

## BE AN EXAMPLE

Text: 1 Timothy 4:12-16.

Delivered on: March 10, 2013. Streetsboro.

**1 Timothy 4:12-16.** Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. **13** Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. **14** Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. **15** Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. **16** Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

### I. LET NO ONE DESPISE YOUR YOUTH.

- A. By all accounts, Timothy was a young man.
1. Of course, by Roman standards, one was considered to be a youth until age 44.
  2. Jews considered the age of adulthood to be 40.
  3. While we don't know his actual age, we can assume that he was probably not yet 40.
  4. Furthermore, Paul probably also had in mind his "spiritual age."
- B. Just as we go through stages of life in a physical way, we also go through stages spiritually speaking.
1. We start out as babes.
    - a. **Hebrews 5:13.** For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.
    - b. **1 Corinthians 3:1-2.** And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. **2** I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able
    - c. **1 Peter 2:2.** As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby
    - d. Babies are quick learners.
    - e. They have an insatiable hunger.
    - f. Yet, they also have a limited diet.
  2. As we grow in a physical way into a more mature (hopefully) person, we also grow spiritually (hopefully).
    - a. We continue to learn and grow.
    - b. We start to apply some of the things we have learned by experience. **Hebrews 5:14.** But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.
    - c. We no longer have a limited diet.
    - d. As young people often do, we question everything.
    - e. Of course, once we get to the adolescent age, we think we know everything.
  3. As we grow into adulthood...
    - a. We begin to fathom how much we don't know.
    - b. We appreciate those who raised us much more.
    - c. We have gained much more wisdom as Hebrews 5:14 teaches.
    - d. Unlike physical growth, spiritual growth continues until we die. (Or a lack of spiritual growth causes us to die spiritually.)
- C. Paul tells Timothy that he is not to give anyone reason to despise him on account of his youth.
1. How is he to do this?
  2. In essence, the answer is: focus on growth.
  3. Paul is going to tell him how to do that in the following verses.
- D. Whether we are young or old, we are to give no one cause to despise us or the faith.
1. **1 Peter 4:14-15.** If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. **15** But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.
  2. **Romans 2:23-24.** You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? **24** For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written.
- E. Part of this command is included in verse 14.

## II. BE AN EXAMPLE...

### A. In word.

1. In everyday speech.
  - a. This has been going around on facebook lately.
    - (1) Before you speak, THINK.
      - (a) T – Is it True.
      - (b) H – Is it Helpful.
      - (c) I – Is it Inspiring.
      - (d) N – Is it Necessary.
      - (e) K – Is it Kind.
    - (2) Surely, this is true for a Christian. **James 1:19-20.** So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, **slow to speak**, slow to wrath; **20** for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.
  - b. We must control our speech. **James 1:26.** If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.
2. In preaching the Word.
  - a. **2 Timothy 4:2.** Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.
  - b. **1 Peter 4:11.** If anyone speaks, **let him speak as the oracles of God.** If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

### B. In conduct.

1. **Philippians 1:27.** Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel
2. **1 Timothy 3:15.** But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth
3. **Ephesians 4:1.** I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called
4. We must conduct ourselves according to the high standards set forth by the gospel.
  - a. In regard to:
    - (1) Our mode of dress.
    - (2) Our speech.
    - (3) Our style of living.
    - (4) Our entertainment.
    - (5) All things! WWJD.
  - b. Why?
    - (1) Because there is no higher standard of moral conduct.
    - (2) Because, as Christians, we have entered into a covenant with God.
    - (3) Because it is the only way one can enjoy religion.
    - (4) Because it is the only way we can have peace on our death bed. **2 Timothy 4:6-8.** For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. **7** I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. **8** Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

### C. In love.

1. For God and man.
2. **1 John 3:16-19.** By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. **17** But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? **18** My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. **19** And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.

### D. In spirit.

1. In all things, we must conduct ourselves with the right spirit (attitude).
2. Sometimes people do the right thing but do it with a mean or angry spirit.
3. God loves the cheerful giver. **2 Corinthians 9:7.** So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.
4. We are to be meek. **1 Peter 3:15-16.** But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; **16** having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

5. We are to be gentle. **Galatians 6:1**. Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.
- E. In faith.
1. In being a person characterized by faith.
  2. Having an unshaking confidence in God. **2 Corinthians 5:7-10**. For we walk by faith, not by sight **8 We are confident**, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. **9** Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. **10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad
  3. In having an active faith. **1 Thessalonians 1:2-4**. We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, **3** remembering without ceasing your **work of faith**, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, **4** knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.
  4. In having an evident faith. **1 Thessalonians 1:6-8**. And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, **7** so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. **8** For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that **we do not need to say anything**.
- F. In purity.
1. Pure in the sense of being free from the stain of sin. **James 1:27**. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.
  2. Pure sexually. **1 Thessalonians 4:1-7**. Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; **2** for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. **3** For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; **4** that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, **5** not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; **6** that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. **7** For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.
  3. Our hope for eternal life gives us motivation to be pure. **1 John 3:1-3**. Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. **2** Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. **3** And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

### III. GIVE ATTENTION TO: (“Attention – to bring near).

- A. Reading.
1. Reading what exactly?
    - a. The New Testament as we have it was not yet complete.
    - b. Paul was telling Timothy to read whatever Scriptures were available to him.
    - c. These would have included the Old Testament.
      - (1) **Romans 15:4**. For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.
      - (2) The Old Testament scriptures prove that Jesus is the Christ.
        - (a) **Acts 18:28**. For he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.
        - (b) **Acts 8:34-35**. So the eunuch answered Philip and said, “I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?” **35** Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him
        - (c) **Galatians 3:24**. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.
        - (d) **2 Timothy 3:15**. And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
    - d. Some New Testament works were extant as well.
      - (1) Peter considered Paul’s writings to be Scripture. **2 Peter 3:15-16**. And consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, **16** as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.
      - (2) Paul’s epistles were copied and circulated. **Colossians 4:16**. Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.
  2. We also must be students of the Scriptures.
    - a. **2 Timothy 2:15**. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

- b. Studying the scriptures daily will only increase our faith. *Acts 17:11-12*. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. **12** Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.

B. Exhortation.

1. As a young preacher, Timothy had to take the things he learned from the Scriptures and encourage others.
2. Preaching involves five things. **2 Timothy 4:2**. Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.
  - a. Convince – to find fault with, correct.
  - b. Rebuke – to chide, censure severely.
  - c. Exhort - to admonish, encourage, entreat, a persuasive discourse.
  - d. Longsuffering – a quality needed by the preacher – to suffer long. Patience, perseverance.
  - e. Teaching – doctrine.

C. Doctrine.

1. Timothy was to “bring near” to himself doctrine.
2. Doctrine matters! What we believe is important to God.
  - a. Need to understand Lord’s Supper. **1 Corinthians 11:23-31**. For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; **24** and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” **25** In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” **26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes. **27** Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. **28** But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. **29** For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. **30** For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.
  - b. Need to understand church discipline. **1 Corinthians 5:6-7**. Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? **7** Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.
  - c. Need to understand the doctrine of the resurrection. **2 Timothy 2:16-18**. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. **17** And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, **18** who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.
  - d. Need to avoid doctrines of demons. **1 Timothy 4:1-3**. Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, **2** speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, **3** 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.
  - e. There are some doctrines which Jesus hates. **Revelation 2:14-16**. “But I have a few things against you, because you have these those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. **15** “Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. **16** “Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth
3. **Titus 1:9-11**. Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. **10** For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, **11** whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.
4. **2 Peter 2:1-3**. But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. **2** And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. **3** By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

D. Meditate on these things.

1. To what degree? Answer: Give yourself entirely to them.
2. **Psalms 1:1-3**. Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; **2** But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. **3** He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.
3. Timothy is also told to take heed to the doctrine in verse 16.

#### IV. TAKE HEED TO YOURSELF.

- A. “Take heed” – to give attention to, to check.
- B. Not only was he to take heed to doctrine. He was also to take heed to himself.
  - 1. Many are great at taking heed to doctrine but not so good at taking heed to himself.
  - 2. The Pharisees were this way. *Matthew 23:1-4*. Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, 2 saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. 3 Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. 4 For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers
  - 3. Jesus’ answer to this type of person is, “Woe to you!”
- C. We must examine ourselves as to whether we are living according to the doctrine.
  - 1. *2 Corinthians 13:5*. Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified
  - 2. We are to also examine ourselves in worship. *1 Corinthians 11:27-28*. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

#### V. CONTINUE IN THEM.

- A. Knowing the correct doctrine is not enough.
- B. Obeying and teaching the doctrine for a short time is not enough.
- C. We must know, obey, and continue in the doctrine.
  - 1. *1 Corinthians 15:1-2*. Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.
  - 2. *Colossians 1:21-23*. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight— 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

#### VI. RESULTS.

- A. Your progress will be evident to all. (v.15)
- B. You will save yourself and those who hear you.
  - 1. Ultimately, this must be our first goal.
  - 2. *Ezekiel 3:18-19*. When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. 19 Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.
  - 3. In teaching others the gospel, we are not only potentially helping to save their souls, we are saving our own in the process.
  - 4. Furthermore, we are not held accountable for their obedience. *Acts 13:46*. Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.