

**Title: A Mature Church Has Mature Leaders**

Text: 1 Timothy 4:6-10

**Introduction**

What is the training regimen for the GVSU football team?

or the GVSU ladies' basketball team?

Why do they have such a training expectation?

So they will be fit and able to run down the field and win the game.

**Main Idea: Expect Your Leaders to Constantly Train for Godliness**

Yes, training is necessary, but in what areas should this training be?

Three areas - Knowledge, Perspective, and Attitude.

**2 Timothy 2:2 (ESV)**

*and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.*

**1. Leader - Be A Good Servant By Being Trained in Good Doctrine (vs. 6)**

Biblical leaders need to know stuff about the Bible!

**1 Timothy 4:6 (ESV)**

*If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.*

If you put what things before the brothers? Who are the brother?

If we just look back to what we have covered over the past few sermons, we will see that Paul is referring to the teaching he gave Timothy regarding Elders and Deacons as well as how the church itself is to function, and the warnings against false teaching.

So, if Timothy puts all these things before the leadership of the church, he will be doing a great service to the church of Jesus Christ.

Timothy was trained by the Apostle Paul in two specific areas according to this verse.

1. Words of the faith.
2. The Good Doctrine.

What are these and why would Paul be intentional about training Timothy in these? And then what is Timothy supposed to do with his training?

**The Words of the Faith** - Very simply put, Paul is referring to the Bible.

Godly leaders like Paul, Timothy, and all those who hold the titles of Pastor or Elder must not only be proficient in understanding the Scriptures, but they must be able to **“put these things”** before those under their care. They must know the Scriptures and be able to adeptly speak the scriptures into the lives of those under their watch.

As Spurgeon says of John Bunyan, *“Prick him anywhere; and you will find that his blood is Bibline, the very essence of the Bible flows from him. He cannot speak without quoting a text, for his soul is full of the Word of God.”*

This ought to be the case for leaders in God’s church. We should be thoroughly Bibline.

**The Good Doctrine** - This is the teachings or the theology of the Bible.

What is “Theology?” It is the study of God.

The leadership’s responsibility is not only to know the Words of the faith, but they must understand the theology that comes from the Words of the faith. In other words, we study and know God through the lens of Scripture. Recommended Sequence:

**Biblical Theology**: Start with Biblical Theology to understand the themes and narratives within the Bible itself. This approach focuses on understanding the theological themes and messages within the context of the Bible’s unfolding narrative. It traces the development of these themes throughout the different books and authors of the Bible, highlighting how God’s revelation progresses and culminates in Jesus Christ.

**Systematic Theology**: Building on the foundations of Biblical Theology, move to Systematic Theology. This discipline involves organizing and summarizing the teachings of the Bible on various topics in a coherent and structured manner. It seeks to present a comprehensive and logical overview of Christian doctrine, such as the nature of God, salvation, sin, and eschatology.

**Historical Theology**: After establishing a foundational understanding of biblical and systematic perspectives, study Historical Theology. This field studies the development of Christian doctrines and theological ideas throughout church history. It examines how beliefs have been formulated, debated, and defined over time, considering the influence of historical contexts and key figures.

**Philosophical Theology**: With a grounding in biblical, systematic, and historical theology, engage with Philosophical Theology. This discipline engages with philosophical methods and concepts to explore theological questions. It often addresses issues such as the nature of God, the problem of evil, and the relationship between faith and reason.

**Practical Theology**: Finally, focus on Practical Theology to apply your theological insights to real-world ministry and Christian living. This area applies theological insights to the practice of ministry and Christian living. It addresses the real-life implications of faith,

including pastoral care, preaching, ethics, worship, and church leadership, aiming to bridge the gap between doctrine and daily practice.

This sequence ensures a solid foundation in Scripture, a comprehensive understanding of Christian doctrine, historical context, critical thinking, and practical application.

Now this may sound overwhelming, but for those called to lead the church of Jesus Christ, there is an obligation to grow in our understanding and use of God's Holy Word.

Leaders of ABC. Ultimately, God is sovereignty in control, but He is using you and me to minister to the needs of this congregation. He is using you to speak His word lovingly into the hearts and minds of those He brings here.

Think about this - you and I can give life and hope to people by accurately communicating what the Bible says into the lives of others.

This is a tremendous weight that should be carried seriously, soberly, and passionately.

**2 Timothy 2:15 (ESV)**

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.*

**Elders of ABC** - this responsibility rests squarely on our shoulders. As we grow in our understanding of God's word, we grow in our capacity to be used by God.

**"God will use you to the level you are equipped to be used." - Wayne Muri**

It seems to me, from my limited perspective, that there has been a dumbing down of biblical christianity on masse in the American culture today.

I don't mean to sound snobbish and I am certainly not suggesting that I am some Biblical savant, because I am far from it. I just think that the church in America has gotten away from training and moved toward entertaining.

I believe our lack of biblical understanding is a result of pragmatic, results oriented ministry where we are more focused on attendance than we are Christlikeness.

And I think the leadership of the church is responsible. I think we are derelict in our duties and we are paying the price.

The stark reality is everything rises and falls on leadership. And if the leadership's focus is on attendance rather than Christlikeness, then we will continue to slip into irrelevance and foolish pragmatism.

Thinking about this from another perspective, if the Bible is indeed the Word of God, then what better goal should we have than to master its truths and obey its commands?

*If we concern ourselves with the depth of our ministry, God will see to the breadth of it. If we minister for spiritual growth, numerical growth will be what God chooses it to be.*

**John F. MacArthur**

For the leadership of ABC and for all those who desire to function in leadership. The trajectory is clear. We must be trained in good doctrine. The teachings of the Bible must not only permeate our souls, but they must transform our lives.

If you function in some leadership capacity at ABC, whether it be elder, deacon, equipping class teacher, children's worker, youth leader, Connection Group facilitator, or whatever, you MUST master doctrine and the church is here to help you do so. Not only master it, but God's doctrine must master you!

*Gradual growth in grace, growth in knowledge, growth in faith, growth in love, growth in holiness, growth in humility, growth in spiritual-mindedness—all this I see clearly taught and urged in Scripture, and clearly exemplified in the lives of many of God's saints.*

**John Charles Ryle (Bishop of Liverpool)**

Take advantage of the training this church offers...

- Equipping classes
  - Biblical
  - Theological
  - Practical
- Equipped for Life
  - Evangelism Training through Gideons
  - A Christian Perspective of A.I..
- ???

Remember, God will use you to the level you are trained. You should be a life long learner and one who puts themselves in the way of training.

**Review** - Expect Your Leaders to Constantly Train for Godliness

- Be A Good Servant By Being Trained in Good Doctrine

**2. Leader - Focus On The Eternal Over the Temporal (vs. 7-8)**

Biblical leaders need to have the right perspective. Paul wants Timothy's life and ministry to be shaped by the gospel! This will aide tremendously in keeping the church pure and her teaching sound.

**1 Timothy 4:7-8 (ESV)**

*Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather 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.*

Do you see what Paul is saying to Timothy in these verses?

Paul says that it is possible for Timothy, in his line of work, to pursue things that are irreverent (profane) and silly make believe ideologies.

We see the same warning in chapter 1...

**1 Timothy 1:3-4 (ESV)**

*As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.*

It is no surprise to any of us that ideas, ideologies, and foolish myths abound and have no limit.

We can get lost in rabbit holes of stupidity which serve only one purpose and that is to detract us from the most important use of our time - getting to know God!

This is why Paul tells Timothy not to waste his time on these things because they serve no real purpose while sucking up finite time.

**Some examples of real internet searches...**

1. Do penguins have knees?
2. Is the tooth fairy real?
3. Do fish get thirsty?
4. Can I marry my cousin?
5. Can I eat my goldfish?
6. What would a chair look like if our knees bent the other way?
7. Is it illegal to name my baby Batman?

Instead of wasting time on foolishness, use the time God has entrusted to you for more noble purposes.

**Ephesians 5:15-16 (NIV84)**

*Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.*

Paul contrasts silly myths with using the time given with what I argue is the chief end of man - **“Rather train your self for godliness.”**

What does this mean?

**Godliness = piety**

***The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament (2150. εὐσέβεια eusébeia)***

*εὐσέβεια eusébeia, fem. noun from eusebés, devout, godly. Devotion, piety toward God. Godliness or the whole of true religion, so named because piety toward God is the foundation and principal part of it.*

*The word eusébeia literally means well-directed reverence, but does not imply an inward, inherent holiness. It is actually an externalized piety. Paul uses it only in the pastoral epistles.*

So, do you understand the meaning? Godliness is an outward lifestyle based on an inward, God produced transformation.

Paul challenges Timothy to TRAIN (γυμνάζω *gumnázō*) or EXERCISE himself in this.

This means he is to put effort into this.

Passivity and godliness have no relationship with one another.

Why should he put effort into this? Look at verse 8...

***1 Timothy 4:8 (ESV)***

*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.*

Again we see the value distinction between this world and the next.

Working out and pushing ourselves physically is quite beneficial. We know this intuitively and experientially. We feel better when we get these old bodies moving. Our doctors and health professionals tell us over and over the benefits of exercise.

Our bodies are amazing machines created by the hand of God that respond by becoming stronger when we push their limits.

**The summer Olympics is a great example of this.** These people are shockingly above the norm.

Elyse Joliff said she would like to see a normal person perform in the Olympics so we have an accurate frame of reference. haha

**Conan O'Brien has the same thought when he said...**

*Some people are saying that the reason Michael Phelps isn't doing so well is because he let himself get too out of shape. I just have to say that I have been watching the Olympics, and if that guy is out of shape, I have been dead for five years. - Conan O'Brien*

There is value to physical training.

Godliness, on the other “holds promise” for this life and the life to come.

What does this mean?

It means that when we become followers of God, God gives us promise after promise for this life and the next. Let me give you just three promises for this life...

### **God promises His Presence**

***Joshua 1:9 (ESV)***

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”*

### **God promises His Provision**

***Philippians 4:19 (ESV)***

*And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*

### **God promises His Peace**

***John 14:27 (ESV)***

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.*

Does God keep his promises?

But He also gives promises for the life to come...

### **God Promises Eternal Life**

***John 3:16 (ESV)***

*“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

### **God Promises New Bodies**

***1 Corinthians 15:52–53 (ESV)***

*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.*

## God Promises an Inheritance in Heaven

### 1 Peter 1:3-4 (ESV)

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,*

Again, I ask you - Does God keep His promises?

And because He always keeps His promises, there is everlasting value in pursuing godliness because godliness will benefit believers for all eternity!

This is why Paul wants Timothy to have an eternal perspective on this life. Life can get exceptionally challenging. Interpersonal strife, cancer, death, marriage break-ups, depression, anxiety, car accidents, you name it, life is profoundly difficult at time - most of the time.

If we fail to have an eternal perspective - that there is life and life abundantly beyond the life, discouragement, cynicism, and even depression can easily creep in and cause **“the dark night of the soul.”**

But if we remember regularly and often that this life is but a vapor and there is a glorious life to come where we will see our Savior, Jesus Christ face to face and fellowship with Him and all the saints for eternity, well, then the challenges of this life are put in their proper place.

These trials and tribulations are no longer in control of our emotions, but instead, they are background noise to a much greater and hope-filled reality.

Christians are to be pleasant to be around. They ought to be a joy to talk with. Their demeanor should be full of kindness and compassion. Christians are UNFLAPPABLY OPTIMISTIC.

Why? Because we know what's coming!

We've read the end of the story and we win.

We know that He has gone to prepare a place for us and will bring us to Himself.

We know His plan of rescue will succeed.

And because we know this, we can look at this difficult life with a powerful confidence.

### 2 Timothy 1:7 (ESV)

*for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.*

*What if you had the ability to travel to your eternal life now? Imagine all that you would see and experience...*



*But then, you were forced to come back to the life you had been living still remembering clearly what you experienced in God's Heaven.*

*How would an experience like this change the way you lived out the rest of your life?*

*I suspect it would have a profound impact.*

I want you to memorize and meditate on a verse that will help you keep your mind focused on the right things - eternal things.

**Colossians 3:1-4 (ESV)**

*If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

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- Focus On The Eternal Over the Temporal

**3. Leader - Work At Setting Your Hope On The Living God (vs. 9-10)**

Biblical leaders need to possess the right attitude.

**1 Timothy 4:9-10 (ESV)**

*The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.*

What saying? The saying we just covered in verse 8 regarding the inestimable value of godliness.

And this is Paul's way of saying how serious it is. He says what he says about **godliness** because it is...

Trustworthy

Deserving of full acceptance

Worth toiling over- Working to the point of exhaustion.

Worth striving over (The word "strive" translates *agōnizometha* ("I agonize"), another athletic term).

Why is Paul's statement in verse 8 on godliness worth this kind of effort? Because of the end of verse 10...

**1 Timothy 4:10 (ESV)**

*For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.*

Friends, Paul uses a very powerful word here. A word that is so powerful it can change the tide of history. **HOPE!**

**Fyodor Dos-toy-ev-sky**

*To live without hope is to cease to live.*

**Fyodor Dostoyevsky (Russian Novelist)**

*Hope is a word which has taken on a new and deeper meaning for us because the Savior took it into His mouth. Loving Him and obeying Him, we suddenly discover that hope is really the direction taken by the whole Bible. Hope is the music of the whole Bible, the heartbeat, the pulse and the atmosphere of the whole Bible.*

**A. W. Tozer**

*Only a Christian has a right to hope, for only he has the power of God to give substance to his hope.*

**A. W. Tozer**

And this is what Paul says. We, believers in the gospel, have a hope that is “*set on the living God...*”

Our God is not dead! He is alive! He is risen from the dead! He is offering hope every second of every day!

And our living God is “*the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.*”

Woah, what does this mean?

*“The statement that Jesus is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe may seem to teach universalism, the belief that all persons will eventually go to heaven regardless of whether they accept Christ. But the rest of Scripture clearly denies the idea. The Greek word translated here as ‘especially’ expresses the sense of ‘particularly.’ The point is not that Jesus saves everybody and then saves believers even more. Rather, Jesus is the Savior for all — all who believe. Further, ‘all people’ pictures the transnational scope of the gospel. Thus Christ is the ‘Savior’ of people from every race and nation.” CSBSB 1923*

Our God is more than capable of rescuing the entire world.

But there is a contingency on our rescue, we must accept His attempt.

*We must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thus be saved.*

Friends, I am not underselling this when I tell you - Christ's rescue plan is your ONLY hope for salvation from God's eternal wrath.

### **EXPLAIN THE GOSPEL...**

Without this beautiful, life saving, heaven giving, rescue plan offered by the Living God, you have NO HOPE.

But for those of us who have repented of our sin and place our faith in Christ, we have hope!

Not a wishy washy hope, not a "hope so" hope. Not a circumstantial hope.

No, our hope is firmly rooted in the living God who is the only, preeminent one.

### ***Colossians 1:15-23 (ESV)***

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.*

This is the kind of HOPE believers in Christ, leaders in the church are supposed to walk in. Paul wanted Timothy and those he discipled to live with HOPE.

***My only hope is that I shall be clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ.***

***David Martyn Lloyd-Jones***

What do you think the life of someone with this kind of HOPE would look like?

What do you think they could accomplish?

What if we really believed that this life is simply a preparatory precursor to the next?

That this is the most heaven the unbeliever will know and the most hell those of us in Christ will know?

I think if we could shed our love and admiration for this life and start to live in light of the Hope we have for the next, we would see revival.

I am closing in on finishing my 55th year on this planet.

Frankly, I am discontent. I have ten to twenty productive years in me.

I want my life to count for the church and Christ's kingdom.

I want to make an impact for the gospel that will live well beyond me.

I don't want to simply preach a weekly sermon, teach some classes, and collect a paycheck until its time to hang up my pulpit.

I want to reach people for Christ. I want to disciple them.

I want them to make disciples.

I want to see God move in HUGE ways!

I am not interested in biding my time.

I am instead passionate to have God use my time to give people TRUE AND LASTING HOPE!

And do you know what would give me endless joy? All the leadership and each one of you would desire the same thing...

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- Focus On The Eternal Over the Temporal
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### **Conclusion**

Can you imagine what would happen to this church, to Allendale, if each one of us were...

Trained in good doctrine?

Focused on the eternal over the here and now?

And lived passionately in the light of the HOPE we have in Jesus?

This church would become an epicenter for godliness.

This church would become a juggernaut of righteousness

This church would be the catalyst for disciple-making she is called to be.

Church, Christ is calling you to this? Will you respond? Will you step up? Will you take the lead in growing in Godliness?

And all of this rises and falls on Mature Leadership.