people notice. Authenticity is observed and respected. Eventually, people begin to believe they can experience the same transformation. Keep growing in your walk. As you grow older, grow deeper." (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary - 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus)

**Warren Wiersbe** has a good word - As good ministers, we preach the Word; as godly ministers, we practice the Word; as growing ministers, we progress in the Word. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - New Testament](#)) . (**Ed**: I would add As faithful ministers we persevere holding fast to the word).

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**Take pains** (meditate, devise) ([3191](#))([meletao](#) from **melete** = care, meditation, which is from **mélō** = to be of interest, to concern oneself) means to continue to perform certain activities with care (root word = melete = care) and concern and thus to practice, to continue to do, to cultivate. It means to give careful thought to (to think about, to meditate upon) which is the primary sense in 1 Ti 4:15. **Meletao** is used 34x in the Septuagint compared to only 2 times in the NT and often conveys the idea of to meditate (or to delight in) the Word of God (or some synonym) or upon God Himself (Ps 63:6). The derivative in Lk 21:14 **promeletāō** (4304) means to premeditate.

**Progress** ([4297](#))([prokope](#) from [prokopto](#) = to cut forward [a way], advance from **pró** =before or forward + **kópto** = cut, strike, impel) describes not merely moving ahead but doing so against obstacles. **Prokope** refers to an explorer or an advance team hacking a path through dense trees and underbrush for the marching army to follow. Resistance is inherent to that sort of **progress**. The **progress** goes forward through obstacles, dangers, and distractions (cf false teaching at Ephesus - 1 Ti 4:1). The idea of **prokope** is blazing a trail before a marching army.

#### Related Resources:

- [Meditate](#)
- [Primer on Biblical Meditation](#)

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Meditation is a going up into the mount of the Lord, into its ampler air, where earth recedes and sinks into the mists, and God comes down to talk with us, and to make His goodness pass before us. MARK GUY PEARSE

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#### Spurgeon - READING: 1 Timothy 4:6–16

Do you think it an easy thing to stand before the people and deliver a message which you believe you have received from God? If you so imagine, I wish you would try it. He that finds it easy work to preach, will find it hard work to give an account of his preaching at the last great day. One has carefully to look around, and think while he is preaching, 'I must mind that I do not put this truth in such a way as to exaggerate it into a falsehood. I must not so encourage the weak that I dwarf the strong, nor so commend the strong as to grieve the weak. I must not so preach the grace of God as to give latitude to sin: I must not so denounce sin as to drive men to despair.' Our path is often narrow as a razor's edge, and we keep on crying in our spirit, while we are speaking, 'Lord, direct me! Lord, help me to deal wisely for thee with all these souls!' The anxieties which we feel in connection with our pulpit work are enough to make us old before our time. I have heard of one who thought he would give up his ministry because he had so small a chapel, into which he could not get more than two hundred people; but a good old man said to him, 'You will find it quite hard enough

to give a good account of two hundred at the last great day.' It is an idle ambition to desire a large congregation, unless that desire is altogether for God's glory, for we only increase our responsibilities when we increase the area of our influence. Still, some are responsible for not having a large congregation. If their dullness keeps people from hearing, they do not thereby escape from responsibility. To speak aright God's Word beneath the divine influence is, in the speaking as well as in the getting of the message, the burden of the Lord.

FOR MEDITATION: (Our Own Hymn Book, no. 900 v.2—John Jo

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### **Warren Wiersbe - (1 Peter 5:2) FORWARD HO!**

The pastor of the local assembly must be a man who walks with God and who is growing in his spiritual life. Paul admonished young Timothy: "Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress" (1 Tim. 4:15). The word "progress" in the original means "pioneer advance." The elders must constantly be moving into new territories of study, achievement, and ministry. If the leaders of the church are not moving forward, the church will not move forward.

"We love our pastor," a fine church member said to me during a conference, "but we get tired of the same thing all the time. He repeats himself and doesn't seem to know that there are other books in the Bible besides Psalms and Revelation." That man needed to become a "spiritual pioneer" and move into new territory, so that he might lead his people into new blessings and challenges.

Sometimes God permits trials to come to a church so that the people will be forced to grow and discover new truths and new opportunities. Certainly Peter grew in his spiritual experience as he suffered for Christ in the city of Jerusalem. He was not perfect by any means, but Peter was yielded to Christ and willing to learn all that God had for him. (BORROW [Pause for power : a 365-day journey through the Scriptures](#))

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### **FILLING THE MIND WITH TIMELESS TRUTH - NIV Once a Day**

Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching ... Be diligent in these matters.

1 TIMOTHY 4:13,15

"Garbage in, garbage out." It's a principle of computer programming that states that a computer can only respond to a question on the basis of information it has been supplied. If all you put in is "garbage," that's all you will get back in return.

What you feed your mind becomes the basis for the lifestyle you lead. Charles Hodge discusses the significance of good "input" in the Christian life.

#### **WALK WITH CHARLES HODGE**

"It is unreasonable to expect to be conformed to the image of God unless the truth concerning God operates continuously upon the mind.

"How can the love of Christ increase in those who hardly ever think of him or of his work? We cannot make progress in holiness unless we devote much time to reading, hearing, and meditating upon the Word of God, which is the truth whereby we are sanctified.

"The more this truth is brought before the mind—the more we commune with it, entering into its concerns, applying it to our own case, appropriating its principles, rejoicing in its promises—the more we may expect to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

"Those distinguished for their godliness have been those accustomed to withdraw the mind from the influence of the world and to bring it under the influence of the Word of God."

#### **WALK CLOSER TO GOD**

Here is a helpful "five finger" method for getting a grasp on a passage of Scripture:

1. Read it.
2. Hear it.
3. Study it.
4. Memorize it.
5. Meditate on it.

The grasp will be weaker or stronger depending on the number of fingers you use and how often you exercise that grasp.

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### **Molding Character 1 Timothy 4:15–16**

Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all" (1 Timothy 4:15–16 NASB). Lesslie Newbigin goes so far as to question whether the church ought to encourage the concept of leadership, so difficult it is to use without

being misled by its non-Christian counterpart. The church needs saints and servants, not “leaders,” and if we forget the priority of service, the entire idea of leadership training becomes dangerous. Leadership training must still follow the pattern our Lord used with His Twelve.

Perhaps the more strategic and fruitful work of Christian workers is to help leaders of tomorrow develop their spiritual potential. This task requires careful thought, wise planning, endless patience, and genuine Christian love. It cannot be haphazard

or ill conceived. Our Lord devoted the greater part of His three years of ministry to molding the characters and spirits of His disciples.

Paul showed the same concern for training young Timothy and Titus. Paul’s method for preparing Timothy for the church in Ephesus is deeply instructive.

Timothy was about twenty years old when Paul became his friend. Timothy tended toward despondency, and he was too tolerant of and partial to people of rank. He could be irritable with opponents. He was apt to rely on old spiritual experiences rather than kindle the flame of daily devotion.

But Paul had high hopes for him. Paul set about to correct Timothy’s timid nature, to replace softness with steel. Paul led Timothy into experiences and hardships that toughened his character. Paul did not hesitate to assign him tasks beyond his present powers. How else can a young person develop competence and confidence if not by stretching to try the impossible?

Traveling with Paul brought Timothy into contact with men of stature whose characters kindled in him a wholesome ambition to serve Christ. He learned from his mentor to triumphantly meet the crises that Paul considered routine. Paul shared with Timothy the work of preaching. Paul gave him the responsibility of establishing a group of Christians at Thessalonica. Paul’s exacting standards, high expectations, and heavy demands brought out the best in Timothy, saving him from a life of mediocrity as a leader. (Oswald Sanders)

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### **A W Tozer = Real Living**

Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. —1 Timothy 4:15

Let me observe that some Christians think they can be disciples of Christ without ever a thought about the necessity of self-discipline and genuine commitment to Him. We must face the fact that many today are notoriously careless in their living. This attitude finds its way into the church. We have liberty, we have money, we live in comparative luxury. As a result, discipline practically has disappeared.

What would a violin solo sound like if the strings on the musician’s instrument were all hanging loose, not stretched tight, not “disciplined”? Being an artist, the musician would not attempt to bring sound from that violin until each string had been tuned and tested and all was in perfect harmony.

In things that matter with God—important things—we need to be disciplined, pulled together, attuned to the Spirit until we are in harmony with all of God’s planning for us.

The Spirit of Life dwells and fills men, permeates their being, sanctifies their nature, quickens their powers, vitalizes their mortal bodies and radiates their life.... Pentecost turned anemic believers into exuberant saints.

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### **J C Philpot - Yawning & lounging their time away**

"Be diligent in these things; give yourself wholly to them, that your progress may be revealed to all." 1 Timothy 4:15

That their progress may be evident to all, ministers must give themselves wholly to their work. Every pursuit, therefore, however useful for other men as a part of their business or profession, which is not of the things of God, hinders the real and visible profit of a servant of Christ.

Now, we firmly believe that, if instead of yawning and lounging their time away in sloth and idleness, or gossiping from house to house, pastors would—apply their minds to reading, prayer, and meditation—live more alone—commune more with their own heart—be more separate from everything worldly and carnal—and give themselves more to the work, when out of it as well as in it, in the home as well as in the pulpit—they would find the benefit of it, not only in their own souls, but in the exercise of their ministry! A cold, lifeless, indifferent heart—though at various times, every servant of God has to mourn over his coldness and deadness—but a heart habitually cold, lifeless, and indifferent, and rarely otherwise, cannot be expected to warm up and cheer the drooping, desponding hearts of the family of God.

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**Spurgeon** - "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all."—1 Tim. 4:15.

THIS is, practically, a promise that, by diligent meditation and the giving up of our whole mind to our work for the Lord, we shall make a progress which all can see. Not by hasty reading, but by deep meditation, we profit by the Word of God. Not by doing a great deal of work in a slovenly manner, but by giving our best thought to what we attempt, we shall get real profit. "In all labour there is profit," but not in fuss and hurry without true heart-energy.

If we divide ourselves between God and mammon, or Christ and self, we shall make no progress. We must give ourselves wholly to holy things, or else we shall be poor traders in heavenly business, and at our stock-taking no profit will be shown.

Am I a minister? Let me be a minister wholly, and not spend my energies upon secondary concerns. What have I to do with party politics, or vain amusements? Am I a Christian? Let me make my service of Jesus my occupation, my life-work, my one pursuit. We must be in-and-in with Jesus, and then out-and-out for Jesus, or else we shall make neither progress nor profit, and neither the church nor the world will feel that forceful influence which the Lord would have us exercise.

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## 1 Timothy 4:15 A LETTER FROM J. EDGAR HOOVER

Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. 1 Timothy 4:15

The chief of the Federal Bureau of Investigation has often stressed the importance of family Bible reading. Some years ago in a letter to the American Bible Society he said, "Inspiration has been the keynote of America's phenomenal growth ... and the backbone of its greatness... This inspiration has been from faith in God ... and in the belief that the Holy Bible is His inspired Word. Reading the Scriptures within the family circle is more important today than ever before. As a small boy I sat at my mother's knee while she read the Word to me and explained its meanings with stories as we went along. It served to make the bond of faith between us much stronger. Then there were those wonderful nights when my father would gather all the children around him and read aloud verses from the Bible. This led to family discussions which were interesting, lively, and informative. Those wonderful sessions left me with an imprint of the power of faith and ... prayer which has sustained me in trying moments throughout my life."

Regrettably, family altars are fast disappearing from the American scene. People are too busy. The family is seldom together long enough to enjoy such sweet moments of fellowship — and the world is much the poorer for it! The Word of God constantly admonishes us to meditate upon its contents, for only as we absorb its teachings, believe its promises, and hide its precepts in our hearts can we prosper spiritually and live the "more abundant life."

Take a cue from the letter of J. Edgar Hoover; and if you have not yet established a definite time for Bible study in your home, start now — even if you can devote only five minutes a day to this necessary task. Man cannot live by bread alone. He must find sustenance for his spirit by appropriating the truths of God through the avenue of prayer and careful meditation. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

How precious is the Book divine,  
By inspiration given!  
Bright as a lamp its precepts shine,  
To guide our souls to Heaven.  
— J. Fawcett

A Bible that is falling apart usually belongs to a person who is not!

**1 Timothy 4:16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.**

KJV 1 Timothy 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

NLT 1 Timothy 4:16 Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right for the sake of your own salvation and the salvation of those who hear you.

- **Pay close attention** 1 Chronicles 28:10; 2 Chronicles 19:6; Mark 13:9; Luke 21:34; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 3:10,11; Col 4:17; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 2:7,15; Hebrews 12:15; 2 John 1:8

- **to your teaching** 1 Ti 4:6; 1:3; Romans 16:17; Eph 4:14; Titus 2:7; Hebrews 13:9; 2 John 1:9
- **Persevere** Acts 6:4; 26:22; Romans 2:7; 2 Timothy 3:14; Titus 1:9
- **You will ensure** Ezekiel 3:19-21; 33:7-9; Acts 20:26,27; 1 Cor 9:27
- **Both for yourself and for those who hear you** Isaiah 55:11; Jer 23:22; Romans 10:10-14; 11:14; 1 Cor 9:22; 1 Th 2:16,19,20; 2 Timothy 2:10; Philemon 1:19; James 5:20

## PREACHER SAVE THYSELF!

Closely scrutinize your private life that it might authenticate your public ministry.

**Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching** - This is good advice not just for Timothy and for all pastors, but for all saints. It reminds me that we need to watch over our own heart because out of our mouths comes that which fills our heart. We need to be prepared for as Paul says in 2 Ti 2:21+ "Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work."

As Solomon advised "**Watch** (Lxx = [tereo](#) in [present imperative](#) which calls for us to depend on [the Holy Spirit to obey the command](#)) over your heart with all diligence, For (a crucial, vital term of explanation!!!) from it flow the springs of life." (Pr 4:23+)

"**Be on guard** ([prosecho](#) in the [present imperative](#)) for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. (Acts 20:28+)

Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on (present tense) those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and **turn away** ([ekklino](#) in [present imperative](#) which calls for us to depend on [the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) from them. (Romans 16:17+)

**Pay close attention** (1907) ([epecho](#) from [epí](#) = upon + [écho](#) = have, hold) means literally have or hold upon. To hold fast. To hold firmly to (hold firmly to a particular belief) To give attention to, then to hold one's mind toward. Note the command is a [present imperative](#) which calls for us to depend on [the Holy Spirit to obey the command](#).

**Teaching** (doctrine) (1319) ([didaskalia](#) from [didasko](#) from [dáo](#) = to know or teach) is either the act of teaching or the thing taught and in this use denotes doctrine or what is taught.

The term **doctrine** in Scripture "is broader than a simple reference to information passed on from one person to another or from one generation to the next. Christianity is a religion founded on a message of good news rooted in the significance of the life of Jesus Christ. In Scripture, then, **doctrine** refers to the entire body of essential theological truths that define and describe that message (1Ti 1:10; 4:16; 6:3; Titus 1:9). The message includes historical facts, such as those regarding the events of the life of Jesus Christ (1Cor 11:23). But it is deeper than biographical facts alone. As J. Gresham Machen pointed out years ago, Jesus' death is an integral historical fact but it is not doctrine. Jesus' death for sins (1Cor 15:3) is doctrine. (Sound) **Doctrine**, then, is scriptural teaching on theological truths." (parenthesis added) ([Elwell, W. A., & Elwell, W. A. The Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#) - online - an excellent resource)

**Thomas Watson** - Meditation is the chewing upon the truths we have heard: the beasts in the old law that did not chew the cud, were unclean; the christian that doth not by meditation chew the cud, is to be accounted unclean. Meditation is like the watering of the seed, it makes the fruits of grace flourish.

### RELATED RESOURCES:

- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Doctrine](#)
- Charles Buck Dictionary [Doctrine](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Doctrine](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Doctrine](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Doctrine](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Doctrine](#)
- [What is false doctrine?](#)
- [What is doctrine?](#)
- [Why is sound doctrine so important?](#)
- [Why is Christian doctrine so divisive?](#)

- [What is orthopraxy/orthopraxis?](#)

**Persevere** (epmeno in [present imperative](#) which calls for us to depend on [the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **in these things** - This begs the question "What things?" Paying attention to his own soul and to his teaching.

**Persevere** (remain, stay, tarry) (also in the [present imperative](#)) (1961)([epimeno](#) from **epí** = upon, in or at + **meno** = abide, endure, continue, stay or remain > **epí** intensifies the meaning and so this word is a strengthened form of [meno](#) and gives the force of adherence to and persistence in what is referred to) means literally to tarry, to stay at or with, to abide in, to continue in.

**Charles Swindoll** writes that "The key to successful ministry, in a word, is **perseverance**. In fact, perseverance IS ministry success; the only way to fail in ministry is to back off and give up. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that perseverance is also the minister's greatest challenge. Discouragement seemingly comes from nowhere to knock us flat. Criticism makes us wonder why we should stay at it. Laziness promises the work will be easier tomorrow. Greed looks for greener grass in another occupation. Idealism wearily wrestles with futility. Hope barely staves off fatigue. Determination eventually overcomes doubt. But if the minister isn't seeing results or receiving encouragement from the congregation, then resignation will likely follow. Faithful expositors need few things to keep them going . . . but encouragement is one of them....(and) there's no better proof of an authentic ministry than **perseverance**. Ministers don't succeed in ministry because of brains, talent, charisma, or interpersonal skills. Ministers succeed by hanging tough through difficult seasons—so expect difficult seasons. Ministers **persevere** through disappointment—so hang tough. Successful ministers don't let dirty politics get the best of them. They refuse to quit when people criticize or run after false teaching. Success for the minister is faithfully carrying out the duties of ministry, day in and day out, in season and out of season, year after year, regardless of the results." (See [Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus](#))

**For** (gar) - [Term of explanation](#). This forces you to ask what is Paul explaining? And this time the answer is fairly clear cut. Paul gives what in essence is a promise (conditioned on his obedience to the preceding commands).

**You will ensure salvation** - NET translates it "you will save both yourself and those who listen to you."

**Third Millennium** - While God alone grants salvation (1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; 4:10), he is pleased to use his people as instruments (secondary causes or agents) in bringing salvation to others. Unlike the thief on the cross, in a sense, salvation is not completed when one initially comes to faith. To be sure, faith brings regeneration, justification, adoption, and the assurance of salvation. One is sealed by the Holy Spirit. One is eternally God's. However, initial repentance and saving faith also begin the lifelong process of sanctification, which is not completed until the Christian's earthly life has ended. Progressive sanctification (which differs from definitive sanctification, see below) is a work of God (Phil 2:13) that demands the cooperative activity of the Christian (Phil. 2:12).

**Ron Teed** - Paul concludes his remarks to Timothy regarding the qualities of a noble servant by commanding him to pay close attention to himself and his teaching. Each of the characteristics of an excellent minister found in 1 Timothy four, verses 6-16, fit into one of these two categories: A true man/woman of God will concentrate totally on personal holiness and public instruction. Such behavior on the part of a minister will not only confirm his/her salvation but will also bring a reward when the minister stands before the judgment seat of Christ at the Rapture. This will be an indication of true salvation both for the minister and for those whom he teaches. It will bring about salvation for him in the sense that final salvation, deliverance from sin and entrance into eternal glory, demands perseverance. Persevering in the faith is a mark of genuine salvation. If you are truly saved, if you have confessed to God that you are a sinner in need of a Savior, and have accepted the death of Jesus as payment for your sins, then the Holy Spirit lives within you and will stand by you when the going gets tough. He will not let you slip away no matter what the persecution might involve. It is those who simply say they are Christians, when they do not have a clue what it truly means to be a Christian, who will break ranks and be led away by false teaching and fear. - John 8:31, Matthew 10:22 Such perseverance is the result of daily Scripture reading, devotion, prayer, meditation, sharing the Gospel, and of course obedience. Such perseverance is only possible by the power of God and the submission of the believer to the Holy Spirit When a minister lives his/her life in this way, he/she will be the channel through which God brings to salvation those who are willing to acknowledge that Christ is the One-and Only true Savior. This should be the goal of each and every minister, 1 7F 18 and it should be your goal as well. ([Ibid](#))

**As you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you** - Paul is not implying Timothy would or could earn his salvation by paying close attention and persevering but that he would assure an abundant entrance into paradise. Peter writes "Therefore, brethren, **be all the more diligent** ([aorist imperative](#) - Do it now! Don't delay! It is urgent!) to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for ([Term of explanation](#)) in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. (2 Peter 1:10-11 [±](#))

Believers all participate in the [Three Tenses of Salvation](#) - (1) past - justification, (2) present - sanctification and (3) future - glorification. Timothy has been saved and there is nothing he can add to his past tense salvation (justification). But he is now being sanctified, daily, progressively set apart from the world and unto God, progressively being transformed into the image of God's Son



(2 Cor 3:18+) and it is this phase of his "salvation" that he is exhorted to "ensure." And so for example Paul wrote "work out your salvation in fear and trembling" (Php 2:12+), which describes Timothy's and every believer's charge to obey - work out! But praise God, Paul adds a small preposition following this command -- "for." The "for" serves as a term of explanation, and explains how Timothy and all of us will even be enabled to work out our salvation. And so what is the explanation? Paul explains you can work it out, because of what God works in (so to speak). He says "for it is God in you (the indwelling Spirit Who is continually energizing or) "working in you, giving you the **desire** and the **power** to do what pleases him. (Php 2:13NLT+).

John writes "**Watch** ([blepo](#) in the [present imperative](#)) yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward (cf 2 Cor 5:10+, Rev 22:12+)." (2 John 1:8)

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### **Vance Havner - January 16. Have You Paid Attention To Yourself Lately? 1 Timothy 4:16**

Are you constantly serving others without giving yourself needed times of rest and refreshing? Or do you remember that you have spiritual needs too?

When Paul wrote First Timothy 4:16, Timothy was a young pastor working ferociously to see his ministry succeed. Timothy was serving as the pastor of the giant church of Ephesus—the world's largest church at that time. In the process, he was learning to deal with all the problems that go along with serving as the senior pastor of such a large church.

Timothy was discovering that taking care of a large church was an all-consuming task. He was giving every ounce of himself to serve the needs of that church and to make sure it was well taken care of. In fact, he was so busy taking care of everything and everyone else that he was forgetting to take care of himself!

Have you ever been guilty of running around and taking care of everyone else except yourself? Have you ever gotten so busy helping others that you forfeited your own vital time with God? Be honest! Have you ever done this so regularly that you began to feel drained, and you knew it was because you weren't taking care of your own spiritual needs?

That's why Paul admonished Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself..." This phrase "take heed" comes from the Greek word epecho, which is a compound of the words ep and echo. The word ep means on, and the word echo means to have or to hold. When these two words are compounded into one word, it means to grab hold of something very tightly. In other words, the word epecho describes an extremely firm grip.

It's so easy to get distracted by other things that scream for your attention. However, if your relationship with God suffers because you are trying to help everyone else, it will just be a matter of time until you run dry, lose your energy and passion, and have nothing more to offer. This is exactly what was happening to Timothy! If he was to continue serving as an effective minister to other people, he had to set aside some private time to develop his own relationship with God.

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### **Greg Laurie - THE IMPORTANCE OF DOCTRINE**

Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you. (1 Timothy 4:16)

Theology and doctrine are not trivial matters. Yet there are people today who set aside biblical teaching and say, "I just want to experience God. I don't want to argue over doctrine. I just want to love Jesus." That is a nice sentiment, but it is also a very dangerous one. It means they might end up loving the wrong Jesus. They might end up believing the wrong doctrine.

That is why the Bible exhorts us again and again to have our lives and doctrine in order. One of the reasons so many people are falling prey to false teachings today is that they do not have a grip on good Bible teaching.

I once heard a statistic that 80 percent of people who are pulled into various cult groups were once part of a church. That isn't necessarily saying they were believers, but it is saying that these people had some church involvement at some point in their lives. If that statistic is correct, then it is alarming. It shows there are people who could have spent time in church, maybe a lot of time, but because they didn't have their doctrine in order, they were led down the wrong road.

If you have your doctrine in order, if you know what the Bible teaches, then you will be able to refute false teaching and defend your faith. It's what Jude means by exhorting Christians to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

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### **Robert Neighbour - "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine." (1 Tim. 4:16.)**

Unto thyself give heed, weigh well each word and deed.

Make them a faithful witness to thy creed;

Then, when shall set thy sun, thine earthly race be run,  
The Lord will grant to thee a large "well done."  
But should'st thou press thy creed, to doctrine give thine heed,  
And yet defame Thy Lord in word and deed;  
Then let me thee remind, that thou shalt surely find  
God will not grant a "well done" to thy kind.

HOW strongly does the admonition ring out: "Take heed to thyself." Someone asserts, "I am for pure doctrine." We will do well to note, however, God's order. God places "thyself" before the "doctrine," thus putting the emphasis on the life. Both are necessary; both, indeed, are vital, but the Christ in your life is more to be desired than the Christ in your creed.

We are deeply sorrowed by the sweep of the present day apostasy. Denials of the faith, and negations of the Christ, are heard on every hand. The destructive force of modernism can hardly be overstated. However, there is one menace that is even greater. That is the menace of worldliness. Bad doctrine is bad, very bad; however, bad living is worse, much worse.

Christians, who boast their orthodoxy, should first be able to proclaim their separation and holiness. The world will lose its faith in Christianity far more quickly on the rocks of Christless Christians, than upon the rocks of Christless theology.

Lord, may I live what I profess;  
The faith I hold, may I possess  
In life, and words, and holiness;  
Lord, keep me true.  
To doctrine, I would give due heed,  
Yet, may my life adorn my creed,  
Thus meeting all my brother's need  
In what I say, and do.

There is one other desire that lies deep down in our hearts. It is this: We want not only to have a good life and true faith, but we want also to have the power of God manifested in both. There is too much "form of godliness" around these days, and too little of the power thereof.

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#### **William MacDonald - [Truths to Live By - One Day at a Time](#)**

"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine." (1 Tim. 4:16)

One of the many noteworthy features of the Word of God is that it never isolates doctrine from duty. Take Philippians 2:1-13, for example. It is one of the classic passages in the New Testament on the doctrine of Christ. We learn there of His equality with God the Father, His self-emptying, His incarnation, His servanthood, His death and His subsequent glorification. But this is introduced, not as a doctrinal treatise, but as an appeal to the Philippians and to us to have the mind of Christ. If we live for others as He did, this will eliminate strife and vainglory. If we take the low place as He did, God will exalt us in due time. The passage is intensely practical.

I often think of this when I read books on systematic theology. In these books the authors seek to gather together all that the Bible teaches on the doctrines of the faith, whether of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, angels, man, sin, redemption, etc. While this has definite value, it can be very cold when isolated from godly living. A person can be intellectually proficient in the great doctrines and yet be sadly deficient as to his Christian character. If we study the Bible as God has given it to us, we never get a dichotomy between doctrine and duty. The two are always beautifully balanced and woven together.

Perhaps the doctrinal subject that has been most divorced from our personal responsibility is prophecy. Too often it has been presented in such a way as to cater to curiosity. Sensational speculations concerning the identity of the Antichrist may draw the crowds but they don't develop holiness. Prophecy was never intended to tickle itching ears but rather to shape Christian character. George Peters lists 65 ways in which the Second Advent is calculated to affect our doctrine, duty and character; and I don't doubt that there are many more than that.

The lesson for us is that we should never divorce theology from practical godliness. In our own personal study and in teaching the Word to others, we should emphasize Paul's exhortation to Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine..."

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#### **Oswald Chambers —1 Timothy 4:16**

IN THIS VERSE, THE WORD heed means "to hold up, to concentrate, screw your mind down, fix it, limit it, curb it, confine it, and rivet it" on yourself and your teaching. It is a strong word, a powerful word, a rousing word, a word that grips us—body, mind, and spirit. We are to concentrate on God's work, stick at it, fix the mind, be careful of our self-preparation, and take heed to reading. That is what we have to do if we are going to be workers approved unto God.

Notice who is talking and to whom he is talking. The apostle Paul is writing to Timothy; and notice that the apostle's method was like the journeyman's method with an apprentice. That is the method of God always.

Let me explain what I mean. A journeyman's apprentice is a boy put in the charge of a skilled worker in order to learn a trade. That was God's method of teaching this young man. Timothy had a good mother, and a godly grandmother, and then he had the apostle Paul. He was brought up in the journeyman apprentice's style, spiritually.

God does not use anyone who is undisciplined. If you are a worker for the spiritual welfare of souls, God will help you to grow spiritually under masters, teachers, and other workers. Thank God for every worker who was ever placed under the apprentice!

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### **KNOCKOFFS - David Jeremiah**

Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. 1 TIMOTHY 4:16

They're called "knockoffs"—counterfeit watches, sunglasses, pens, and ties, all sporting a designer label. "Counterfeiting is a booming international business," reported the New York Times, "accounting for an estimated 5 to 7 percent of global trade." Some people buy phony goods for fun because they enjoy sporting a "Rolex" watch or "Louis Vuitton" purse, but others are fleeced of their hard-earned money.

There are a lot of counterfeit religions being peddled today too. Visit any large bookstore, and peruse the titles in the religion/spirituality section. Surf through the channels on your television. Scan the religion section of your newspaper.

How can you tell the truth from the knockoffs? The best way is to carefully study the genuine article. It's easy to spot fakes if you know the authentic. That's why it's important to read the Scriptures and divide them rightly. It's important to listen to the sermons and study the writings of trustworthy pastors and teachers.

The apostle Paul warned Timothy to reject the claims of false teachers, "rightly dividing" the Word of God for himself (2 Timothy 2:15). Don't fall for the phony. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. (BORROW [Sanctuary : finding moments of refuge in the presence of God](#))

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### **PILGRIM'S PROGRESS**

WATCH YOUR LIFE AND DOCTRINE CLOSELY. PERSEVERE IN THEM, BECAUSE IF YOU DO, YOU WILL SAVE BOTH YOURSELF AND YOUR HEARERS.—1 Timothy 4:16

Periodically, I'm asked what my greatest challenge is at Moody. That's not a hard question to answer. The answer does not relate to finances, personnel, management, or even the busyness of my schedule. My greatest challenge at Moody is me. When I'm keeping myself spiritually, emotionally, and physically fit, I have a far greater capacity to deal with the challenges at the office. When I keep myself functioning in the context of my gifts and am growing in Christ, I have a special strength, even on the tough days. As the old spiritual says, "It's not my brother, nor my sister, but it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer."

Paul challenged Timothy to do the same: "Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you. . . . Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you" (1 Timothy 4:14–16 NASB 1977).

When Paul said to "take pains with these things . . . so that your progress may be evident to all" (v. 15 NASB 1977), he was referring in part to his earlier exhortation that Timothy develop the qualities of love, purity, faith, excellent conduct, and wise speech.

The primary focus of Paul's plan for Timothy's success was Timothy himself. His leadership would rise or fall on how well he managed his personal growth and progress. And I like the fact that Paul called for him to make progress, not perfection. If perfection is required, we might as well quit. We'll never make it. But if progress in character, attitudes, and behavior is your passion, keep at it. That's a goal that you, by His grace, can attain.

Unfortunately, it is easier to become task oriented, throwing our worn-out selves and spirituality into the work. But God needs fit, growing workers in the vineyard. With Him it's always personhood before performance.

Is your life more involved with doing than becoming? (Joe Stowell)

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1 Timothy 4:16

TODAY IN THE WORD When navigating a ship, an error of one degree seems miniscule, but continued travel in an errant direction

will lead the vessel miles off course. Similarly, false belief about Jesus, even if seemingly slight, has increasingly deleterious effects upon orthodoxy (right belief) and orthopraxy (right practice). Today's text warns against such false belief leading to idolatry.

Nothing in 1 John readies us for 5:21, as nothing explicit is said about idols up to this point in John's letter, though he does call Jesus "true God" (v. 20). John may be speaking of the actual idolatry of his day (cf. Acts 17:23; 1 Thess. 1:9), but it is more likely that the "idols" are those conjured by the false teachers. Idolatry is the worship of false gods. The antichrists' false claims about Jesus are idolatrous, because false belief leads to worship of something that is not God. In contrast, John exhorts us to maintain right belief about Jesus, "the true God and eternal life" (v. 20). Those who truly know Jesus completely avoid idols and those who endorse them.

First John 5:18-21 summarize John's major themes. As our study of 1 John ends, let's review one edifying thread woven through John's letter: assurance for believers in Jesus Christ, God's Son. First, assurance is grounded in obedience to the command to love and live like Jesus (2:3-6; 3:14). Second, confidence on the day of judgment is based on righteous living and loving in Christ (2:28-29; 4:17).

Third, certainty in prayer results from living and praying according to God's will (3:21-22; 5:14). Fourth, God's testimony about Jesus resides in our hearts (5:9-13). Lastly, all assurance is guaranteed through God's Spirit living in us (3:23-24; 4:13). As one New Testament scholar states: "The grounds of assurance are ethical, not emotional; objective, not subjective; plain and tangible, not microscopic and elusive."

**APPLY THE WORD** Sometimes Christians read God's Word piecemeal, one verse or passage at a time, often without connecting the small portion to the larger context, namely, the chapter, book, Testament, and Bible as a whole. Today, take time to read 1 John in its entirety. This is a good practice for any Bible study: at the end of a study, take some time to re-read the entire book. If you need a resource to encourage you, read Gordon Fee's *How to Read the Bible Book by Book*.

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## 1 Timothy 4:11-16 NO CREDIBILITY GAP

Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them. 1 Timothy 4:16

There is to be no "credibility gap" in the believer's testimony and life. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." Do our lives line up with what we say we believe?

In one of the letters of John Newton, reference is made to "the remarkable and humbling difference between a believer's acquired and experimental knowledge, or in other words, between his opinion and his practice." This is precisely what Paul was saying to Timothy. Right doctrine and wrong practice add up to a minus on the spiritual score sheet.

To increase the copies of Bibles upon the bookshelf is an easy matter; but to multiply the truth of that Book in our lives is something else. In a picture painted in the Middle Ages, a friar is seen dressed in the robes of his order and apparently en-grossed in his religious devotions. Looking more closely, how-ever, one can see that what appeared to be a book is really a punchbowl and the friar's clasped hands are squeezing a lemon.

Too often a disparity exists between doctrine and life, preaching and practice, belief and behavior. The apostle's plea was for the balance of the two. Never can there be the sacrifice of doctrine, for right living is possible only when there is right believing. But as others look on, is our life as credible as our creed? Someone has written, "I am my neighbor's Bible, he reads me when we meet. Today he reads me in my home, tomorrow in the street. He may be relative or friend, or slight acquaintance be. He may not even know my name, yet he is reading me." May there be no credibility gap! ([Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Be like Jesus, this my song,  
In the home and in the throng;  
Be like Jesus, all day long!  
I would be like Jesus.  
—Rowe

Don't pray and talk cream and live skimmed milk!

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## **First Things First**

Watch your life and doctrine closely. 1 Timothy 4:16

Today's Scripture & Insight: 1 Timothy 4:12–16

When you travel by air, before the flight takes off an airline employee presents a safety briefing, which explains what to do if there is a loss of cabin pressure. Passengers are told that oxygen masks will drop from the compartment above and they are to put one on themselves before helping others. Why? Because before you can help anyone else, you need to be physically alert yourself.

When Paul wrote to Timothy, he stressed the importance of maintaining his own spiritual health before helping and serving others. He reminded Timothy of his many responsibilities as a pastor: There were false teachings to contend with (1 Tim. 4:1–5) and wrong doctrines to correct (vv. 6–8). But to discharge his duties well, what was most important was to “watch [his] life and doctrine closely [and] persevere in them” (v. 16). He needed to take care of his own relationship with the Lord first before he could attend to others.

What Paul told Timothy applies to us too. Each day we encounter people who do not know the Lord. When we tank up on our spiritual oxygen first through time in God’s Word, prayer, and the enabling of the Holy Spirit, we keep our relationship right with God. Then we will be spiritually alert to help others. By: C. P. Hia ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, open Your Word to me now. Let me breathe in its freshness before I go out to be Your light to the world.

A Christian’s life is the window through which others can see Jesus.

(ED: ARE YOU WINDOWS CLEAN? A GOOD "CLEANING PRODUCT" IS 1 John 1:9)

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### **Doctrine, Dynamic, Discipline - Vance Havner**

- Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine. I Timothy 4:16.
- Stir up the gift of God which is in thee. II Timothy 1:6.
- Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. II Timothy 2:3.

**Doctrine, Dynamic, Discipline**—Paul would have young Timothy qualified in all three. For lack of any or all, our Timothys do not fare so well today. Some know not what they believe or else turn from truth to fable. Some lack fire from heaven, vainly "compassing themselves about with sparks." And real discipleship has given way to a modern version without a cross.

How the church suffers for lack of all three! How many members can give a reason for their hope? How much of our religious activity is the work of the Spirit? And while we have professed believers aplenty, how many disciples do we have?

We need a fresh course in the Three D's!

Paul would have young Timothy well-grounded in what he believed. We have been entrusted with a sacred deposit, revealed truth, the Word of God. If a preacher is not doctrinally ready to preach, he is not ready. Then, he must be discipled, disciplined, trained in obedience. Only if we continue in the Word—the doctrine—are we disciples indeed. We must stir up the gift of God within us, that we may be burning and shining lights. But it is the dynamic of the Spirit, not human enthusiasm—old Adam worked up to a high pitch. Stir carries the idea of kindling the flame—doctrine that we may believe, discipline that we may behave, dynamic that we may burn! That is the true New Testament Timothy, believing, behaving, burning

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### **Phillips Brooks - .—I Tim. 4:13, 16.**

The truth is, no preaching ever had any strong power that was not the preaching of doctrine. The preachers that have moved and held men have always preached doctrine. No exhortation to a good life that does not put behind it some truth as deep as eternity can seize and hold the conscience. Preach doctrine, preach all the doctrine that you know, and learn forever more and more; but preach it always, not that men may believe it, but that men may be saved by believing it. So it shall be live, not dead. So men shall rejoice in it and not decry it. So they shall feed on it at your hands as on the bread of life, solid and sweet, and claiming for itself the appetite of man which God made for it.

To decry dogma in the interest of character, is like despising food as if it interfered with health. Food is not health. The human body is built just so as to turn food into health and strength. And truth is not holiness. The human soul is made to turn, by the subtle chemistry of its digestive experience, truth into goodness. And this, I think, is just what the Christian, as he goes on, finds himself doing under God’s grace.

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### **A W Tozer - Religion Should Be a Fount Not a Front**

Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee. 1 Timothy 4:16

As students of God's Word, we should bear in mind that the burden of the Old Testament was the disparity between the external and the internal life of Israel and that much of the preaching of Christ was directed against the Jews for their failure to be inwardly what their outward profession proclaimed them to be.

Paul, too, warned of those who had but a form of godliness without the corresponding substance, and the history of the church provides all the proof we need that the temptation to make a "front" of religion is very real and very strong.

Probably the tendency to make a mere front of religion is strongest among persons engaged in professional Christian service, but the condition must not be accepted as inevitable. Our first responsibility is not to the public but to God and to our own souls!

Briefly, the way to escape religion as a front is to make it a fount! See to it that we pray more than we preach. Stay with God in the secret place longer than we are with men in the public place. Keep our hearts open to the inflowing Spirit. Cultivate the acquaintance of God more than the friendship of men and we will always have abundance of bread to give to the hungry!

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### **Pay Attention! Joe Stowell 1 Timothy 4:16**

I would love to have a dollar for every time I heard my Mom say, "Joe, pay attention to what you're doing!" As I was growing up, there was always something more fun to distract me from the task at hand.

To be honest, I still need reminders like that, particularly in my desire to become more like Jesus. I suspect that all of us do. We want to follow and serve Him more effectively, but there are so many distractions along the way: A little pursuit of materialism here, a little power trip there. And ooh, there's an opportunity to chase pleasure for a little while. Before long, we're spiritually disoriented, frustrated, and perplexed about how to get back on track in our pursuit of Jesus.

We need to take Paul's instruction to Timothy to heart. He says, in essence, "Timothy, pay attention!" He tells Timothy where his attention should be: "Watch your life and doctrine closely"

(1 Timothy 4:16). Let's talk about those two words "life" and "doctrine."

By God's grace, I have had the opportunity to invest a major part of my life in preaching. A lot of my ministry has been sharing God's Word in a variety of contexts. But, for a long time now, I have been keenly aware that those moments in the pulpit are only the tip of the iceberg. Scripture reminds me over and over that my life has to match up with what I am preaching. If I am proclaiming the joy of freedom in Christ, then my life needs to show that I am walking in the freedom that He offers. If I am calling God's people to greater levels of commitment and sacrifice for kingdom causes, then I need to be stepping out in faith, seeking to grow in my commitment and willingness to sacrifice. Timothy is reminded of this when Paul tells him to "set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). Nothing hinders our witness for Jesus more than a lack of authenticity. We need to pay attention to the way we live.

Paul also tells Timothy to pay attention to his doctrine. He starts chapter 4 with the warning that "in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons" (1 Timothy 4:1). Since the early days of the church, the enemy has been consistently attempting to distract God's people by leading them away from the core truths of Scripture. A key responsibility of Timothy, the young pastor, was to "command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer" (1 Timothy 1:3).

Satan continues to sow seeds of doubt in our minds about the authenticity and authority of Scripture—one of our bedrock doctrines. Some well-meaning but misguided churches promote the notion that other religions and belief systems, if sincerely held and practiced, may offer an alternative means of reconciliation with God. This flies in the face of Jesus' words when He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Teaching which tells us that we need to do good works to be saved is a frontal attack on the grace of the gospel.

So, what's in it for us? Paul assures us that the payoff in paying attention to our life and doctrines is huge. "If you do," he writes, "you will save both yourself and your hearers." So take my Mom's advice: Pay attention to what really matters!

YOUR JOURNEY...

- What pursuits have recently distracted you from following Jesus wholeheartedly?
- What areas of your life might need a little more attention today? What has God spotlighted, even as you've been reading?
- What about paying attention to your doctrine? How is your time in God's Word shaping your ability to think biblically and to differentiate between truth and error?

## Your Walk And Your Work For Christ

1 Timothy 4:11-16

by Pastor Steven Cole

April 24, 1994

William Carey, often called the father of modern missions, was a shoe cobbler by trade before he went to India. He kept a map of India in his shop, stopping every so often to study and pray over it. Sometimes, because of his preaching ministry, his shoe business suffered. One day a friend admonished him for neglecting his business. "Neglecting my business?" said Carey, looking at him intently. "My business is to extend the kingdom of God. I only cobble shoes to pay expenses."

No matter what your occupation, every Christian should have Carey's mentality: "My real business is to extend God's kingdom; I just work to pay expenses." In other words, every Christian is in the ministry. Eph 4:11-12 states that God gave to the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service (ministry), to the building up of the body of Christ." My job is to equip you to do the work of the ministry. If you are a saint (= "holy one," true of every believer) then you're in the ministry! Some may be supported so that they work full-time in their ministry. But every Christian, like William Carey, should see their main business as serving God.

Since that is the clear teaching of the New Testament, it ought to be of great concern to every Christian to know how to fulfill the ministry God has entrusted to him or her. It seems as if there are droves who are either burning out on ministry because they are exhausted, or bombing out of ministry because of moral failure. Timothy's danger was that he would just fade out of the ministry because his timid personality had a tendency to want to avoid conflict. The fact is, you can't preach God's truth without confronting error and offending some people. So Timothy was in danger of neglecting his ministry (1Ti 4:14).

Some of you are not involved in any kind of ministry for the Lord. Maybe you burned out, bombed out, or just faded out. Frankly, ministry is battle, and who likes war? The tendency of the flesh is to let someone else do it, especially if it's a hassle. Maybe you justify your lack of involvement by thinking, "I'm not all that gifted anyway." But remember, in the parable of the talents, it was the guy with only one who buried it and was rebuked by his master because he didn't use it to further the master's interests. If you know Christ as Savior, you're called to serve Him in some capacity. In our text, Paul gives us a basic lesson of Christian service that will enable us to fulfill our God-given ministries:

Your walk with Christ is the necessary basis for your work for Christ.

"Pay close attention to yourself [your walk] and to your teaching [your work]" (1Ti 4:16). It's the same principle Paul imparted to the Ephesian elders when he said, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock" (Ac 20:28). First, your walk; then, your work. Your work for the Lord must always be the overflow of your walk with the Lord. I define ministry as being full of Jesus Christ and slopping over onto others. That means that your ministry will be backed by a life of integrity; you are imparting to others what you have because you walk in reality with Christ. If we all would learn this simple but profound principle, that our walk with Christ is the necessary basis for our work for Christ, we would avoid burning out, bombing out, and fading out in the work He has given us to do.

### **1. Pay attention to your walk with Christ.**

One reason the church is often short of workers is that so many who attend church are not walking in daily reality with the living Lord. They have fallen into the American self-centered way of life. They attend church because it meets some of their personal needs. If it fails to meet their needs, they either shop around for another church that does meet their needs or they stop going altogether. They are living for self and using God and the church to help self be more fulfilled. Sometimes volunteering to serve in the church helps meet a need to feel useful, so they sign up. But even their service has a self-focus. They do it because it meets their needs.

If I have just described you, I say to you in love, you are not living the Christian life. The Christian life is not living for self and using God and the church to meet your needs. The Christian life involves denying yourself daily and living under the lordship of Christ. We are no longer our own; we have been bought with the precious blood of Jesus. We no longer live for ourselves, but for Him who died and rose again on our behalf (2Co 5:15). As we live each day with our hope fixed on the living God, He shapes our character in conformity to Christ and then uses our changed lives as a witness of His saving grace so that others come to know Him and grow in Him.

So ministry is not volunteering for Jesus, or doing a job because the pastor or the church needs your help. Ministry is based on dying to self and living to please Jesus. God never calls us primarily to a task. Rather, He calls us to Himself. Before I can do something for God I must be something in relationship with God. I can only impart to others in ministry what I possess from my walk.

Therefore, the primary responsibility of every believer is to develop godliness through the daily discipline of a walk with the Lord Jesus.

Timothy was relatively young when Paul wrote this, about 35 (a mere youth from my perspective now!). Some of you think 35 is ancient, but in that culture age was more highly regarded than in ours. Paul wrote, "Let no one look down on your youthfulness" in part for the church, so that they would not shrug off Timothy's teaching with the excuse that he was too young to know what he was talking about. But Paul also wrote it for Timothy. He's saying that even if you're younger in years, you can have a ministry if your message is backed by a godly life.

Paul mentions five areas (the KJV's "spirit" is based on weak manuscript evidence and should be omitted):

### **A. Speech**

There's a convicting one, for starters! How's your speech? Has your tongue been tamed by the power of God's Spirit? As Jam 3 tells us, the tongue can be an instrument for great evil or great good, depending upon whether it is under the control of the flesh or of the Spirit. Eph 4:29 commands, "Let no unwholesome [lit., rotten] word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear." There is no place for name-calling, sarcasm, profanity, ridicule, gossip, blaming, destructive criticism, angry words of threat and revenge, griping, complaining, lying, filthy talk, or dirty jokes.

Instead a godly person will use words to build up others and show them grace: encouragement, praise, appreciation, gratefulness, cheerfulness, understanding, sympathy, testimony, truth, caring correction and warning, and helpful counsel.

So often, even in Christian homes, family members rip into one another with rotten words and never confess their sinful speech and ask forgiveness. Several years ago Marla and I were at a pastoral couples conference. We had just checked into our room when we could hear through the door into the adjoining room a couple exchanging barbed attacks on each other. This was a pastor and his wife, but they sounded like the kind of destructive speech you hear on the worst TV sitcoms! The man was disqualified for ministry because he was not using godly speech toward his wife. Walking with the Lord Jesus means bringing your speech under His lordship and judging yourself when you sin with your words.

### **B. Conduct (KJV = conversation)**

In modern parlance, your lifestyle. This points to your behavior which should testify to your commitment to Jesus Christ. Honesty, integrity, how you spend your time and money, your priorities, your attitude toward possessions, your personal appearance, the way you maintain your home, the way you treat people—all of these factors should add up to show that Christ is Lord of your life.

### **C. Love**

This focuses on your relationships. Biblical love is not a gushy feeling, but rather a self-sacrificing, caring commitment which shows itself in seeking the highest good of the one loved. Since the highest good for each person is that they glorify God in their lives, love is committed to help each person grow in submission to Christ's lordship. Paul spells out the qualities of love in 1Co 13. Each of us should frequently evaluate our conduct toward others, especially in our homes, by that list.

### **D. Faith**

This could point to faithfulness or reliability, a fruit of the Spirit. Or, it could point to the faith we are to have toward God. We call ourselves believers, and yet all too often we are not believing believers! We aren't expecting God to work. We aren't trusting God with our problems. But in order to carry on any significant ministry, we must be men and women of faith. We have leaned upon God in our own trials and have proved Him to be faithful. So we can ask and trust God to work in the lives of those to whom we minister.

### **E. Purity**

This means moral purity, not just outwardly, but in the thought life. Sexual immorality always begins in the mind. Walking with Christ means taking "every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2Co 10:5). As soon as a wrong thought pops into your mind, you confess it and turn from it. You "put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts" (Ro 13:14).

A survey of American pastors revealed that 20 percent view pornographic material at least once a month (Leadership [Winter, 1988], p. 24)! And only 64 percent of evangelical seminary students think that watching pornographic movies is morally wrong (David Wells, Christianity Today [1/15/88], p. 25)! Is it any wonder the American church lacks God's blessing? I believe that a man who yields to viewing pornography at least once a month should not be in leadership until he gains victory. Purity in thought and deed is essential for ministry.

Thus your walk with Christ is the necessary basis of any work you do for Christ. Since the Lord wants every member of His body to



function in serving Him, pay attention to your walk. You don't have to have all these qualities in perfection before you start serving the Lord. But you do need to be growing in each area, bringing every aspect of your life into submission to the lordship of Christ. Then, as you relate to others, you slop over what you have of Christ to them; you are ministering.

But ministry doesn't happen automatically. It requires attention and work as well:

## **2. Pay attention to your work for Christ.**

"Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching" (1Ti 4:16). Since Timothy's spiritual gift was in the area of public ministry of the Word, he was to focus on that. Note the importance of the ministry of the Word in the church assembly: reading it (especially in a culture where many slaves would have been illiterate); applying it to life ("exhortation"); and, teaching it (1Ti 4:13). Paul exhorts Timothy not to neglect his gift (1Ti 4:14), to take pains in making progress in it (1Ti 4:15), and to persevere in it (1Ti 4:16), which implies that it won't be easy or automatic. There is much more that could be said, but I want to point out five things concerning spiritual gifts:

### **A. God has given every believer at least one gift.**

A spiritual gift may be defined as "a God-given ability for service" (Dr. Ryrie). While there are a lot of debatable aspects about spiritual gifts, it's significant that in each of the four New Testament passages dealing with spiritual gifts, it is stated that each believer has one (Ro 12:3-6; 1Co 12:7; Eph 4:7; 1Pe 4:10). You have not been left out. God has gifted you to serve Him.

### **B. Your gifts will be recognized and confirmed by the Body.**

Normally, believers receive a spiritual gift at conversion. Of course God can bestow other gifts subsequent to salvation as He deems necessary to equip a person for a specific ministry. Apparently God revealed to Paul what Timothy's ministry was to be. The elders at Timothy's home church affirmed Paul's prophecy. So they laid hands on Timothy, prayed for him, and he received the gift of teaching for his task (see 2Ti 1:6).

God does not normally reveal your gift supernaturally. As you grow in Christ and get involved in serving Him, other believers begin to confirm your gift. They will say things like "You're good at that," or, "God ministers through you in that area." I remember even when I was in college and would take a stab at teaching, as unpolished as I was, people would tell me how much it had helped them. If every time you try to teach, you see people squirming in their seats, looking at their watches, and not coming back the next time you're scheduled, maybe your gift is in another area!

### **C. Your gifts must be exercised and developed.**

Even though Timothy received his gift in a rather dramatic fashion, he had to work at developing it. Note the words Paul uses to exhort Timothy to exercise and develop his gift (1Ti 4:14-16): Don't neglect it. "Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them." Make evident progress. "Pay close attention." "Persevere in these things." In 2Ti 1:6, Paul had to exhort Timothy to kindle afresh his gift. The fire was dying out. The spiritual muscle can atrophy from non-use.

Although spiritual gifts are God-given, they're not automatic or fully developed. You must make a commitment to fulfill the ministry God has given you: "be absorbed in these things." It's a good idea for a new believer (or one who doesn't know his or her gifts) to try as wide a range of ministry experiences as possible. As you do certain things, you will narrow down your field of interest and ability until you discover your area of gift. Then concentrate primarily on your area of gift, while remembering that every Christian is responsible to serve in most areas. In other words, just because your gift isn't helps doesn't mean that you never help others. But you focus in your area of gift. You work hard to develop your ministry skills in that area.

A common mistake many pastors make, especially as a church grows, is neglecting the ministry of the Word. They start doing everything else, or often become more like the manager of a company, and the teaching ministry suffers. But a pastor's main work is preaching and teaching to equip the rest of the church for their ministries (1Ti 4:13-16).

### **D. Your gifts, when backed by godliness, should be exercised with confidence in the Lord.**

As I emphasized already, giftedness must be accompanied by godliness. But my point here is that when gifts are backed by godliness, they can then be exercised with the quiet confidence that your faith is in God and you're doing what He wants you to do. So when opposition comes (as it often does), you don't quit in anger or frustration. You persevere.

Timothy was a timid fellow. Perhaps he was threatened by the older Ephesian elders. Maybe he felt inadequate ministering in the shadow of a man like Paul. Maybe he was afraid of people. Paul says, "Prescribe and teach these things!" (1Ti 4:11). The word "prescribe" means to command. It refers to an order passed down a military chain of command. What Paul is saying is, "Timothy, exercise your gift with confidence and authority, backed up by your godly life!" And, persevere when opposition comes (1Ti 4:16).

Perhaps this especially applies to the gift of teaching. You can't be a people-pleaser and preach God's truth. The Bible isn't God's handbook of helpful hints for happy living. It gives us God's sure truth, His commandments for life. It confronts sin and selfishness. God's spokesman had better not beat around the bush.

Hugh Latimer, who later was martyred by Bloody Mary used to say to himself before he preached at the royal court: "Latimer, Latimer, thou art going to speak before the high and mighty king, Henry VIII, who is able, if he think fit, to take thy life away. Be careful what thou sayest. But Latimer, Latimer, remember thou art also about to speak before the King of kings and Lord of lords. Take heed thou dost not displease Him."

But it also applies to every spiritual gift when the person is growing in godliness. If you're walking with Christ, then you have a vital contribution to make to His body. We should never do it with arrogance or confidence in ourselves. But the point is, God wants to use you to impart something of Christ to others. It's not humility, but rather the sin of being too self-absorbed, if, like Moses when God called him, you refuse to do what God has gifted and called you to do. And you're not being faithful to Him if you quit at the first sign of difficulty.

#### **E. Remember that eternal issues are at stake in the exercise of your spiritual gift.**

"You will save both yourself and those who hear you" (1Ti 4:16). Paul obviously is not talking about being saved by works. We are saved by grace through faith apart from works (Eph 2:8-9). But there is also a future aspect to salvation. Those who are saved will persevere and they will influence others to be saved as well. This may apply more to those with gifts of teaching or evangelism, but it also applies to someone with the gift of helps or giving or showing mercy. As you grow in godliness and exercise your gift faithfully as unto the Lord, He will use you in the eternal salvation of lost people.

You need to remember this especially when opposition comes. Timothy was not in an easy situation in Ephesus, where he had to confront these false teachers. No doubt he was being attacked. It would have been easy to say, "Why bother? Why take this flak? I'm out of here!" But Paul says, "Timothy, remember that eternal issues are at stake! You must persevere in the salvation you have received. Those hearing your message need to be saved and to persevere. So when you're discouraged, when you're being attacked, don't quit! Eternal issues are at stake.

#### **Conclusion**

Stan Mikita, a star center for the Chicago Blackhawks hockey team, used to get in a lot of fights during games. He stopped one day when his daughter, Meg, who was eight at the time, asked a very grown up question: "How can you score a goal, Daddy, when you're in the penalty box all the time?"

If I might rephrase the question, How can you work for the Lord if you aren't walking with the Lord? If you have trusted in Christ, you're on His team. You're in the ministry. You are as responsible as I am before God to fulfill your ministry. To do it, pay attention to your walk with Christ; that's the foundation. And, pay attention to your work for Him. Don't neglect the gift He has entrusted to you.

#### **Discussion Questions**

How would this church be different if every member viewed himself or herself as a minister of Jesus Christ?

How godly does a person need to be to get involved in ministry?

How important is it to know your spiritual gift? What difference does it make?

Why are so many Christians suffering "burnout"? Is it inevitable? How can it be avoided?

Steven J. Cole Sermon Series - -- Sermons on 1 Timothy.