

1 Timothy 4.6-11 A Good Minister

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[0 : 00] The Apostle Paul will often use metaphors of athletic training to illustrate the life of faith.

! Now when using these metaphors of athletic training, training is significant in the fact that if somebody wanted to compete, then they can't just be a fair weather type of exercise training regimen.

If they were to compete, they were to train to compete, then the people which they are competing against are athletes themselves. So in order to have an upper edge on these other athletes, a training athlete will have to train so hard that they will have that upper edge over the others who themselves have also been training.

And there's many instances where Paul uses this illustration, these metaphors of athletic training to illustrate the life of faith.

Some examples are in 1 Corinthians 9.24 where he says, And then further in 1 Corinthians 9.25, he says, And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate, that is, exercises self-control in all things.

[1 : 27] Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. And then in 2 Timothy 4.7, he says, And then finally in Hebrews 12.1, he says, Now when the Apostle Paul uses the imagery of athletic training, there's much to it than just training.

There's the putting off that which hinders, as well as the pursuing of that which helps. And he uses this athletic training imagery in our text this morning in 1 Timothy 4.

So our text this morning will be verses 6 to 11. But for context, we will read from verse 1 to verse 11. Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies and hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving. For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.

[3 : 20] But reject profane and old wives' fables and exercise yourselves toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach because we trust in the living God who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.

These things command and teach. Our great God, we thank you again for this morning and for this time that we have to be under the ministry of the word, and we pray that as we seek to grow in our knowledge and understanding of your word, that you would illuminate it to us by your spirit.

I pray that you would attend the preaching by your spirit, that it would be marked by the spirit and power of God. And I pray, Lord, that you would use even me in the preaching of your word to make your word effectual to the hearers for the glory of your name, the edification of the saints, and the advancement of your kingdom and the salvation of the lost.

I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. So, as I said this morning, we're going to look at verses 6 to 11. And in these verses, what's going on is that imagery of athletic training is used metaphorically to illustrate the duty of a good minister of Jesus Christ to exercise the soul.

[4 : 51] That one was a bit of a mouthful, so I'll say it again. That imagery of athletic training is used metaphorically to illustrate the duty of a good minister of Jesus Christ to exercise the soul.

So, you're going to see a lot of illustration of this metaphor. So, remember as we work through it, this is not a sermon on physical training for physical life. It's a sermon on exercising of the soul. So, we'll be divided into three parts. The first part being nourishment. The second part being exercise. And the third part being motivation. Okay?

So, there's going to be nourishment, exercise, and motivation. Now, remembering the context of where we are at. In last week's sermon, in verses 1 to 5, it spoke about apostasy.

If you recall, about the reality of apostasy. And, of course, apostasy is bad. So, there's a transition that's being made here from that which is bad, apostasy, false teachers, to that which is good, a good minister.

[5 : 58] So, a transition is being made, but yet it's coming out of the context of that which is bad, apostasy, false teaching. So, given the reality and the warning against apostasy and false teaching, then there is the good to exercise the soul.

And the duty of being a good minister. So, first of all, let's look at nourishment. Verse 6. It says, All of 1 Timothy, all that we've worked through so far.

So, Timothy, as a pastor, to be faithful, to be a good minister, his duty is to instruct in the things such as the right use of the law.

The gospel, public prayer, piety in men, the role of women in church, modesty, the qualifications of deacons, the qualifications of elders.

These are things which Timothy is to instruct in. This is written to Timothy, but it's not just for Timothy's knowledge. He is to instruct in these things to the brethren.

[7 : 38] So, his duty is to instruct the content of 1 Timothy, to instruct these things. He is to instruct them. It's not just a matter of instruction. This is something we need to understand as we move forward.

Because he is, as you remember, confronting false teachers. He is confronting those who are in positions of authority. And he needs to confront them in their false teaching and to correct it.

So, his duty is to instruct, but it's also to uphold the truth in the face of conflict, in the face of error. And his duty is to deny error.

His duty is to correct false teaching. And his duty is to insist on good doctrine, on that which is true. So, his duty is to instruct, but notice who he is to instruct.

His duty is to instruct the brethren. Now, brethren is plural for brother. So, the brothers, but it encompasses men and women who are believers, who are Christians.

[8 : 38] The brethren is Christians, the believers. But the language that's used is language of family. Brothers is a term that's used for someone who is family.

So, the believers, the Christians, it's getting at the fact that they're within the family of God. Now, when somebody becomes a Christian, when somebody is saved, we are justified.

And being justified, it means that we're forgiven of our sins, of all of our sins, and we have Christ's righteousness accredited to us. So, we are declared as righteous, not because of anything we've done, but because of Christ's righteousness.

So, God sees us as right because of Christ's righteousness. And when we're justified, we're adopted. Adopted into the family of God. There are many privileges and spiritual blessings of being a Christian, and that our sins, there's no longer condemnation for our sins.

We're fully forgiven. We're seen as righteous in the sight of God, justified. And we are adopted as his children. So, the children of God, believers, Christians, is who Timothy is to instruct in these things.

[9 : 50] So, this shows us, as a church, the priority of who is to be instructed in the church. In other words, the duty of Timothy is not to entertain the goats, but to feed the sheep.

And many contemporary churches have drifted from this. Instead of having their focus being to feed the sheep, to nourish Christians, their focus has become to entertain non-believers.

But that is not the priority of the church. He says here to instruct the brethren. And then it gives us the result. If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ. Nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine, which you have carefully followed. So, the result is that Timothy will be a good minister. Now, a lot of churches, for their qualifications for an elder, they, instead of using texts such as 1 Timothy 3, they will look for somebody who's a nice guy.

And it's good to be a nice guy. There's nothing wrong with being a nice guy. But in 1 Timothy 3, the qualifications for an elder isn't as long as he's a nice guy. Now, I once talked to a man who had been a pastor in Salvation Army.

[11 : 17] No, he's Anglican. And the Salvation Army wanted to hire him as a pastor. He said, but I have different convictions. And they said, do you love Jesus? And he said, yes. And they said, well, that's all that matters.

And that's not true. That's not all that matters for the qualifications of an elder. So, many churches will just appoint somebody as an elder because he's a nice guy.

And again, it's good to be a nice guy, but there are things in which an elder is called to do, such as reject, err, confront false teachers, which the requirements are more than being a nice guy.

And being a nice guy, somebody might be motivated to seek to do things for man's approval, as opposed to God's approval. And here, we see that the result is being a good minister in God's word. It tells us this. So, in doing these things, instead of seeking man's approval, in doing these things, Timothy will have God's approval. According to God's word, a good minister of Jesus Christ.

[12 : 28] And then we see the benefit. If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine.

Now, in the ministry of the word, in the feeding of the sheep, the believers are to be nourished. The elect are to be edified.

But in the duration of a sermon, let's say it's a 45-minute sermon, those who hear the sermon, there's a 45-minute span in where they're hearing things about the word.

But for the one who prepares the sermon, there's many hours that goes into it. So, for the minister of the word, there is much nourishment received by the one who is careful to follow and how they are nourished by, as he says, the words of faith and of good doctrine.

But I want to point out in what he is nourished and what believers are nourished. The benefit is you will be nourished in good programs.

[13 : 31] No. Good performances. No. You will be nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine.

Now, there's that word doctrine that post-modern churches and the emergent church seems to have an issue with, that we should be more concerned about living than about this doctrine stuff.

And sometimes it's even said as though saying the word leaves a bitter aftertaste in the mouth. But doctrine isn't something that's foreign to scripture. Scripture talks about doctrine and promotes doctrine.

And not only is doctrine in scripture, not only is doctrine something that can be known, but doctrine is profitable. Doctrine is nourishing.

So some will argue that the Christian life is less of speculative and more practical, and it's more about living, more about the way in which we live, and living rightly than about that which we think about.

[14 : 45] So is this true? Is this true that the Christian life is not about theology and more about living? But to take it even further, is this actually a true dichotomy?

Are these two things pitted against each other, or are they related? William Ames. William Ames was a Puritan who was a student of William Perkins. William Perkins is considered to be the father of Puritans and very influential.

And his works have stood the test of time. That's one benefit of old guys is that if their stuff was bad, it's not going to make it.

Well, hopefully it's not going to make it through time. But if it's made it through time and people keep buying it and people keep publishing it, people keep promoting it and quoting it as being good, then that's somebody you want to read.

So anyways, William Perkins, his student was William Ames, and William Ames called theology the doctrine of living to God.

[15 : 51] Theology is not irrelevant to living. It's not pitted. It's not a dichotomy. But he called theology the doctrine of living to God.

If we want to live godly lives, if we want to live unto God, how do we inform the decisions we make? How do we inform the ways in which we live? Or what is the mystery to godliness?

So, being nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine, which you have carefully followed.

It's not that he has heard it once on Sunday and went about his business and forgot about it, but that he carefully followed.

Have you ever purchased something from Ikea? It doesn't come assembled. You have to assemble it and they provide instructions for it. And if you're like me, probably take one look at the instructions and then you take a look at the parts and put the instructions aside and give it a try and you have an end product and there's an extra part left over and, well, it's probably a spare part anyways.

[17:07] Sometimes I've assembled Ikea furniture without carefully following the instructions is what I'm getting at. But of all things, actually, Lego is something the instructions I have to carefully follow.

There's all these little pieces of different colors and I have to carefully follow the instructions in order to have the end product, which is the picture on the box of Lego.

He says here, Knowing the words of faith, knowing good doctrine, understanding it, agreeing with it, trusting in it, and carefully following it, you will be nourished.

So, our next point. Athletic excellence doesn't come from diet alone, but it must include exercise. So, we've looked at nourishment.

Now, we're going to look at exercise. And with exercise, with training to excel, training to have an upper edge on the other opponents, an athlete needs to shed everything that hinders and to pursue the things that help.

[18:26] So, in shedding what hinders, it says here, But reject profane and old wives' fables. It's to reject error.

And we've seen much error in 1 Timothy. 1 Timothy is to confront much error. It's not that Timothy has the errors. He's to confront the error. There's the misuse of the law and there's all the other things that are going on.

There's the apostasy and the Gnostic asceticism, which was addressed last week. There is error and it needs to be rejected.

How is it to be approached? It's to be rejected. Reject the error. And he calls it profane and old wives' fables. He doesn't even go into detail.

And I think it's for a reason that he doesn't go into detail. It's because it's to be rejected. It's error. And the error needs to be rejected in the sense of don't waste your time with it.

[19:29] Time is precious. Your time is precious. So, reject error. Don't waste your time on this error, these profane and old wives' fables.

Reject it. And instead, because your time is precious, spend your time in what is profitable. Shed what hinders and spend your time in what is profitable.

In other words, don't get caught up in these errors. Even spending the time to follow them, it's deceptive.

We've seen that last week is that these errors are deceptive. They deceive. So, don't get caught up in them. Reject them. There's only so much time. And there's too many good books.

I've already mentioned William Perkins and William Ames. Their works alone is probably more books than the average person reads in their lifetime. There's so many good books to read.

[20:24] There's so many good podcasts to listen to. There's so many good sermons to listen to. There's so much good content that one person, we're not going to be able to fill our time and our capacity with all that is good.

So, to spend that time on which is error, these profane and old wives' fables, would take away our precious time from focusing on what is good.

Shed what hinders and pursue what helps. Don't let good learning be set aside for time-wasting or sub-part content, let alone heretical, which is unprofitable, useless, and foolish.

So, instead, putting off shedding what hinders and pursuing what helps. Pursuing what helps is exercise yourself toward godliness.

So, using the illustration, the metaphor, the imagery of athletic training, how does an athlete train? Again, an athlete who would train to compete wouldn't be a fair-weather athlete.

[21:27] They wouldn't just get up off the couch from playing video games. Only when it's fair weather, if they try to compete, they're not going to win. They're not training to compete to win.

One of the oldest sayings that I know of is, no pain, no gain. When you're training, if you're not training to the point of pain, you're not going to see any gain.

If you're just training until you're tired, you're not going to have a competitive edge upon those which you're competing against for the prize. So, train in godliness.

That is, train in things that promote godliness. Now, this is not speaking of a covenant of works, but of a covenant of grace. This is being founded on a covenant of grace. And what I'm getting at is that it doesn't say train for godliness.

It's not that somebody who is not a Christian, with their asceticism and discipline, can train themselves into the kingdom of God. But this is based on the covenant of works, that having been saved, having been transferred into the kingdom of Christ, having been united to Christ, then train accordingly.

[22 : 38] That is, the mystery of godliness is not earned or worked, but granted through union with Christ. If you remember from 1 Timothy 3.16. I'll read it again.

1 Timothy 3.16, So, if you are a Christian, if you're not a Christian, you can't work your way into the kingdom with discipline and asceticism and training.

If you are a Christian, because you are united to Christ, godliness is yours in Christ, therefore exercise it.

With training to progress, if it's strength training and you can't add more weight, then you use progressive overload.

You can't add more weight, so you add more reps. If you can't add more reps, then slow it down. If you can't slow it down, then do drop sets. It's progressive overload. So, also with training to exercise the soul.

[23 : 53] This is maybe a bit of a cheesy dad joke kind of phrase, but progressive overload of heavy reading. Of heavy reading, contemplation, and prayer.

That's pursue holiness, pursue orthopraxy, pursue piety, pursue right conduct, or if you remember from Ephesians, walk worthy.

Now, we'll see that bodily exercise profits a little. Verse 8. For bodily exercise profits a little. And you might think, I'd say bodily exercise has quite a bit of profit.

Actually, it helps maintain a physical health, and a healthy body fuels a mind. It helps with a healthy mind. So, what does it mean when it says bodily exercise profits a little? In comparison to exercising the soul, bodily exercise profits a little.

Let me explain. Let's say, again, with this athletic imagery, that you are training because you want to compete, and you're competing because you want to win. How are you going to train to have an upper edge against all your other competitors who are training with great discipline?

[25 : 10] You are going to have to work very hard and train very hard and shed everything that hinders and pursue everything that helps to try to have that upper edge. And then you compete.

Let's say you win. Let's say you out-compete everybody else and you win the prize. You have that prize, but then next week, or sorry, next year, there's going to be another competition.

And everyone's been working extra hard to have that upper edge against you and all that training that you did to win the prize. You're going to have to work even harder to maintain or to win the prize again the next year.

So, let's say you win it again and so forth for 10 years. and you've trained very hard, very disciplined, and you've won the prize. You've out-competed everyone every year.

But after 10 years, if there's a tragic, fatal accident, is all that training going to give you immortality? No, it's not. That training, it's really, it's only beneficial to get the prize.

[26 : 11] There's other benefits, such as health, but the 15 minutes of fame from winning that prize that's going to be gone by the next year. You're going to have to win the prize again. And after that life, all that training isn't going to give immortal life.

And after death, when coming before a God who made us, who is a holy, righteous, and just God, who by no means clears the guilty, all that training will not justify us before God.

So, as, as disciplined, as in training as we can be in the physical life, it only profits us in physical life.

And when we compare that to things of eternal life, bodily exercise profits a little. Now, physical exercise isn't bad. It's not what he's saying.

He's saying bodily exercise profits. There is profit. Physical exercise is not to be neglected, but it's also not to be made too much of.

[27 : 12] as though it was an end in itself or a highest good for sculpting our body and body worship or wanting to showcase our physique as though our physique was the highest good and an end to itself.

So, there's, bodily exercise profits a little in exercise for physical life. But it's used as a metaphor for exercising the soul to exercise eternal life where we see the profit is for more than just physical life. So, bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

Godliness is profitable for all things. the profit of godliness is more than that which the world will seek for their profit in physical exercise.

Not for body worship, not for just 15 minutes of fame for winning a competition, but for all things. Godliness is profitable for all things.

[28 : 32] That is, the life that now is, godliness is profitable for the life that now is and that which is to come.

Godliness is profitable for that which is to come. I previously mentioned William Perkins. William Perkins, he wrote that theology is the science of living blessedly to God.

In this present life, theology is profitable for living blessedly and in that which is to come, theology is profitable for living blessedly.

So, in this life, as for practical piety as pilgrims who are on our way and for the life to come, the beatific vision and glory.

So, our third division, training and diet and exercise is hard, but it is helped with having a reason to persevere. So, again, training and diet and exercise is hard, but it is helped with having a reason to persevere.

[29 : 42] So, the third point is motivation. Motivation is the reason. Our text gives us the reason. Training with a goal will help results.

If a person doesn't have really experience with physical training and they decide they're going to start and they just go into the gym without having a goal or thinking it through, just thinking that it's just going to happen, pretty soon they'll find that they're not going to get the greatest results. But when there's a goal in mind and ways to achieve that goal, then that helps with getting results. Likewise, be profitable.

So, notice that it says, for this end, verse 10, for to this end we labor, some versions may say, we labor and strive and suffer reproach, as though striving after a goal, a result, an end result in which we're working towards, striving towards it, laboring towards a goal, pursuing that goal, and suffering reproach for the sake of that goal, for to this end, as striving after a goal.

And then it says, because, for to this end, we labor and suffer reproach because we trust in the living God. Now, Ephesus was a place of significant amount of idolatry, the temple of Diana, and of course, if you remember the riot, the riot was because the craftsmen who made little idols were losing business because of Christianity.

[31 : 36] There was much idolatry of presumed deities who had no life in them. We trust in the living God.

Now, that word trust, I think, is important because we trust in the living God. trust is having confidence in his trustworthiness.

Now, what is faith? We know that we're saved by faith alone, through grace alone, Christ alone. Faith is knowledge, assent, and trust.

So, it's knowledge of truth, knowledge of the words of faith and of good doctrine, of assent, to agree with it, that it is true, and to trust, to have confidence in the trustworthiness of the word of God. because we trust in the living God. And it says, because we trust the living God, who is the savior of all men. Now, this is a curious statement, isn't it?

[32 : 36] To misinterpret it, some might see, oh, God saves every man. Each man is saved. Because it says, we trust the living God, who is the savior of all men.

the Bible does not teach universalism. That's not what this text says, and all of scripture speaks to the fact that God does not save every man, but those whom are not saved will be condemned with eternal torment.

The Bible doesn't teach universalism, and that's not what this passage says. Now, there are many times where, in similar wording, the Bible will speak of God being the savior of all men, and in that context, it means all kinds of men.

If you remember the beginning of 1 Timothy, it's not just the Jews which God saves, but God saves every tribe, of every tribe, every tongue, and every nation.

God is the savior of all types of men, of all kinds of men. The Bible doesn't teach universalism, and it can't be what it's getting at, because what we just looked at last week was the apostate.

[33 : 54] So it's not warning against the reality of the apostate, but then saying God saves every man. There's more that's going on to this year. Now, the word savior, we have the English word savior, the Greek word which we get that from, when translating from languages, it's not that a Greek word has one word that it means, and that always means that word in English.

That's not how translation works. That will cause problems. But there's a gloss, a variety of possible meanings, and which one is most appropriate will depend on many other factors, such as being lexically determined, or the context.

So we can't, just because a Greek word means one thing in one place, doesn't mean it means that word in another place. And BDAG, which is a very reputable lexicon, a Greek lexicon, says that the word which is used here, it can mean rescuer, it can mean savior, it can mean deliverer, and it can mean preserver.

And the consensus seems to be that here, the use of the word means preserver. God is the preserver and giver of life.

And with God's providence, God has created all things, and God is not absent from the operating, of how creation operates.

[35 : 29] He does not sit back and let things work themselves out, but God is the first cause, the uncaused first cause of all things, and God's works of providence, having created all things, God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful, preserving, and governing all of his creatures, and all of their actions.

Not just believers, but all creatures, in other words, all men. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful, preserving, and governing all men.

Especially those who believe. Preserving and governing all of his creatures, and all of their actions. In verse 10, the second part, because we trust the living God, who is the savior of all men, especially of those who believe.

And I think this is the last piece that really helps us to understand, that it's speaking about God's providence and preserving all of his creatures, because it would not make sense to say, God saves every man, especially those who believe, because salvation is effectual.

So, especially those who believe, when we consider God's preserving of all men, God's most holy, wise, and powerful, preserving, and governing of all of his creatures, God's providence, especially those who believe, that is God's special care for his children.

[37 : 12] In a sin-cursed world, we will see lots of calamities, lots of suffering, lots of sorrows, lots of death, a lot of things that are because it is a fallen, sin-cursed world.

And for the unbeliever, it is God's judgment against them. For God's sin, but for the believer, it is not for their judgment, it is for their good, it is for their sanctification, it is according to God's fatherly disposition towards his people.

Romans 8, 28, for we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him. So are you a believer? If you are a believer, then there is much encouragement to take out of this text, that in all of God's creatures and in all of their actions, that God is most holy, wisely, and powerfully preserving and governing all things for his glory and for the good of his children, especially those who believe.

If you are not a believer, then there is no asceticism, there is no training, there is no work which can work a sinner into the kingdom of God.

The only way to be in a right standing with God, the only way to be freed, to have freedom from the penalty of sin and the punishment and judgment of God's judgment of sin is by faith in Christ.

[38 : 52] In describing saving faith, Petrus Van Maastricht wrote, saving faith is nothing other than the act of the whole rational soul by which it receives God as the highest end and Christ as the one and only mediator for this purpose that we may be united with him and being thus united obtain communion with all his benefits.

And previously we talked about how faith is knowledge, consent, and trust. If you are not a believer, know the gospel, know this mystery of godliness, know about the Son of God's incarnation, his coming, his living, his doing, his perfecting righteousness, his suffering and dying as a substitute,

his rising from the dead in power, his ascending on high, and his current reigning over all of his creation.

And to have faith is having knowledge and this truth and the promises of the gospel that all who believe on Christ, all who have faith in Christ will be saved, assenting to it, that is agreeing with it, and trusting, having confidence in the trustworthiness of the one who has promised these things that is of God through Christ.

So, these things command and teach. Verse 11, these things command and teach, that is, put them in remembrance of these things.

Timothy, as a good minister, is to command and teach these things to the brethren, to meditate on them, to put it into practice, and to instruct it.

[40 : 35] Not just throw it out there and see if they like it, but to command and to teach these things. So, some concluding uses that we can take out of this.

Keep your finger here and turn over just a little bit to 2 Timothy 3.16. In the context of the duty of a good minister and exercising the soul, what can a good minister use to exercise the soul?

Or also being nourished in the words of faith and good doctrine. How can we better understand what that is? Well, let's turn over to 2 Timothy 3.16.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Sounds like it addresses exactly what Timothy is confronted with, his task, his duty, and what he is to instruct and in what to be nourished. Next, this book is written to Timothy.

[41 : 56] This is a letter written to Timothy. It's written to one man, but it's curious, isn't it, that though it's written to Timothy, we are reading it to the church. It was written to Timothy, but it's to be read publicly.

Now, typically, when we write a letter to someone, if we write a letter to our spouse, or if we write a letter to a family member, it's not our intent for that to be read publicly, let alone to be read in front of the church.

But this, although it's written to Timothy, it's to be read to the church for a number of reasons. It's not just that Timothy should know what his duty is, but it's that the church, that the church is to know what is to be expected of a faithful minister.

Also, if you recall from chapter 3, that the qualifications of an elder are not things that are beyond every Christian, that only an elder is to have these things, but it's things that every Christian is to aspire towards.

And so because every Christian is to aspire towards these characters, this character of godliness, so an elder must contain these things in order to lead by example in these things.

[43 : 15] So because a minister is to be concerned about these things, so every Christian, every servant of God is to be concerned about these things that is relevant, particularly that which is for the exercising of the soul, the nourishment and the exercise of the soul and the motivation, the reason for it.

Next, observe the contrast that's been made. The contrast has been made between verses 1 to 5 of chapter 4 of the apostate.

It's those who deny Christ in their life and in their deeds and then deny Christ in word and in doctrine. So there's a sharp contrast that's made from the apostate false teacher who denies Christ in life and deed to the good minister who, by his life and deeds, is faithful and is nourished in the words of faith and the good doctrine.

the brethren, which again that term encompasses believers, Christians, the brethren have been called out of this world.

They've been separated from the world, they've been transferred out of the course of this world into the kingdom of Christ and they've been reoriented in Christ by the spirit.

[44 : 49] And because this has occurred, the believer has been, the believer was in the world, in darkness, following the course, according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air, and by the power of God has been dislodged out of that course, has been uprooted, has been relocated, transferred into the kingdom of God, and reoriented.

And having been regenerated, the brethren, it's not just that we're now able to exercise the soul in living to God, but it's that there's nothing more profitable to the soul than this, and that there's

nothing more blessed in this life than that which is to come.

If you remember the first hymn that we sang about how the Sabbath is an emblem of eternal rest. Eternal rest is where God's blood bought people will be in the presence of God, in the glory of God, in a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and they will be most blessed to all eternity.

And in this life, in some things, we have a glimpse, an emblem of eternal blessedness. and the Sabbath, in the worship of God, with the people of God, in the house of God, is an emblem of eternal blessedness.

In this life, we have blessedness in the means of grace. When we have communion with God, when we pray with God, that is an emblem of having perfect blessed communion with God in glory, unhindered by sin, though our communion now is hindered by sin and not perfect, it is an emblem, it is a foretaste.

[46 : 47] In these things, in this life, we have a taste of blessedness. So, again, it's not just that we're able, it's not just that we're able to exercise the soul, but there is nothing more profitable to us, and nothing more blessed in this life, and that which is to come.

So, if you are in Christ, if you are united to Christ, exercise these things, exercise godliness. So, believers, practical ways to do this.

Make use of the means of grace. Make use of time in the word. Make use of meditation on the word. Memorize scripture.

Make use of prayer. Prayer is communion with God. And in these things contains to us a glimpse of glory.

That is a glimpse of being blessed to all eternity. Let's pray. Our great God, we thank you for your word. We thank you that we have in your word divine testimony, that we have truth, and that this letter which was written to Timothy, that in it you give us today, the church today, an understanding of what is to be expected of a good and faithful minister of the word, and the duty of the minister, and how the soul can be nourished and exercised.

[48 : 17] And I pray, Lord, that you would help us to think upon these things, and to think about what we must do throughout this week in order to apply your word, to do your word, to grow in your word.

And if there are those here this morning who are not believers, I pray, Lord, that by your grace you would call them out of darkness into marvelous light and grant them faith and repentance, and that we would see your kingdom advanced.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.