

Title: Godliness and the Church.

⁶ If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. ⁷ But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. ⁸ 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. ⁹ This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. ¹⁰ For to this *end* we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is *the* Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. ¹¹ These things command and teach.

¹² 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. ¹³ Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. ¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. ¹⁵ Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. ¹⁶ 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.

Introduction

We discovered last week that from chapter 3: v.14 through to chapter 4: v.16 is one section of Paul's letter to Timothy. Last week we dealt with part one of this section and this week we are going to study part two. Last week we discovered the instructions that Paul gave Timothy concerning false teachers and personal holiness within the Church family.

This week we will find out that Paul is giving specific direction to Timothy concerning his own ministry. (**4: v. 6-16**)

You will notice that **personal guidance** is given to Timothy by Paul all the way through this section.

v. 6, 12, and 16.)

⁶ If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.

¹² 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.

¹⁶ 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.

This is the **most intimate passage within the whole letter** because it reveals Paul's close relationship with Timothy.

Paul instructs Timothy to lead by example, demonstrating godliness and a concern for the gospel.

The reason Paul is taking a personal interest in Timothy, is not just that he might be a good leader, but also that he might train other leaders also.

It is very important that we understand this point.

We have about 14 disciple parents who have been teaching and helping students at OIC over the last 2 years now. The time has come for some of these people to be disciple parents themselves.

This will release the disciple grand-parents to get somebody else to disciple.

This is the normal way of making progress in your spiritual life.

We can all think of excuses why we can't become disciple parents.

Some of them are, **I haven't got time. I am not good enough. I don't know enough about the Bible. These are not reasons. They are excuses.**

If you have read the Bible through in 1 year, done the OIC discipleship course, attempted most of the memory verses, and you have a good disciplined prayer life, and you are obeying the Bible, **you are ready to be a disciple parent.**

The problem is finding the right person who is born again of God's Holy Spirit and willing to be a disciple for Jesus.

There is nothing more satisfying than to see a Christian grow when you have spent time with that person. The transition from being a disciple to becoming a disciple parent is a big one but it is the next step for you, if you are willing to trust the Holy Spirit for His help.

Today we can learn how Paul instructed Timothy, so we ourselves can grow in our understanding of leadership and ministry in the Church.

There are three main points within this passage.

1. The personal life of a good minister of Jesus Christ. – v. 6-10
2. The public life of a good minister of Jesus Christ. – v.11-14.
3. The goal and purpose of a good minister of Jesus Christ. – v. 15-16.

1. The personal life of a good minister of Jesus Christ. – v.6-10.

In v. 6-10 Paul gives Timothy three challenges concerning his personal life as a minister of Jesus Christ. These challenges would apply to anybody who has leadership ministry within a Church. It could be a Sunday School leader, a worship leader, or a disciple parent.

a) Feeding on God's Word. – v.6

Paul tells Timothy to instruct the members in good doctrine, by feeding them God's word.

When I was at the Faith Mission Bible College in Edinburgh, Scotland, over 33 years ago, I worked through a book with the principal Rev. Dr. Colin Peckham.

The book is called the "**Great Doctrines of the Bible**".

We studied this book in our "**Doctrine**" classes every week over a period of two years.

I have kept this book and used it for over 33 years to instruct me and to teach others.

The great thing about the book is that it **only points out what the Bible teaches on the most important subjects in the Bible.**

There is very little personal commentary. You only get what the Bible teaches. You don't get any personal points of view.

What Paul is saying to Timothy is this, "**don't give people your point of view, just preach the word of God and instruct your members in the word of God.**"

I thank God that He guided me to train at a Bible College all those years ago.

The Bible College focused only on the word of God, prayer, personal holiness and evangelism.

As far as I am concerned, the Faith Mission Bible College got it right.

As we discovered last week, feeding on God's word helps us to identify false teaching.

It is clear from the way Paul says, "**if you instruct the brethren in these things**" that he is referring back to the false teachers that he previously spoke about.

People in leadership positions within the Church must constantly warn their congregations about false teachers.

When God spoke to Ezekiel in chapter 3: v. 17-21, He held Ezekiel responsible to **warn God's people.**

Ezekiel 3: v. 17 in N.K.J.

¹⁷ "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me:

A good minister warns people about false teachers.

However, in order to do this well, you need to know what the Bible teaches.

Also you need to stand firm to that teaching and not to compromise.

In v. 7 Paul tells Timothy to avoid feeding on false teaching – v. 7a.

Timothy must avoid feeding on the equivalent of junk food.

Junk food causes health problems if you have too much of it.

It appears that Paul is warning Timothy about stories and traditions passed down through the years that **give the appearance of being spiritual** but in actual fact are **not grounded in the word of God.**

We are not exactly sure what any of these stories or phrases were from this time in history. However, I will give you an example from my generation.

In England as I was growing up people used to say that "**Cleanliness was next to Godliness**".

In other words, if you were smart and clean, God would accept you.

People used to dress up in smart clothes and go to Church.

Everybody had their Sunday best clothes which they kept clean and ready for Sunday.

This was not Biblical teaching and it gave the wrong message to people.

God doesn't judge us by what we wear on the outside.

However, we are expected to have a regular bath or shower and keep clean for our own personal health.

1 Samuel 16: v. 7.

⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For *the LORD does not see as man sees*; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

b) **Growing in godliness – v. 7-8.**

Paul tells Timothy to **exercise himself** towards godliness.

What does he mean by that?

Firstly, we need to understand the Greek word which is translated by the word exercise, or discipline in some translations.

It comes from the Greek word "**gumnazo**" which is where we get our English word "**gymnasium**".

The word means to **train or exercise**.

It includes the sort of **self-sacrificing training** that athletes get involved in.

Next year on Friday 24th July the Olympic Games will be held in Tokyo.

(Show slide of Olympic Games poster etc.)

Athletes from all over the world will be competing in many events.

(show slides of different events and athletes, some Japanese ones would be good)

It is now only 18 months to go until the games begin.

Some of these athletes are going to receive a Gold Medal, being the best in the world in their chosen sport. (Slide of Gold Medal)

How are these athletes going to make it to this highest grade?

They are going to have to continually watch their **physical diet**.

They will have to **reject many foods** that are not good for their body.

(Show slides of unhealthy foods)

The athletes will be on a **strict physical training programme**.

Sometimes it would involve getting up early in the morning to go for a fitness run.

They will need **perseverance**; sometimes nearly 4 years of training.

The final thing is that the athlete would need to **perform well on the day of the competition**.

They would need to be completely focused on the period of the Olympic Games.

Getting that Gold Medal will involve a lot of physical and mental exercise.

All of the ingredients which go to make an Olympic Champion, need also to be seen in the life of a good minister of Jesus Christ.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, we can achieve **greater things than Gold Medals**. God can use us to lead people to **eternal life**, and **disciple them to be disciplined followers of Jesus**.

Quote:

J. Oswald Sanders wrote,

"Spiritual ends can be achieved only by spiritual men who employ spiritual methods."

c) **Focusing on Salvation – v. 9-10.**

Here Paul repeats his popular phrase – "**this is a faithful saying...**"

Now he is talking about **Salvation**, and probably Timothy's Salvation.

Paul says that when we are serving God, it is hard work, and we do suffer persecution in different forms.

However, in the end we do have our reward, **eternal Salvation in Heaven.**

We don't get a "Gold Medal". We get something better.

We get to live in a Heavenly city, whose protective walls are made of jasper and the city is pure gold.

Revelation 21: v. 18.

⁸But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

At the end of the day, our Salvation through Jesus Christ is the only thing that really matters.

Therefore, it is a good thing to share your faith in Jesus to those who will hear you.

We never know when God might use us as an instrument in His hands for the Salvation of the lost.

We can't save people but the gospel message is still the power of God unto Salvation for those who will believe.

2. The Public life of a good minister of the gospel – v. 11-14.

In v. 12 Paul is telling Timothy to be a **good example to God's people.**

Paul gives us five words to explain what he means.

In order for Timothy to be a good example he needed to be careful in these areas.

a) **What he says** – His words needed to be wholesome and exemplary.

Jesus had something important to say about speech in **Matthew 12: v. 34-37.**

(Matthew 12: v. 34-37 in the N.L.T.)

³⁴You brood of snakes! How could evil men like you speak what is good and right? For whatever is in your heart determines what you say. ³⁵A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. ³⁶And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. ³⁷The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you."

Absolute honesty is required in the speech of somebody who ministers God's word.

Proverbs 6: v. 16-19 in the N.K.J.

¹⁶These six *things* the LORD hates,
Yes, seven *are* an abomination to Him:

¹⁷A proud look,

A lying tongue,

Hands that shed innocent blood,

¹⁸A heart that devises wicked plans,

Feet that are swift in running to evil,

¹⁹A false witness *who* speaks lies,

And one who sows discord among brethren.

b) **How he conducts himself** - James teaches the same thing in James 3: v. 13.

James 3: v. 13

¹³Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom.

1 Peter 1: v. 15

¹⁵but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct,

- c) **How he loves** - Biblical love is very different from human love. It involves **self-sacrificing service on behalf of others**, regardless of how you feel about that person. The self-sacrificing minister gives his time and energy to the people he is called to serve. He devotes his life to seeing them **strengthened and built up in the Lord**.
- d) **Faith** - Paul is not referring to belief here, he is referring to faithfulness.

1 Corinthians 4: v. 2. (N.K.J.)

² Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

- e) **Purity** - The Greek word used here is “**Hagnea**” and this word refers primarily to purity in the area of sexuality, both in actions and the intentions of the heart. You will notice that this is one of the qualifications of Elders and Deacons. They must be one women men. They must keep their sexual activity for their wives only. This is very important for anybody in both in Christian leadership and for all Christians too.

In v. 14 Timothy is told not to “neglect” the gift that was given to him.

The Greek phrase which is translated “do not neglect” indicates that Timothy could actually be in danger of giving up the ministry.

In **2 Timothy Chapter 1: v.3-15** Paul gives us an insight into the pressures that Timothy faced at Ephesus.

(2 Tim.1: v. 3-15) in the N.L.T.

³ Timothy, I thank God for you—the God I serve with a clear conscience, just as my ancestors did. Night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. ⁴ I long to see you again, for I remember your tears as we parted. And I will be filled with joy when we are together again.

⁵ I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you. ⁶ This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. ⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

⁸ So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. And don’t be ashamed of me, either, even though I’m in prison for him. With the strength God gives you, be ready to suffer with me for the sake of the Good News. ⁹ For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus. ¹⁰ And now he has made all of this plain to us by the appearing of Christ Jesus, our Savior. He broke the power of death and illuminated the way to life and immortality through the Good News. ¹¹ And God chose me to be a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of this Good News.

¹² That is why I am suffering here in prison. But I am not ashamed of it, for I know the one in whom I trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until the day of his return.

¹³ Hold on to the pattern of wholesome teaching you learned from me—a pattern shaped by the faith and love that you have in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, carefully guard the precious truth that has been entrusted to you.

¹⁵ As you know, everyone from the province of Asia has deserted me—even Phygelus and Hermogenes.

To encourage Timothy in his ministry, Paul gave him **three motives for not abandoning his ministry**.

Firstly, Timothy was reminded of the gift within himself.

God had given him a special gift designed for his present ministry.

Timothy’s gift included, evangelism, preaching, teaching, and leadership.

When we are born again, we are all equipped by God for ministry. The challenge is to find out your gifting and get on with it!

Secondly there was a public affirmation of his gift.

Timothy's gifting was recognised by the Elders.

When people recognise your gifting from God, it is much harder to give up. We should all

encourage one another in our God given gifting!

The final encouragement was that Timothy's gift came about by the laying on of hands by the Elders.

This was an official position that was recognised by spiritual men of God. Timothy was publically accountable to people to continue in ministry.

This point points to the importance of public ordination of Pastors and Elders.

3) **The Goal and Purpose of a good minister – v. 15-16.**

Paul sums up this section in these two verses.

He says to Timothy to pay close attention to his life and his teaching.

The benefit of this will ensure salvation for Timothy and for those who hear his pure and good teaching.

Finally, Timothy had to **persevere** so that those who heard his teaching would **benefit and grow to be faithful followers of Jesus**.

When we minister in whatever ministry, it is not for ourselves. It is for the benefit of others and for God's Glory.

Of course it should bless our heart also.