

1 Timothy – The Household of God

This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare (1 Timothy 1:18 ESV)

I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, ¹⁵ if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:14-15 ESV)

Watch Your Life and Your Doctrine

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1 Timothy 4:11-16

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Introduction:

Good morning! Please open up your Bibles to 1 Timothy 4:11 as we continue our series in 1 Timothy. We spent about five weeks immersing ourselves in the Psalms as we prepared our hearts for the Easter season but now we are back to 1 Timothy!

Now as you are finding that spot in your Bibles, I want to ask you, have you ever had a task placed before you that felt impossible to tackle? Maybe it was a project at work that your boss gave you because he knew you had the wherewithal to tackle it. Or maybe it was one of your children that for whatever reason, you just couldn't get to listen to you. We have all had seasons and circumstances in life where we felt inadequate and unable to accomplish what was before us.

That's a hard place to be in because it exposes our weakness and reminds us of our need. BUT, it is also a GOOD place because it causes us to look up and see our great and powerful God. The only One who is able to equip us for whatever is before us. And friends, that is where Timothy found himself.

Timothy would have been a younger man, maybe thirty or so, and he had the task of correcting, rebuking, and reorienting this Church in Ephesus. And though Timothy was a brilliant, godly and

extremely capable young man, there is no doubt that his opponents would have found it very difficult to take correction from him. It's hard to take correction from someone younger isn't it?

So Timothy needed some encouragement and it sounds like he needed to be challenged as well! Just like the trailing hockey team in need of a good pep talk as they head into the final period, Timothy needed to have a bit of a pump up.

So that's what Paul offered him in the text before us today. Words that every godly leader needs to hear but also what EVERY CHRISTIAN needs to hear. This Word is spoken to a young pastor but I promise you that whether you are a dad, mom, son, daughter, brother, sister, boss, employee, these words will also serve as both an encouragement and a challenge for you.

With these things in mind, hear now from the holy, inspired, inerrant, living and all active word to us today. 1 Timothy 4:11-16:

¹¹ Command and teach these things. ¹² Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. ¹³ Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. ¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. ¹⁵ Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. ¹⁶ Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Timothy 4:11-16 ESV)

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

These verses serve both as an encouragement and a challenge to young Timothy because he had quite a task before him. So how did Paul do this? He reminds Timothy that he needs to watch the way he conducts himself both in and outside of the pulpit. In other words, take James' words seriously:

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. (James 1:22 ESV)

Be a hearer and a doer of the Word! Let your life and your words exhibit to the watching world that your faith has transformed you! That's important for all us to hear isn't it? Timothy needed to remember to watch both his words and actions and so do we.

Watch Your Life and Your Doctrine

So, how was Timothy – how are we - to do that? How do I keep watch of my life and doctrine so that I don't go off the rails? The first thing we do is this:

1. Set an Example That's Worth Following

Look with me to verse 12. Paul reminds Timothy to:

¹² Let no one despise you for your youth, **but set the believers an example** in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12 ESV)

Timothy was given the task to right the ship in Ephesus but he had at least two things against him. For one, he was a younger man than his opponents. And secondly, he was new to town! These false teachers already had a foothold and Timothy was the new kid on the block. It would have been easy for people to look down on him as he was both young and new to town. It would have been easy for people to look down on him and disregard all that he was there to do. Can you picture that?

Paul knew what Timothy was feeling and he gave him this advice: Forget about your age and live a life that is EXEMPLARY.

Live a life that so demonstrates that your age will not disqualify you from your mission. Donald Guthrie puts it this way:

The qualities in which Timothy is to excel are those in which youth is so often deficient. Yet for that reason they would stand out the more strikingly. It would become evident to the Christian believers that authority in the community is contingent on character, not on age.¹

¹ Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, TNTC, (digital version).

Isn't that a good reminder? It is not Timothy's age but his character God was interested in. Therefore, as William Mounce puts it, Timothy was to:

Be such a good example that accusations have no credence.²

Redeemer City, these words are not only for our elders but for all of us. We are ALL called to live as examples for one another and to the watching world. Moms and dads, set an example worth following. Mentors, set an example worth following. You are working in an unbelieving workplace, set an example that says something to the world about the God you serve!

How do we do this? By letting the Holy Spirit transform every part of us to look more like Jesus Christ. Look with me to verse 12 again:

¹² Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in **speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity**. (1 Timothy 4:12 ESV)

So let your speech demonstrate that you are no longer led by the flesh but by the Holy Spirit. James says:

¹⁹ Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, **slow to speak**, slow to anger. (James 1:19 ESV)

Be SLOW to speak. THINK before you speak. Oh how many people have could have avoided an unnecessary conflicts if they just thought before they spoke. If they seasoned every word they said with salt! Friends, let's be slow and wise in our speech. Let's be those people who remember the words that come out of our mouth are a reflection of our hearts. Let's be the people who sow peace and not division and friction with our words!

Paul adds that our conduct, the way we live, should serve as an example to those around us. In other words, we should live wisely. Others should look at your life and be able to say that you live with wisdom and prudence. The way you handle your finances, the way your spend your time, all of this will serve as an example to those around you, one way or the other.

² William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles – World Biblical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 258.

And set an example worth following through your love and faith. Do people look at you and see compassion and grace? Do you model what it is to walk in love towards your brother and sisters? What about your faith? We are to be examples of those who trust in God to those around us. Our faith, yours and mine, should be a source of encouragement to those who we bump shoulders with.

And be an example of purity. Timothy was a younger man and there were young widows in the Church. He would not have been exempt from the temptations that all men and women face. So Paul says strive for purity. D.A Carson puts it this way:

We are to deal drastically with sin. We must not pamper it, flirt with it, enjoy nibbling a little of it around the edges. We are to hate it, crush it, dig it out.³

Timothy was a young pastor and he knew that any tampering with sexual sin would bar him from ministry but friends, ALL of us are to avoid and fight sexual temptations with all we have. In the confusing and promiscuous culture we find ourselves in, let's be those who are marked by self control and holiness. Let's be the people who trust in the Word of God rather than Hollywood. Let's be the people who TRULY believe that Jesus is better than porn or pre-marital sex. Let's be the people who believe what Jesus said is true:

Blessed are the **pure** in heart, for they shall see God. (Matthew 5:8 ESV)

Set an example that's worth following in all that you say, how you act, in your love and faith, and in your purity.

And what else can we do to protect ourselves and others from going off the rails? We:

2. Prioritize the Word

Prioritize and preach the Word. Look with me to vs 11:

¹¹ Command and teach these things. ¹² Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. ¹³ Until I come,

³ D.A Carson, *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Global Christian Publishers), 47.

devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. (1 Timothy 4:11-13 ESV)

Paul was planning to come and visit the church in Ephesus but in his delay he charged Timothy to stay in the Scriptures. Rather than take part in the errors that the false teachers were spewing, Timothy was to be rooted in the Word. More than just a mere hobby, Timothy was to DEVOTE HIMSELF to the Scriptures. William Mounce puts it this way:

The agenda Paul spells out for Timothy emphasizes the centrality of the text for theological correctness and includes not just a basic reading but a fuller awareness of the text's meaning that is gained through study, reflection and devotion.⁴

Preaching the Word of God demands time and attention. Pastor Levi devotes numerous hours each week in study and preparation before he preaches Sunday after Sunday. He doesn't roll out of bed Sunday morning and then prepare the sermon. No, he is devoted to this task which means he spends all week in preparation. THAT is what is demanded of the preacher of God's Word. Paul says to Timothy, study hard! Devote yourself to the Word of God!

And more than just reading, Timothy was to exhort, or urge, and teach the people to listen and obey the Word. Because the Word is where Timothy's authority came from. Paul didn't tell him to slam his fists or smash some skulls. He said preach the Word, that's where the authority comes from, and things will be set right.

So his task, along with all who preach the Word was to: read the text, explain the text, and apply the text! That was to be his priority. And that is to be the priority of the elders here at Redeemer City. And we as a people should be ENCOURAGING them more and more to be devoted to the Word of God. Because that's their main job!

They are going to be pulled in other directions because sometimes we will think other things should take priority but when we do, let's remember this text:

¹³ Until I come, **devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.** (1 Timothy 4:13 ESV)

⁴ William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles – World Biblical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 261.

Friends, let's make sure that we are a Church who are praying for our leadership team on a regular basis. We need to pray that God would continue to grant them a passion for His Glory, His Word, His Church. We should be praying that they never tire of preaching the Word to us. If we are not doing this now, then let this week be the first in which we start to regularly pray for our elders and leadership team.

Our leaders are called to prioritize the Word but so are you and I! In our own lives, we should be daily reading and studying the Word. But also in the lives our families. Our children should grow up hearing and reading the Word often. They should see mom and dad DEVOTED to the Word of God. They should see mom and dad going to the Scriptures when they are making tough decisions. They should see mom and dad delighting in reading God's Word.

And for those of us teaching bible studies, youth groups, or serving in Redeemer Kids, all of us should be devoting ourselves to the Scriptures so that we can teach them RIGHTLY. Let me ask you, do you prepare before you teach your bible study? Do you prepare before you teach the children? I know we all have busy and full lives, but if we have committed to teaching the Word in any format, then we must be a people who are devoted to studying and preparing beforehand. And P.S, by the grace of God, we are doing this well but we need to continue to! Prioritizing the Word as we are called to means devoting ourselves to studying it hard.

And as you prioritize the Word, Paul says to:

3. Steward your Gifts

Look with me to verse 14:

¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. (1 Timothy 4:14 ESV)

Commentators are unsure exactly what 'council of elders' Paul is referring to here, but either way, one thing is clear, Timothy was equipped and called to serve the local Church. At one point, a group of elders prayed and commissioned him to serve the Church.

Timothy was called and charged to be a minister of the Gospel. So as he was in the trenches battling in Ephesus, Paul reminded him to remember his calling and steward the gifts given to him. It would have been easy as the opposition was tough, to simply give up. To throw in the towel or call in the reinforcements. But Paul urges young Timothy to dig deep, to remember his calling, and to steward his gifts.

He was evidently gifted with the ability to lead as is made clear by the fact that Paul left him in Ephesus to get the job done. To right the ship. John Calvin comments on Timothy's ability this way:

Hence we learn that Timothy was still young, **though he held a place of distinguished excellence among many pastors**; and that it is a grievous mistake to estimate by the number of years how much is due to a person.⁵

Timothy was young, gifted, and distinguished among pastors but just like many people, he was plagued with discouragement when he saw the task at hand. But God had gifted him and called him to this task so there could be no quit. He would need to push through and use the gifts that God had given him. This was no time to cower and quit. As Proverbs 24:10 says:

If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small. (Proverbs 24:10 ESV)

I could imagine Timothy quoting this to himself as he wrestled with the uphill climb he found himself in. This is a good reminder that ministry is hard. Life is hard. Things usually don't go as planned and when they don't we need to remember that God is still sovereign. He is still reigning on His throne. And we are called to serve HIM and use the gifts that He has given us to further HIS kingdom. God has gifted each and every one His children in a distinct way so that they can serve the Church. So that they can be used to further God's glory in the world. That means each of you here! Peter says this:

¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: ¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as

⁵ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of the Apostle Paul to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, (digital version).

one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 4:10-11 ESV)

Sometimes it's so easy to want to sit on the side-lines and let others do the hard work isn't it? But if God has gifted you, which He HAS, then you need to serve Him with that gift and with all of your might. Maybe it's in worship ministry, hospitality, teaching, prayer ministry, Redeemer Kids, set up and tear down crews, greeting, or maybe just by being a good friend to someone who needs it. Some of you here today have the gift for spotting the person that needs a friend. Whatever it is, steward it well. John Calvin challenges us this way:

To neglect a gift is carelessly to keep it unemployed through slothfulness, so that, having contracted rust it is worn away without yielding any profit. Let each of us, therefore, consider what gift he possesses, that he may diligently apply it to use.⁶

We all are called to the task of furthering God's Kingdom, so let's listen to Paul's charge and steward our gifts well.

Finally, after we have set out to be godly examples, prioritized the Word of God, and worked hard to use the gifts God has given us, Paul says we must:

4. Be Vigilant

How do you stay vigilant? You stay alert, you work hard, and you keep your eyes on the prize. Look with me to verses 15-16:

¹⁵ Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. ¹⁶ Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Timothy 4:15-16 ESV)

The Christian walk is hard and not for the faint of heart. Jesus said:

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24 ESV)

⁶ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of the Apostle Paul to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, (digital version).

In concluding his encouragement and charge to Timothy, Paul reminds him to stay vigilant. He says, stay in the Word, immerse yourself in it. Watch how you live. Watch what you believe and teach. And stay consistent and move forward because how you live will have an effect on the Church. One commentator puts it this way:

Growth and forward movement are signs of spiritual life and ministry effectiveness. Paul wants Timothy to exhibit both, movement and effectiveness.⁷

Good Christian leadership will have a positive impact on the Church. And the flipside is true as we know all too well. When false teachers and teaching makes its way to the pulpit, it isn't long before the Church goes astray. Paul wanted Timothy to feel the weight of that truth so he would remain steadfast.

Friends, vigilance is necessary for us because it is so EASY to forget that we are in a spiritual war. Last weekend we celebrated Good Friday and Easter Sunday. We were reminded of the great price that Jesus paid so that our sin could be paid for. Then we celebrate the resurrection on Easter Sunday where we are reminded that Jesus, in rising from the dead defeated sin and Satan, secured our salvation and assures us of our hope. Every year the Easter season comes around and we experience the extreme emotional highs and lows. And that is good!

But then...we wake up Monday morning and the feelings are gone. Suddenly the daily cares and struggles are back in front of our eyes and we are tempted to forget all that we just celebrated. And friends, this is EXACTLY why we must remain VIGILANT! Because there is a real enemy who is aiming to rob God of his glory by derailing the Church. And he tries to do this by getting us to fix our eyes on this earthly kingdom rather than Gods. By getting us to care more about the pleasures of this life, whether it be our relationships, careers, cars, houses or toys, than the pleasure of serving our glorious and all worthy God. So we must be vigilant.

⁷ Robert W. Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, TPNTC, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.), (digital version).

And we do this by STAYING in the Word. We REMAIN preaching, teaching, and delighting in the Gospel once delivered to the saints. Whether you're a preacher, elder, mom or dads, brother or sister, preach it without wavering. Don't distort it. Don't mute it. Don't bend it. Get up, week after week, and preach it. And as you preach it, sit under it. Let it change you. Let it confront your sin. Let the word of God wash over you and grow you.

In verse 16, Paul gives Timothy a charge which doubles as a scary reminder. He says:

¹⁶ Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Timothy 4:16 ESV)

Paul says to young Timothy that life and death are at stake. Now, he is NOT saying that the Ephesian's salvation is dependant on Timothy. No. From the beginning to the end, God is the Agent of securing our salvation and keeping us till the very end. Thanks be to God.

But nevertheless, God uses human means, pastors, and all Christians alike, to edify, protect, encourage, and keep His children from falling away and being derailed. So you and I are called to stay vigilant not only for ourselves but also for our brothers and sisters sitting beside us. For our spouses, for our kids, for one another. Do you want to be a good brother or sister in the faith? Then take your Christian walk seriously. Devote yourself to God; remain vigilant and you will serve Redeemer City Church well.

And can I just say, isn't this a beautiful truth? Though it is scary, though it challenges us, it reminds us that God has not called us to live this life alone. We are called to do life together. We are called to be in each other's corners, to come alongside, to encourage, to challenge when necessary, to be there in the good and the bad. And in a world that seems ever divided, the Church is called to be a family that sticks together. And friends that is a awesome blessing.

Christian, are you feeling the struggle? Are you feeling the heat? Are you afraid you might be headed off the track? Take a breath. And remember who is driving the train. Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus. And as you do, let's be a people who serve as godly examples for one another,

who prioritize Gods Word, who steward our gifts, and who stay vigilant. Let's prioritize these because this is no small matter.

¹⁵ Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. ¹⁶ Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Timothy 4:15-16 ESV)

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.