

## Getting in Shape

Be turning in your Bibles to 1 Timothy 4 for our text. *(1Tim. 4:6) If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. (7) But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. (8) For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. (9) This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. (10) For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. (11) These things command and teach. (12) Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. (13) Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. (14) Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. (15) Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. (16) Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*

Here we have the apostle instructing Timothy to instill into the minds of Christians sentiments that might prevent their being overtaken by false teachers. He begins by defining a good minister and observing that they do not study to advance new notions, or promote modern advancements. In fact, they are not even eloquent speakers but rather they are those that *put the brethren in remembrance of those things which they have received and heard.* (v6) Peter echoed the same idea when he said, *Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though you knew them (2 Peter 1:12).* Peter would then write two chapters later. *2 Peter 3:1 I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.* You see that the apostles understood that a significant part of their work was to put their hearers in remembrance. There is really nothing that I can present to you that is new and that you have not heard before. If it sounds new, then it's probably because you have forgotten. We tend to forget things. That's why we write things on a list or tie a string around our fingers. Have you ever been grocery shopping without your list and discovered when you got home that you forgot the most important items that you needed? Well, we do the same thing with God's word; we forget and need to be reminded.

Notice that ministers are to bring to remembrance *words of faith and of good doctrine.* A minister is not in the entertaining business although I have no problem inter-mingling a story or two in the message to bring a point. The Lord did this with parables, but you do not come here to hear stories. You are here to hear words of faith and good doctrine. I want to make three brief observations to this idea of teaching.

**Observation 1.** Ministers also have a need to be growing and increasing in the knowledge of Christ and his doctrine: they must be nourished up in the words of faith.

**Observation 2.** The best way for ministers to grow in knowledge and faith is to put the brethren in remembrance; while they teach others, they teach themselves.

**Observation 3.** Those whom ministers teach are brethren, and are to be treated like brethren; ministers are not lords over God's people and are not pastors over the flock.

Paul gives some wise advice to the younger Timothy as he stresses the importance of godliness. *Refuse profane and old wives' sayings (v7).* During that time there were many traditions and customs of which some people fill their heads that had nothing to do with godly teachings. We have people doing the same things today

such as that Jesus was born on Christmas day- traditional but not Biblical. Paul then adds ***but exercise thyself rather unto godliness***; that is, mind practical religion. Those who would be godly must exercise themselves unto godliness; it requires a constant exercise.

We hear a lot today about physical conditioning and there are TV and magazine ads promoting all kinds of exercise equipment. This is a big market because many are obsessed with physical exercise and conditioning. Paul here tells us to exercise unto godliness because he adds ***bodily exercise profits little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise to life that now is and of that which is to come.*** The bottom-line point is what profit is there in exercising the body and neglect exercising the soul. What will it benefit to mortify the body if we do not mortify sin? Notice two benefits of exercising godliness.

**No 1.** It will be useful to us in the whole of our life, for it has ***the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*** The gain of godliness lies much in the promise to the life that now is, but especially to the life that is to come. Under the Old Testament the promises were mostly of temporal blessings, but under the New Testament most of God's promises are spiritual and eternal blessings. Godly people might not have a lot of the good things in the life that now is, yet it shall be made up to them in the good things of the life that is to come.

**No. 2.** There were profane and old wives' fables in the days of the apostles; and Timothy, though an excellent man, was not above such; so, words of advice were given, ***refuse*** and ***exercise.*** We must not only cease to do evil, but we must learn to do what is right and make a practice of exercising ourselves to godliness.

**There is encouragement seen in verses 8-11.** Verse 8 has an interesting word ***profitable.*** The motivation and encouragement that we have to precede is in the ways of godliness, and to exercise ourselves leads to the profit we receive. So, Paul said (v 8) that ***godliness is profitable for all things.*** You see, when a person considers this idea of living for the Lord, living the life of a Christian, it is a commitment. And as you evaluate that commitment, you consider the profit balanced against the loss. Is the reward or profit worth the cost of what I'll have to give up? If you decide the cost is too great, then godliness is not profit. But Paul says it is profitable which means "*Yes, godliness is worthy of all the effort and all our labors and losses in the service of God*" and it will be abundantly recompensed.

***Therefore we labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, (1Timothy 4:10).*** Notice godly people are to labor and also expect reproach; they must do well, and yet expect at the same time to suffer ill. Toil and trouble are to be expected in this world. Nonetheless, those who labor and suffer reproach in the service of God can depend and trust upon the living God that they will win in the end. Let us encourage one another ***because we trust in the living God.***

The text tells us that the god who is to be our pay-master is the living God, who lives forever and is the fountain of life to all who serve him. This should serve as encouragement to us in all our services as well as our sufferings for him, especially considering that he ***is the Savior of all men.*** Providentially he cares for us and makes available salvation to all men. He has a general good-will to the eternal salvation of all men such that he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. It is not His desire that sinners be lost. ***(1Timothy 2:3) For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; (4) Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.***

Jesus is the Savior of all men but all men will not take advantage of the opportunity afforded them. While salvation is available to all, the reward will be limited those who seek and serve him. If he has such a good-will for all mankind, then how much more will he provide for those who are obedient to the gospel. He is the Savior of all men, but ***especially of those that believe;*** and the salvation in store for those that believe is sufficient to recompense them for all their services/sufferings.

**He concludes the chapter with an exhortation to Timothy. v11 *These things command and teach.*** Timothy was to *command and teach these things* that he had been taught. Now he admonishes Timothy to conduct himself in such a way which might gain him respect, notwithstanding his youth: “***Let no man despise thy youth;*** that is, give no man an occasion to despise thy youth.” Instead of living in youthful folly, Paul told Timothy to confirm his doctrine by a good example: ***Be thou an example of the believers,***

Those who teach by their doctrine must teach by their life, else they pull down with one hand what they build up with the other: they must be examples both *in word and conversation*.

- Their discourse must be edifying, and this will be a good example:
- their conversation must be strict, and this will be a good example:
- they must be examples *in charity*, or love to God and all good men,
- examples *in spirit*, that is, in spiritual-mindedness,
- in spiritual worship, - *in faith*, that is, in the profession of Christian faith, -
- and *in purity* or chastity.

He charges him to study hard: ***Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, to meditation upon these things, (1 Timothy 4:13).*** Though Timothy had extraordinary skills, he used ordinary means for spiritual maturity. Perhaps Paul was encouraging him to public reading of the scriptures; he must *read and exhort*, that is, read and expound, read and press what he read upon them; he must expound it both by way of exhortation and by way of doctrine; he must teach them both what to do and what to believe. Ministers must teach and command people to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded, (**Matthew 28:20**). The best way for ministers to avoid being despised is to practice the things that they preach. The successful preacher is the one that minds his studies that he may be improving in knowledge. He must also mind his work. Ministers are to give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

Paul then charges Timothy to beware of negligence: (**1 Timothy 4:14**) ***Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.*** The verse begins with ***Neglect not the gift that is in thee.***

Like many things, if not used will be lost. The gifts of God will wither if neglected. Timothy received the “gift of God” by the laying on of the apostle Paul’s hands. (**2 Timothy 1:6**) ***Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.*** Yet in our text, we see the ordination by the laying on of hands of the presbytery (i.e. elder). The laying on of hands is used three ways in the N. T.

1. It is used in healing the sick as in Acts 9:17.
2. It is used in imparting spiritual gifts by the laying on of the apostle’s hands (Acts 8:17).
3. It is used in appointing to a ministry as seen here and in Acts 13:3.

It seems these gifts (prophecy) were being recognized and accepted by the elders. It was in a sense of them giving their blessings or approval to Timothy. Today we might extend a handshake.

Having this work committed to him, Paul urged Timothy not to become careless. Timothy was instructed to (**1 Timothy 4:15**) ***Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.*** Yet Paul presses it upon him to be very cautious: (v16) ***Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine,*** consider what you preach and ***continue in them.*** Right living and right teaching go together. The truths that thou hast received will be the way to ***save thyself, and those that hear thee.***”

Are you saved? Invitation