

Thursday, January 5, 2023 • Read 1 Timothy 4:12–16

Questions from the Scripture text: What were some doing with Timothy's comparative youth (v12)? What was Timothy to do about this despising? By what means was he to put a stop to it? In what six areas, specifically, was he to be an example to them? What three public ministries would this personal example commend (v13)? What would he be doing if any of this lapse (v14)? What practice would facilitate his giving himself entirely to them (v15)? With what result before whom? How does v16 summarize/recap this charge? Who is using this (cf. 2:3) to do what two things?

How is ministerial authority maintained? 1 Timothy 4:12–16 looks forward to the second reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these five verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **ministerial authority is maintained by taking heed to oneself first, and then with a diligence already demonstrated in one's own progress, to direct others in theirs.**

There was a time when people rightly despised inexperience, immaturity, lack of progress, lightness, and half-heartedness in the ministry. The idolizing of youth and characterization of seriousness as misery and maturity as mythical has brought us into bizarre times, where we can hardly understand what the apostle is telling his young (probably in his 40s!) protégé: what Timothy lacks in years, he should seek to make up by diligence.

Let no one despise your youth, v12. Timothy was to “command and teach” (v11). But there is a perpetual problem of people whom God is saving by means of His appointed ministry depriving themselves of its benefits by having too little regard for the minister himself. The apostle would tell another protégé, “Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you” (Titus 2:15).

Be an example, v12b, 15. But this authority is not enforced by domineering; it cannot be maintained by declaration and demand of status or imposed by force of will. Its purpose is God's use of it to save the hearers (v16b), so it is strengthened by the demonstration that God is also saving their preacher. The preacher's progress (v15b) indicates that the path that they are on together ends in perfect blessedness.

There are six areas, specifically, in which the apostle commands the pastor to be an example. Six areas in which the people should be aiming at making “progress,” and in which therefore it is a help to them that the pastor's own progress would be evident.

- in **word**; if his words are going to be used to teach, then they should never be idle or useless (cf. Mt 12:36–37; Col 4:6), and they should certainly never be rash or malicious (cf. Prov 12:18; Col 3:9–12).
- in **conduct**; God Himself, Christ Himself, is the standard. But if the man preaching this standard isn't being conformed more and more to that standard, he makes himself the occasion of others' disregarding it.
- in **love**; outward keeping of rules is not Christian behavior if it does not flow from faith that is energized by love (cf. Gal 5:6, 13–14; Rom 13:8–10; Mat 22:37–40; Jn 13:33–35). The pastor who is not making progress in love to God, neighbor, and brother may be an example of the fleshly counterfeits of the condemned, but he is not an example of progress in the Christian life.
- in **Spirit**; again, the man's spirit must be being formed by the Holy Spirit. This is something that, being inward, he himself cannot produce. He must pursue it by the means of grace for himself as a dependent upon grace, just as his pursuit of it for others is also by the means that the Spirit uses to form their spirits.
- in **faith**; he is always to be meditating upon (cf. v15a) the truth that he believes about Jesus (cf. 3:16). He rejects all manmade religion (v1–3, 7; cf. Col 2:20–23), but is always full of how Jesus is reigning in glory, making Himself to be preached among the nations and believed upon in the world.
- in **purity**; there is no room in the minister's life for impurity, because there is no room in the believer's life for impurity. He must be single-minded, always aiming at what will honor the Lord best and serve the Lord most, rather than seeing how much fleshliness he can get away with tolerating.

Give attention to reading, to exhortation, to teaching, v13. It is the truth that the Lord uses to make an example out of a minister, because it is the truth that the Lord uses to conform believers to Christ through the ministry. Thus, the truth must be read; the mere reading of God's Word is its own component of worship and discipleship. The truth must be applied; exhortation is bringing the truth to bear in every useful way. The truth must be taught; there can be no proper application without the formation first of the understanding.

Do not neglect, but continue heedfully, v14–16. This discipleship plan was not the best practices plan produced by an elite think-tank. It is what God has ordained to give His church through the preacher (v14a), as He Himself has proclaimed in Scripture (v14b), which He Himself signified on earth by the actions of others whom He had appointed from heaven (v14c). Such a divine calling is worthy of cultivation that forms the entire setting of one's life (“these things cultivate” being a more literal translation of v15a) and the core substance of one's life (“in these things, Be!” being a more literal translation of the next phrase). The command “take heed” translates a verb that indicates both strenuous effort and attention to detail.

God is saving people! Though we do not all have the calling of a minister of the gospel (cf. Eph 4:11–14), we do all have a calling to participation in that work (cf. Eph 4:15–16, 25–29). Surely, it is worth great devotion and diligence to participate in God's own work in God's own way.

In each of the six areas, how do you most need to progress? What is God's method for progressing you? Who are God's ministers for progressing you? To what things in life are you giving more thought, time, and effort than this progress in yourself and others?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for sanctifying us unto salvation through Your truth: read, applied, and taught by men whom You have appointed. Forgive us for when we take them or their ministry lightly. Forgive them for neglecting their own progress, and save us both we ask, through Jesus Christ, AMEN!

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

First Timothy 4 verses 12 through 16. These are good words. But no one, despise your youth, but be an example to the believers. In word in conduct. In love. And spirit. In faith. Impurity. Till I come give attention to reading. To exhortation. To doctrine. 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. Meditate on these things. Give yourself entirely to. That your progress may be evident. To all. 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.

So, for other reading of god's inspired and inherent word. And we have a little bit of a difficulty, identifying with the Uh, first part of the passage, let, no one despise your youth. Because we live in such an insane age. That inexperience immaturity. Lack of holiness, lack of progress in the face.

Are actually admired and exalted. And anyone who is mature, or holy or sound. Serious. There's viewed with suspicion. Or just, Despised and ignored. There was a time when youth was rightly looked down upon. Because those who had not spent that much time in the world. Had not had much time to learn much time to grow.

Lunchtime for experience. No, Timothy Was best as we can guess somewhere in his early 40s, probably. When this was written to him, not To permit anyone to despise. His youth. But the answer was not. Because youthfulness is good. But because as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, He was to be mature beyond his years.

He was to be among them, although of a lesser age than some Of a more advanced Christian maturity. That, by the means that God has appointed Through which the rest of the church will go. Through which quote, you will save your heroes in verse 16. That by those same means he would have grown.

In an advanced way. And so the command to let, no one despise, your youth is important. Because Timothy is the minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He did not have the option. Of not insisting. On his authority. Verse 11, which we finished with last week, these things command and teach There is a temptation in the ministry.

To want other people to think that we are. Um, Not requiring their submission. The problem is Jesus requires. Their submission. And it's not our authority. To disregard. If we disregard it, we disregard Christ. As well. And so there's let no one despise your youth and the The mechanism by which he is to Combat.

The despising of youth is given immediately in the next phrase, b, and example. A pastor ought to be. The sort of Christian. That the rest of the congregation can look at. And say, that's the sort of Christian that I should be. An elder ought to be the sort of Christian.

That the rest of the congregation can look at and say that's the sort of Christian. I should be. Same with a husband. Father. Same with a mother. Now, all of us want to be that. For the rest of the congregation that we may encourage one another. Each of us is a joint that supplies something or a member that has its part.

As the apostle says, in Ephesians chapter 4, But there are some whose specific part is to be an example. To those to whom the Lord. Has entrusted the care, the spiritual care. Of others. And the apostle gives Timothy six different ways. To be an example one. That he should be an example in word.

The scriptures teach us. That we will give an account for every idle word. As Jesus said during his earthly ministry. And command us that our speech. Would always be with grace always, be useful for edifying for building up. Strengthening the way you put. Great big steel I-beams into a skyscraper two by fours to frame a house edifying.

Maybe, you know, the word edifice for a building comes from the same. Idea. That we should always be speaking in a way that builds up. We're having a hard time. With our hearts and our lips. And In some cases, our brothers and sisters. Even just speaking edifying words on the Lord's day, When the words are to be not just edifying, but worshiping.

But seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Well, you should be asleep sometimes. But, Whatever you are. With others. It should be speaking edifying, more. Not Idle. Words. This is a very difficult thing. This is something that

This is something that The book of James says, is the hardest thing in the Christian life. And so it is necessary that the people have. An example. In word. In conduct got himself, Christ himself as a standard. But the Kind of pastor the elder. Father husband mother. Ought to be able to say, Imitate me as I imitate Christ, just as the apostle did.

If the man preaching God's standard isn't being more and more conformed to Christ, Then he makes himself an occasion of others. Disregarding, the standard They are responsible for their own disregarding. But he must not let himself be an occasion. Upon which they do. So

We're in the pantry. No, the bucket. Let me bucket. One apple a few.

So he is to be an example, in word, and in conduct And if you're following along in your Bible, you can see the next one or maybe remember from the reading. In love. The outward keeping of rules is not Christian behavior. If it does not flow from faith, that is energized by love.

You remember Galatians 5, 6? Circumcision or uncircumcision is anything but faith. Working by and it's specifically the word for energized and are got oh. Energized by love. And so, if he if he is an example, To the congregation of conduct needs to be conduct. That comes the way. That the Lord actually produces.

Codily, Christian conduct. Through love forgot. Love for neighbor. And love for brother. The last thing we pastor. Wants to be an example of for his congregation. Is a counterfeit. He needs to have his actual progress. As verse. 15 says. Evident to all. So, an example in word, Conduct. Love.

Spirit. Just closely related to love is. That he serves the lord with his spirit. The man serves the lord with the man's spirit as a result of the lord's spirit's work. Upon the man. And so it needs to be from the inside out from a principle of love. From a principle of being conformed, more to Christ.

Body. Is that the resurrection? But soul spirit. Is now. Needs to be an example of faith. Faith. Does not just hoping against hope. It is a convincedness of the truth of the bible. And so the way that his spirit grows in love so that his behavior progresses and his words progress.

Is by meditation upon the truth of scripture. Especially the truth about Jesus. We're still just 12 verses away from that summary about Christ in chapter 3 and verse 16. And the emphasis on the fact that Christ is enthroned in glory. From where he causes preachers messengers. Angels, as it's translated in our text.

To go out from where he makes himself to be proclaimed among the nations. From whereby his spirit, he causes himself to be believed upon in the world. And so, the minister must be an example. Of someone who meditates upon the truth of scripture and especially the truth about Jesus.

In this, he rejects. All man-made religion, but is always full his heart and mind always full. Of how Jesus is reigning and glory Jesus is making himself to be preached among the nations. Jesus is making himself to be believed upon in the world. And very soon. Jesus returns. And we stand before him.

Counted righteous. In him. Clothed with righteous words and behavior. By him. By the time we stand at the judgment, you will have completed his work in the day of Christ, Jesus. This is the great key. To growth in the Christian life. You. There are some who translate there at the end of So, first Peter might be a second Peter.

Um, well anyway, they translate it. Grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. But it's probably an instrumental date of there. Grammatical construction grow by the grace of Jesus Christ grow by the knowing Jesus Christ grow by knowing Christ. That this is how we make progress.

And if the congregation is going to be making progress towards the day and of the perfection, perfecting completing of God's work in them. By the grace of Christ. And by the knowing of Christ, the minister who is an example to them. Needs to grow in the same way. Needs to be an example in faith.

And so, Be an example in word conduct. Love spirit, faith. And finally purity. That as the Lord brings us closer and closer. To that day of Christ in which our salvation is completed. The fullness of our adoption is revealed at the redemption of our bodies to use the language of Romans 8.

That salvation that is nearer. Now to us than when we first believed in the words of Romans 13. Well, that day is a day in which we will be holy in which the Lord will have produced in us. The peaceful fruit of righteousness. The holiness that is necessary to see the Lord.

That which we know we will have We will be likened. Because we will see him. As he is. And so that's what a minister should be growing in. He should be growing in purity. There is no room in his life. For impurity. Because there is no room in the believer's life.

For impurity. We should be single-minded always aiming. Not at what will accommodate my pleasures while being good enough. But rather always aiming at what honors the Lord best. And serves the Lord most Not tolerating any more darkness. Or the sorts of deeds for which the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.

But yearning for looking to God for depending upon Christ force striving by his spirit for More and more of that light, that belongs to the next life to walk in the light as he is in the light. Recognizing the sin that we have and confessing it. Because he is not only.

Faithful and just to forgive us our sins. But praise God. Also faithful, and also just To cleanse us. From all unrighteousness. So there's six things that he's to be an example. Uh, to the Ephesians. Four, and how. Is he going to be an example? Uh, of them. And how are they going to follow the example?

Well, there are three things very quickly. That he says to give attention to, that will help Timothy in this And, As they help Timothy in this to become the example, they're also the three things. That will help us as we follow the examples. And here it is reading. Exhortation and doctrine reading the scripture.

Applying the scripture. And building up theology the teaching. Of the scripture. Praise God. These are three things. He has commanded. Four is public worship. These are three things that he has commanded. For families to be doing. At the beginning and end of each day. And working out and thinking about speaking together about In everything that they do.

And these are the three things by which Christ grows us. In himself. Now, one of the things that Christ has done for his church, In order that there might be proper reading of the scripture. Is he has given the church. Uh, particular men, whom he has appointed. Paul reminds Timothy.

That. He was prophesied over. That doesn't necessarily mean fortune. Tolders special secret knowledge from God. But it can be a simple as that, which is done. Now, when a man is being recognized and has been properly and following the scripture, Um, Uh, called trained as being installed too and ordained for the ministry.

There's preaching that takes place. Preaching about what it is to which he's being called. And then there's the laying on of hands that takes place and it shows. The the man's calling, the man's duty, the man's role. His office in the church is not being given to him by other men.

It is being given to him by God is being called by the Lord Jesus Christ. There's no option. Says why? Resignation. From or retirement from The ministry is so offensive to some of us. Because we see do not neglect the gift. That is in, you not for you in you for the church.

The gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy, which doesn't come from man, comes from God. With the laying on of the hands of the eldership, which shows that it doesn't come from them. Comes from God, very specifically from the God man. Jesus Christ. And so there's no option.

To not do his ministry. And so he is to meditate upon the word read and meditate upon the word in applied. And meditate upon the word. Taught. Uh, these things he is to give himself entirely too. Perhaps even describing here. In a way that others cannot. Others have? Uh, different callings in this world different vocation.

They have to. Work to make money. One of the things that we have seen and will continue to see About. Ministers. Elders, who rule? Well, we we saw And especially those whose labor, whose vocation is preaching and teaching. Is that they are worthy of. Double honor. That they can get their living from the

ministry.

Why? Because if they are to do this double time, Meditation upon the word of god and growth. In word and conduct. And love and faith. Uh, love and spirit and faith and purity. Then they need to. Meditate. Upon these things and give themselves entirely to them. Now, you may have other things that you have to do.

If you have another job, But when whatever does not have to be spent in, Um, In that calling, or that vocation The believer should have an example. Of the value of meditating upon the word of god and being always thinking upon and feeding in where the lord has had us in his work.

So that you Uh, would be growing in the conversion of your inner thought life. From. Thinking about a bunch of different things, going a million different ways. To. Uh, having the bulk of your inner thought, life being bringing the word of god to bear, On whatever it is that you're thinking about.

Remembering what you've read. And so the word just by itself. Uh, remembering and thinking upon how the word applies to the different things that you think about, not that you never think about anything else. But that you're thinking about how the bible, Uh, teaches you to think about those things expectation.

And then thinking about not just the word of god. Um, and remembering the words themselves. And the reading, but also, Uh, building the theology of the word understanding. The how all of the teaching of the scripture fits together and especially in christ. In. Doctrine. So, give attention. To a reading to the exhortation.

To the teaching. And paul's implication, there is When he gets there he'll help Timothy do that, isn't it much more helpful much easier to do? Uh, when we have brothers that we are doing that with This is one of the great things about. The lord's day and the assembly of the lord's day.

So, we have an opportunity. Uh, to be with people who are helping us, because we're all talking about Uh, the word of god and how it applies and the system of doctrine. That it teaches. I find that even as a pastor, even as a pastor who knows that i should be obeying this passage, Is difficult for me to keep my Um, my mind on these things.

As much as i ought to and it's a help to me. When i'm with brothers. And we're helping one another. And so he says, take heed. To yourself, be. Vigilant, be careful. Cultivate. Um, In your Cultivate yourself. Cultivate the doctrine. Continue in them. And as we've already mentioned a couple of times.

In doing this, you want to say both yourself? Timothy is a sinner saved by grace being grown by grace. Here are the means of grace. And they are the means of grace for the minister. And as the lord graciously works in the minister, by those means. He is an example.

Because they're the same means by which the lord grows those to whom he ministers.

To those to whom he is an example. So, he says, And doing this, you will say both yourself. And those who hear you. So, here's the pattern for How the lord? Continues that work in his people. That he will bring to completion. And the day of christ, jesus. And praise god.

He who started the work. Will surely bring it. To compassion. Oh man, let's pray.

Our father in heaven. We pray that your spirit would

Our father in heaven. We pray that your spirit would blessed to us. This portion of your word that we have been thinking about That you would help us to meditate opponent. And that you would grow us. In word in conduct in. Love and faith and spirit and purity. That you would grow us by the grace of christ that he would grow us by the knowing of christ.

That you would be exalted in christ. He would be exalted. In the work that he has done in us by his spirit. Even work that you do. By your blessing to us of what we have just been Doing in this passage. At this time and we ask it in jesus name, Amen.