

1 Timothy
C.) The Church and its minister
2. 4:6-10 Exhortations to faithful ministers
4:6-10
“Training for life”

I. Introduction

II. Vs. 6a Stay the course

III. Vs. 6b-10 Five good habits

I. Introduction

I started pastoring at 29 and pioneered my first church at 30, man what was I thinking or better yet what were those who attended that church thinking...as a matter of fact what were you thinking? All alone in that city with my wife and two little ones starting a church without any experience, there were so many times I just didn't have answers for the things I was experiencing. I bet that was Timothy's experience when he was left in Ephesus, "*Man I wish Paul was here right now I sure could use his advice.*" Friends.....

- *The trouble with youth is that experience comes with time of which you have just purchased the watch.*
- *The trouble with maturity is that you have experience and time but you can't remember where you put the watch!*

That's why I love Paul's letters to young pastors as Timothy has the energy and Paul the experience which comes out on every page of these letters. As a young pastor I poured over these letters to gain insight and as a mature pastor I still love them if for no other reason than to find my watch! A pastor must teach about three things that are like road signs:

- **Where we are going:** *Missoula 45 miles*
- **How we are to get there:** *Highway 93 speed limit 65*
- **What to watch out for:** *Road construction ahead double fines_*

Paul has covered the “*What to watch out for*” sign last week and this week he covers “*How we are going to get there*”. He will do this by giving us athletic illustrations that are 5 “**good habits**” that ensure our successful arrival at our destination.

II. Vs. 6a Stay the course

Vs. 6a The general tone of this section of the letter is that of a warning and it suggests that Paul knew Timothy extremely well as he knew that such a warning would not have been misconstrued as lack of confidence. **With all of this adversity that Timothy was facing the warning does not take on the tone of looking OUT for situations and circumstances, instead Paul’s warnings are aimed INWARD to deal with his own reaction to those situations and circumstances.**

Saints, maturity **doesn’t give you the advantage** in having experienced everything life can throw at you, **maturity gives you the advantage of knowing how YOU are going to react to the things you experience!** First thing Paul warns Timothy amounts to, “**STAY THE COURSE!**” Adversities greatest advantage is confusion as it causes us to question the road we are on and specifically if it is the right one. Paul reminds Timothy that the road he is on is directed by Jesus and thus it is assured that in His timing it will reach the destination! Paul says that in “*staying the course*” he will be a good minister. The word “*minster*” is **not** referring to a “*position*” but instead it is referring to an activity, “**servicing**”! “*Tim*”, Paul say’s “*If you stay on course you will be good at what you do, servicing!*” That’s always something that you need to evaluate about yourself: “*Is my failure because of bad technique or do I only need to keep practicing what I’m doing?*” **That’s a very good question to ask yourself when things aren’t going**

well because you can practice bad habits for the rest of your life and no matter how much you do they will never turn into good habits!

III. Vs. 6b-10 Five good habits

Paul goes on to list five “*good habits*” that Timothy only needed to keep practicing:

- a. **Vs. 6b Watch what you eat:** Paul says to Timothy, “*nourished in the words of faith and of good doctrine*”. This dietary advice is not dealing with the physical life but with the spiritual life to which Paul is saying in essence “*garbage in, garbage out.*” One of the favorite tricks on junk food on the packaging is that it is, “*Fortified with 15 essential vitamins*”. But I have yet to hear a professional athlete or an Olympian say that they owe all their success to consuming large quantities of “*Hostess Ding Dongs and Twinkies*” that were “*Fortified with 15 essential vitamins*”. What are you putting into your mind and your spiritual life? What are you feeding on spiritually daily? Not everything that you feed upon is junk food, something’s just have ZERO nutrients or far less than healthy things like “*the word of faith and good doctrine*”. Not only was Timothy to be “*nourished*” in the words of faith and good doctrine he was to “*carefully follow*” what he learned. There is a twofold formula to becoming a good servant “*feed*” upon truth and then “*follow*” truth! **The Bible isn’t only the “greatest story ever told” it is the “greatest truth ever lived”!** This goes far beyond knowing that the four gospel are not “*John, Paul, George and Ringo*” or that an “*epistle*” is not the wife of an “*apostle*”.

- b. **Vs. 7a Keep focused**: Paul says, “*Reject profane and old wives’ fables*”. This habit is stated in the negative and is **a warning against intellectual distractions**. There were a lot of godless and stupid myths in the first century church that Paul warns Timothy will be an endless source of distraction. The word for “*godless*” is the word that is rendered elsewhere as “*common*” which suggests that they were very popular with the society. Second they were not only popular but **goofy**, spread around by folks who had too much time on their hands. These fables have no basis in reality, they are just pure nonsense yet many believers got caught up in the distraction. Some of these fables are found in so called Christian groups that claim they have another gospel and speak about ancient cultures that never existed. Others are popular because of the media and countless movies about space aliens in “*galaxies far, far away*”. Friends, you don’t have to taste the poison to be a good exterminator!
- c. **Vs. 7b-8 Be balanced**: “*Exercise yourself towards godliness*”. It is clear reading Paul’s letters that he had a good deal of interest in sporting events as he mentions them quite frequently. The word rendered “*godliness*” means “*wholeness or balanced*” and these verses suggested that we ought to keep our spiritual life fed and our physical life strong in order to be effective. This speaks about our training regimen where the focus is on being a servant that has developed spirit, soul and body to maximize their usefulness for God’s service. The balance comes in where we want to make sure we train the areas that most effect our service which would first be exercising our spiritual lives, then making sure that our physical bodies can keep up.

- d. **Vs. 9 Pay attention**: Five times in this letter Paul writes, “*This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance*” and it is his way of saying, “*This is very important!*” Not only does this refer to what Paul has just said about balance it also speaks to a general application of being aware in life, a heightened awareness, a game face in life. We should not take ourselves too seriously but we must take what and who we are called to extremely serious. It’s amazing the difference we experience when we are prepared for life as we have far more confidence through the difficult situations and circumstances. Saint’s there is a great need today for Christians to wake up and start taking each day a bit more serious.
- e. **Vs. 10 Victory is ours**: “*We trust in the Living God*”, Paul says. As important as the four truths are above; “*Good Habits*” wouldn’t guarantee success apart from this fifth truth. **This habit has nothing to do with a practice and everything to do with where we are putting our trust, the Living God.** The sad truth is we can look at these four “*good habits*” and begin to trust in our “*good habits*” instead of the living God! We can and should “*both labor and suffer reproach*” but if our confidence is in those things we will not attain victory. The great purpose of this life is the shaping of our character by truth and the Holy Spirit. Godly character is far more important than athletic accomplishments and trophies. Spiritual exercise is not easy and will require both labor and suffering reproach, (verse 10). We can be assured this victory because “**Positionally Jesus is the Savior of all men but Practically He is the Savior of those who trust in Him.**”

The Greek culture put a huge emphasis on physical physique but Paul says that such emphasis was short lived at best. One study discovered that for every hour spent in the gym it may increase your life up to an hour. But we know that this isn't endless as even fitness guru Jack LaLanne died in 2011 at the age of 96. There is a need for bodily exercise but no amount in the Gym will land you in eternity. Ah but spend the time and effort in **God's Gym** of the word of God and you will be fit for this life and the life to come, and you won't get sweaty and smelly.

- If you have to choose between “*working out*” and “*worshipping out*” you would be better off choosing **worshipping!**
- If you have to decide between “*body building*” or “*bible study*” choose **bible study!**

Sure you can do deep knee bends to increase the strength in your legs but you would be far better off bending your knees in prayer and building up your faith. Alan Redpath said, *Any battle -- for victory, power, or deliverance from ourselves or from sin -- which is not based constantly upon the gazing and the beholding of the Lord Jesus, with the heart and the life lifted up to him, is doomed to failure.*