

1 Timothy 4:6-16

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 03 June 2013

Preacher: Arthur Jackson

[0 : 00] If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. Have nothing to do with irreverent silly myths, but rather train yourself for godliness.

For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, for to this end we toil and strive because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

Command and teach these things. Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in life, in faith, in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.

Do not neglect the gift you have which was given you by the prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. Practice these things. Immerse yourself in them so that all may see your progress.

Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers. This is the word of the Lord.

[1 : 23] Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Good afternoon to you.

It is great to possess a second or third language, isn't it? And Scott is using his today in service of the Lord.

We praise God for that. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we love you. We give thanks to you for your goodness to us. Know the joy that we have.

Lord, in being loved by you, called by you, redeemed by you. So come and help us as we seek to understand your word in a way that will enable us to live it in this world.

Be glorified in us. Be glorified in us is our prayer in Christ's name.

[2 : 31] Amen. 44 years ago, 44 years ago, I found myself in the United States Army. I was a Vietnam-era draftee, and initially I did not want to be in Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

My body was there on Texas soil, but my mind was back in Kansas City. That's where, surely, we were engaged at that time.

She was, as well as my faith family, whom I loved dearly. Somewhere along the way, in basic training, my mindset changed about being in the Army.

The difference in my demeanor is reflected in two snapshots that I believe we still have in our possession.

The first one was taken not long after my arrival at Fort Sam Houston. I had on my Army khaki uniform, green recruit.

[3 : 50] I was as green as my Army green uniform. I had my Army cap perched on the back of my head. There I was outside our barracks, took the picture with Bible in hand.

Far away from home, a 19-year-old kid. It's amazing, though, what the right environment and the right diet and the proper physical training can do for a 19-year-old, let alone a 59-year-old.

Each day, I was under the discipline of Army training. I ate Army food. I slept in Army beds.

I wore Army clothes, even down to Army socks and Army underwear. But roughly six weeks after I had taken that first picture, I took another one.

And what an amazing transformation in just six weeks. It was the same me on the one hand, but my muscles were tighter.

[5 : 08] My demeanor reflected one of confidence. My mind was focused.

And yes, even that cap that was on the top of my head had a tilt in it. And I was ready to go where the Army would send me.

I was a soldier after six weeks, ready for any assignment, even had they called me the front lines of the Vietnam War.

What's your point, Pastor Jay? Training worked, huh? The training worked. And just as there are certain things that characterize good soldiers, similarly, there are things that characterize good servants, God's servants.

Whether you're talking about those of the professional kind or, as some of you are here today, the lay variety, it characterizes you also.

[6 : 19] But what I want you to see in this text is the kind of ministers that are needed in our culture today. There are several things that characterize our culture, several words.

We are spiritually curious, and we go to great lengths to secure both the earthly and eternal well-being.

Have you noticed that in our culture? Some are even willing to try the latest spiritual fads and fixes promoted by various ones who would wear the label of minister or father or whatever.

But they're willing to try these latest things. But what we see in our text today really contrasts with what we saw in the text on last week.

As a matter of fact, look at chapter 5, if you would, please. Excuse me, chapter 4 and verse 1. Notice what it says. Now, the Spirit speaks expressly that in latter times some will depart from the faith by, and notice what they did.

[7 : 34] They were devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons. And they've explained that well. This was the underlying issue, the underlying problem, the underlying force.

It was spiritual forces. Those were the agency.

That was the agency through which these demons taught these damnable doctrines. Now, notice, see, in our text as we get further in, what we see here is not exhaustive.

But what we do see could be called the measure of a godly minister. And I want you to note six things with me from this text that will help us to see what the measure, again, not exhaustive, but the measure of a godly minister, the kind that is needed to counter the trends, the patterns, not only that were evident in Paul's day when he wrote to Timothy, but even in our day that in a way it contrasts and counters these things that we see in our culture.

The first thing we see is in verse 6. And it concerns diet. And here's the deal. God's servants are nourished through God's Word.

[9 : 07] In other words, the kind of servants that counter the religious trends and the religious teachers in our day, they're ones who have a different kind of diet.

You see that in verse 6? If you put these things, these things in reference to the things that Paul was saying in chapter 4, verses 1 through 5, before or serve them to the brothers or the family of God, notice here, you will be a good servant of Jesus Christ, and here's the word, being trained, or it could be translated, being nourished in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed.

Last week's text challenged those who devoted themselves to demon-inspired teachings of false teachers whose consciences had been desensitized, so desensitized that they believed their own lies, and they led others in believing the same.

But here, Paul points out in verses 1 through 5, the error of their ways, the error of their teaching, and that these things refer to those things in verses 1 through 5.

But being a good minister of Jesus demanded that Timothy challenge and correct the aberrant notions of the false teachers of his day because he had partaken of the right kind of nourishment.

[10 : 42] He had been trained or better continuously nourished in the gospel truth and in Christian teaching. The well-taught minister is in a position to feed others well.

Those who have not been taught well or those who have strayed from the teaching of the gospel and Christian doctrine are in no position to do so.

While the minister of the gospel is to be nourished by and follow God's truth, there were some things also then and now that are to be avoided.

Things he is to have absolutely nothing to do with. And we see those in verse 7, things that have no real spiritual nutritional value at all.

They could even be called spiritual junk food, if you will. But according to the text, the false teachers were serving up those things without biblical root and without biblical substance.

[11 : 51] Things, we see in verse 7, that were characterized by characteristic of old women who were vulnerable and gullible and prone to believe just about anything.

You see that in verse 7? Have nothing to do with irreverent silly myths or old wives kind of tales.

Rather train yourself for godliness. Huh? Train yourself for godliness. And again, the training, the nourishment is speaking about spiritual food.

The spiritually nutritious diet from God's word. Absolutely essential for those of us who preach and teach God's word.

But it's not simply for us alone. It is for all of God's people. And at the center of a spiritually healthy life is God's word as pictured in Psalm 1.

[12 : 54] If you know that great psalm, Blessed is a man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. Huh? But where is his delight?

In other words, he said this, His lifestyle is not informed by input from the ungodly. But then he goes on to contrast. He said, But at the center of this person's life is the very word of God itself.

Huh? The truly blessed person meditates on that word day and night. He takes counsel from it. He prospers and bears fruit because of it.

But the value of God's word and the life of the minister and God's people cannot be underestimated. Some years ago, I read the biography of George Mueller, if you know anything about him.

19th century British minister and evangelist. And God used him. He was so much a man of faith. God used him powerfully.

[13 : 54] Thousands of orphans taken care of. And he trusted God and prayed. But he also had this to say regarding the spiritual diet of God's word.

I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the word of God. And the meditation on it.

What is the food of the inner man? The word of God. And not the simple reading of the word of God. So that it only passes through our minds just as water runs through a pipe.

But considering what we read. Pondering it. Applying it. In our hearts. And of course, that's the idea of the word meditate.

It's like rolling it over and over in our hearts and in our minds. Not only are God's servants nourished through God's word. That's their diet.

[14 : 52] But also there is the discipline. The spiritual climate of our day. Not only demands that God's servants, God's people. Really focus in and have a diet that is rich in God's word.

But it also is that God's servants train themselves for a godly walk. We see that in the next part of verse 7 and in verse 8. So not only is there a different kind of diet.

But there is a different kind of discipline. Rather than partake of non-nutritional junk food. Which has nothing to spiritual health and vitality. Timothy was to train or to discipline himself for the purpose of godliness.

Godly living. The verb here translated train is the word that we get our word gym or gymnasium from. And it means to exercise naked.

That is, without any encumbrance. Now while on the one hand it applied to physical exercise. It also applied to the discipline of the mind or the training of the mind.

[16 : 05] And just as athletes in training strip for rigorous training for an athletic prize. So discipline is essential for the physical well-being and excellence.

But also note too that Paul is not here promoting the asceticism that he rejected in verses 1 through 5. Though some would say that this whole idea of training carries over.

No, he's not in support of that. As a matter of fact, he has rejected that. That's not what's in view. Those things that we see in verses 1 through 5 as we heard well on last week.

Are very inconsistent with the biblical theology of creation. The biblical theology of marriage. Inconsistent with God's word. But what's in view here is the kind of discipline that is rooted in scripture.

And encouraged by scripture. And I don't know if we could even, we perhaps could go down and give lists of this and lists of that. But it mainly, it seems like it's talking about godly living as a whole.

[17 : 10] As a package is what really seems to be in view here. Things that are good and right and proper for the Christian minister. But also for every one of us here, huh?

Note the goal of such things, of such training is godliness. You see that? Rather train yourself for godliness.

For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way. As it holds the promise for the future and also for the life to come.

Nine times. You may have been tracking with this. That word godliness is mentioned in 1 Timothy alone. And godly living, friends, listen to this.

Need not take some kind of strange twist, huh? Doesn't demand something strange or esoteric or novel? No, huh? What was in view that was godliness that is rooted in the very gospel.

[18 : 16] That was embodied in the person and the work of Jesus Christ. 1 Timothy chapter 3 verse 16. As one writer put it, it is the godly, obedient, reverent living of one struck by the reality of what God has done in and through the person of Jesus Christ.

And Pastor Kent Hughes put it so well in his commentary on 1 Timothy. He says that it is this. This godliness is all in action.

All struck by God to the point that we are living for God. It's the love that's so amazing and so divine that it demands my life, my soul, my all.

It's the living of one who sees and understands God and then lives accordingly. Think of those even today.

And perhaps you're among the number. You're preparing to really be buff, huh? Some of you are working on your six-packs. Others are working on our keg, huh?

[19 : 26] But here Paul encourages Timothy and us to be spiritually fit people. And spiritual fitness demands our responding to God's word and, friends, the power of the Holy Spirit.

Because you and I cannot do this in and of ourselves, huh? We obey words that we find in Colossians, huh?

Colossians chapter 3. And just let me read this because, I mean, I think this is a part of being godly, of godly living that we see here. Paul writes in Colossians chapter 3, verse 5, Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you, huh?

Sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these things, the wrath of God is coming. And these you, notice this, I love this past tense that he often uses in these passages like these.

Once you once walked, you once lived when you were living in them, but now you must put them all away. Anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.

[20 : 42] Oh, this is disciplining yourself for godliness. Do not lie to one another, saying that you put off. The old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Here there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free. But Christ is all in all. But put on then.

And so it has to do with putting off and putting on and putting to death. That's disciplining yourself for godliness. Forgiving one another, forbearing one another.

That's what's in view. It is the nature of the Christian life. It is not something strange or different, but it's the life, the very life that you and I live.

Notice verse 8, Paul contrasts the benefit of physical bodily training with training for the purpose, listen friends, of godly living.

[21 : 44] And both require discipline. But they contrast in that the gain of godliness is both temporal as well as eternal, as promised for life that is now, as well as that to come.

The profitability of godly living. The benefits of being a person of faith and living in this world. I mean, it has a way of positioning you, not simply before God, but before men in ways that demand recognition and favor.

Godliness has its advantage both in this life as well as the life to come. The pursuit of god and godliness in its very dimensions is the greatest thing, friends, that you and I can give ourselves to.

Don't you love Jesus' words? Seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness. Then all these things will be added unto you. The necessities of life as we offer ourselves to the Lord and to his purposes.

Paul is so confident that godliness holds the promise for the present and the future, that he says that this is one of those trustworthy statements, reliable statements.

- [23 : 09] We've seen others in the book. We will see others as we continue in the book. It's worthy of being embraced, just as the truths that had been presented earlier.
- The minister's diet, it's different than those guys that were promoting this false religion. It's different than that.
- The minister's discipline is different. But also, notice that the minister's duties that we see in verses 10 and 11. God's servants are to be engaged in God's work.
- Look at verse 10. For to this end, and I love these, these are some great New Testament words, we toil. And what's he talking about?
- This is labor to the point of exhaustion. It's what's in view. Ministry. We toil. And not only that, we strive.
- [24 : 07] This is the word that we get agonized from. Huh? We strive. Why? Because we have our hope set on the living God. That's in view.
- And in view of that, we toil. And we labor. In other words, we work hard. We labor. Ministry is not a cakewalk.
- Huh? Oftentimes people see the Sunday morning, Sunday afternoon. Whoa, that's all there is to it. Wait a minute. You don't see sometimes Sunday night and Sunday morning and Saturday night.
- And, and it's toil. Not only physical, but there is the emotional and spiritual toil that God's servants exercise.
- Huh? The pursuit of God. Labor and toil. Huh? God's servants ought to be engaged in God's work.
- [25 : 09] Huh? Different diet, different disciplines, but also different duties. Huh? The text speaks of the living God as the Savior of all people. You see that there?
- Given the teaching of scripture, we know that he's not talking about that everybody will be saved. He is not the Savior in the sense of redemption of all people.
- So you say, well, Pastor Jay, how then is he the Savior of all people? The word translated Savior, so tear, has various different connotations other than spiritual salvation.
- Savior, in that day, was a term that was applied also to Roman deities, Roman officials, and others who were viewed as delivering men from some order, some calamity.
- Also, if we look in the Old Testament, God is pictured there as the protector and preserver of all men in the sense of common grace.
- [26 : 11] It's whether a person is redeemed, a part of the family of God. There are certain things that God gives to all of his creation. Jesus put it well in Matthew chapter 5, verse 45.
- He causes the sun to shine on the evil and the good, sends rain on the just and the unjust. He's the Savior, and that he exercised saving power activity temporarily for some, but eternally for others.
- And this broad saving, protecting, delivering activity of God encompasses those who partake of common grace, but more specifically, those who are partakers of special grace, the elect of God.
- But it is in this sense, a special sense that he is Savior, to those who believe that they have been, who have trusted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, especially those who believe, those of us who have been delivered from the greatest of all calamities, penalty for our sins.
- Paul notes, again, the whole idea of striving and toiling, it's gospel labor. A different labor, different from the religious, false religionists of that day.

[27 : 35] And hopefully as we labor, different from those who don't embrace the gospel like we do. But we labor because of it. We labor because there are those who remain to be rescued and even proclaim God's grace and love to all.

Huh? Notice in verse 11, tells Timothy, command and teach these things. Normally when he's speaking about these things, he's talking about the previous words that he has said, the previous sections.

And even here, this is a transition of sorts, as he transitions and goes into verses 12 through 16. The command concerns Timothy's life and his ministry, specifically the ministry of the word.

So here's the other three things. The first thing is we see it in verse 12. God's servants are to be people of godly character.

So they have a different diet, different discipline, different duties, but also they are different in character than the religionists of that day. And so they are to be today.

[28 : 51] Look at verse 12 with me. Let no one despise you for your youth. That'll preach here, won't it? Huh? But set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity.

Huh? What is he telling? He said, Timothy, as you command and teach these things, live in such a way that your age, probably around 35, will not be a liability for you.

What he's saying? He said, don't make it easy for people to dismiss what you have to say because of your age. Live in an exemplary kind of way that they can sort of skirt your age and see the kind of person that you are and be willing to follow you and to listen to what we have to say.

Sometimes we're put in places that are very intimidating for us, whether we are on the upside of age or on the downside of age, like myself.

I wonder if Timothy ever felt that kind of intimidation. But we are to live in ways that divert people's attention away from the things that would make us an easy target, whether it's youth or old age or our race or ethnicity or all of these various things live in a kind of way that is respectable enough that people can cut you some slack.

[30 : 26] Words and speech and we see as the words and deeds are in view, God's people in general, servants in particular, are to show that they belong to Him by the way that they live.

And we see those various things, love and purity and trust, those things. How can these things be? How can we live in this kind of way?

It demands personal resolve, but it also demands spiritual power. You can't do it on your own, Timothy. Nor can we. God's servants are also to possess ministerial competence.

So it's character, but also competence. And we see that in verse 13. Until I come, devote yourselves to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, and to teaching.

Now, here's the deal. The false teachers, they had devoted themselves in chapter 4, verse 1, to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons.

[31 : 29] But here, Timothy is charged to devote himself to God's Word. A different devotion. Three things are mentioned here in reference to God's Word.

You see them there? To the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, or to preaching, into teaching. Again, centered on God's Word.

It was to be read as it was today. And the response of the people of God, of the reader, this is the Word of God, or the Lord. And God's people say, thanks be to God, because these are God's very words.

It was not only to be read, it is to be preached. They are to be, it used to be, for warning and encouragement and to urge people forward in faith as well it is to be, it is to be taught.

What is he saying? He is to be an expositor of the Scripture. And Bible exposition brings out of the Scripture the sense that is in it.

[32 : 34] And that's what we labor to do, sometimes better than others, each week as we stand behind the sacred desk. Before it can be preached, however, it must be believed.

Timothy was to be a man like John Wesley was, a man of one book. This is what Wesley had to say. Give me that book.

At any price, give me the book of God. I have it. Here is knowledge enough from me. Let me be homo unius libri, a man of one book.

Wow. Rather than devoting ourselves to the various spiritually popular kinds of things.

Give me the book of God. And let us labor in it for his glory. Character, competence, and look at verses 14 and 15.

[33 : 44] God's servants are to embrace their calling. Theirs is a different calling. Practice. Do not neglect the gift you have which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.

Practice these things. Immerse yourself in them so that all may see your progress. He was not simply or just to be a man of the book.

He was not to neglect the gift that had been given him by God, graciously bestowed through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Rather than neglecting it, not giving himself to it, he was to immerse himself in it.

Huh? In the ministry to which he was called. And what a delight, what a joy in the midst of toil and sweat and exhaustion does the joy of Christian call that God has bestowed on some of us and we are from for which we are humbled and challenged at the same time.

But we embrace it. He was not to be lazy. Huh? Because giving himself to his call would result in the kind of progress that would be noticeable.

[35 : 09] not only noticeable to him but other people can say, hey, I remember when and now I see now and I see that there has been progress.

Sometimes it's slow. Progress, nonetheless. He would advance personally and professionally as God's minister. Notice the summary as we're about to close.

Verse 16, Paul tells him a good word for us regardless of whether you're a professional like me or others.

Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this for in doing so what will happen? There will be a blessing.

You will save yourself not in the salvific kind of sense. Only Christ can do that. but there is this idea of sanctification progressing in our salvation that happens both for the minister as well as those who are under the ministry itself.

[36 : 16] There will be personal and communal benefit from his progress in doing what God had called him to do. the Lord would use these labors for his personal well-being as well as for those that he calls the brothers and believers and the hearers of the word in the same chapter.

The measure of a minister that we see here is good for us to consider. So even as we walk through this I ask you this afternoon what about your diet?

It's rich in God's word. What about your discipline or another way of saying your Christian walk? Huh?

What about your duties? Are we truly people on mission with God in this world in this community? Huh? What about your character?

Huh? Are you living according to God's word? What about your competency and regardless of what it is that you're doing in the body of Christ in your call?

[37 : 32] Huh? These things are good for God's ministers but as I mentioned it's good for the brothers for six it's good for believers for 12 and hearers all same group it's good for all of us given the spiritual climate and curiosity of our day godliness and God honoring service must be the goal of all of God's servants whether you're the lay or the professional variety huh?

Our day needs these kinds of servants our day needs these kind of believers in a way that would counter the trends and the appetites that are present the spiritual fads and fancies we need people who are grounded in God's word and live out God's word in ways that it reflects in their character may we be that kind those kind that kind of ministers may you be that kind of people let's pray heavenly father we praise you for your goodness to us this day and pray as we look at this measure of a godly minister that we would see all of ourselves Lord is on the team we would be people on mission embracing your gospel embracing your word living it for your glory for your honor so let these things be as our prayer in Jesus name amen