

*30 Day Devotional
for
Christian Leaders
from
Paul's Letters
to
Timothy & Titus*

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How to Use this Book:

God's Word is Awesome! The Lord promises that if we will diligently study the Bible He will use it to increase our faith. Romans 10:17 says: "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

The first thing you need to do to make this study be everything it can be for you is to **commit yourself to becoming a student of God's Word.** You're going to need to find at least 30 minutes each day to study and to prayer! Don't cop out and say you can't do that! How much time do you spend on the phone each day? How much time watching TV? How much time on Social Media? You can find 30 minutes for God!

Next you need to begin each session in prayer, asking God's Holy Spirit to lead you into all truth! Then read the passage for the day, preferably in the New King James Version of the Bible. Then follow the study guide for that day, which will guide you through this wonderful book.

You will also want to take a 3x5 Index Card and write the memory verse on it. Use it throughout the day to help you learn key Bible verses. I can guarantee you you'll never be sorry in the future for Bible verses stored in your mind!

Then end each time in prayer also, using the things you've learned that day as a launching pad into praying for all the things going on in your life.

God bless you as you study God's Word!!!

Day 1- Read I Timothy 1:1-2 Memorize 1:5

Paul had first met young Timothy in Lystra on his second missionary journey. Timothy's grandmother Lois had been the first to believe in Christ in their family. It was probably through her influence that Timothy's mom Eunice had become a believer. But Timothy's dad was not a Christian. You can imagine the wrestling match that must have gone on in young Timothy's heart about whether or not to follow Christ like his mom or to be like his dad. **Meeting Paul probably cemented for him the decision to follow Christ.**

The information about Timothy's background comes from Acts Chapter 16 and Second Timothy Chapter 1.

Whether Paul was the actual one that led him to Christ or not, v. 2 shows the high regard Paul had developed for Timothy. Fill in the blanks from verse 2:

To Timothy, a _____ in the faith.

Paul had become Timothy's role model in life and ministry. Paul recognized such **potential** in young Timothy that he took him along to the next stops on that missionary journey. Timothy had proven so **faithful** along the way, that Paul even gave him more responsibility and left him to keep churches growing along the way (Acts 17:14, 18:5).

What had Paul recognized in Timothy? His _____

Why did Paul trust Timothy with greater responsibility?

He had been proven _____ along the way!

One of the messages I preach is how **we all need 3 kinds of people in our lives** at the same time. We need a Paul, a spiritually mature mentor who will lovingly pass the faith along to us. They see potential in us and invest their time in us. We need a Barnabas, someone that will encourage and exhort us as we labor together. And we also need a Timothy, someone we are being a Paul to, helping them gain new heights in their Christian walk as they demonstrate their faithfulness.

Who is your Paul? _____

Who is your Barnabas? _____

Who is your Timothy? _____

If you could not fill in any of those blanks, end this first day by praying that God would lead you to a Paul, a Barnabas, and a Timothy. **Don't be afraid to ask someone to be your Paul.** I had to make the first step in approaching most of my Paul's! I have many times made the initial approach to disciple Timothy's also. I have many times been able to reach the next "true son" in the faith simply by inviting them to breakfast at a local restaurant. There we simply use scripture, great Christian books, and a time for questions and answers to help us grow closer to Christ. I consider it among the most important things I do in the ministry! You can do it to! Pray now for God the Holy Spirit to lead you to just the right Paul, Barnabas, and/or Timothy!

Day 2- Read I Timothy 1:3-11 Memorize 1:5

In this letter from Timothy to Paul we see that Timothy has been left in Ephesus to help that church grow. From verse 3, write in the blank Paul's first command to Timothy in the letter:

_____ in Ephesus.

It's very interesting that Paul's first command to Timothy was to stay right where he was, laboring for Jesus. There's no magic in "remaining" if you are just taking up space, but **often it is the loving long term presence of a minister that is the key to a healthy and fruitful ministry.** Thom Rainer puts it well in his book, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them*:

"Our surveys of Pastors across America indicate the average tenure of a Pastor to be 3.8 years. But the average tenure of an Unchurched-reaching pastor is 11.8 years, over three times longer than the typical American pastor." -As quoted in chapter 7

I have been in the ministry long enough to know that it's not that the pastors who have been there on average 11.8 years had less conflict than the other pastors, but that when conflict came they "remained in Ephesus" to keep shepherding the flock God had entrusted to their care.

Paul knew that if a young minister like Timothy remained with the people it would lead to church growth and church health! This is not to say that there is never a time to leave a church (there most certainly is!), but the truth is that many times ministers (especially young ones) leave for all the wrong reasons.

Now it is very significant what Paul says to Timothy he is to do while he is remaining at Ephesus. **In verses 3-7 we find that Timothy as a young pastor is to make sure the right things are being taught at the church in Ephesus.** He says the wrong kind of teaching is that which just leads to disputes, but the right kind of teaching will lead to godly edification which is in faith. Draw a line from the word to its definition below:

Dispute: To build up or strengthen

Edify: To argue about, to question the validity of

You should have created an 'X' as you drew your two lines! What Paul was telling Timothy was that when we are teaching Biblical truth it should build Christians up in their faith, not tear down their faith. I have occasionally been in places where someone claiming to be a Christian was teaching things that question the Bible's reliability and tear down people's faith. Paul told Timothy to keep it from happening in his church.

Interestingly, when you count up the words in First and Second Timothy, **only the words "faith" and "good" occur more than the word "doctrine."** Doctrine means "that

which is taught and believed as fact.” It occurs 12 times in the 2 books, and the obvious concern of Paul in these letters is that the church of God be grounded in Biblical truth.

Take a moment and skim these occurrences of the word “doctrine” in First and Second Timothy, and write down the verse which touches you the most from the list:

I Timothy 1:3, 1:10, 4:1, 4:6, 4:13, 4:16, 5:17, 6:1, 6:3

II Timothy 3:10, 3:16, 4:3

Your favorite: _____

In verse 5 Paul makes clear what good doctrine’s purpose is: Fill in the blanks:

The purpose of the commandment is LOVE from a _____ heart, from a good _____, and from sincere _____.

I can tell you that as a Pastor there is nothing finer than when you see God through His grace fill another heart with love, that manifests itself in:

- a pure heart that Christ has forgiven and cleansed and filled with the Spirit
- a good conscience transformed from scorning what God wants to embracing it
- a sincere faith that is drawing the person nearer to God

In contrast to that ‘Christ’ centered doctrine that builds baby Christians up, the “false teachers” were teaching a ‘law’ based system of works that quite frankly was based more on fulfilling a checklist of requirements than on faith in Christ. Unfortunately, those kind of teachers are also alive and well today. Paul tells Timothy their teaching is useless because it is not focused on producing “little Christ’s” who love, but “little legalists” who condemn.

But Paul also makes clear that the law itself does serve a very useful purpose if it’s used “lawfully.” It makes clear to us the sin that must be repented of, and the kinds of things Christians will stay away from with the help of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. **But just trying to measure up on our own to the law never justifies us before God (as some of the false teachers were teaching).** Paul demolished these arguments in the book of Galatians.

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ”
-Galatians 2:16

“Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” -Galatians 3:24-25

“In Christ Jesus neither circumcision or uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.” -Galatians 5:13

What the false teachers had missed was that the civil portion of the law was like training wheels for a child learning to ride a bike. Once you have learned to ride, the training wheels are obsolete. The purpose they served is honored, but they are no longer the focus!

This is so well said in a John Bunyan quote:

**“Run John Run, the law demands, but gives him neither feet nor hands.
Far better news the gospel brings, it bids him fly, and gives him wings”**

It’s that glorious gospel that Timothy must see is taught in his church, and so must we! Making sure people understood that, and that unnecessary Jewish customs weren’t thrust upon baby believers, was worth Timothy “remaining in Ephesus!”

As you pray today, accept the sacred trust (v.11) that is being committed to you by God. Commit to Him that wherever He leads you will go, and that you will stay until He moves you, not circumstances or cowardice.

Day 3- Read I Timothy 1:12-20 Memorize 1:17

No human being is worthy in and of themselves to go to Heaven when they die, let alone be a minister of Jesus Christ. The fact that anyone can be forgiven of sin, go to Heaven when they die instead of Hell, and be able to minister for Christ is only due to the grace of God and Christ's completed work for sinners on the cross of Calvary.

In these verses Paul reflects on his own salvation and call to ministry. In doing so, he shows the thankfulness and awe that should characterize all Christians in general and Christ's ministers in particular! **Every true minister of Christ is a sinner saved by grace, one beggar telling other beggars where he found bread!**

In verse 12 we see God's part and Paul's part in Paul being put into the ministry. Fill in the blanks with either the word enabling or the word faithful:

Paul's part was being found _____ in the things he did before becoming "the Apostle Paul."

God's part was _____ Paul to do what He was calling Paul to do.

I wasn't born the Reverend Danny Campbell. I was born Daniel Joseph Campbell (I was almost named Kenneth George, but that story isn't getting told!). I was radically saved when I was 17 years old. I knew the same time I was saved that I wanted to be a full time minister for Jesus. But it wasn't until I was 28 years old that I was ordained and went from being a "Mr." to being a "Rev."

At my ordination ceremony, the Rev. Bill Smithson (one of my "Paul's") preached my ordination sermon. He said something about me that day that I still regard as the nicest compliment I have ever received in my life. **He said that Danny had been "faithful when he didn't have to be."** I was a member of his church in Evensville, Tennessee while I was a student at Bryan College. I helped every way I could, teaching classes, visiting people on outreach night, helping meet needs, setting up chairs and tables, picking up trash, etc., never receiving any pay from the church (although I had many wonderful meals at the Smithson's home, and God used my time with "Brother Bill" to show me much of what it means to be a minister!).

That's the kind of person God is looking for to be set apart for full time ministry: those who are faithful when there is nothing in it for them except pleasing God by serving people. If a minister ever loses that kind of heart, he has lost the heart of the ministry. That's what Paul meant by being "counted faithful." Let me ask you: are you faithful now, *before* going into the ministry? If you are not, please know that the ministry is not for you. God is looking for ministers to shepherd His sheep, not hirelings who have a "what's in it for me" mentality. Be faithful when you don't have to be! As you are faithful, God Himself will enable you for every task He has for you in the ministry!

Now many of us who are in the ministry have things that we did before we were Christians that we are not proud of. In verse 13, Paul says that he received mercy for his terrible conduct before he was a Christian because he did it “ignorantly in unbelief.” **Non-Christians act like Non-Christians because they are Non-Christians!** And that’s what we were before Christ saved us. When we are saved and become enlightened to just how despicable our former way of living was, we need to accept Christ’s forgiveness as Paul had and go forward in our faith. Someone has said that the average American is being crucified between 2 thieves: the regrets of yesterday and the fears of tomorrow. But dear saint: **For the Christian the only 2 days that matter are the day you were saved (because of all the blessings you inherited) and Today (the difference you can make).**

In verse 15 the phrase “this is a faithful saying” appears. It occurs 5 times in these “Pastoral letters” from Paul to Timothy and Titus. Beside the verse write the letter of the alphabet on the right that is the verse(s) being spoken of.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| _____ I Tim. 1:15 | a. If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work |
| _____ I Tim. 3:1 | b. If we died with Him, we will also live with Him |
| _____ I Tim. 4:8-9 | c. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners |
| _____ II Tim. 2:11 | d. Those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works |
| _____ Titus 3:8 | e. Bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things |

I Tim. 1:15 = c I Tim. 3:1 = a I Tim. 4:8-9 = e II Tim. 2:11 = b Titus 3:8 = d

You can tell that Paul is very intense as he is writing to Timothy, calling him to “wage the good warfare” concerning these things. **Paul believed that God had great things in store for Timothy if he would humbly and diligently follow his instructions.** If he didn’t there was a good possibility that his life and ministry might be “shipwrecked,” like Hymenaeus and Alexander of verse 20.

In Second Timothy we will find out more about the prophecies made about Timothy and the rotten beliefs of Hymenaeus. But it’s important to note that when we turn from the Biblical faith that Paul and the other apostles point us to, there is no place for us in the church. That’s the sobering message Paul has in verse 20, where he says that Hymenaeus (who names their kid that?) and Alexander have been delivered over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. **Paul’s point is clear: if you don’t live and teach what’s in the Bible, Satan is your master, not Jesus, and the world is your home, not the church.** Hymenaeus and Alexander’s place in the church could only be restored if they would repent and stop “blaspheming” God with teaching that was not from the Bible.

As you pray today, think about how serious the call of God is to ministers. God is looking for faithful ministers who are grateful for their salvation, love God’s word and will do anything Christ leads them to do! Pray Isaiah’s prayer: “Here am I, send me!”

Day 4- Read I Timothy 2:1-8 Memorize 2:5

Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus were more than just the words of a professor to a couple of his students. Taken together they are rich manuals on how the church is to operate, applicable to all churches in all places for all time. Paul expresses the purpose of I Timothy in chapter 3, verse 15. Write it here:

Paul's meaning is clear: if I am unable to come there, make sure the people know that these things are to be the practice of the church. With that in mind, we must never forget what the church is to do "first of all" in chapter 2, verse 1. From that verse, fill in the blanks:

"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, _____, intercessions, and giving of _____ be made for all men,"

Paul's first command to the church was to PRAY for all men! He uses 4 different words to emphasize this. Pastors are to lead their people to pray! This always has to be said first because our human tendency is to pray last! We often affirm with our lips that all of our efforts are in vain without God because we depend on Him. But often our actions reveal prayerless lives and powerless churches, acting independent of God the majority of the time. We must repent and make Paul's admonition our first priority: calling the people to prayer and dependence on God.

Interestingly, in verse 2 he immediately says to pray for kings and all those who are in authority. Again, this is a stab at our sinful nature. **We spend the majority of our time complaining about those in authority, not praying for them.** As children we criticize our parents, as students we criticize our teachers, as players we criticize our coaches, as church members we criticize our pastors, as citizens we criticize our government, as disciples we criticize our Lord. Paul in essence calls us to be known by those who are in authority not by our complaints but by our prayers and godly living.

That this is the obvious point is made clear in the second part of verse 2: that WE may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. God Himself has put the authorities into our lives. As they take care of what they are to take care of, and we take care of what we are responsible for, great things happen. **We're to be known by our leaders as the most helpful, the most considerate, the most God-focused people they know.** As they see Jesus in our lives many of those people will want to have Jesus in their lives also!

This is made clear in verse 4.

What does verse 4 tell us that God desires? _____

You may want to underline that verse in your Bible. **When the Bible tells us what God wants, we should commit it to memory.** Oh that Jesus' disciples would have God's burning desire for people to come to know Christ as Savior and Lord!

This also helps us know the 2 categories of things that we pray for people. First we pray for their salvation so they'll spend eternity with Jesus. Then we pray that they'll come to the knowledge of the truth. I take that to mean how God's truth affects the areas they are responsible for.

This sheds light on how we can pray for even bad authority figures. A child with an alcoholic father would pray for his salvation and the end of the alcoholism. A citizen with a politician who is pro-choice would pray for his salvation and for him to see that abortion is the taking of an innocent babies' life.

Now we should add two things.

First, praying for authority does not mean submitting to a command from an authority figure that would make us violate our faith. A Christian youth can say no to his dad when asked to drink alcohol with him. Daniel's friends refused to bow and worship an idol.

Secondly, there may be times when we have to actively disobey, or practice what is called civil disobedience, for a higher good. Corrie Ten Boom and her family did this when they saved many Jewish lives in their 'Hiding Place,' in defiance of Nazi commands. The Hebrew Midwives in the Bible refused to kill precious babies, and instead helped them live.

Who does verse 5 tell us is the Mediator for us between God and men? _____

That's a very important verse. One Roman Catholic Pope said: "I am the mediator between God and man." Sorry, Mr. Pope, Jesus is the mediator between God and man, no pope, no priest, no pastor! **It was His ransom for all (verse 6) that makes eternal life a reality for all who believe.** Because of this, we are able to make supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks through Jesus to God our Father. Jesus has made it possible for us to pray directly to the Father, and no Christian should take this responsibility lightly. Have Paul's in your life you can go to for wisdom and instruction, but not to the neglect of your personal time with your Heavenly Father!

Paul is so clear on this that he takes verse 8 to call men out to pray. I used to love watching wrestling matches when one wrestler would "call out" another wrestler to grapple in the ring. **In verse 8 Paul makes clear that to be a real Christian man is to**

accept being “called out” to pray, anywhere you are, even raising your hands to express your complete dependence on God. When we have wrath and doubts in our hearts, we shake our fists at God. When we are praying with holy hands, we are coming to Him with humble hearts and open hands, ready to receive from God what He wants to give us, like a little child with arms outstretched for his daddy!

By the way, let me let you in on a principle that has greatly helped me. When you are talking to somebody, **don’t say you’ll pray, stop and pray** with them. This is very meaningful to people and sets an atmosphere of prayer in your church. It is not uncommon at the end of our services to see little pockets of people praying for a need! It’s glorious to see! It also has a way of squashing people gossiping to you about others. When you insist on stopping to pray for the other person, it oftentimes is the last time the gossipers bring gossip to you. Isn’t that odd? Gossipers love to talk to people about other people, but rarely like to talk with God about anything!

So brothers, first of all: PRAY!

Day 5- Read I Timothy 2:8-15 Memorize 2:8

Wow! These verses are not very politically correct! But they are “scripturally correct,” and must be heeded. In Paul’s second letter to Timothy, he makes the importance of ALL scripture known. Write II Timothy 3, verses 16 & 17 here:

I once heard a seminary president give a great definition of the four things scripture is profitable for.

- Doctrine means that which you should believe.**
- Reproof means that which you should not believe.**
- Correction means how you should not behave.**
- Instruction means how you should behave.**

Now I am going to walk you through verses 8 – 15, and beside each statement from those verses, write the one of those 4 words that applies the most (Doctrine, Reproof, Correction, Instruction)

- A. To be a Christian man is to be a man of prayer (v.8) _____
- B. Christian women should not be known by outward appearance (v. 9) _____
- C. They should be known for their inward godliness and good works (v. 9-10) _____
- D. Women cannot be pastors (or authoritative teachers in the church) (v.11-12) _____
- E. Men are to be pastors, a teaching rooted in the order of creation (v. 13-14) _____

A=Instruction B =Correction C = Instruction D=Reproof E=Doctrine

Note on verse 8: Most men in churches want to leave the praying to women. Paul in instruction is correcting the men to focus on the inside first. Next he will instruct the women to do the same.

Note on verses 9-10: These words are not an absolute forbidding of hairstyles or makeup or jewelry or nice clothes. They are a clear call for women to put more emphasis on being beautiful on the inside than the outside.

Note on verses 11-12: Remember that Paul is speaking about how we are to conduct church (I Timothy 3:15). These verses should not be taken as an absolute prohibition on women sharing testimonies, praying or teaching, or even having key positions in the church. **All scripture must be balanced with other scripture.** In I Corinthians 11 we see women allowed to pray and prophesy in church, with the same concern for modesty

and submission given here. We know that Philip the evangelist had 4 daughters who were prophetesses (Acts 21:8-9). Priscilla was probably more vocal than her husband Aquila, and together they taught the Preacher Apollos what he needed to know (Acts 18:26). Phoebe was entrusted by Paul with the task of conducting business at the church in Rome, and they were to “assist her in whatever business she had need of (Romans 16:2).” Obviously she had to speak to them so they would know what they were being asked to do by Paul.

These verses do not contradict Paul in our text, nor does the fact that in Christ all are equal (Gal. 3:28). **In our text Paul uses the phrase teaching and authority in the same verse. Who are the authoritative teachers in the church? The Pastors/ Elders (also called Bishops) Some churches speak of these leaders as their Board of Directors.** Chapter 3 will follow immediately with the qualifications such men should have, making it obvious that this is the office Paul has in mind in verse 12. The church needs to hear the things women who understand this tension have to say. **But the authoritative teachers, or pastors of the church, are to be men, just as the husband is the head of the home.** Not politically correct, but certainly what the Bible teaches!

Note on verses 13-15: In response to those who say Paul’s arguments were bound to the culture of his day and are not applicable in our more “enlightened” times, we must see that the text does not allow for such an interpretation. Paul’s arguments are rooted in the creation order itself, a timeless focal point that renders the cultural argument obsolete. As a female Greek tutor of mine once said, you have to do linguistic gymnastics to get this text to say anything else. Obviously nowhere else does the Bible teach that women are saved through having children! There are 2 interpretive options. One is that Paul is simply saying what he has already said: women are to have a strong faith that exemplifies itself in carrying out their distinctively feminine roles. The Greek word translated ‘saved’ could also be translated ‘preserved’ here. That would make sense in the context. The other option is to stress the definite article in the Greek, and find a reference to read it thus, she will be saved through THE Childbirth, or the birth of Christ. Paul had just spoken of men and women in creation and their fall, now he interjects a word about Christ. This is exactly what happens in Genesis, where after the creation and the fall, in Genesis 3:15 the Devil was told that the seed of the woman would crush his head. Women who respond to that message in faith, as is indicated in verse 15, will be saved (as well as men). That is the reading I prefer!

As you pray today, thank God for the doctrine, the reproof, the correction, and the instruction in righteousness that He gives us in the Bible. **Thank God that in a world that has men and women both very confused about their role, both men and women are given clear teaching in the Bible about where to put their life’s emphasis.** Gather in the main teaching of this text that both men and women are to put the emphasis on prayer and godly living; what’s on the inside versus what’s on the outside!

“In domestic affairs I defer to Katie. Otherwise, I am led by the Holy Ghost.”
-Martin Luther

Day 6- Read I Timothy 3:1-7 Memorize 3:1

Having established that churches are supposed to be full of godly and praying men and women, Paul now turns to the importance of churches having leaders who are great examples to the church of what disciples should be.

It is interesting that in verse 1 he speaks of one “desiring” to be in the position of bishop, and that is affirmed as a desire for a “good work.” I often tell people that are considering the ministry that if they can do anything else, do it! **There should be a burning desire to be a pastor and help people grow in Jesus. Where this desire is lacking, the ministry should not be entered into.**

There are several New Testament words that describe the office of what we would call a pastor or minister.

The word bishop, episkopos, could also be translated overseer, and more often is.

The most common greek word used is presbuteros, translated elder.

The word we use most often is pastor, although it is only translated that way in Eph. 4:11, where it says “he gave some to be pastors and teachers.” Mostly that word, poimainein, is translated “shepherd,” and brings to mind the imagery of a shepherd lovingly taking care of a flock of sheep. Psalm 23:1 could read, “the Lord is my Pastor.”

All of these words are interchangeably used to refer to the same position in the New Testament. Interestingly, the word for minister comes from the word from which we get our word deacon. It refers to many types of “servants” in the New Testament.

Paul used those 3 words together in Acts 20 and Peter used the 3 words together in I Peter 5:1-2.

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words.

“From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the _____ of the church.” (Acts 20:17)

“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you _____, to _____ the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28)

“The _____ who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow _____ and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: _____ the flock of God which is among you, serving as _____, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;” (I Peter 5:1-2)

It is very interesting what Peter says in I Peter 5:4. It could be translated like this: “and when the chief Pastor appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away!” As a Pastor that gives me goosebumps to think about! If it does you as well, you’ve got the desire!

When we get to Titus chapter one we will see that the New Testament churches always had more than one Pastor/Elder/Overseer serving together at the same time, and that our churches must also.

But for now I want to go right into looking at the character of these men. I want you to think of yourself and your character when you see these words. I am going to put these statements in question form for you to use as you close out this time in prayer.

Am I blameless?

What Paul has in mind is unpacked in the following statements!

Am I a “one woman man?”

This is the literal Greek wording here. The MacArthur Study Bible notes on this section explain well why this does not necessarily prohibit all divorced men from serving. Interestingly, BH Carroll, the great Pastor and founder of Southwestern Baptist Seminary, had a failed marriage before he became a Christian. The main focus here is that since believing the man has an exemplary marriage and is a “one-woman man.”

Am I temperate?

Free from overindulgence in any area

Am I sober-minded?

Realizing the importance and seriousness of life

Am I of good behavior?

Being well-mannered is an important part of this

Am I hospitable?

Do I open my home to others?

Am I able to teach?

The main distinction between a pastor and a deacon

Am I not addicted to wine?

The downfall of many a man

Am I not violent?

We must be approachable and not always blowing up in anger

Am I not greedy for money?

We must be free from the love of money

Am I gentle?

There will be much nurturing to do

Am I not quarrelsome?

If you love to debate join a debate club, that's not how we operate!

Am I not covetous?

God will supply our true needs, we shouldn't be trying to keep up with the Jones'

Do I rule my own household well?

Remember men, we're pastors at home first

Are my children in submission with reverence?

No guilt trips here, don't put your kids under a microscope- the main thing is that during their formative years they were basically good kids and it's evident to others you tried to do your job

Am I not a novice?

Relatively new believers should be allowed time to grow, not thrown into the unquenchable fire of torment the ministry can become if you are ill-prepared

Do I have a good testimony with those outside the church? *Outsiders will never be insiders if insiders don't display a compelling reason to go from being outside to inside!*

If you are anything like me that list is awfully humbling!

Who of us could get an A + grade on everything on that list?

We are what we are by the grace of God! If these traits are rising to the surface in our lives, it is evidence that God is doing a great work in us, and that the Holy Spirit may be preparing us to be a shepherd of God's people. Over time that will be confirmed by a local church. It's always worth making sure that it is God's will and that it is God's perfect timing. Don't rush it! Just be faithful now, when you don't have to be! It is very sobering to see that in both verses 14 and 15 the Devil is mentioned and that he is looking to snare and condemn preacher boys. Stay out of his traps!

Day 7- Read I Timothy 3:8-13 Memorize 3:13

It is generally accepted that Acts Chapter 6 is where the first deacons were formed. Read Acts 6: 1-7 now and answer these questions.

1. From verse 1 write the problem the church was having:

2. From verse 2 write how this problem was affecting the twelve apostles/ elders:

3. From verse 4 write what the priorities of the apostle/ elders were to be:

4. From verse 3 what were the qualifications the people were to look for in selecting these first “deacons?”

5. From verse 3 what were the men to do?

6. From verse 7 what was the result when these “deacons” began meeting the physical needs and the apostles had more time for prayer and the Word?

Answers:

1. Ministering to the needs of some of their widows
2. Their time studying God’s word to teach the people was suffering.
3. Their priority was feeding the people spiritually with the Word and wise leadership
4. Men of good reputation, Spirit-filled men, wise men
5. Meet the physical needs of the widows, allowing the apostles time study and teach
6. More and more people were becoming disciples

Now it’s important we understand why God brought deacons into being in the first place. Back in I Timothy 3, we see only one real difference between the things requested of elders and deacons. Verse 2 tells us that elders are to be “able to teach.” That requirement does not appear under deacons. Acts 6 showed that deacons needed to be created so that the apostle/ elders would not be distracted from prayer and the ministry of the Word.

Deacons are set apart by the church to help meet physical needs so the pastor/elders can have more time to prayerfully lead and feed the people spiritually. Of course there are times when Pastors meet physical needs of people. But the church must be educated to the importance of the apostles statement in Acts 6:2- it is not desirable for the teaching pastor to neglect his most important assignments, namely prayerfully studying God’s Word to teach and lead the people he is part of shepherding with the other elders.

At the same time, we should note the importance of deacons themselves being godly men, examples to the flock, who themselves sometimes are gifted teachers. Stephen gave a rousing sermon in Acts 7, which was one thing God used in the Apostle Paul’s

conversion, and he was the church's first martyr. Philip was used of God to evangelize and baptize the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8. They are set aside by the church to make sure physical needs are met, but often wind up speaking to people about their spiritual needs as well, perfectly complementing the role of the pastor/elders. These considerations make it of paramount importance that the qualities looked for in I Timothy 3:8-13 be exhibited.

Write Verse 13 here to underscore the spiritual benefit to those serving as deacons:

As you pray today, thank God that He has made provision for both spiritual needs and physical needs to be met by the church!

Day 8- Read I Timothy 3:14-16 Memorize 3:16

Paul states in verse 15 his reason for writing the entire book of I Timothy. Fill in the blanks below:

I write so that you may _____ how you ought to _____
yourself in the _____ of God, which is the church of the _____
God, the _____ and ground of the _____.

The church is God's house. Not the Pastor's, not the Deacons, not a very influential members. The church is to be thought of first as God's house, not ours!

When we go into someone else's house, we are to respect the rules of the house. We would do well to remember that Paul's express reason for writing I Timothy was so that people would know how to act in God's house.

It is worth the time to look at a few applicable Old Testament verses speaking about reverence in God's house by people and ministers alike.

Draw a line from the 'address' on the left with the verse on the right:

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Leviticus 10:3 | “Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil” |
| Ecclesiastes 5:1 | “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go into the house of the Lord.’” |
| Psalms 122:1 | “By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified” |
| Isaiah 56:7 | “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations” |

It is very significant that immediately after talking about the church of the Living God, he says the church is the pillar and ground of truth.

He is of course speaking of biblical truth, and immediately follows it with what was probably a song in the early church!

Note how this early song is saturated with Biblical truth:

God was manifested in the flesh - Affirms Jesus as the eternal God and his incarnation, his being 100% God and 100% man (See Philippians 2)

Justified in the Spirit - Affirms that at His baptism the Father stated how pleased he was with His son, and the unity between Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Triune God (See Matthew 3)

Seen by angels - Affirms the death & resurrection of Jesus, when an angel rolled away the stone at the tomb (See Matthew 28)

Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world - Affirms God's plan to bless the preaching of Jesus with worldwide church expansion (See Acts 2, Acts 11:18, Galatians 3:28)

Received up into glory - Affirms His return to Heaven to make a place for us, from where He will return! (See John 14, Acts 1)

“Now it came to pass, that while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into Heaven, and they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.”

-Luke 24:51-52

May the Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs that we sing ever be grounded in such strong affirmations of biblical truth!

As you pray today, ask God to give you a heart for the public worship of the church. Ask Him to help your church make worship as special as it was to the early church, one glad heart at a time!

Day 9- Read I Timothy 4:1-10 Memorize 4:6

The only hope that one Christian has for unity with another is if both adhere to the authority of the Scriptures over our beliefs and our behaviors. Look up I John 1:7 and write it here:

And of course the Psalmist tells us that God's Word is a "lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." When I walk in the light of God's Word and my Christian neighbor does also, we have a common basis for our beliefs and our behaviors. Some things of course are less clear than others in the Bible, and on some doctrines divergence of interpretations are inevitable. But the apostle Paul made clear that preachers like you and me are to have as our authority the word of God.

I believe that's what Paul is getting at when he says that in latter times some will depart from the faith. He means that there will be those who don't lead their hearers to objective, true, Biblical faith but away from it to subjective, extra-biblical teachings added by men and women.

Paul's words are as relevant today as when he wrote them. Consider these examples based on verses 1-3.

Some of our Pentecostal friends label every vice as directed by such things as a "spirit of obesity" or a "spirit of adultery." Others have developed elaborate teachings on the demonic world, often in language that reveals a big imagination but little scriptural support. Most of us have had someone tell us "God told me to tell you such and such..." One preacher told a nationwide TV audience that Jesus had promised him he would not die before the rapture. He's dead now, but the rapture still has not occurred. Paul said in the last days people would depart from (biblical) faith and teach such things.

He also says that in these last days people will forbid others to marry. I think of the requirement that Roman Catholic priests be celibate, even though as we have already seen in I Timothy 3:2, biblical faith makes no such restrictions of its overseers.

The requirement to abstain from certain foods reminds me of the 7th Day Adventists who push Old Testament dietary restrictions on their people, explaining away such clear passages as Acts chapter 10 where God makes clear that now such foods are permissible to eat.

But that's what false teachers do! They add legalistic requirements to Biblical faith (and certainly there have been a good number of Baptists who have done this as well!).

Verses 3-5 make some profound points!

Answer this Multiple Choice Question by Circling the Correct Answer:

In verses 3-5 the Bible makes clear:

1. Nothing created by God is bad in and of itself
2. Everything God has made is good and has a right purpose we can be thankful for
3. Believers can discern the right purpose things have through Scripture and prayer
4. All of the above.

You should have circled answer number four. Isn't this Biblical teaching liberating?! It goes well with Ecclesiastes 3, where wise King Solomon told us that there is a time for every purpose under Heaven! The wise pastor will understand this and look for the right purpose and use of what God has made, not try to be like the Pharisee and add extra-biblical requirements to weary believers.

I love the word of commendation in verse 6 Paul gives to his young ministers who stick to living and preaching Biblical faith! They will be nourished and grow with the very words they use to help others grow. Verse 7 let's us know that they don't get caught up in those silly arguments that the legalists do: they stick to teaching things that will help people grow! I can not stress enough how important this is. So many pastors are wasting their time dealing with things that don't really matter. Effective ministers exercise themselves in what promotes godliness, not what promotes foolish arguments!

Summarize in your own words verse 8:

Verse 10 is a great way to end this passage. Paul in essence says "we labor and suffer for what really matters: the life-giving gospel." Jesus is *potentially* the Savior of all men (because of his death for sinners), but *especially and only for* those who believe (as clearly taught everywhere in the New Testament). Paul knew that when pastors got too distracted by concentrating on the foolish words of false teachers, it would take up valuable time that God wanted spent on making disciples. May we hear Paul loud and clear in our day, and may the gospel abound!

Pray today, brother, pray, that you will stay on track and not waste gospel labor on foolish disputes!

Day 10- Read I Timothy 4:11-5:2 Memorize 4:12

Immediately in these verses Paul brings up the authority that pastors have as they teach God's words. Just as God did not give Moses the 10 Suggestions, but the 10 Commandments to bring the people, when pastors impart God's word to people they do it with authority. In our day authority has been so abused that we shrink back from viewing ourselves as authorities. We just know that someone is going to stand up as we speak and yell, "who do you think you are?" That's why 2 things are so important as we proclaim God's authoritative word to people.

First, as we spoke of yesterday, what we command and teach must be objective biblical truth that God wants to see appropriated in people's lives, not one of the subjective extras that we get caught up in. Perhaps an example will help: We do well to proclaim with authority to our congregations the necessity of people studying God's word. We abuse authority when we insist that everyone not using the King James translation is a compromiser of God's truth. The Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, not Middle English. Anyone with cursory knowledge of the original languages knows that each English translation has its strengths and weaknesses, and times that it more accurately renders the force of the original languages. We need to be careful as ministers of the Word that we let God's Word be the authority, not our preferences!

Secondly, we must make sure that we ourselves are under the authority we proclaim to others. For the Christian the Word of God is the authority, and pastors and people alike are under it's authority. We command and teach to others what we are doing our best to follow and obey ourselves.

Here's how Adrian Rogers put it: "You'll never be over what God wants you to be over until you're under what God wants you to be under."

Pastors must be examples of the very things they would have others obey.

This is made very clear in verse 12. In the left column below are the traits pastors are to be examples of. Write in the letter of the correct definition of that trait as listed on the right.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| ___ 1. Word | A. The yearning of soul toward something desirable to you |
| ___ 2. Conduct | B. Freedom from dirt |
| ___ 3. Love | C. Creative, animating power & divine influence of God |
| ___ 4. Spirit | D. Biblically formed viewpoints |
| ___ 5. Faith | E. The things you do |
| ___ 6. Purity | F. Really believing God can do anything |

1=D 2=E 3=A 4=C 5=F 6=B

Brother, in God's kingdom it doesn't matter how young or old you are. If God has done a great work in your life and brought you to spiritual maturity, you are to be an example to the flock! Sometimes young ministers are afraid to exert influence because they feel looked down upon. Young ministers do have a lot to learn, but if they are spiritually mature they have a lot to offer, most of all the truths they have learned in time spent in God's Word. **Your walk with Christ will always be your best answer to your critics!**

Again in verse 13 we see Paul anchoring this appeal to the young minister by encouraging him to emphasize the reading of the scriptures, the preaching of the scriptures, and the teaching of the scripture's doctrinal truths. There is no excuse for a preacher not laboring hard in getting Bible truth into believers' heads and hearts and lives.

Verse 14 makes me think of the day that Timothy met with the elders and they ordained him into the gospel ministry. No doubt someone blurted out, "God's going to use you, Timothy!" Paul here reminds Timothy that men of God saw enough in him to set him apart for the ministry, and prayed with their hands on him for God to use him. I have goosebumps even now as I think of my own ordination and the times men of God have exhorted me to make a difference for the God of the Bible!

Just like Timothy in verse 15, you and I need to continually:

- meditate on these things
- give ourselves to the truth of these things
- have demonstrated progress in these things

In verse 16 he makes clear that eternity is at stake on God's called-out pastors and elders taking heed to these things! It's a matter of our own salvation being real and God using us to see others saved as well! This is life and death stuff, don't approach it casually!

Now its very important that we see how Paul ends this section. A new chapter should not start, but chapter 5, verses 1 & 2 should go with our section for today.

Why? Because in 4:12 Paul in essence says, "Timothy, as a minister, don't let anyone look down on you." In 5:1-2 he in essence says, "Timothy, as a minister, don't you look down on anyone either!" When the church has this kind of mutual submission and respect, God can do great things! So Timothy is to appeal to older men as if they were his own father, younger men as if they were his brothers, older women like they were his mother, and younger women like they were his sisters!

As you pray today, ask God to make you a loving shepherd of the flock He has or will entrust to your care! Don't forget to stir up the gift He has placed within you, that burning desire to present his truth to help grow His sheep!

Day 11- Read I Timothy 5:3-16 Memorize 5:8

James 1:27 tells us: “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.” In Acts chapter 6 deacons came into being to make sure the church in Jerusalem didn’t slight deserving widows of needed attention. It appears clear from that evidence and from I Timothy 5 that all churches are supposed to minister to widows in their midst.

In our passage Paul gives the most complete criteria in the scriptures on which widows should be put on the official church watch list of widows.

What I appreciate so much about this part of God’s word is that it really confronts our notion that everyone needs to be treated equally or the church just isn’t being fair. It is so easy to get spread thin in church ministry trying to meet everyone’s needs the same. That usually means that we do a sub-par job looking after everyone (including our own families) and don’t take care of the “real widows” Paul had great desire to see cared for. But even as we look into these things, be careful minister: people in today’s churches don’t like their notion of fairness being questioned, *even where the Bible is clear.*

Perhaps the best application of these things is to be absolutely sure before God, whoever else you minister to, that you lead your church to take special care of the ones Paul calls “real widows.”

Let’s spend the rest of our time today looking at Paul’s criteria for a widow to be on the official church widow list.

In the blank beside each statement below, write either DO PUT ON LIST, or DON’T PUT ON LIST!

V. 4 A Widow who has kids or grandkids who could take care of her: _____

V. 5 A Widow without family who trusts God and really prays: _____

V. 6 A Widow who lives for personal pleasure: _____

V. 9 A Widow under 60 years old: _____

V. 9 A Widow who was a “one man woman” (literal Greek): _____

V. 10 A Widow who is known for good deeds: _____

V. 10 A Widow who raised her children right: _____

V. 10 A Widow who was hospitable to strangers: _____

V. 10 A Widow who served the saints: _____

V. 10 A Widow who relieved the afflicted: _____

V. 11 Younger widows who may yearn for remarriage: _____

Paul obviously wants Paul to take care of the ones who have nowhere else to turn who have been faithful to Jesus and ministering to others for years! What incredible wisdom is here!

I feel compelled to say it again: whoever else you take care of, take special care of the godly widows who have nowhere else to turn! I think Paul would readily add that we are to take care of those women who meet the criteria whose family could care for them but refuse to care for them as they should.

But whoa to the man who doesn't obey Paul's stern instructions here to take care of his own family. He says it clear first in verse 4, then in verse 8, and again in verse 16. He means it!

We must in love share verse 8 with those we preach to! To not care for our dear elderly is to deny the faith and to act worse than an unbeliever. And so many in America have not honored but dishonored their elderly relatives.

Oh the times I have felt so frustrated as a Pastor hearing that someone was upset with me for not visiting their mom in a nursing home, knowing full well that their mom was healthy enough for them to bring to church every Sunday but they wouldn't because of their personal inconvenience. God help America if we don't repent and practice pure religion again!

Do not misinterpret Paul's words in verses 11-16 to be extra hard on younger widows. He has two concerns spoken of elsewhere in scripture also. First, he knows that when you are young enough to work but don't have to there is a great danger of being idle and getting into lots of trouble. That's why elsewhere he says "if a man won't work, don't let him eat." His second concern is that if male deacons spend time visiting young female widows, all kinds of inappropriate things could happen. In Titus he is going to instruct older women to teach younger women one on one instead of young pastors spending time with young women one on one. Unfortunately much church history has shown the validity of Paul's concern.

Oh man of God, as you pray today, commit to live and minister in the light of God's Word!

Day 12- Read I Timothy 5:17-25 Memorize 5:17

In I Timothy 3:1 we had read of the position of bishop, or overseer, in the church. As we demonstrated on the devotional entry for day 6, the words for bishop and elder and pastor are used interchangeably: they all refer to the same person. In chapter 3 Paul dealt with the qualifications such men are to have. In our passage for today, Paul returns to the subject and says more about how a church is to treat its leaders.

In verse 17, what does he say the elders who rule well are worthy of?

This is such an important concept for churches. In general most people really appreciate their pastors and let them know that they do. But in every church there are what Marshall Shelley called “well intentioned dragons” who drain the pastors joy in ministry. They think they are called of God to be the Pastor’s other Holy Spirit. Every church has them, and every pastor has a few that cause them a lot of frustration.

It is so important for godly people in the church to know that dragons exist and to be on a mission to encourage their pastor/ elders. If a pastor only hears from the dragons (*and pastors often hear from the dragons*) he will get very discouraged! Make it a goal to be a lifelong encourager of leaders in your church.

It is also important to point out again that Biblical leadership is shared leadership. The early churches had not just one Pastor/ Elder but multiple pastor/elders working together to lead the church. They were godly men who together served as “keepers of the vision” for the church.

The second part of verse 17 tells us to especially honor those who labor in the word and doctrine. Then in verse 18 it quotes Deuteronomy 25:4 about not muzzling the ox while it treads out the grain, and Luke 10:7 where Jesus said “the laborer is worthy of his wages.”

The point is worth noting. The elders of a church will include those who have a full-time job elsewhere and still find time to provide spiritual leadership to the church. But there is also a place for a church to provide for all of the financial needs of one or more pastor/elders so they can labor full-time in studying to preach and teach God’s Word!

An Ox can’t devote himself to the task of treading out of the grain when he’s muzzled, and there will be less food for the people as a result. If the pastor is “muzzled” and has to spend valuable study time on other things, less spiritual food for his people will be the result. This is why churches historically have called it the Pastor’s Study instead of the Pastor’s Office.

In verse 19 how many witnesses does it take to receive an accusation against an elder?

_____ or _____

Paul is so practical! He knew that dragons would arise who would make hurtful accusations against the leaders of the church. Paul makes clear that an accusation has no merit unless 2 or 3 people are witnesses. Paul knew that most dragons act alone!

In verse 20 he tells us to rebuke openly those who are sinning so that the rest will fear, or take sin seriously themselves. This statement can be taken 2 ways, both appropriate. If an elder is found to have sinned, open rebuke is needed so the people understand leadership requires greater accountability. The verse could also mean that public rebuke is needed toward those dragons who make charges alone, so the rest will know that gossip and slander will not be tolerated in God's house.

Again in verses 21-22 Paul charges Timothy and us to realize how serious it is that we conduct things rightly in God's house. Verse 22 speaks about ordaining new people into the position of elders and deacons, something that is not to happen too hastily. No one should be made a leader in the church without first demonstrating spiritual maturity and responsibility. To contribute in putting a person into leadership who should not have been there is to contribute to whatever sinful results follow.

TAKE THE NECESSARY TIME TO EXAMINE PEOPLE BEFORE MAKING THEM LEADERS IN GOD'S HOUSE!

In verse 23 Paul tells Timothy to take care of himself! That's a good word for leaders in churches! We are often so busy taking care of others that we neglect our own bodies. Let's take care of our bodies!

This verse should not be used as an argument for social drinking. In chapter 4:4-5 Paul had told us that everything has a good purpose. There are times a doctor will prescribe drugs or an alcoholic beverages in a medicinal way, as Paul does here. This does not give tacit approval to the drinking of alcoholic beverages as a recreational past-time! A good verse for church leaders to meditate on is Proverbs 31:4, which says "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, It is not for kings, to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink." I have decided in my own life that if regular consumption is not for kings, its not for Pastor Danny either.

Recently a worldwide long term study of alcohol use was completed by researchers. It concluded that there is "no safe amount" of alcohol consumption. Each drink raises the probability of having medical troubles. With each additional drink the percentage of risk intensifies. "What about all that I have heard about how a glass of red wine helps people, Pastor Danny?" I'm glad you asked! The researchers concluded that the same benefit can be had by drinking non-alcoholic juice, with none of the pitfalls!

Verses 24-25 are a good reminder to let God be the ultimate Judge. Things are not always what they appear. Some sins are evident, but others are hidden. It is not uncommon for someone to serve as a pastor or deacon, and then out of the blue we hear of a secret sin that has destroyed their current witness for the gospel and their leadership in the church of the living God. Eventually God will bring everything into the light.

Pray, brothers, for your own life and witness. We all sin and fall short of the glory of God. We are only going to Heaven because of the work of Christ on the cross. Now that we have become His, don't neglect your time with God, as John 15:5 says, your time abiding in Christ. That's what will produce the fruit.

And Be F.A.A.A.T. disciples:

Faithful.

Available.

Approachable.

Accountable.

Teachable.

We need time with God and each other to make it home before dark!

Day 13- Read I Timothy 6:1-8 Memorize 6:6

The number of slaves in the Roman Empire was somewhere between 20 % and 50 % of the population. Galatians 3:28 tells us that in Christ Jesus there is neither slave nor free, but all are one in Christ Jesus. It was probably not uncommon, then, in the churches of the New Testament to have a saved slave and his saved owner taking communion side by side during a time of worship! Think of the issues that must have arose at “work” and at church!

I believe that you can make a compelling argument that scripture puts such a regulation on slavery that one day, if scripture was followed, slavery would cease to exist, at least as it did among the pagans.

Elsewhere Paul appealed to Philemon for the release of their Christian brother Onesimus. Even in our modern history, though unfortunately many Christians supported slavery, it was Christian’s like William Wilberforce who eventually rallied support for ending it in the British Empire.

I think it is very important for our purposes to apply Paul’s words in verses 1 and 2 to slavery and to working for someone in general. And so in verse one he connects counting masters as worthy of honor with not blaspheming God’s name and doctrine.

What is up with that? It all comes down to recognizing God given authority. God is our ultimate master and authority, and gives us human authorities, however tainted, so the world will have some level of order to it. If indeed 50 % of the population in the Roman Empire were slaves, it would have been thrown into economic chaos by Paul advocating an immediate end to slavery (although I think that is what he in his heart wanted as seen in the book of Philemon).

As believing slaves honored their Heavenly Father and their earthly master, those same masters (especially the believers) would be swayed to do willingly and lovingly what they would be furious about doing by compulsion: set the slaves free. Many a Christian employee has found applying these words in their work situation very liberating. As they have gone from scorning their boss to honoring them, they have seen both their own disposition and their bosses changed!

Paul’s words were right, because they were really God’s words through Paul. So in verse 2 he says teach and exhort these things (the doctrine of authority).

In verse 3 he tells us what this doctrine will accord with.

Write it here: _____

The doctrine will accord with godliness

In verse 3-5 he says to withdraw from those who teach otherwise, and in pride lead people to disputes, arguments, envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, and useless wranglings, false teachers with corrupt minds and truth challenged lives.

It says that such teachers will suppose that godliness is a means of gain. I have to say that in our day there are those who call themselves Liberation theologians, who often use the Bible to support their angry rhetoric against all kinds of different institutions, be they governmental or “big business” or religious institutions. Rarely do these teachers or their followers reflect the fruit the Bible tells us will be in the lives of true disciples, even though some of them are called “reverend!”

Let me be clear: there is a place for churches and Pastors to speak Biblical truth to every area of life. But even when we are forced to speak the truth in love against an institution, we honor the authority structure that ultimately comes from God, even when He leads us to civil disobedience against that institution. David honored King Saul even when King Saul acted contemptuously against him, because he was the God given authority for that time.

The test is the fruit: Many liberation theologians, in the quest for greater rights (often fighting for a worthy cause) have never produced disciples as the Bible knows them.

Men like Chuck Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship, have improved prison conditions and seen many people become born-again Christians at the same time. Such is the Bible’s way!

Verses 6-8 are a beautiful description of the great gain that comes from godliness with contentment. Jesus questioned, “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world but forfeit his soul?”

Remember Adrian Rogers quote: “you’ll never be over what God wants you over until you’re under what God wants you under.”

The best Biblical example of this honor and contentment is Joseph, who in God’s sovereignty went from being a slave in Potiphar’s house to being Governor over all of Pharaoh’s house!

Brothers, as you pray today, commit to honor God, and to honoring the authority structure He has put you under, and to encourage your people to do the same!

Day 14- Read I Timothy 6:9-21 Memorize 6:10

A wise English minister used to pass along the following advice to his disciples: “Men, in the ministry, there are 3 things you are never to touch: don’t touch the glory, don’t touch the girls, and don’t touch the gold.”

Our passage for today is a clear warning for ministers and other Christians to avoid the pitfalls that can come with a wrong emphasis on money.

Fill in the blanks in verses 9-10 here:

But those who _____ to be rich fall into _____ and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful _____ which drown men in _____ and perdition. For the _____ of money is a root of all kinds of _____, for which some have strayed from the faith in their _____, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Perdition means future misery in Hell. Paul says here some words that ministers must receive very seriously. Many ministers today want to serve God AND money. They view themselves as professionals and reject calls to churches that may be of God because the salary and benefits package doesn’t match their expectations.

There were people in a previous church that were surprised that I had indicated strong interest in coming as Youth Pastor before ever knowing the details of the “package.” We knew God had called us there, and we knew that “where God guides, He provides.” Our eyes were on Jesus, not on a “benefit package.”

Please note though that it’s not money that is the root of evil, but the “love” of money that is the root of all kinds of evil! Money itself is a-moral. It can be used to advance Christ’s Kingdom, but it can also be misused to one’s own downfall, just as pride and lust for the opposite sex can.

Paul is here providing balance to his argument in chapter 5 that the worker is worthy of his wages. Indeed, it is right for a church to provide for the needs of it’s ministers. But shame on the minister that will be lured from one church to another based on the expectations of receiving more money. Such things are not to be the focus of the minister!

To make sure this point settles in, let’s put some words side by side. In the left column below is the words you used to fill in the blanks above. In the right column below fill in the things Paul tells Timothy to pursue as a man of God in verse 11.

V. 9-10
Desire
Temptation
Lusts
Destruction
Evil
Greediness

V. 11
R _____
G _____
F _____
L _____
P _____
G _____

In verses 17-19 Paul shows why it is so important that the minister is the right kind of example in money matters and pursuing not money but God: If he doesn't accept this commandment (v. 14), he won't be able to command the rich to obey it (v.17).

Just as verse 12 says the minister will “lay hold on eternal life” by using his money to serve God, verse 19 says rich Christians will “lay hold on eternal life” by using their money to serve God.

It would be foolish to interpret these verses in a way that said either group, ministers or rich Christians, were saved by the “work” of using their money for God.

For Timothy in verse 12, this “stewardship” of money would show that his professed faith in Christ was genuinely more important than this world's riches. For the rich Christian in verse 17, this “stewardship” would show that his trust was indeed in Christ and not all the money he had made.

It is just as important for all Christians to show their faith by good stewardship today. Let it start with you, O man of God!

As you go through the Bible, remember to build a file in your mind of the wonderful things it says about Jesus! Paul had a way in the middle of writing of bursting out in praise for who Jesus is, as he does in verse 15! May we too burst out in spontaneous praise to Jesus. Remember that He is:

The Blessed and Only Potentate (dynastes-“dynasty”)
King of Kings
Lord of Lords

The words in verse 16 eloquently share how great Jesus is, and the point is that He is in absolute control and can be trusted by His followers to meet every need they have. Every time he has been “seen” it has been on his terms, but when He is in the “unapproachable” light of his Heavenly dwelling, no man can see Him for the radiance!

The last verses of I Timothy bring us full circle back to chapter 1. Timothy, “Guard these teachings, you have a sacred trust invested in you.” Chapter 1, verse 6 had spoken of those who speak idle words, 6:20 speaks of those who use idle words. Such people think they are wise, but are only straying from the truth. Minimize their impact, Timothy, by speaking the truth that edifies!

To make clear this word was not just for Timothy, but for the church he was serving, and for all of us 2,000 years later, Paul ends by saying “Grace be to you ALL.” In the Greek the ending is plural. 2,000 years later we are to continue to guard the sacred teachings, one minister, one church at a time!

As you pray today, Thank God for the sacred trust of the holy writings. Ask Him to help you be the kind of steward for Jesus you are supposed to be as you wait for His glorious return!

Day 15- Read Titus 1:1-9 Memorize 1:5

I am putting Titus before 2 Timothy in our study because 2 Timothy is the last letter Paul wrote. Just like Timothy, Titus looked to Paul as his spiritual father. In turn, Paul trusted Titus, as Timothy, with very important church growth assignments. We are not told of Titus in the book of Acts, but his name appears 13 times in Paul’s letters. It is clear that elsewhere Titus had served as an apostolic delegate for Paul in the city of Corinth (see 2 Corinthians 8:16-24).

The purpose of Paul’s letter to Titus is clearly stated in verse 5. Write it here:

In I Timothy we looked in detail at the traits of elders, so let’s have some fun here! Circle the traits of an elder as you find them in the word search below: (Use the list below for the words to search for!)

W H A D L B L A M E L E S S O P J Q N H
R T H O L D S T O B I B L E N U N Y O O
M H A U D A S O E W C R U N S I S S T L
N O I N S U B O R D I N A T I O N E G Y
O S F T T B A C B H M U R O C H J L I A
T P E S E E A S I E S S L L O R M F V M
V I A L W L Y N U D R I M F D O D C E A
I T I W A H N O D I S S I P A T I O N N
O A D O R E E X H O R T E R O M H N T R
L B M N D O S L Y T F D I H Z I A T O A
E L X L O V E R O F G O O D L A T R W I
N E E B F T T E E R T A N P A I L O I S
T N O T G R E E D Y O S A E M T S L N E
Y A P Y O S I N O T S E L F W I L L E D
S O U N D D O C T R I N E R Y I W E I Y
N L O V E E T Y H E A O R L L P F D A I
O U D F A I T H F U L C H I L D R E N G
B E L I E V E T H E B I B L E C O D E S
N O T Q U I C K T E M P E R E D G H O P

A man
Faithful children
Steward of God
Not given to wine
Hospitable
Just
Holds to Bible

Blameless
No dissipation
Not self willed
Not violent
Lover of good
Holy
Sound Doctrine

Husband of one wife
No insubordination
Not quick tempered
Not greedy
Sober
Self-controlled
Exhorter

Paul takes so much time on leadership in these letters to Timothy and Titus because of the vital importance of churches getting leadership right. Someone has said, “everything rises and falls on leadership.” If churches are going to be everything they are supposed to be, they must take seriously the scriptures command to only have leaders who are faithful men of God.

We should note that Paul follows the pattern here he had in the book of Acts. He wants multiple elder pastors in each church to share the leadership of the church. This is exactly what he had done in Acts 14:21-23. Take a moment and look those verses up. Young minister, you were meant to pastor as part of a team of pastor/elders. Don't let a church burn you out by expecting you to provide all of the pastoral insight and leadership alone. The apostles led the church in Jerusalem as a team, eventually passing the leadership off to the elders. The churches Paul planted also had leadership teams of elders. Here Paul calls for Titus to set in order what is lacking by appointing a team of elders in each church. You should call your church to study the scriptures and move toward a team of leaders. There are many fine books on the subject to help your church move the right direction.

Some have wondered why Paul addresses deacon qualifications with Timothy but not Titus. My best guess is that Timothy was helping the churches in the area of Ephesus that already had elders and deacons, but needed some guidance. In addressing Titus, the churches in Crete didn't have either established yet. So Paul instructs Titus to get the main thing right first- getting the right people in leadership positions as elders. As time passed the churches would raise up deacons to assist the elders when they needed to, as the church in Jerusalem had in Acts 6.

Before we close today, let's not miss a look at a few of the great statements in the first 3 verses.

It is noteworthy that Paul did not hesitate to speak of himself as a slave of God. A prerequisite for being a church leader should be this same attitude: God owns me and I am here to do what He wants, period! Paul also shows his confidence that his ministry would result in those elected by God coming to faith. He knew that those who were truly God's would be drawn toward living by truth that would demonstrate itself in godly living. We should have this same confidence in God today. Salvation begins and ends with Him. Our call is to be faithful at preaching the gospel to people, because as verse 3 demonstrates, preaching is the instrument God most often uses to manifest His Word! What an awesome job we have!

Today as you pray thank God for buying you on the auction block of grace, and for putting you into service as a preacher of the truth. Pray that your church will respond to the call to have Biblical leadership in place. If it does, pray for God to protect and encourage the leaders you have!

Day 16- Read Titus 1:10-16 Memorize 1:16

Yesterday we saw Paul commanding Titus to appoint godly elders in each church on the island of Crete. Today we see why this is so urgent! Paul makes clear that if we don't diligently get the right kind of leaders in place, the wrong kind of leaders will quickly take over and ruin the church.

He immediately mentions that many are insubordinate. Look up that word in the dictionary and write the definition here:

I once read "Treasure Island" to my children. It details how Long John Silver and his band of scallywags pretended to be an obedient crew under the authority of the ship's captain, only to reach Treasure Island and mount a mutiny that led to lost life and much heartache. **Paul here says that that is what an insubordinate person is like. Eventually they will try to overthrow the authority that God has put in place.**

The scriptures are full of such traitorous actions. Satan's rebellion against God. Korah's rebellion against Moses. Absalom's rebellion against David. Judas' rebellion against Jesus. The Judaizer's rebellion against apostolic doctrine.

The toll to put down these rebellions is always great. That is why Paul is so zealous for a godly and watchful leadership to be in place. Make no mistake about it: churches will have to deal with such things many times in their existence. You may doubt that, now, young minister, but you will learn. Turn over to Acts 20 and read verses 17-38, especially verses 28-31.

Paul did not call for godly leadership so that mutinies would not come, but so the church would be ready when they came.

I love verse 15! Jesus had said in the sermon on the mount, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." Pure ministers of God don't go looking for a battle anywhere they can find it. But they are willing to rebuke sharply when defiled wolves try to distract the sheep with things that don't really matter. We know that our purity is not so much because of our being faithful and just, but as I John 1:9 says we are forgiven of our sins and cleansed from all unrighteousness when we confess our sins to Jesus who is faithful and just. In a nutshell, we are pure because we believe in Jesus and everything we do is Christ focused.

Isn't it interesting that Paul charges that these ones who are insubordinate are defiled AND unbelieving. They are in your church, but they really don't believe in Jesus and demonstrate their faith by living Christ focused lives. So they are always looking out for themselves and their interests in interactions with others in the church, not the interests of Christ.

Lest you think I am missing the point here, write the verse that comes next here, verse 16:

Remember, we are not talking about people outside the church here. We are talking about people that profess Christ and try to become church leaders. In many churches they have become key leaders. Paul says that when it comes down to bearing Biblical fruit, it is just not present in their lives. In other words, the way they live denies what they say they believe with their mouth.

Paul makes a startling declaration in verse 16 about such people. Just as God had declared in Leviticus that some gross sexual sins were an abomination before the Lord, these insubordinate "Long John Silvers" in the church are abominable in God's eyes. Despite their profession, they are disqualified from the "good work" of Biblical church leadership.

Can you feel the stunning implications of this for so many of our churches today? Often a person becomes a leader because of secular qualifications for a task instead of a Christ-like walk that is an example to others. As you pray today, ask God for the courage to work toward Biblical leadership reform in your church!

Day 17- Read Titus 2:1-8 Memorize 2:1

Having established how critical it is for the churches to have godly leadership, Paul turns now to giving Titus critical advice that will guard Titus’s ministry. In our day the neglecting of what Paul says here has given Satan a foothold that has destroyed many young ministers. Listen to Paul, man of God.

In the verses for today, Paul shares 4 different kinds of people who need sound doctrine spoken to them in close interaction with the “minister.” They are:

1. Older Men
2. Older Women
3. Younger Women
4. Younger Men

It is of critical importance that we see Paul instructing Titus to spend extra time teaching and admonishing the older men and women and the younger men, but not the younger women. Note in verses 3 and 4 that it is the older women’s responsibility to admonish and teach the younger women. Paul was not an out of date old legalistic as some have suggested about him. He simply knew the birds and the bees, and that the only young woman a young minister was to spend extra time with was his own wife. There are few things sadder in the life of the church than when a Pastor is discovered to be having an affair with a woman in the church. We hear of it happening all the time. Many non-Christians cynically think all that the Pastor wants is your money and your wife. Oh the price we pay for dismissing scripture’s teaching.

Over the years some have grumbled in the church about me following this teaching closely, but I don’t care! My wife has grown in her appreciation of why I do this, and feels a little more secure when she hears the inevitable disclosure of another church pastor running off with a woman in his church. Her good looking man is not giving the Devil a foothold! And she is very good at allowing me to spend as much time with women in the church as I want, as long as they are over the age of 70! Let them grumble, young minister, you do the right thing! And teach the older women to teach the younger women and thus be a good “Titus woman.”

Verses 7-8 are worth you writing down and meditating on. Write them here:

As you pray today, identify a few older men and women and younger men that God may be wanting you to pour a little extra time into!

Day 18- Read Titus 2:9-15 Memorize 2:13

On day 13 we dealt fairly well with Paul's teachings about slavery. Here let's take a bit of another twist on it. Let's apply verses 9-10 to being an employee for a boss in our day. Though employees are not slaves to their bosses, we are told everywhere in scripture that we are to be subject to those in authority over us who lead us, whether in the government, the church, the home or the workplace. Fill in the blanks from those verses:

“Exhort bondservants to be _____ to their own masters, to be well _____ in all things, not _____ back, not _____, but showing all good _____, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.”

The blanks you just filled in are the commands Titus is to give “workers” in relation to their bosses. It is tough being an employee, but it is also very hard to be “the man.” The pressures on leaders are immense. Some, to be sure, let the “power” go to their head and become real “turkeys” to work for. But when the simple things called for in verses 9-10 are done, it really is encouraging to a boss. Think about it:

Bosses need to know what they have asked to be done will be, that's where obedience comes in. Bosses appreciate those who do what they are told to do without complaints and minimal supervision, that's where being well-pleasing comes in. The boss can count on you! Bosses hate being undercut before other employees, that's where not talking back comes in. Bosses need to know you can be trusted, that's where not pilfering comes in. They also need to know you won't “steal” company time by surfing the internet, doing a half-way job, or mediocre work. Bosses need to know you are faithful to the mission of the company and the job that must be done for everyone to get their paycheck. That's where fidelity comes in.

I have coached over a dozen seasons of high school soccer, and those are the same things I need from my players as a coach. The ones who do them are a joy to lead, the others are a pain in the neck. Now I know that some of you now want to again talk about what a “turkey” your boss or coach or pastor is. You can take heart that the Bible probably has as much to say to leaders about servant leadership as it does to workers about humble followership! The point is this: When verses 9 & 10 are followed, many times things get better in the workplace. When they are not, it's almost guaranteed that the workplace will stink.

It is striking to me that Paul says that our doing these things will “adorn” the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. I have a beautiful wife. She looks good before we go to bed, she looks good in the morning, she looks good in the afternoon. I'm getting distracted just thinking about her right now! But when she “adorns” herself with one of her dresses, a little makeup, and some jewelry, I almost shut down completely because all I can think about is her! That is how Paul says our working attitude will make the gospel of salvation appear to onlookers like bosses. They will constantly be

wondering why you are different than the other employees, and they will want to know your God!

Verses 11-15 are just Paul reminding Titus to insist that those who profess Christ show it by living a different lifestyle than those around them do. Back in 1:12 he had affirmed that the people of Crete tend to be overfed, under-worked liars who act on animalistic urges. That's pretty well the depiction of men in America on prime time television today. Paul insists those who name Christ grow up in their faith. I once learned this acronym for GROW UP:

**Godliness
Ruling
Over
Worldliness
Under
Pressure**

He underscores his point in verse 12: "we should live soberly." It's as if Paul is saying: "Cretans act like drunk frat boys all the time, a Christian Cretan should live soberly." The New King James Translation has the word sober 9 times, 3 of which are here in Titus as Paul urges the Christian Cretans and their Elders to be godly men! How many times would he use the word with American Christians?

Verse 15 calls the young minister to speak these things, exhort, rebuke with all authority. The authority we have is knowing Jesus personally and proclaiming what His Bible tells us. What's hard about this for me is that when I have done this, some people have come to despise me. But in the last part of verse 15 Paul says, "Let no one despise you." What?! How can he say let no one despise you when he has just given an assignment that will lead some to despise you?!

It all comes back to what he spoke about in verses 7-8 and in I Timothy 4:12. It is clear that as we speak gospel truth there will be some who will despise what they are hearing. Among other things the gospel's call to die to self will offend many. But we need to make sure that our lives and our speech are exemplary, so it truly is the message they are despising and not the messenger.

But let me say this from experience: as you speak and rebuke with authority, a lot of people will become very unhappy and in lots of ways will take it out on you and even your family. There is no warfare like spiritual warfare. That's why we celebrate verse 13-14: our great God Jesus is coming back to get His own special people who are zealous to do things His way!

As you pray today, commit to abiding in Jesus, that you may bear much fruit and so adorn the gospel of our God!

Day 19- Read Titus 3:1-8 Memorize 3:5

The Apostle Paul must have been from Missouri! Missouri is the “show me” state. Over and over again we learn that Paul was not nearly as interested in people professing faith as possessing faith. He urges people to “show me” their faith by the way they live! So in 1:16 he speaks of those who profess to know God but don’t “show me” their works and thus deny God. In 2:7 he calls for the young minister to “show me” a pattern of good works. And here in chapter 3 he urges followers of Jesus Christ to stop criticizing their leaders and instead be ready to “show me” good works.

This is the tension that we must always hold in our preaching and teaching. The things we do, the “good works,” don’t save us, but if we have been saved “good works” will flow like a river from our lives! Paul is eager for the church to live this balance well! Verse 5 is among the best verses in the Bible about how we are saved by God’s grace, not by works. Write it here:

We are saved by our being born again, or our regeneration. It comes by trusting in Christ’s work on our behalf at Calvary, not through our own works. But those who are saved are called to overflow with good works. Write verse 8 here:

Elsewhere Paul states these truths over and over again. Look up and write down Ephesians 2:8-10 here:

Perhaps Jesus said it best when in John 15:5 he connected the life we have in Christ with the fruit (or good works) we bear: “I am the vine, you are the branches; if you abide in me, you will bear much fruit. Without Me you can do nothing.”

C.S. Lewis also gave a great way of understanding God’s supreme role in the fruit we bear, the good works we do. He asked us to imagine a little boy asking his father for 6 pence so he could get his father a present. The father was delighted with this request. The son bought a gift worth 6 pence and brought it to his father who was delighted by the gift his son had given him. But ultimately the father was “6 pence none the richer.” God doesn’t need our good works so that He can save us! Acts 11:18 says He gives the gift of repentance. Ephesians 2:8 says He gives the gift of faith. John 15:5 says He bears fruit through us when we abide in Him. It all brings great delight to God and us, even though God is “6 pence none the richer.” Another way Jesus said it was: “Freely you received, freely give.”

Affirm these things constantly!

Day 20- Read Titus 3:8-15 Memorize 3:14

One of the great things about the Apostle Paul was how he spells out clearly EXACTLY what he is talking about. Verses 8 and 9 are as good an example of this as you'll find.

Verse 8 says to AFFIRM justification by grace through faith that leads to good works. These teachings will be good and profitable and useful to men.

Verse 9 says to AVOID foolish disputes and contentions and strivings about the law. These teachings will be bad and unprofitable and useless to men.

Any questions?

What great words these are today when there are so many foolish disputes in our churches. Matters of important doctrine must be weighed carefully, and false teachers should be disciplined. But many of the arguments we have are over that which is foolish. Be known for good works, brother, not good arguing skills!

In verses 10 -11 Paul gives a very stern directive. The church is to deal with divisive people in their midst. A divisive person is one who is constantly dividing people by reckless actions and accusations. They are always stirring something up. They are not building up the body but tearing the body down.

So how do you deal with a divisive person? Again, Paul is clear:

Warn them once.

Give them a second warning.

Strike three means they are out- out of the fellowship until they repent.

Verse 11 clarifies why this must be done. Scripture makes it clear that a believer loves his brothers and sisters in Christ and is "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3)." To not do these things is to be warped, sinning, and self-condemned. The church has tried through admonishment to make the person see the incredible responsibility we all have to build up the body, not tear it down. They must be excluded until they understand how to do their part in the body!

Usually churches don't do anything about such divisive people, and over the years frustrations build, and things spill over into some of the church's meetings. Usually the exact opposite of what is supposed to happen here transpires. Others leave the church (many times a Pastor) but the divisive person stays to get ready for the next battle. Oh the heartaches churches experience when they allow carnal people in positions of leadership. There is a better way- and we have seen Paul advocate it in these letters to Timothy and Titus.

Verse 14 is the verse I quote the most from Titus. Write it here:

Professing Christians in America right now are obsessed with having their own needs met. You will probably find more Christian books on having your own needs met than on any other topic. We are a lot like the Cretan Christians. Paul's last command to Titus to relate to the Christians at Crete needs to be heard by the Christians in America as well:

MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS

MEET URGENT NEEDS

WHY?

SO YOU WON'T BE UNFRUITFUL!

As you pray today, ask God to reveal some needs in your church and in your community that He is leading you to meet so you won't be unfruitful!

Day 21- Read II Timothy 1:1-7 Memorize 1:7

This is such a beautiful passage! We see here the love of a grandmother and a mother, and the love of a Savoir and a mentor! We see the faith spanning 3 generations and hear of the sacred trust of a minister's ordination.

Verse 1 starts with Paul's own assurance that he was an apostle by the will of God, and that as a Christian he possessed a promise of life because of his faith in Jesus Christ. No doubt he was thinking of everlasting life as in John 3:16, and in abundant life as in John 10:10. **Every gospel minister should have the assurance of their own salvation and the knowledge that their sins are forgiven through the blood of Christ shed for their redemption.** In Ephesians 1:7 Paul says: "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

As we go through 2 Timothy we will see Paul repeatedly reminding Timothy of these 2 things: his salvation and his call to ministry. I can testify as a Pastor that it is these 2 things that God the Holy Spirit reminds me of when I am really struggling. I believe the Holy Spirit prompted Paul to write 2 Timothy to encourage ministers in all places in all times to keep on keeping on for Jesus!

Paul is so very tender toward the struggling young minister in verses 2-5. Next to the verse below in the left column write the letter of the tender thought expressed toward Timothy in the right column.

Verse 2 _____ A. I know your faith is genuine, Tim, just like your mom and grandmom

Verse 3 _____ B. This letter is to you, you're like a son to me

Verse 4 _____ C. I pray for you all the time, Tim

Verse 5 _____ D. I can't wait to see you, Tim, I know you have shed many tears there

Verse 2 = B Verse 3 = C Verse 4 = D Verse 5 = A

I believe in verse 6 Paul reminds Timothy of his ordination service, which involved the laying on of hands. This means Paul and probably others had prayed over Timothy after recognizing his faith and God's call on his life to the ministry.

You may be wondering how a person knows if they are called to the ministry. It is not easy to describe. But this I know: There is always an inside witness and an outside witness to God's ministry call. Inside a person there is a burning desire from the Holy Spirit to preach the Word, edify saints and evangelize sinners. Elsewhere Paul says, "Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel." Now there are many Christians who have those same burning desires who are not called into the ministry. That's where the outside witness comes in. That's when other Christians also sense that God has set you apart for "full-time" ministry and tell you so. When both the inside and outside witnesses are there, there is probably a "call" to the ministry.

Paul's point in these first 6 verses becomes clear in verse 7. As a young minister of the gospel Timothy had probably already seen some of the harder parts of working with people. Many ministers get very discouraged after encounters with well intentioned dragons and not so well intentioned dragons. Sometimes we are afraid to go on. We'd rather quit. Paul is writing to tell Timothy (and us) not to let fear keep us from being and doing what God has called us to be and do.

God Himself had done this for Paul! Write Acts 18:9-10 here:

Note how in Acts 18 Paul was told not to be afraid because God was with him. In our verse 7 Paul tells Timothy to overcome fear by concentrating on the Spirit that had been given to him:

The Spirit of power (the word is like dynamite in the Greek)

The Spirit of love (agape in the Greek)

The Spirit of a sound mind!

There are many things we can't do- but God the Holy Spirit in us and through us can do anything He wants to. Let's let Him!

As you pray today, thank God for your own salvation and if applicable, your call to the ministry. Ask God for the courage to stir up the gift inside you!

Day 22- Read II Timothy 1:7-18 Memorize 1:13

We are looking at this passage from the overall context of one minister speaking to a younger disciple about fulfilling his calling as a minister. But even as we do that, and the context does call for that, we need to stop for a few minutes and feast on what today's passage teaches us about our new life in Christ.

Beside the statement below, write the verse number that states what is true of you now that you are saved:

- A. Death has been abolished for us, we are now immortal _____
- B. We have been saved and called as a part of a plan set in motion before time _____
- C. We are not ashamed because He is keeping what's been committed to Him _____
- D. We have been given a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind _____
- E. God the Holy Spirit dwells in me _____

A = v.10 B = v.9 C = v.12 D = v.7 E = v. 14

Those are some wonderful things to think about, aren't they? Sometimes when I look at the ocean or at a sunset or take a hike in the mountains I am overwhelmed at how God includes people in a grand plan He thought up before time began. If I was God I would not have picked insignificant little danny campbell to be a part of it all. Yet somehow he uses little old me as part of His greater design to bring people to himself and fit them for Heaven! WOW! Selah – think about these things. You and I have incredible worth as people created in the image of God, as blood bought Christians, and as called out ministers of this good news!

Paul uses all of these grand thoughts to convince Timothy, and us, that a little (or a lot) of suffering down here shouldn't hold us back from the ministry God has called us to! We also shouldn't be surprised at suffering, as it was a significant part of the life of our Lord Jesus and our brother Paul here on earth. Instead, we should persevere in our call and encourage brothers like Paul to keep on keeping on for Jesus!

Paul is intense about these things! Think about the commands he has given Timothy so far here in 2 Timothy:

- v. 6 Stir up the gift of God in you, Timothy!
- v. 8 Don't be ashamed of Jesus or a minister like me, Tim!
- v. 13 Hold fast to Biblical truth, young man! Don't let go of the truth!

Paul sounds like a coach hollering encouragement and exhortation to a player, doesn't he? "You can do it, lad! Just a few more minutes in the game! Don't give up! Remember the game plan!"

Oh, I hope you can hear him as clearly as I can!

In verses 15-18, Paul reminds Timothy of some of his friends back at the “seminary.” When the going got tough, Phygellus and Hermogenes had quit. Maybe one day they’d be back like John Mark. But for right now they had given up.

But remember Onesiphorus? When others were ashamed of Jesus and ministers like Paul, The “Big One” showed up! He refreshed Paul, even going to prison to find him at risk of his own imprisonment to encourage this man of God. Apparently he had a reputation for doing the same back in Ephesus, where Timothy now ministered!

Paul’s desire for Onesiphorus in verse 18 that God will remember his unselfish ministry on judgment day really strikes me. It makes me think of Matthew 25:31-46, where our Lord Jesus told us *there will be a day* that true Christians will be separated from lost people, and it will be abundantly evident that the truly saved, like the “Big One,” will be characterized by acts of compassion toward all men, especially those of the household of faith.

Let us be very clear that there is a special call here to God’s people to be a blessing to those who have given their lives unto full-time ministry. When we see a Paul laboring to advance the gospel, we have a responsibility to come along side them and meet their needs so they can keep on keeping on! DO NOT TAKE YOUR PART IN THIS LIGHTLY!

As you pray today, ask God to give you a sensitive heart to those who minister the gospel, and to show you tangible ways you can be an Onesiphorus to them!

Day 23- Read II Timothy 2:1-2 Memorize 2:1

These are 2 of my favorite verses in the entire Bible! They are especially meaningful for a minister of the gospel.

Verse 1 tells us to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus! The temptation for a minister is to try and be strong in many other things. We try to rely on our education, then we fall flat on our faces when we realize how many things simply can't be taught in a classroom. Studying how to handle conflict is no substitute for being entangled in the middle of a conflict.

We tend to rely on our strengths. But there is always a better preacher our folks have heard on the radio, a better caregiver they've met ministering at the hospital, a better leadership style they had back at "such and such" church.

We sometimes rely on circumstances and words of encouragement. But circumstances can change in a hurry and harsh criticism can wound much deeper than words of encouragement can build up.

No, just like Paul encourages here we need to be strong in the grace that's in Christ Jesus! It is our personal relationship with Jesus that helps us be strong, not in ourselves, but in Him. The greatest promise in the Bible is repeated from Genesis to Revelation to men and women of God who seek him: I am with you! If we belong to Jesus, He doesn't just send us out, He goes with us! That promise is even in the Great Commission at the end of Matthew's gospel: "and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

I like the acronym for GRACE: God's Riches At Christ's Expense. I love looking through the Bible and discovering the things that are true of me because of my personal relationship with God. Passages like Ephesians 1 that tell me that in Christ I am blessed, chosen, destined, adopted, accepted, redeemed, forgiven, predestined, sealed, and guaranteed give me such strength, not in me, but in Jesus!

Oh, young minister, feed on the riches of God manifested to us through Christ! Feed in the morning, the afternoon, the evening and snack throughout the day! Just like physical food gives us strength, we are to make ourselves strong early and often in the grace and truth of God!

Having that foundation, we are called to pass the faith along to "faithful" men who will be able to teach others also, just like Paul did for us! We really need to follow the example of Christ here. He had a ministry to the multitudes and so should we. He had a ministry to a dozen and a few dozen at a time and so should we. But He also took the time to pour extra into 3 men. And so should we!

How? I think the main thing here is on the job training! I try and encourage ministering to people together. There has been too much lone ranger service and evangelism in the

body of Christ. Beyond making yourself available to mentor men in the ministry, take them with you on evangelistic visits, hospital visits, help visits, and mission trips. Have their family over for dinner and model family devotions. Intentionally do the things you do anyway with others around! The faith is more “caught” than taught!

Notice how what Paul has in mind influences four generations in verse 2:

- 1st Generation – Paul
- 2nd Generation – Timothy
- 3rd Generation – Those Timothy will teach
- 4th Generation – Those Timothy’s disciples will teach

You may have seen this before, but the gospel will not just be taught more deeply this way, it will ultimately affect more people this way. Let’s just look at 20 years of ministry. In the left column we will see the stats of an evangelist add up that leads 10,000 people a year to Jesus who go on to support his ministry but are otherwise untrained. On the right we will show the stats of a person who pours the faith into one person a year, and has each disciple made pour the faith into one person over the next year.

Year:	Evangelist’s Results:	Discipler’s Results:
1	10,000	1
2	20,000	2
3	30,000	4
4	40,000	8
5	50,000	16
6	60,000	32
7	70,000	64
8	80,000	128
9	90,000	256
10	100,000	512
11	110,000	1024
12	120,000	2048
13	130,000	4096
14	140,000	8192
15	150,000	16,384
16	160,000	32,768
17	170,000	65,536
18	180,000	131,072
19	190,000	262,144
20	200,000	524,288

Now the point is not to set evangelists against disciplers! Jesus did both, and we should support both as well. The point is to pour ourselves into people the way people have poured themselves into us! As you pray today, ask God to give you insight about who you could be a Paul to this year!

Day 24- Read II Timothy 2:3-10 Memorize 2:10

Combined with verses 1-2, these are the verses I use the most when I preach someone's ordination. They really speak to the minister of the gospel as he embarks on a journey of fruitful labor for Christ. And they still speak mightily to those of us further along in the enlistment process, somewhere in the middle of the marathon, or halfway through a plowed field!

Next to the statement below from verses 3-6, write either soldier, athlete, or farmer, depending on which is being spoken of.

1. Competing for the crown: _____
2. Does not get entangled in affairs of this life: _____
3. Must be first to partake of the crops: _____
4. Must endure hardship: _____
5. Compete according to the rules: _____
6. Seeks to please him who enlisted him: _____
7. Hardworking: _____

1=Athlete 2=Soldier 3=Farmer 4= Soldier 5=Athlete 6=Soldier 7=Farmer

I believe the best Biblical image of a gospel minister is that of a Shepherd or Pastor. But these descriptions here supplement our view of the things the man of God is to be about! You are to think of yourself as a soldier, understanding you are under the authority of Christ and obeying his orders, not getting mixed up in "civilian" affairs. You are to think of yourself as an athlete, diligently training, and competing according to the rules, no shortcuts, never letting pragmatic results keep you from doing things God's way. And you are to plow ground and plant seeds and nurture crops like a farmer, trusting God for a fruitful harvest!

I love verses 8-10!

Paul knew his life was about God's glory and God's gospel! In verse 8 he again points to the focal point of the gospel: the resurrection of Jesus Christ! Paul knew the LIVING CHRIST, and that relationship and the gospel's power gave new meaning to suffering and being put in prison. Paul knew that no matter what they did to him, the gospel's power could not be diminished. The Word of God is not chained!

Paul also drew great encouragement in the doctrine of election. Ministry for Paul was a great treasure hunt to discover in every city those who God the Holy Spirit had prepared in advance to receive the gospel message. When you look through the book of

Acts, you see Paul's message being rejected by more people than accepted it. Paul drew great strength that as he faithfully shared the "elect" or chosen that God the Holy Spirit was drawing would respond. And in every place, though the majority rejected Paul and his message, many were gloriously saved!

Interestingly, what Paul is passing along to Timothy as advice here, he had personally received from Christ when he was discouraged in Corinth! Read Acts 18:9-10 and write those 2 verses here:

Young minister, as you pray today, draw encouragement from the fact that as you share, God has many people in the place your ministering in also!

Day 25- Read II Timothy 2:11-19 Memorize 2:19

The beautiful verses 11-13 may have been a little hymn the early church sang. The language is certainly memorable, and the teaching is like a wonderful “fireworks” show to emphasize what has just been stated! Paul is encouraging Timothy and us to persevere in the calling we have been given, to not give up! The little hymn was to be a wonderful and catchy reminder to endure for the one who endured for us!

As we begin to feed on this beautiful text, look up and write here Hebrews 12:2:

Jesus endured for us! By the power of His indwelling Spirit, we can endure for Him!

A lovely reminder of this is how verse 11 reads in the Greek: Pistos o logos. Literally that means: Faithful is the word. You may recall that in John 1:1 we read of Jesus: in the beginning was the logos, and the logos was with God, and God was the logos! Logos can also mean “saying,” as the NKJV translates it, but it touches me to have a hymn that is all about Jesus begin with: FAITHFUL IS THE LOGOS!

Then the hymn makes 4 powerful points. Fill in the blanks of the missing words:

1. For if we _____ with Him, we shall also live with Him.
2. If we _____, we shall also _____ with Him.
3. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.
4. If we are faithless, He remains _____: He cannot deny Himself.

Now look up the verses below, and write the number of the point above that corresponds to the verse below (some will be used more than once).

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|-------|
| A. | I Corinthians 6:2-3 | _____ |
| B. | Galatians 2:20 | _____ |
| C. | I John 1:9 | _____ |
| D. | Revelation 2:26 | _____ |
| E. | Romans 6:4-5 | _____ |
| F. | Matthew 10:32-33 | _____ |
| G. | Revelation 20:6 | _____ |
| H. | Luke 22:31-34 | _____ |

A = 2 B = 1 C = 4 D = 2 E = 1 F = 3 G = 2 H = 4

Did you notice that the last one, H, was for Peter. Although he denied Christ before the resurrection, the context is clear that his was not a final decision to reject Christ, but momentary rejection when the heat was on. Many of us have been there. And we have had to confess our sin, and Christ in His faithfulness, because we were His, has restored us. So obviously, the denying Him the hymn speaks of is a final denial, a rejection of Him as the Lord of our life. It can't be said any better than in Matthew 10:32-33.

Verses 14-18 tell us to ever be a diligent workman, rightly dividing the Word of truth for people. We are to avoid fruitless discussions like “how many angels can fit on the top of a pin” or some of the more speculative areas of prophecy (like being dogmatic on the identity of the “2 witnesses” of Revelation). Many people hold dogmatic views on speculative areas but don't demonstrate Christ-likeness in their life. Those kind of teachers annoy me! But of greater concern to Paul was the blatantly false teachers like Hymenaeus and Philetus who were teaching the resurrection was already past and had caused some to overthrow their “faith.” Their teaching was as destructive in the church body as cancer is in the physical body.

The cure for this false teaching is “rightly dividing the word of truth.” Where the Bible is clear, preach and teach the clear things it says. Don't use the “hard to understand” passages to come up with doctrines not taught clearly elsewhere in the Bible. I like the statement that Mark Twain uttered: “It's not the things I don't understand in the Bible that trouble me, it's the things that I do understand that trouble me!” Too many people in our churches are hearers of the word but not doers of the word. Young Minister, charge your people to obey what they've learned, not be speculators in fringe areas!

I love the beauty and simplicity of verse 19. At the end of the day, God knows who the truly born again are! He knows His own. What's our job? If we claim to be his, we need to take seriously departing from iniquity and demonstrating Christ in our life! What's Paul saying? Christian, you are saved by grace, but holiness is not optional!

As you pray today, acknowledge to God that you know your ministry must be guarded by both orthodoxy (correct beliefs) and orthopraxy (correct practice).

Day 26- Read II Timothy 2:20-26 Memorize 2:21

One of the marks of a mature Christian is understanding what God does in initiating our salvation and what we do in response to God. We are saved by God's grace. Our Spirit prompted response is repentance and faith. God elects, or chooses us, and we respond by wholeheartedly choosing Him. Mistaken attempts to understand such things have led some to conclude that salvation is a 50-50 partnership between us and God. A more Biblical way to understand it is to affirm that salvation is 100 % the work of God, and leads us to a 100 % giving of ourselves to Him.

I say this because verses 20-21 remind me of the great passage on God's sovereign election in Romans 9:21-23. Look those verses up and write verse 21 here:

Romans 9:21 reminds us that those who are saved are being fashioned by God into a beautiful vessel, part of a plan God had before the world began. We all have seen footage of a potter shaping the clay with his hands. It's a beautiful thing! Thank God for His work in our lives.

But Christian minister, never forget that our faith response to the potter's grace must be a YIELDEDNESS to His shaping of our lives. We have seen a potter take a little knife and cut away what no longer needs to be part of the vessel. Our response to the Potter's work must be to "cleanse ourselves" from what is dishonorable so that we can be an honorable vessel for our Master. In a very real sense God allows us to make the decision of whether we will let Him cut away the parts that no longer belong. Hebrews 4:12-13 says that the living knife God will use to "cut us" is the Word of God.

Here's the point: If you as a minister are going to be effective for Jesus, radical faith obedience to scripture's commands is a necessity. Please do not go into the ministry if you still love the world and don't have a burning desire to be like Christ. You can't keep the whole lump of clay intact AND be formed into the man of God you are to become. The sinful parts of the clay must be cut away. Neither the church nor the world needs to see any more "lumpy" ministers who love self more than Jesus.

Look up and write Leviticus 10:3 here:

God, speaking through Moses, was not referring to casual obedience in Lev. 10:3. And Paul is not referring to casual obedience in our passage either. In verse 19 he said “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” After the vessel illustration, he comes back in verse 22 and says “FLEE youthful lusts.” Then he tells us what to PURSUE.

Paul is telling us to *run from* worldly living, and *run to* godly living.

Fill in the blanks from verse 22:

Pursue R _____!

Pursue F _____!

Pursue L _____!

Pursue P _____!

Along the way you will see others running this direction also, all the ones who call on the Lord out of a pure heart! I would recommend you read John Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress sometime to help ‘capture’ these truths!

It’s interesting that Paul’s intense appeal to Timothy and other young ministers is followed by a call to avoid foolish disputes in verse 23. I can tell you from my time in churches and in a Christian College and Seminary that there are many who want to be ministers who don’t PURSUE righteousness but do argue about foolish matters all the time. Many of them will never be of use to earnest disciples looking for a Word from God. True ministers are not interested in playing trivial pursuit, they are looking to make Kingdom First disciples who will go out and make Kingdom First disciples!

Before you pray today, read again verses 24-26, and ask God to use you to free souls from Satan’s power. That’s what Paul wanted pure Christian ministers to be about!

Day 27- Read II Timothy 3:1-9 Memorize 3:5

As I write this entry in the devotional, the national headlines are reporting yet another denomination has decided it is okay for a homosexual to serve as a Minister of the gospel. This assault by some “Christians” on what the Bible clearly teaches is most troubling and represents a complete departure from orthodoxy. I have Christian above in quotation marks because such a complete disregard for Biblical fidelity and authority is the mark of those who don’t really know Christ.

A person who teaches homosexuality is acceptable behavior for any Christian, let alone a Minister, needs to repent and come under the authority of the Scriptures, or they will most likely die and go to Hell. God says homosexuality is an abomination before Him (Leviticus 18:22), that it is the result of rejecting God’s natural creation plan (Romans 1:27), and that those who do not repent and come out of homosexuality will not get into Heaven (I Corinthians 6:9-10). God goes on to say in I Corinthians 6:11 that there were in the church those who had been homosexuals and various other kinds of sinners before salvation, but that they had repented and been forgiven:

“And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God.”

Please don’t misunderstand me. It is possible for repentant sinners to struggle with a sin after salvation during their sanctification process. But they agree with God that it is sin and are actively seeking for it to be rooted out of their life, they don’t celebrate it as a legitimate alternative lifestyle. Our passage today speaks about defiance of God under the guise of a form of religion. In verse 5 Paul tells us to refuse to fellowship with such imposters to Biblical faith!

The things spoken of as emblematic of the perilous last days are recorded below in the left column. Next to each one, write the opposite, more Christlike way of living:

Bogus Religion:

Christlike Faith:

Love of self

Love of money

Boasters

Proud

Blasphemers

Disobedient to Parents

Unthankful

- Unholy _____
 - Unloving _____
 - Unforgiving _____
 - Slanderers _____
 - Without Self-Control _____
 - Brutal _____
 - Despisers of good _____
 - Traitors _____
 - Headstrong _____
 - Haughty _____
- Lovers of Pleasure Lovers of God

Fellow Minister, if you want power in your Christian life, you want others to see that list on the right in your life. Those are the kinds of things Christ exemplified in his earthly ministry, and what he asked for his disciples to be about in his preaching. There are too many people in the ministry today that exemplify the things in the first list. What a pity.

To hammer this home, Paul gives specific traits of bogus ministers in verses 6-9. List at least 5 traits that verses 6-9 reveal the imposters have.

Possible Answers:

- They creep into households. They especially prey on gullible women with questionable morals.
- They take advantage of those who are always fascinated with some new teaching but who are not anchored in truth.
- They resist godly leaders. They resist the truth. They have corrupt minds.
- They are not approved by Heaven. They will progress but so far, and then be exposed as the frauds they are.

Man of God, as you pray today, ask God to fill you with faith and courage to live and proclaim His gospel truth!

Day 28- Read II Timothy 3:10-17 Memorize 3:12

Paul lays a sobering truth on us here! If you want to follow the One crucified at Calvary, there's a cross with your name on it! Having just spoken out against the kind of ministers who do everything they do with personal gain in mind, Paul makes clear that the true way for ministers, indeed all true Christians, includes suffering in this world. Jesus said this a couple ways. Look up and write down the following verses.

Luke 14:23: _____

John 15:20: _____

Paul's words are so important in our day when we see so many "health and wealth" preachers and "name it and claim it" preachers who promise that if you have enough faith your life will be all smiles and smooth sailing.

In verse 13 Paul says such evil men and imposters are going to increase, and that they will go on deceiving others even as they themselves are deceived by Satan in their understanding of the Bible. It was very interesting when Jim Bakker, who had bilked followers out of millions with his wife Tammy Fake Bakker, got caught, lost everything and wound up in jail. There as he read the Bible he realized his ministry had been based on a false prosperity gospel, and in repentance he wrote the book, "I Was Wrong." Hopefully now he knows the difference between a hireling and a shepherd. Do you?

A Hireling is someone who cares for sheep because of what is in it for them- money, recognition, etc... When circumstances get tough, a hireling will run away from the sheep, thinking, "If I stay what will happen to me!"

A Shepherd is someone who cares for the sheep out of great concern for their welfare, and out of a desire to get every one of them to where they are supposed to be. When circumstances get tough, a shepherd stays even amidst persecution from a wolf, thinking, "If I do not stay what will happen to the sheep." That's the difference between a hireling and a shepherd. And the word for Shepherd is the word for Pastor in the Greek. Man of God, sometime do a study of the word shepherd in the Bible, and substitute the word Pastor for shepherd. It will bless you immensely! For instance, Psalm 23:1 reads, "The Lord is my Pastor, I shall not want!"

It is so important that you understand these things, man of God!

Look back at verses 10-11. Fill in the missing blanks:

But you have carefully followed my _____, manner of life, purpose, _____, longsuffering, love, _____, persecutions, afflictions...

Growing up in a good church and going to a good Christian College or Seminary can help you develop right doctrine, a sense of purpose to win the world to Christ, faith in God, and love for people. But the other things, longsuffering, perseverance, persecutions, and afflictions can only come over time as you courageously put yourself out there for Jesus.

Mark my words, if you become a shepherd of the sheep, over time you will have scars from wolf attacks. You'll also have your share of scars from "friendly fire." Surviving in the ministry can often be tougher than being a baby sea turtle trying to make it to the ocean after being hatched. Many start in the ministry unprepared for the spiritual attacks and give up when the circumstances get tough. Paul's little word to Timothy in verse 14 is the word we need to hear: "CONTINUE." Continue on with Jesus, brother!

Verses 16-17 (which you should memorize and refer to often) show Paul again recommending to Timothy life's anchor in a sea raging with imposters teaching junk. The anchor is Scripture, God's Inspired and Inerrant Word. Continue in it, Timothy!

Continue using it to teach doctrine - that's telling people what they should believe!

Continue using it to reprove - that's telling people what they should not believe!

Continue using it to correct - that's telling people how they should not live!

Continue using it to instruct in righteousness - that's telling people how they should live!

That, Timothy, is how you'll help men of God be complete and equipped!

As you pray today, ask God for the strength to CONTINUE!

Day 29- Read II Timothy 4:1-8 Memorize 4:8

As I was studying our passage today, I couldn't help but get excited about the fact that Jesus Christ is coming back! The longer I pastor, the more I look forward to seeing the One this is all about. I want to see the One who I have thanked a thousand times for saving my life. My life was floundering until He became my God! This poor sinner cried to the Lord and He saved me. He's my Best Friend but I don't even know what He looks like! He's the Boss I obey but I've never audibly heard His voice! Words fail to express how much I want to be with Him forever. The longer I live in this sin infested world (not to mention this sin infested body) the more I want Jesus to appear and to make it all better, to set it all right. I'm so tired of the wages of sin.

This passage is a great reminder to finish our race well for the Lord. It's just a few more days and then we will be with Jesus! It might even be today! The word used in verses 1 and 8 for appearing is the word epiphaneia. It's used 6 times in the New Testament, 5 of them in the letters to Timothy and Titus. You may recall that the more common word for Jesus' return is "coming." It is the word parousia, used 24 times in the New Testament. Both words appear together in 2 Thessalonians 2:8, where epiphaneia is translated "brightness."

Okay, now let's get back into our passage! All people, alive or dead, face a future judgment by Jesus Christ. In light of Jesus Christ's impending appearing, which elsewhere we are told to be ready for at all times, Paul gives young ministers a charge. A charge is a strong call to do what you were created and redeemed to do. Jeremiah was ordained before birth to be a prophet to the nations. Young ministers were chosen before the foundation of the world to preach the word of God! Not just when it is convenient (in season) but when it is most inconvenient as well (out of season).

From verse 2 answer in your own words these questions about preaching the word:

What is the preacher to "convince" others about?

What does "rebuking" involve for a preacher?

How does a preacher being an "exhorter" relate to longsuffering?

The main point of verse 2 is that the man of God will proclaim to people what God wants them to hear. Verses 3 and 4 make clear that the time will come (and oh boy has it ever come) when people will surround themselves with preachers who tell them what they want to hear instead of what God wants them to hear. Let me just say this to you, young minister: if you become the type of preacher referred to in verses 3 and 4, you will not be very excited at the appearing of Judge Jesus. You will not hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Paul again lays it on the line for Timothy and us in verse 5. Write it here:

Can you feel the urgency Paul feels as he writes? His own days are numbered, and he wants to make sure he can count on Timothy to pass along the “faith once and for all delivered to the saints.” 2 Timothy is probably the very last letter Paul wrote before being killed for the faith. Verse 6 shows he knows his “departure is at hand.” Did he have any regrets? None at all! Verse 7 reveals that he knew he had “fought the good fight,” he had “finished the race,” he had “kept the faith.” I hope you and I can have that same testimony when our time draws near: oh to know that Danny Campbell kept the faith! Oh to receive the crown of righteousness with all those who have no reason to be ashamed at his appearing!

As you pray today, thank Jesus for being your Savior, your Lord, your God, your Best Friend, and your Boss. Tell him afresh how you long to be with Him forever. And ask Him to fill you with His Spirit for the days ahead, that you may “fulfill the ministry” He has for you.

Day 30- Read II Timothy 4:9-22 Memorize 4:17

We come to the last few words written by the apostle Paul on earth. How sad it is to realize that this man, who had poured so much time into others for the advancement of the gospel, had so few of his young minister friends standing by him in the last days. It is not an exact corollary but what a shame it is in our day for so many older ministers not to receive the love, appreciation and admiration they deserve from hotshot young ministers.

Below you have the names of people on the left and Paul's description of them on the right. Put the correct letter of the description by the person!

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Alexander ____ | A. Forsaken me for the world |
| 2. Luke ____ | B. Sent to Ephesus |
| 3. Demas ____ | C. Useful to me now! |
| 4. Mark ____ | D. Stayed in Corinth |
| 5. Trophimus ____ | E. Did me much harm |
| 6. Tychicus ____ | F. Split for Galatia |
| 7. Timothy ____ | G. Stood with me and strengthened me |
| 8. Crescens ____ | H. Here with me |
| 9. Jesus ____ | I. Get here quickly! |
| 10. Erastus ____ | J. Sick in Miletus |

Answers: 1=E 2=H 3=A 4=C 5=J 6=B 7=I 8=F 9=G 10=D

When I look at that list I have this wish: Oh may future history record my name and your name as a Luke, not as a Demas. And thanks be to God that Jesus never leaves us or forsakes us!

There are 2 more things left to look at as we close our devotional.

In verse 11 it is thrilling to note that Paul had now recognized the worth of John Mark. In his last days he actually wants him there by his side because of his usefulness. You probably recall that Paul and his best friend Barnabas had parted ways over the question of whether or not Mark was useful or useless (Acts 15:36ff). Paul, being concerned over the ministry, did not want to take Mark along because he had quit on them before. Barnabas was concerned over the future of this one minister (not to mention the fact that Mark was his cousin) and wanted to give him another try. Both had

valid points, as often happens in such cases. It is just wonderful to note that Mark had responded well and had become the man of God that Barnabas and the apostle Peter had envisioned. In fact, it is this same Mark that wrote the gospel of Mark! Many believe that the funny reference in Mark 14:51-52 to an unfortunate Streaker is about Mark himself!

The life of Mark reminds me of an analogy that has proved useful to me in talking to people who want to serve Jesus but have a hard time getting over sinful mistakes in their past. Tell them to view their lives as a book. There are some chapters in the past they are proud of, and some they are not so proud of! But with the forgiveness that Jesus offers upon our confession of sins (I John 1:9), and the direction of God the Holy Spirit, we can begin a new chapter today of worship of God and bringing glory to His name. When I have shared this “life as a book” illustration with people, I have really seen the lights go on!

Write verse 18 here:

What does Paul mean that he will be delivered from every evil work? Church history tells us that Paul was beheaded as a martyr for Jesus Christ. He certainly can't have in mind that he will be protected from other physical harms either, because the book of Acts shows him facing beatings and other forms of persecution.

I think the main point Paul is getting at is his absolute belief in the Sovereignty, or Kingship of God. Nothing is going to happen to Paul that God was not aware of and allowing from His throne for His own inscrutable reasons. Elsewhere he shows his excitement that to be absent from the body would be to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8). In Philippians 1 he had stated his desire to depart and be with Christ, which would be better than being in this world. Paul is pointing out to his fellow ministers that when God is for us, even “evil works” Satan and people use to try and do us harm will be used by God to advance the gospel.

It was this confidence that Lottie Moon, the great missionary to China had when she said: “I am convinced that I am immortal in this life until my work is done.”

Such is the confidence we can have in Christ, fellow minister! One day we will be with Paul, Timothy, Priscilla and Lottie in Heaven. Oh to be faithful to our dear Lord until then. As you pray today, ask the Lord to help you to be faithful as you start a new chapter of ministry for Him! To God be the glory!