

1 Timothy 4:6-11 - Tips For Becoming A Good Minister

If you want to be healthy, there are things you should do. Have a good diet, exercise correctly, sleep well. There are several things you can and should do to have a healthy body. Spiritually it is the same. If you are to be a good minister, a good follower of Jesus, there are things you can do to be spiritually healthy.

Paul is going to tell Timothy tips on how to be a good minister of Jesus Christ, that will allow him and the church to be healthy spiritually.

1. Teach The Right Things v6

1. **4:6 NKJV - “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.”**
2. A good minister has to teach and instruct people in the right things. But what are the right things? Think back to the last verses and chapters!
3. He instructed what doctrine to teach, to stay on the truth of the Gospel and not surrender ground to the legalist. He then instructed him on how to run a church, by having worship & prayer as the highest priority and the roles for the men and women in the church. Then he covered what qualities to look for in a church leader, and reminded him it is Jesus who is in charge of the church, because it is God’s Church. Lastly, he told him what would be the signs of the end times, as people depart from the true Gospel to believe lies from legalism and mysticism. How these men would have seared consciences, and focus on religion and works, mentioning giving a spiritual significance to marital status and food, rather than simple faith in God and the working of His Spirit in us.
4. All of that is what Timothy was to instruct the brethren. By remaining faithful to God’s Word and the Gospel. If he was to be a good minister, he was to teach the congregation what God desired and what God has done. He was to show them how to walk with Him and know Him, and how to avoid those who claimed to be from Him but were liars, teaching a false message.
5. The word “instruction” doesn’t mean only to instruct like in a classroom, but also to teach about life and practice as well. It’s to teach not only the theory but show them how to live it.

6. If you want to be a good minister, you need to teach the right things so that you and those who hear you would be nourished in the words of faith and good doctrine. In the same way to be healthy, you have to eat healthy food, so to be a healthy minister, you must teach the right things!

2. Exercise The Right Parts v7-9

1. **4:7-9 NKJV - “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.”**
2. If you want to work out your bicep, do you do calf raises? Of course not! You do bicep curls. We know this humanely, but do we realize it spiritually?
3. If Timothy was to be a good minister, he had to reject bad ideas and beliefs, and exercise himself towards godliness.
4. A lot of us can spend hours working out our bodies, yet only a few minutes a day or an hour or two a week exercising our Spirit. Though there is nothing wrong with bodily exercise and it is good for us, we should rather prioritize the life of the Spirit.
5. Yes, stay healthy for longevity, so you may serve God with less issues. But don’t emphasize being physically healthy so much that you neglect that which is beneficial, not just for the here and now, but for the life that is to come.
6. In the end, this body is going to be worm food and return to the earth it came from. From dust you are and to dust you will return. If you overemphasize the physical to the neglect of the Spiritual, you will ultimately only produce better quality worm food and compost, to the detriment of the life that is to come. Focus not on the temporal but on the eternal things.
7. This would speak loudly to the Greek and Roman culture they lived in, where high value was placed on exercise and the physical body.
8. Paul says not to focus on profane and old wives fables. That is, don’t focus on the words and ideas of man, but focus on God’s Word. Train yourself in God’s Word with more energy than you train physically or academically.
9. Timothy was to combat the ideas and teachings of the false teachers and culture by focusing on the Lord. Godliness is godlikeness. It means to have the same character and attitude as God. The goal of

Christianity is to become like Jesus, and this will happen as we spend time with Him personally and corporately learning His Word and how He wants us to live as His people.

10. David Guzik - *“Though godliness does not make this life the most comfortable, or richest, or most pleasurable, or easiest in the life that now is, it undeniably makes it the best, the most contented, and the most fulfilling life one can live in this world.”*

3. Trust In The Living God v10

1. **4:10 NKJV - “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.”**
2. To be a good minister, you need to know why you serve and why you suffer, it is because you serve and trust the Living God!
3. A good minister has real faith. They truly trust and believe God and all He’s done. Notice what Paul inserts here to, he says he is the savior of all men, especially of those who believe.
4. This shows that Jesus is a universal Savior. The Gospel Paul passed down to Timothy preached Jesus has already forgiven all men and has offered salvation to all men. However, only those who believe truly enjoy and benefit from it. Though the world’s sins might be forgiven, they still had to believe in Jesus as Savior to receive His life.
5. How can you be a good minister, if you yourself don’t believe. Yet there are many in pulpits today who reject the Gospel, the scriptures and even the existence of a God, let alone the true God. There are atheist mega churches today, and I say that literally. They promote all the experiences of good music, encouraging messages, and loving community without God.
6. But if you are to be a good minister, you should yourself be saved and live by faith! And that faith and trust in God should be the foundation of your service and your enduring through suffering.
7. The Gospel has to be the center of our lives. Everything else must spring forth from the foundation that Jesus has forgiven all sin and gives us life through faith in Him.
8. Might I add that if you want to be spiritually healthy, you should serve others in the church? One person described Christians who serve vs those who don’t serve like the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea.
 1. The Sea of Galilee is full of life and a good fishing industry. Why? Because it has an inlet and outlet. It receives water, but it also gives out water, having a life bringing current that ensures the sea is active and plentiful.

2. The Dead Sea by contrast, only ever receives. It has no outlet except through evaporation. But because of that, it contains such high levels of salt that nothing can truly live there except certain microscopic organisms that have adapted to it. But by all accounts, it's called the Dead Sea because there is no real life in it. No fish or plant life can live because of such high salt levels.
3. The Christian who doesn't serve is like the Dead Sea. They receive and receive and receive and grow fat to the point of obesity, and will be no good except to be critics and complainers, spiritual connoisseurs to discuss sermons without any life transformation.
4. But Christians who serve and give out of the abundance God has poured into them are like the Sea of Galilee, they will produce life, growth and fruit over time. So if you have been sitting for a long time, get involved! It can be as simple as offering to help clean the trash cans after the services. Though a new Christian shouldn't be placed in leadership or teaching capacities, any christian of any age can help by serving in things like cleaning the facilities, or helping in the kitchen.
5. But serving is a healthy thing for a healthy believer. Your workout spiritual muscles that change your perspective from yourself towards Christ and others.
6. I will place one condition, if you are coming from a church that burnt you out, or you have gone through a rough time in life, are entering a major transition in life or maybe just got saved this year, it is good for you to sit and listen to God's Word for a bit. A time will come to step in and serve, but take time to heal, be refreshed and learn the foundations. Now if it's two, three, four years in as a person walking with Jesus or going through the process, maybe it's time to find where you can step in.
9. But trusting God is what keeps us strong in this life, knowing that no matter what we go through, He is with us and helps us!
10. ***CH Spurgeon - "“But our God, in whom we trust, is a God with a great, warm, loving heart, a thinking God, an active God, a working, personal God, who comes into the midst, of this world, and does not leave it to go on by itself. Although he is a stranger in the world, even as his people also are strangers and foreigners by reason of the revolt that men have made against their liege Lord and Sovereign, yet it is still his world, and he is still in it.”***
11. In the same way an athlete goes through pain to train their body for the sport they wish to excel in, so we should train ourselves spiritually, enduring suffering and laboring so that we might be strong spiritually for this life and the next.

4. Continue In The Right Things v11

1. **4:11 NKJV - "These things command and teach."**
2. Paul told Timothy to command and teach these things continually. To keep passing these things on to other believers who would do the same.
3. Timothy was to enter the pulpit with authority and conviction, to preach God's Word, not His opinions, speculation or theories of men.
4. A good minister is one who stands for God, come what may.
5. Living your life this way may not result in wealth, power and status in this life. But it will bring honor in the life which is to come. So stand on the truth of God's Word. Teach what is right and true, exercise the right parts of your life, not wasting time on that which is temporal, but on what is eternal, and live your life trusting in God, serving Him and getting to know Him in a personal way.

Discussion Questions

1. **What are you spiritually feeding yourself?** Paul compares spiritual health to physical health: what we consume and practice matters. What are some things that can **nourish our faith**, and what are some things that can slowly make us spiritually unhealthy?
2. **What are you investing in most?** Paul says that physical exercise has some value, but **godliness is profitable for all things**, both in this life and the life to come. What are some things that we can spend a lot of time and energy developing while neglecting our spiritual lives? What would it look like to intentionally prioritize your relationship with Jesus?
3. **How does trusting God change the way we respond to suffering?** Paul says that believers labor and suffer reproach because they **trust in the living God**. How can remembering who God is help us remain faithful when serving Him becomes difficult, discouraging, or costly?
4. **Are you more like the Sea of Galilee or the Dead Sea?** The sermon uses the contrast between the two seas to illustrate Christians who **receive and give** versus those who continually receive without serving. How does serving others contribute to our spiritual health, and where might God be calling you to start serving?