

Intro: Shackleton's Ad: Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages. Bitter cold. Long months of complete darkness. Constant danger. Safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in case of success. Supposedly 5,000 men and 3 women applied (*Many*). 28 chosen (*Few*).

Thesis: "Faithful Workers of Jesus are focused, holy and loving."

I. Stay Focused

- A. **Remind "them".** Who? "Faithful men" (2:2). But also the church.
- B. **Focus "these things."** Common in Pastorals. *What things?* Gospel/Kingdom (8-13).
- C. **Distractions.** Arguments. Babble. So that they and you don't **swerve from the truth**.

ILLUSTRATION: Cut Grass. Fields. Farming lines. Focal point. Hood ornament/Distant mark.

- D. **Rightly Handle.** *Stick to truth of God's Word. Stay in Word. Study it. Know it. Apply it.*
- E. **Avoid ungodliness.** *Gossip. Slander. Quarrels. Babble. Talking behind. Spreads.*

ILLUSTRATION: Gangrene. Cut it off. Get rid of the dead tissue. *Church discipline. v.17.*

APPLICATION: v.19. Lord still knows His own. He will keep them. He's in more control than us.

II. Pursue Holiness

- A. **The Lord wants to use you.** He wants best for you first. Holiness. *Best version of you.*
- B. **He wants to make you Holy.** Like Jesus. If you're a believer, you want to be holy too. In your heart, you know it's not legalistic to want to get better and be better. Like Jesus. It's what you want. But you also keep finding yourself drawn to sin. Jesus make me vessel!

ILLUSTRATION: Vessels. Dishes. Bowls. Jars. **"China" vs. Paper Plates.** *Wash Solo cups.*

- C. **Flee youthful passions.** Lust, yes. But really it's the immature talking/gossiping. Drama.
- D. **Grow up.** *Seriously. Mature a little with the help of Jesus. Stop acting like a child/youth.*

APPLICATION: You *need* to have a clear conscience and relationship with Jesus for ministry. Not perfection, but a desire and pursuit of holiness. Christ-likeness. Be like Jesus. Like Jesus.

III. Love Others

- A. **Servant.** Deacon? Serve others. Not quarreling with them. Kind to everyone.
- B. **Teach.** Endure evil. Correct opponents with gentleness.
- C. **Trusting God.** *He's the one who has to convince them and lead them to repentance. Leading to a knowledge of the Truth. To come to their senses.*

ILLUSTRATION: Prodigal Son. "He came to his senses."

- D. **Escape Snare of Devil.** After being captured to do His will.

ILLUSTRATION: LOTR. Fellowship. Haldir. LothLorien. *'Indeed in nothing is the power of the Dark Lord more clearly shown than in the estrangement that divides all those who still oppose him.... We live now upon an island amid many perils, and our hands are more often upon the bowstring than upon the harp.'* **Gollum. Wraiths. Boromir.**

- E. **What is Devil's will?** Foolish & ignorant controversies. Quarreling among believers. Opposing truth. Engaging in irreverent babble (gossip, slander, rumors), pulling others down/along with you, spreading false doctrine, causing believers to doubt their faith, causing others to distrust leadership, not addressing things in the appropriate way.

APPLICATION:

- 1) **MERCY.** We care for them enough to correct them & teach them with love & gentleness.
- 2) **REPENT.** Our desire isn't just that they would stop/change behavior..

This is hard work. It's much more fun to engage in highly emotional, dramatic, secretive talk.