

# THE GODLY PASTOR'S PICTURE

1 Timothy 4:11-16

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September 24, 2017

**Note:** The following are the pastor's notes used in preaching this message. This is not a complete, word-for-word transcription of what was preached. These notes serve as a companion to the complete message, which is available by listening to the audio version. Bible quotes are primarily from ESV.

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## INTRODUCTION

In this message, we'll see 12 commands for a godly pastor, drawn by the Apostle Paul for the young Pastor Timothy that sketch out what a godly pastor looks like.

### I. COMMAND AND TEACH THESE THINGS (1 Timothy 4:11)

*Command* means to *insist on and instruct*. This is strong language from Paul for Timothy. Why does he say this? I believe 1 Timothy 4:11 performs two functions for Timothy: 1) it grants Timothy the authority from Paul to convince the church to not walk out on the faith by following the false teachers (1 Timothy 4:1-5); and 2) it helps Timothy shepherd the church as they have been commanded to pursue gospel-driven godliness, not silly myths (1 Timothy 4:6-10). In short, this verse lends weight to Timothy's ministry.

### II. SET AN EXAMPLE IN THESE WAYS (1 Timothy 4:12)

The term for youth is *neo-tays*...so we can assume Timothy was a young man in his 30s. The older men were apparently looking down on him, and Paul commands that Timothy not let that happen. Look at *how* Timothy is to put that command into play in his life. The antidote for people looking down on Timothy was to set an example in five specific ways.

#### A. Model godly speech

This refers to private speaking. The prior book written to this church certainly has a lot to say about godly speech (Ephesians 4:25, 26, 29, 31).

#### B. Model godly conduct

These are ways of life, ways of dealing with relationships, integrity of life, etc. A "what you see is what you get" pastor is what Paul's after here, and is what we should all be after—"an exact harmony of practice and principle."

#### C. Model godly love

Love is in the middle of this list of ways to model a good example to the church. It is the centerpiece of the Ephesian correspondence (Ephesians 4:2, 15, 16), with Ephesians 5:2 providing the ultimate reason for Timothy to model love. It was Christ's love for Timothy that would compel him to model Christ-like love before the church.

#### D. Model godly faith

In the Pastoral Epistles, *faith* almost always carries the connotation of *faithful/trustworthy*, such that the pastor must be trustworthy in the discharge of his ministry responsibility. A pastor may be an example in other areas, but if he can't be relied upon, if he isn't faithful, then it'll be hard for him to lead and shepherd well.

#### E. Model godly purity

A thousand sermons can be undone by one immoral act! There must be moral purity in the life of the pastor. This is perhaps the area where self-discipline and working hard for godliness is most to be guarded and protected.

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### III. DEVOTE YOURSELF TO THE WORD (1 Timothy 4:13)

Three elements of Word-work in the worship service are commanded by Paul:

#### A. Public Scripture reading

This pattern of reading the Scriptures publicly was a staple in the Jewish synagogues of Jesus' and Paul's day (Luke 4:16, Acts 13:15, and 2 Corinthians 3:14). Here Paul is commanding Timothy to do this in the church service.

#### B. Public exhortation

This appears after the reading of the Scripture, because all exhortation is subject to the reading of God's Word. This is the appeal to the will via warning, encouragement, and is generally the kind of preaching which aims for change through personal application.

#### C. Public teaching

The text literally says, "to the teaching," signifying that body of doctrine that arises from the systemic reading of the Word of God. There are certain *facts* with respect to doctrine which must be taught, and which one must accept and embrace.

This is almost a definition of expository preaching: read the Word, explain the Word, and exhort from the Word.

### IV. CULTIVATE YOUR GIFT FROM THE LORD (1 Timothy 4:14)

#### A. "Use it or lose it!"

Underlying this command to not neglect his spiritual gift is the idea that if Timothy didn't use it, he would lose it. Timothy's giftedness was not static—it can grow or diminish with use (cf. also 2 Timothy 1:6), and a godly pastor will make it a priority to grow in his giftedness.

#### B. Given by the Spirit

We know that spiritual gifts are given to us by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11. Each of us was given a spiritual gift or gifts when we came to Christ (2 Corinthians 12:12-13), and we are to use our gifts for the body of Christ, not for our own spiritual benefit.

#### C. Affirmed through the elders

We know this was a unique and memorable event in Timothy's life, because Paul himself was present, and he laid his hands on Timothy as well (2 Timothy 1:6). This was truly a unique experience for Timothy, under direct apostolic commendation, affirmed through the elders. The nearest we can get to this today in the life of a pastor is when a man is ordained or commissioned to the ministry or missions.

### V. IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE WORK (1 Timothy 4:15)

#### A. Practice...until you get it right

By "these things," Paul means all that has come before in this chapter. A godly pastor will put into practice in his own life what he is telling others to put into practice in theirs. In that way, he places himself under the same admonition to not heed false teaching (1 Timothy 4:1-5), but to commit himself to "the words of the faith and sound doctrine" that he himself is teaching (1 Timothy 4:6). He himself is, with the rest of the church, training himself in godliness (1 Timothy 4:7-8). And if there is a difference between practice and immerse, it's that practice is the less intense of the two terms. "Practice it until you get it right; attack it until you can't get it wrong."

#### B. Immerse...until you can't get it wrong

There is no verb for immerse—the sense of the phrase is simply: "be in them." The picture Paul is drawing is of a godly pastor plunging into the practice of his ministry so much that it becomes second nature, instinctive, almost automatic.

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### C. For progression (not perfection)

That is, if Timothy will devote himself fully to the commands Paul gives him here, he will make progress in the faith that will be evident to all (especially the church, but perhaps even those in the city as well). A godly pastor must make visible progress in ministry. Paul commands Timothy to do so.

## VI. WATCH YOUR LIFE AND DOCTRINE (1 Timothy 4:16)

Thomas Watson's definition of godliness in *The Godly Man's Picture* is a perfect summary of 1 Timothy 4:16: godliness is the exact harmony of...

### A. "Holy practice"

and...

### B. "Holy principles"

That is, pay close attention to your life and your doctrine. In the end, each of the preceding marks of a godly pastor fall into one of these two concluding areas of godliness, right? It's paramount, then, to keep a close watch on both aspects of godliness, because the promise is so great for Timothy in this verse: "...for by so doing, you will save both yourself and your hearers." We know Paul is not teaching salvation by works, because he so strongly teaches salvation by grace alone through faith alone. What Paul is referencing here is the reformed doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints, whereby the saints are preserved in their salvation in Christ until the end. John Calvin is helpful on this text when he comments:

*And as the unfaithfulness or carelessness of the pastor is ruinous to the Church, so the cause of salvation is justly ascribed to his faithfulness and diligence. True, it is God alone that saves; and not even the smallest portion of his glory can lawfully be bestowed on men. But God parts with no portion of his glory when he employs the agency of men for bestowing salvation.*

*Our salvation is, therefore, the gift of God alone, because from him alone it proceeds, and by his power alone it is performed; and therefore, to him alone, as the author, it must be ascribed. But the ministry of men is not on that account excluded...Moreover, this is altogether the work of God, because it is he who forms good pastors, and guides them by his Spirit, and blesses their labour, that it may not be ineffectual, but effectual for the salvation of the flock.<sup>1</sup>*

## CONCLUSION

Whether you're a pastor in a church in Ephesus riddled with false teaching, or a pastor in London raddled by disasters, Paul's sketch he draws for us with his Scripture pencil of a godly pastor is one that can exhort and encourage any pastor—or any person—to press on in their ministry. *The Godly Pastor's Picture* is a portrait of a man who: 1) Commands and teaches the Word and sound doctrine; 2) Sets an example for the church; 3) Devotes himself to the public ministry of the Word; 4) Cultivates his spiritual giftedness; 5) Immerses himself in the work; and 6) Watches his life and doctrine. Such lives ensure great and eternal blessing!

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<sup>1</sup> John Calvin and William Pringle, *Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 118.

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Context

- What was the main point of the passage immediately before this week's passage?
- Are there logical or thematic connections to the passage from this week's sermon?

### Observation

- Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the text?
- Are there key connecting words (for, therefore, but, because) that indicate the logical flow of the passage?
- What is the main point or points? What supporting points does the author make?
- What surprises are there in the flow of the argument?

### Meaning

- How does this text relate to other parts of the book?
- How does the passage relate to Jesus?
- What does this teach you about God?

### Application

- What does this teach you about you?
- How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?
- Is there some attitude you need to change?
- How does this passage call on you to change the way you live?