

## 1 Timothy 4:6-16 Doctrine and Deeds

This is the heart of the 1 Timothy – things are going wrong at the church in Ephesus and the only way to clear them up is to teach the truth and let people see the truth lived out.

True not only for messed up churches, it's true for every one at all times. The world around us needs to **hear the truth** and **see it lived out**.

The Gospels not only tell us what Jesus taught, they tell us what He did.

After he ascended, He commissioned His followers to make Him known.

- Matt 28:18-20 - [18](#) And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. [19](#) Go therefore and make disciples [KNOW] of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20](#) teaching them to observe [DO] all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

The disciples did that – they went around making the truth of Jesus and His teaching known, *living lives that demonstrated the change*, and passing it all on to others – encouraging people to know about Jesus and to change and be changed accordingly.

Peter tells his readers, (1 Peter 2:21) – "Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps."

1 Cor 11: [1](#) Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.

Titus 2:7-8 "show yourself *to be* a pattern of good works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, [8](#) [having] sound speech that cannot be condemned,"

No escaping the fact that the message of Christianity involves both new beliefs, but also new actions, new habits. *It's not just an intellectual assent; it's an observable change.* The two go hand in hand.

This morning I want to look at Paul's instruction to Timothy and show you what we can learn about HOW to do this, and WHAT it should look like.

Let's start by reviewing the problem, but remember, the solution applies not only to people in the church who are being led astray, it applies to ANYONE who is away from God.

[1](#) Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, [2](#) speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, [3](#) forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and

know the truth. [4](#) For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; [5](#) for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

[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.

1. Do this, don't do that. Accept this, reject that.

- Put on, Put off.
  - o A valuable concept to understand.
  - o "Nature abhors a vacuum." (Aristotle) You do too. You can't just stop doing bad things; you have to put on good things in their place.
    - Trying to break a habit – put on something good every time instead, and use Scripture and worship
    - And the reverse is true – you're not going to find the time or resources in your life to do things that God is leading you toward *unless* you cast off some other things.
    - The whole Christian life is lived like this – don't do that, do this; don't pick up that, pick up this. But remember, the list of thing you should be doing, or can be doing, is WAY longer than the don'ts. That's God's nature. And the stuff He tells you to stay away from is stuff that you're not ready for yet, or that will hurt you. Trust Him.

2. This process of change is **hard**. "Exercise yourself toward godliness." Grk – gymnazo – hard training. Why? I wanted it to be easy, still do. I wanted to cast my vote, make my declaration, and have God flip a switch. Why won't that work?

- The Christian life is not an election. In an election I vote for you, you take care of the problems, I go on with my life while you make things better for me.
- It's joining a revolution. You have a part to play and it involves training, it involves fighting (against your old nature and ideas, and against the forces of darkness), it involves recruiting and rescue missions. The question is, *how you are going to find time for you day job!?! Part of the answer is that you are going to go to your day job and live all of this out. Christianity isn't just what you do on Sundays, it's what you do EVERY day, in EVERY choice you make, in EVERY conversation you have, EVERYwhere you go, in EVERYthing you do.*
- And that means change, and change isn't always easy. **Sometimes** God does radical things in a man or woman's life and suddenly transforms them. Those stories encourage us, they motivate us, but to a degree, they can also mislead us, because most of the time, most of us will have to grind it out, seeing little painful, hard-fought victories scattered over a long battlefield if we are going to see change in our lives.

- **Remember that!** Don't give up fighting just because it's hard. In fact, the fact that it's hard that lets you know you're probably doing the right thing. If your Christian life feels easy, you've either gotten there by building up habits of godliness through prior battles, or you're not engaged in the fight.
- So, exercise yourself toward godliness – it has good rewards as we will see.

[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.

Rewards that last a long time, and which don't fade. Physically, the older you get the weaker you get and the longer it takes to recover. Spiritually, the more mature you become, the stronger you become **and** *the progress doesn't degrade* as long as you stay connected to Jesus.

[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.

So, this part of the radical nature of the message – even though we are to be exercising ourselves in godliness, unlike the false teachings floating around, we don't trust in our works for our salvation. We're saved by grace as we trust in the living God.

Two things must be held in tension – on the one hand, God does this amazing work by saving you – totally and completely, with no regard for what you deserve or how hard you have tried, it's totally grace, and it's totally Him. AND YET, He still expects us to respond to that work and exercise ourselves in Godliness. He'll accept you in ANY condition, but He won't let you stay there.

God gave us a spot on the team, we didn't have to make it through try-outs. **But now that we're on the team**, we want to play as best as we can.

And now Paul goes on to describe what a good player looks like.

[12](#) Let no one despise your youth,

- favorite verse of youth groups, but the word means any man of military age – so up to 40.
- And yet, it still applies, there is no reason why our teens or singles should be looked down just because they are young, if they are standing on the Word of God.
- And that's what's key – *the content of your message should be so overwhelming that your demographics don't get in the way*. So this applies to all of us. Paul is saying, if your testimony, your teaching, and your actions speak loud enough, they'll drown out people's objections to your age, or whatever other kind of opposition they may have. If people see the Truth in you, they'll be willing to listen.

So, he says:

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.

Six marks of the life of a believer.

### **WORD – logos**

- specific words because words express concepts, ideas, feelings, and motives, and there are certain words that shouldn't be coming out of a Christian's mouth because he or she should have no reason to express some of those things. Ask they unsaved people around you and they'll tell you what you shouldn't say.
- general ideas/concepts; words you shouldn't say, but topics you don't discuss, conversations you don't take part in – remember you are an ambassador of Jesus, and you have to consider – is this something He would say?
- what you say AND how you say it – what's your tone?
- James 3
- How do you change?
  - o Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks – Matt 12:34
  - o The cure for halitosis is found in the heart. Let God work on your heart and He'll affect your tongue too; but as always, go for the disease, not the symptom.

### **CONDUCT**

- most of us need examples, we need to see things lived out – show me, what does that look like.
  - o This is one reason why fellowship is so valuable – we learn by osmosis, for good or for evil.
    - If you are going to be around the ungodly a lot you need to have a plan for how you are going to take extra measures to fight against their influence.
- Parents - point out godly conduct in others and explain it in ourselves
- “Preach the gospel at all times, and when necessary use words” St Francis – yes, but that wasn't what Jesus did. It's not one or the other, it's got to be both

### **LOVE**

- Agape – committed love, more than emotions, in involves action
  - o Biblical love is sacrificial – it loves when it hurts
  - o Biblical love initiates – it loves the hard people and makes the first move
  - o This is the love that God has shown us.

### **SPIRIT**

- general attitude and demeanor
  - o It's one thing to keep your mouth shut, it's another to step up and take action when necessary, but how's your underlying attitude about it all
    - You can do “good” deeds with a rotten heart and they have no value

## FAITH

- do you live by it? Do you takes steps of faith? Do you line up your life and actions with what you say you believe? Is there a clear link between what you believe and what you do?
- And not just what you do, but also what you don't do.
  - o Do you freak out all the time
  - o Are you constantly dominated by fear and worry? Does anxiety get you in a headlock?
    - OR, Can you say with Paul, when faced with adversity, "none of these things move me?"
- How do you get to that point? It comes by knowing God's nature and reminding your self of true doctrine. If God's Word says this, then I must... **Faith is taking action based on belief.** So if you want to have more faith, you need to be reminded of what you believe.

## PURITY

- Holiness and Purity are very similar ideas. What people see as purity in our lives is because we are replicating what God desires. So when people look at your life, your attitudes, your actions, your relationships, do they see Jesus, or do they see a reflection of the rest of the world?
- And here's the challenge – it's to be in the world, but not of the world. Neither fully engaged with everything going on around you, nor fully disengaged. You can't just go with the flow and join the crowd but neither can you live your life in a monastery.
  - o How you make the call is going to be between you and Jesus – but those are the two poles and you will always find yourself gravitating toward one or the other – telling yourself it's OK to do what you want, or retreating from the world in search of God while forgetting that God is at work in the world and wants to use you in that work.
  - o Purity is something that you have to pursue issue by issue by consulting Scripture, seeking God in prayer, and asking for Godly counsel.
  - o It's not easy, but it must be something you **actively** strive to do.

And pursuing these six things opens up the door for you to be able to do three others:

[13](#) Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

Now, fortunately, all of this is made possible by God.

[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.

Paul is reminding Timothy of what needs to be done, but he's also reminding him that *God has already gifted him to be able to do it*. So don't just stare at the list of what needs to be done and shake your head like there's no way it could happen. Remember that **if God calls you to it, He will get you through it.**

Using our sports analogy again, God put you on the team, He teaches you the plays and then, somehow, He gives you the ability to do what needs to be done. So there is this mysterious dance between Him giving you the ability to change and serve and you actually receiving and acting on it.

[15](#) Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.

Progress provides the proof. Do you see change in your life? Do you see old habits fading away and more godly ones taking their place?

[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.

We close by remembering that it's not just us at stake here – there is a world of 7 Billion people around who need to see what godliness lived out looks like.

You have the privilege of not only being changed yourself, but also of providing a living breathing illustration of grace and growth to those around you.

And the key to it all, is stick close to Jesus, get into His Word, get into fellowship, get into doctrine and then get into the gymnasium of life and work it all out by receiving His instruction and strength.

He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it. He has ordained good works for you that you might walk in them. It is our joy and privilege to be a part of what He is doing, so let go of your fears, let go of your worries and get in the game.