

## I TIMOTHY 4:7-16

In Chapter 4:1-6 the apostle Paul warned Timothy of an apostasy which would come. There would be those who would depart from the truth giving heed to demonic spirits and their doctrines.

Now here in verses 4:7-16 Paul gives Timothy some positive and personal instruction in regard to these apostates and their practices.

V.7 - Here Paul exhorts Timothy to refuse profane and old wives fables. These are the kind of teachings that apostates would propagate.

A fable is a myth or fictitious story which falsifies the truth in some way. An example of this would be what the Gnostics taught that Christ was the last in the order of emanations from God and not really God.

But these would include any kind of fictitious story that runs counter to the truth.

As a boy I've been told of hoop snakes... shingles... planting posts... groundhogs...

Paul uses an athlete term to instruct Timothy. Instead of paying attention to old wives' fables which are profane and not godly he instructs him to exercise himself unto godliness.

This kind of exercise involves things like reading and studying the Bible, praying, meditating on Scripture, and witnessing to others.

V. 8 - Paul gives a contrast between two kinds of exercise - bodily exercise and godly exercise.

He said bodily exercise profiteth little. This doesn't mean it is not profitable and valuable to exercise our bodies but it profits little compared to godly exercise. Bodily exercise is limited to this life which is of short duration.

Godly exercise such as ... is not just for time but for eternity and it promises precious rewards in this life now and in the life which is to come. One illus. of this would be found in the command to honor our fathers and mothers...

V. 9 - Paul is referring to the fact just mentioned about godly exercise in contrast to bodily exercise. It's something you can depend upon and it is something worthy for all to accept.

It's a shame to see the emphasis today on so much bodily exercise and so little on godly exercise. There's at least a dozen exercise programs aired each morning on T.V. stations with a large audience but how few are there who are concerned about eternal things.

V.10 - Paul says "for therefore" or to this end he and others were laboring and suffering reproach. We are trusting in the living God in whom is no disappointment concerning eternal things.

Here Paul points out that the living God is the Saviour of all men. In this statement we can see that God's provision of salvation is for all men although all won't be saved. In this sense we can see that Christ is the potential Savior of all men and the actual Saviour of all those who believe.

He is Saviour to those who believe specially because they have availed themselves of His wonderful provision.

V.11 - This probably refers to what Paul has been saying in the previous verses about godly exercise and being occupied with eternal things instead of temporal things.

V.12 - Paul gives Timothy instructions for his personal life in light of his younger age and exhorts him to be an example of a believer in various ways to avoid any justified criticism.

In Word - Timothy was to set forth a good example in what he said. His speech was to be above reproach and edifying to others. Oftentimes believers are characterized by off-color expressions or cursings. Right after I was saved, I rebuked man in barber shop...

In conduct - Timothy was to set forth a good example in how he lived. He was to practice what he preached and live a consistent life.

In love - timothy was to exercise love toward others. This is the way whereby Jesus said people would know us as His disciples.

In spirit - Timothy was to set a good example in displaying a good spirit. He wasn't to have a critical spirit or a complaining spirit but to present a good positive attitude before others.

In faith - Timothy was to display faith and faithfulness before others.

In purity - Timothy needed to keep himself pure and not to give in to temptation. This demanded a proper thought life that comes from meditation on God's word and staying in communion with God.

V.13 - Paul exhorts Timothy in regard to the local church setting.

He was to give attendance to or devote himself to reading God's Word publicly. This was the practice in the synagogue and it was carried over into the Christian church as well.

Timothy was to give himself also to exhortation or encouragement using the Word of God. He was to read the Word and then to exhort others on the basis of what was read, by explaining it and applying it.

Timothy was to give himself to doctrine or teaching as well. In order for him to do that he had to be in the Word and making spiritual progress himself.

V.14 - Timothy was not to neglect the gift which was given to him by prophecy. Apparently, at some time a prophet had stood up in a local assembly and announced that Timothy had been given a certain spiritual gift. This then had been followed by the elders laying their hands on him as public recognition of what the Holy Spirit had done.

Although this gift is not mentioned it seems most likely to be that of pastor-teacher.

This procedure is illustrated in Acts 13 when the Holy Spirit separated Saul and Barnabas.

V.15 - The idea here is to "care for" or cultivate ones self in this work of the ministry and to give ones self wholly to it so that it will be evident to others.

There's a certain principle here which bears mentioning. It's one thing to have to work to subsidize

one's ministry - it's quite another to work and have a ministry on the side.

V.16 - This emphasizes the importance of the Lord's servants to keep their personal life in order before teaching others.

It's a fact a pastor can become so busy in helping others that he neglects his own spiritual welfare.

If Timothy would follow these exhortations he would save himself as well as others from these false teachings.

We need to take some steps to prevent ourselves from being sidetracked

### **I. BY EXERCISING OURSELVES UNTO GODLINESS (7)**

this involves...

1. Reading and studying God's Word
2. Having a fervent prayer life
3. Attending church services faithfully
4. Witnessing to those who are lost

### **II. BY SETTING A GOOD EXAMPLE OF WHAT A BELIEVER OUGHT TO BE (12)**

1. In what we say
2. In what we do

**III. BY STAYING INVOLVED IN WHAT THE  
LORD HAS CALLED US TO DO (13)**

means...

1. means using our gift