

Message #27

I Timothy 4:11-16

IF THE CHURCH IS TO BECOME A PILLAR AND SUPPORT OF THE TRUTH OF GOD, IT MUST HAVE A MINISTER WHO TAKES THE COMMUNICATION OF GOD'S WORD SERIOUSLY AND THE APPLICATION OF GOD'S WORD TO HIS OWN LIFE SERIOUSLY.

CHALLENGE #1 – The challenge concerning pastoral authority. **4:11**

Both verbs in this verse “prescribe” and “teach” are present imperatives, meaning these are two commands given to the minister that he is to continually obey.

The verb “prescribe” is a unique Greek word that implies communicating a message with military authority, as in a military command or order (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 338). Paul is demanding that Timothy preach and teach with authority. Paul wants Timothy to boldly and authoritatively thunder forth the Word of God.

Dr. John MacArthur made an interesting observation when he said most preaching today is intriguing, entertaining and interesting, but not commanding and convicting (I Timothy, p. 170).

CHALLENGE #2 – The challenge concerning pastoral age. **4:12a**

In the historical background of both the Jewish and Greek mindset, age usually had respect while youth usually had to earn respect. The words “look down” indicate that some people in the church can despise or think little of a minister if he isn't elderly (p. 240). Paul's point here is Timothy was never to allow people to look down on him because of his age. Two contextual points keep people from looking down at a young minister: 1) His commanding and accurate communication of the Word of God (**4:11**); 2) His continual application of God's Word to his own life (**4:12b**).

CHALLENGE #3 – The challenge concerning pastoral application. **4:12b**

Timothy not only needed to commandingly preach the truth, he also needed to live the truth.

Area #1 - A minister is to be an example in speech. **4:12b**

Never should ungodly speech or unsound doctrine come from the lips of a minister. You can be certain that what is in the heart eventually comes out through the lips.

Area #2 - A minister is to be an example in conduct. **4:12c**

The Greek word “conduct” is one that speaks of a manner of life or behavior that turns back or wheels around toward God (Smith, p. 34).

Area #3 - A minister is to be an example in love. **4:12d**

Now the love referred to in this verse is not the emotional and irrational love of the world; this is a very specific love—Biblical “Agape” love—described by God in His Word.

Area #4 - A minister is to be an example in faith. **4:12e**

A minister must be one who continually demonstrates faith in God and His Word. He must continually believe God and demonstrate that to others.

Area #5 - A minister is to be an example in purity. **4:12f**

This particular word speaks of the fact that the minister must keep himself ceremonially clean at all times. Let’s face it; if the church is to be pure, it begins with the leadership.

CHALLENGE #4 – The challenge concerning pastoral attention. **4:13**

Here, in capsule form, is the essence of a ministry that will help make a church become a pillar and support of the truth of God.

Now the verb “give attention” is one that means to devote oneself to something or to turn one’s mind toward something (Smith, p. 385).

Area of Focus #1 - A minister is to give attention to the reading of God’s Word. **4:13a**

- 1) Exodus 24:7 says, “Then he (Moses) took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, ‘All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!’”
- 2) Deuteronomy 31:11 says, “...when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place which He will choose, you shall read this law in front of all Israel in their hearing.”
- 3) Joshua 8:35 says, “There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel with the women and the little ones and the strangers who were living among them.”
- 4) II Kings 23:2 says, “The king went up to the house of the LORD and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests and prophets and all the people, both small and great; and he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD.”
- 5) Nehemiah 8:8 says, “They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading.”

- 6) Luke 4:16 says, “And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.”
- 7) Acts 15:21 says, “For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”
- 8) Colossians 4:16 says, “When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea.”

Area of Focus #2 - The minister is to give attention to exhortation from God’s Word. **4:13b**

The word “exhortation” carries with it the idea of aiding or helping someone by verbal counsel. To give comfort, encouragement and exhortation by communicating the Word of God (Smith, p. 340).

Area of Focus #3 - The minister is to give attention to the teaching of God’s Word. **4:13c**

The minister must devote himself to systematic instruction of the Word of God. The Bible is a difficult book. It comes directly from an infinitely wise God. Therefore, it is no easy matter to teach it. It requires prayerful and careful study, and it is a tough discipline.

CHALLENGE #5 – The challenge concerning a neglect of pastoral attention. **4:14**

I want you to notice that the noun “gift” is singular, not plural, indicating he had been given one special gift, probably pastor/teacher. His gift had been divinely revealed and recognized by the elders of his church.

God does not call men into ministry today through special prophetic revelation like He did with Timothy; but He does call men into ministry through sovereign providence. God will give a man a desire and a gift and then open doors and give him opportunities to use it. If he neglects his gift, he can lose his ministry.

CHALLENGE #6 – The challenge concerning pastoral absorption. **4:15**

Paul is telling Timothy that he should carefully premeditate and think about and actually be absorbed in the Word of God and in developing his gift. Why? So that all will see the progress of the minister’s life. People should be able to look at the minister and see His commitment to God’s Word and see that he is growing, gaining and developing. They should be able to see that their minister is highly dedicated to God’s Word and will.

The people have a right to expect that their pastor is absorbed in the Word of God.

CHALLENGE #7 – The challenge concerning primary attention. **4:16**

Timothy was to keep his primary focus on his own life and teaching.

Ladies and gentlemen, if the church of God is to become a pillar and support of the truth, it must have a minister who takes the Word of God seriously.

Questions for us all:

- 1) Is the authoritative preaching of God's Word sweet to us, or is it bitter to us?
- 2) Do we systematically read the Bible?
- 3) Am I working on my own life?