

Title: ~~Be An Example of the Believer~~ *(An Urgent Appeal)*
 Text: I Timothy 4:12-16

Take your Bibles, please, and turn with me to I Timothy. I Timothy chapter 4 beginning at vs 12.

We have been looking at the duties and responsibilities of members of the church. We have looked at the matter of the importance of Prayer in the church. Prayer should be number one on the agenda of things that we do in the church. Then, secondly, we looked at the position and duties of women within the church. Thirdly, we studied the qualification for officers within the church. Now, we are looking at the reasons why the church needs SPIRITUALLY qualified people to serve as leaders in the church. And there are basic two reasons why the church needs ^{spiritual} ~~qualified~~ people. We have already looked at the first reason. ⁽¹⁾ We need spiritually qualified people because of the times in which we live..And this is very important.

Today, I want to come to the second reason why the church needs spiritual leaders.. *And this really is "An Urgent Appeal"*
(20) The church of Jesus Christ needs spiritual leaders to be an example of the believers...To be an example of the believers to the world.

I Timothy chapter 4 beginning with Vs 12....(READ Vs 12-16)

Prayer

Our Father, we thank you, again, for the Word of God. And we pray that it might minister unto our hearts under the direction of the Holy Spirit. We know, Lord, that there is no limit to your power. But, we know that we are limited because of sin and self. And we refuse to let the Spirit work in our lives. But, Father, we pray that today we would put self aside so that we might hear the Holy Spirit speaking to our hearts. Help us to know the principles of living from your ^word. And help us to apply these principle to our lives. And we ask this in Jesus name.....Amen.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

When you unite with a church it is because there is a need in your soul for the message and the inspiration of the church. You also are uniting with it because there is an innate need to give and to **do**. Christ's work is unfinished. This unfinished work is for us to do. When you unite with a church you accept a responsibility - a sacred responsibility - to do your part for your Master and for others.

Your sacred responsibilities of membership:

* **Serving**. There is a place of service awaiting you somewhere in the church. God has given you a talent to be used. This may include teaching Sunday school, visiting the sick, leading youth groups, singing in the choir, and working on committees.

* **Learning**. Anyone who helps others must first develop a growing faith and be able to articulate it. Participating in Bible study groups and developing the habit of daily Bible study are ways to continue learning about the character of God.

* **Giving**. You are expected to do your fair share in supporting the budget of your church's ministry. You should give freely and cheerfully without any thought of reward. Your giving should be systematic and proportionate to your income, not giving what you can spare, but according to what God has entrusted to you. Give to the best of your ability, forgiving is a way you can take part in spreading the Gospel.

* **Witnessing**. "You will be my witnesses," said Jesus, "in Jerusalem [that is, at home], in all Judea and Samaria [the surrounding areas], and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). At the same time that Jesus commissioned His disciples He set forth your responsibility to spread the gospel everywhere. This does not mean you have to stand on street corners reading scripture, but you can be an effective witness to friends, co-workers, and family members.

* **Praying**. The highest and deepest benefit you can receive from prayer is strength and courage to live triumphantly each day. Start the practice of daily prayer at a time that is best for you. The worth of a prayer is not determined by its grammatical correctness, but by its sincerity. The main thing is to speak with God about the things that trouble, delight, or confuse you. Be persistent in your requests, turning your petitions to align with God's will.

Now, as we look at this Urgent Appeal that Paul is making for spiritual leadership, notice Vs 12.."Let no one look down upon your youth." And right away we think this is referring to young people....NO WAY!.

It is interesting to note that in the days of Paul a young man was a young man until he reached the age of 40..WOW! Under 40, you are a young man. Over 40, you are an old man.

Also, during the days of Paul in the nation of Israel no one could hold a position within the government until they were 30 years old. All men were considered children until they were 30 years old.

Now, they could be used to fight wars, or, for certain leadership positions. Kings, for example, were often very young. So were many of the prophets and Priest. But, those in governing positions of the nation of Israel, the elders of the land, had to be over the age of 30. And, commonly, it was said that a man became a man when he was 40. In our society we say 21 for a man and 18 for a woman. But, they said 40.

I often wondered about this and why Paul referred to Timothy as a young man? Well, simply because they referred to all men under the age of 40 as young men. Paul says, "Let no one look down on your youthfulness." He is giving words of encouragement to Timothy. Do not let people look down upon your youth, Instead be an example of the believer.

Now, I would like to share with you five tremendous principles from these verses concerning our example, or testimony, to those around us.

(1D) First of all, the pattern of life that we should be careful to live.

Vs 12 says , "Be an example." The word "example" is the word for "pattern". "Be an example or pattern of those who believe."

Also, notice that this is a command. It is not a mere suggestion. It is a command. We are to be an example or pattern of the believer.

Now..HOW? How can we be an example or pattern of the believer? HOW? Well, the Bible never tells us to do something, without telling how to do it. So, the Bible gives us 5 areas in our life that we can be an example.

(1E) Number one, in our speech. That is, what we say, we should be a pattern of the believer. You know, it is so easy, isn't it, in our conversations with others, those on the job, those with associate with, our neighbors and friends, to be careless in what we say and how we say it. It is easy to say things that hurt people...tear them down....words of discouragment....words of criticism.. So, here is a great area of life to deminstrate that we are christians. Be an example in our speech. By the way, it is wrong speach, evil speach, bitterness and angrey speach that the Bible says "grieves the Holy Spirit of God. Be an example of the believer in what you say. Let your words be words of encouragment...building folks in self esteem.

(2E) Secondly, be an example of the believer in Conduct. That is, in the manner of your life. The things that you do...the places you go..your reading material...where you seek entertainment...Be an example of the believer in conduct.

(3E) Third, be an example of the believer in love. This remainds me of what it says in Ephesians chapter 5 concerning the great responsibility placed upon husbands to love their wives. And the great standard to love their wife as Christ loved the church.

The truth is that all believers should have this standard. All believers should love people as Christ loved people. The same kind of compassion that caused Christ to be moved when he saw the multitudes. Let no man look down upon you, but be an example of love.

You know, it is an amazing thing that the first ingrident that seems to go in the life of a church is the ingrident of love. And I remember that John remains us in Revelation chapter 2 that the church of Ephesus was known for her doctrine, but there was one thing wrong with that Chruch. The believers had left their first love. It is so easy to do. And here we are told to be an example of the believer in love. Or, as the song goes.."They will know we are Christians by our love." *Be an example of the Believer in love*

~~The believers had left their first love. It is so easy to do. It is~~
~~easy to know all the things that God has said, but to be an example~~
~~of the believer in love. Of, as the ^{Verse} Song goes, "They will know us by~~
~~our love."~~

(4E) Then, Paul says to be an example of the believer in faith. That is, be a person of faith. Which means, to believe that God is able to do what He says he will do.

You know, it is wonderful to be around people who live by faith. I have meet people in my life who have been a source of strength and encouragement because they were people of faith. And I am always thankful at some ^{I have attended} business meetings, when someone stands up and says, "I don't know where the money will come from, but I believe this is of God. And I believe we should do it."

You know, that is wonderful. People of faith, people who believe God will do what He says he will do. We must not be "visionaries", but, we must be people of vision. We must not let our hearts run away from our heads. But, oh how we need more heart in this matter of the head knowledge of the Word of God.

^{A person had to me, nice} Do you know what we need in ~~this church~~? ^{Baptist churches?} People who have a ~~Presbyterian~~ ^{heart} head....a Pentecostal heart...an Jehovah Witnees* Beet.....I like that... Oh, how we need more heart. ^{Made Feet} People who believe the things they say they believe. People who know how to trust God. People who will have fiath to blieve that it will happen because God said it would happen. Be an example of the believer in the area of Faith. ^(Thank people for Verse)

(5E) Also, we should be an example of the believer in the area of purity.

And dear friends, this is an area of life that we really need today. The word "purity" means "to be clean." Jesus told the disciples that now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. And moral impurity(including by the way drinking) will start when a person departs from the principles of God's word. Be strong in the Word of God, and you will be an example of purity. ^{"Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.... (Reading Mutual)}

People often ask me.. "Pastor, what must I do to live the christian life?" Well, dear friends, here it is in a nutshell. Be an example of the believer in the area of your SPEECH...CONDUCT...LOVE...FAITH, AND PURITY...

(2E) Now, let's come to Vs 13. I would like you to notice the preparation needed to be a good example of the believer. How did Timothy and how should we prepare our lives so that we will be an example of love..faith..speech..conduct..and purity?...HOW???? Vs 13 says.."until I come give attention to three things: (1) First, to the public reading of the word of God. (2) Second, to exhortation, And (3) third, to teaching.

(1E) "Until I come, give attention to the public reading of scripture."

You know, on this matter of reading the Bible, I don't know whether or not you just read the Bible. But, what a joy it is to just read the scriptures from day to day.

Now, I believe we need to systmatically study the Bible. But, dear friends, we also need those times when we just read it. Just read the Bible until the concepts and principles are hidden in our heart. And when that happens, start all over and read it again.

Sometimes a person comes to me and says concerning a verse of scripture that it says so and so. And to myself I think.."I don't recall the verse saying that." So, we turn to the verse and discover that it says something entirely different from what we both thought. Oh, friends, we need to just read the Word of God.

(2F) Then secondly, giving attention to exhortation. The word "exhortation" is a tremendous word. It doesn't refer to beating a person over the head and forcing him to learn. That is not the meaning. The word means "to call along side of"..WOW!!!!!! For example: THE HOLY SPIRIT IS CALLED THE COMFORTER. The word "comforter" comes from the same root word as "exhortation" "One called along side of". In other words, we are to have the heart of Christ and the heart of the Holy Spirit. To come along side of others with the kind of comfort and encouragment and strength that is produced from a heart that is related to the Holy Spirit of God...

(3E) And then third, give attention to teaching. Pay attention to teaching. Whether it comes from our Sunday School teachers or this public.. Pay attention

Reading the scripture, exhortation, and teaching. These three things will prepare us to be an example of the believer in the areas of speech, faith, love, conduct, and purity...

(3E) Then, in Vs 14, we have God's plan for our life.

Vs 14 says, "Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery (Press-ba-tery).

The principle being taught here is that Timothy, as well as all of God's people, has a *spiritual gift*

Now, I don't know what Timothy's *spiritual* gift was. It must have been the gift of teaching since he was the PASTOR-TEACHER of the church in Ephesus. But, the statement that you should consider is: DO NOT NEGLECT THE SPIRITUAL GIFT WITHIN YOU."

Dear friends, I don't know what your *spiritual gift* is. It may be the gift of helps. It may be the gift of ~~administration~~ or ~~leadership~~. It may be the gift of mercy or wisdom or giving or serving or teaching. BUT, let us be committed enough in our christian understanding to find it and not to neglect it.

Often I am asked: "Pastor, **I** am not sure I have a spiritual gift. Does every Christian have a gift?...YES...Every Christian has a spiritual gift,

according to 1 Cor 12-7-

And these gifts have been given by the Holy Spirit of God to the Church "as He Wills." And God gives as he wills, but He gives to every christian.

People often comment that
~~Have you ever ask yourself why the church is weak and it seem to lack power?~~

or
~~Have you?~~ Well, the reason why the church lacks power is because the members of the church are not using their spiritual gifts. *→ God's power doesn't*
~~And every member has a gift.~~ And this gift was given for building-up the body, the church.

All people are important. "If the foot should say, because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body, is it any less a part of the body?" You see, everyone of us is important. And I trust you know and are using your spiritual gift for the glory of Jesus Christ. God says, "Do not neglect your spiritual gift."

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And notice, it was given "with the laying on of hands." Now, what was this for? In the O.T. the Priest would lay his hands on the animals before they were sacrificed to God. And the purpose was IDENTIFICATION. So, in this case it was done by whome? By the PRESBYTERY. Or, the elders of the church. So, the Point is: that a person idified his or her gift by the laying on of hands by others within the church, namely the elders..

It is interesting to note that when Paul says "do not neglect", apparently it was being neglected. Timothy was neglecting his gift. And Paul says to stop it. Do not neglect your gift.

Dear friends, are you neglecting your spiritual gift? Are you neglecting what God has given to you? Neglect not your gift.

(40) Then, in Vs 15, we find something important about *our* (Timothy's) progress.
Paul says, "take pains with these things."

What things? What things are we to take pains with? Well, I believe Paul is refering back to Vs ~~13~~ ¹²⁻¹⁴ "to public reading of the scriptures, to exhortation, and to teaching." ~~Possible he is also refering to~~ the use of your spiritual gift, *To our speech, our conduct, our love, our faith, our purity*

Take pains with these things. Give yourself to them. Be absorbed in them. Give yourself completely to them....100%...

You know, ^{many} most christians are half-hearted in giving themselves to the reading of scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. But Paul says, to take pains with these things...WHY?...^uSo that your progress or growth, or testimony may be evident to all."

It is interesting to note that the word "Progress" means "to cut or to blaze a path." It refers to a person cutting his way through the wilderness. Blazing a new trail into the unknown. "Give yourself to these things, be absorbed in them...in reading, in encouraging one another, in teaching, in the use of your spritual gift...WHY?.....So that you will know you are growing in the faith. And when this happens, this blazing of a new trail, this testimony of yours will be known or evident to all. You see, a half-hearted commitment is ^{poor} poor testimony to the ^{showing grace} work of God.

(5) Finally, Va Vs 16, we are told to remain steadfast in all things.

Paul says, "Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching." This is a good principle for all of us to follow. Everyone of us should pay close attention, first of all, to our own salvation, and then to that which we teach. We must live what we confess. We must practice what we preach. Our lives must be everything we claim it to be. And if our lives are not, it is hypocrisy, it is a hindrance to the testimony of Christ. "Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching. **PERSEVER IN THESE THINGS.**" The word "persever" means "do not depart, remain steadfast" in these things... What things?....In the reading of scripture, in encouragement, in teaching. WHY?....."For as you do this(Vs 16) you will insure or garantee salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you."

Now, what is Paul talking about?

~~salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you."~~
~~What is Paul talking about?~~

, Paul is refering to the total gontent of this chapter. When he began chapter 4, he said "in later times" such and such will happen. The point is that Paul is saying that you will save yourself and those who hear you from falling into false doctrine, falling into apostacy, falling into that which is standing apart from the truth. You will save yourself and all those who hear you, if you will persevere in these things: THE READING OF SCRIPTURE...EXHORTATION...TEACHING....AND USING YOUR SPRITUAL GIFT. Persevere in these things and you will not be pulled away, you will not fall, you will not backslide, into false doctrine, you will not be influenced by ~~demons~~ *False Teachers*. But you will be secure in your salvation. And your salvation will then be a testimony to those who hear you.

So, dear friends, what about our lives? *IS IT* a testimony, an example of those who believe in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity? Is your life in harmony with what you say you believe? Are you neglecting the use of your spiritual gift?

In these ~~latter times,~~ *later Times,* the church needs spiritual people. People who not only say they are christians, but people whose lives are in harmony with what they confess. People who show themselves to be an example of the christian . in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. People who are studying the scriptures. *And* you can be that person today, by simply trusting God. Saying to God, I confess my sin and I turn my life over to you. *Yes - I will do as you have commended,*

Praise God ~~for~~ those who persevere in these things. *For they will* ~~Let us go~~ *inure salvation both for themselves and for those who hear."*
~~forth from this service to be an example of the Believer.~~

Shall we close in prayer