

STUDIES IN 1 TIMOTHY

LAW NUMBER TEN: "Leadership Involves Being a Good Servant"

1 Timothy 4:6-16

Key Verse 4:6: "By continually making known these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourishing yourself on the words of faith and the good teaching which you have closely followed."

TEXT:

v. 6 By continually making known these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourishing yourself on the words of faith and the good teaching which you have closely followed.

v. 7 But be shunning unhallowed and old womanish tales. Be training (exercising) yourself toward godliness;

v. 8 for physical training (bodily exercise) is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable with respect to all things, holding promise for the present life and of that about to come.

v. 9 Reliable is the word and worthy of wholehearted acceptance.

v.10 For this purpose we are toiling and struggling (wrestling), because we have fixed our hope upon the living God, who is the savior of all men, especially of believers.

v.11 These things be commanding and teaching.

v.12 Let no one look down on you (think little of) because you are young; but keep on becoming an example of the believers in word, in behavior, in love, in faith, in purity.

v.13 Until I am coming, give yourself to the reading, the exhortation (preaching), the teaching.

v.14 Do not neglect the gift which is in you, which was given you through prophecy with the laying on of hands of the elders.

v.15 Be practicing these things, be living (throwing yourself into) in them in order that your progress may be evident to everyone.

v.16 Keep on paying careful attention to yourself and to the teaching; keep on continuing in them (sticking to it), for in doing this you will save yourself and those who are hearing you.

INTRODUCTION:

("Just Wait Till You Have Children Of Your Own!")
by Erma Bombeck and Bil Keane)

The saddest teen-ager I ever knew was Stuart Stark, whose parents bridged the generation gap.

I was so sorry for the kid I could have cried. His mom and dad would go around saying things like, "Groovy, wow, uptight and hey, man." They dug their son's records, ate the same breakfast cereal, grew sideburns (not his mother) and protested everything their son protested.

Not only were they a drag to both generations, but they took away Stuart's inalienable rights to play Parental Squares with the rest of the guys.

Parental Squares is a take-off on the old "Can You Top This" game. One boy tells how square his parents are and the next one will try to top him. The first liar doesn't stand a chance. (Not to mention the parents.) It goes like this.

"My dad is so square he still uses words like 'doozy, neat and drip.'"

"That's nothing," interrupts a boy. "We were in a restaurant the other day and my dad called a waitress 'toots.'"

"Listen to this. My dad picked me up at football practice the other night and was wearing knee shorts, dress shoes, white socks and an elastic stocking up to his knee."

"YOUR DAD WEARS SUPP-HOSE!"

"Not only that. He has a picture in his billfold of him during the war with his arms around the Andrews Sisters."

"Who are the Andrew Sisters?"

"Who knows? But once I put a fingerprint on it and he almost clobbered me."

"My dad's so square," contributed another voice, "he sleeps in pajamas."

"Mine's so square he hoses down the lawn mower and dries it off so it won't rust each time he uses it."

"Mine saves old anti-freeze from year to year."

"My dad thinks he's a hippie if he doesn't shave on Saturday morning."

"Mine wants me to grow up to be just like the guys in the King Family."

There was a silence before the next round. Poor Stuart just sat there in silence. Then they were off again.

"Do any of your dads wear a belt around their slacks?"

"Are you kidding? I'm surprised my dad gave up wooden buttons on his trousers for zippers. He's so conservative he didn't buy a pullover sweater until last year."

"Has your dad talked with you about sex yet?"

"It was pitiful."

"I feel sorry for 'em."

"Yeah. My dad got so goofed up he had a sunflower seed making time with a blue jay."

"I know what you mean. My dad was so embarrassed he spelled out N-E-C-K-I-N-G."

"I got the squarrest dad of anyone here. He was on the phone the other night and said--are you ready for this?-- Okey dokey."

"My dad's squarer than that. The other day I said the meat was 'tough' and he made me apologize to Mom."

"Speaking of moms," said another, "does your mom get shook if you wash your hair before you go to bed?"

"My mom's worse," said a small voice. "She washes her hands every time she pets the dog."

"I don't believe it," they giggled. "You should see my mom. She wears a hairnet when the convertible top is down."

"Oh no. What about mine? Every time my hair grows down to my eyebrows she says the same dumb thing, 'I'm going to buy you a dog license.'"

"Does your mom try to stuff a hot dinner down you when you've just had three hamburgers and a double malted after school?"

"Yeah, and does she always tell you how you can't study, listen to the ball game, talk on the phone and chew gum all at the same time?"

"Look, you guys. My mom is really square. When my gym shoes get a hole in 'em and the sole flaps, she throws 'em away."

"Mine's worse," said a tall boy in the rear. "I gotta win the game with this one. My mom is so square that when I said to her, 'Why don't you let it all hang out and you'll feel better?' she sent me to my room, called Grandma and cried for fifteen minutes."

"Parents sure are weird," said one boy. "Wanta play another round?"

"Neh. Let's go play some ball."

Poor Stuart. He doesn't play ball well either.

pp. 121-23

EITHER WAY

A wealthy woman was interviewing an applicant for a job on her household staff.

"Do you know how to serve company?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am, either way," replied the young girl.

"And what do you mean by 'either way'."

"Why, so they will come back or so they won't."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

GETTING EVEN

The maid had just been discharged. Extracting five dollars from her purse, she threw it to Fido, the family dog.

When asked why by her former employer, she answered, "I never forget a friend. This was for helping me clean the dishes all this time."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

(The Signature of Jesus: On the Pages of Our Lives
by Brennan Manning)

Secular life is concerned frantically with escape from the fear of death--through novelty, variety, physical beauty, and possessions. John Silber, president of Boston University, blasts what he sees as today's self-centered hedonism: "The gospel preached during every television show is 'You only go around once in life, so get all the gusto you can.' It is a statement about theology; it is a statement about beer. It's lousy beer and even worse theology."

p. 82

(The God-Players by Earl Jabay)

Squarely on the top of man's world is a throne on which man sits, self-coronated. In such a world, man the egoist

- (1) ultimatizes himself,
- (2) lives in conflict with people and
- (3) ignores God.

p. 41

(Laugh Again by Charles R. Swindoll)

Someone who is truly unselfish is generous with his or her time and possessions, energy and money. As that works its way out, it is demonstrated in various ways, such as thoughtfulness and gentleness, an unpretentious spirit, and servant-hearted leadership.

- *When a husband is unselfish, he subjugates his own wants and desires to the needs of his wife and family.
- *When a mother is unselfish, she isn't irked by having to give up her agenda or plans for the sake of her children.
- *When an athlete is unselfish, it is the team that matters, not winning the top honors personally.
- *When a Christian is unselfish, others mean more than self. Pride is given no place to operate.

As Isaac Watts wrote early in the eighteenth century:

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

What strange-sounding words! Not because they are archaic but because everyone today is so selfish--and we are never told by our peers to be otherwise. Ours is a day of self-promotion, defending our own rights, taking care of ourselves first, winning by intimidation, pushing for first place, and a dozen other self-serving agendas. That one attitude does more to squelch our joy than any other. So busy defending and protecting and manipulating, we set ourselves up for a grim, intense existence--and it is not a modern problem.

Greece said, "Be wise, know yourself."

Rome said, "Be strong, discipline yourself."

Religion says, "Be good, conform yourself."

Epicureanism says, "Be sensuous, satisfy yourself."

Education says, "Be resourceful, expand yourself."

Psychology says, "Be confident, assert yourself."

Materialism says, "Be possessive, please yourself."

Asceticism says, "Be lowly, suppress yourself."

Humanism says, "Be capable, believe in yourself."

Pride says, "Be superior, promote yourself."

Christ says, "Be unselfish, humble yourself."

When I write that last line, I find myself shaking my head and smiling. In our selfish, grab-all-you-can-get society, the concept of cultivating an unselfish, servant-hearted attitude is almost a joke to the majority.
pp. 79-80

Matthew 20:26-28

It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

Matthew 23:11

But the greatest among you shall be your servant.

Matthew 24:45, 46

Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.

Matthew 25:21

His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master."

John 13:1-5

Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God, and was going back to God, rose from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself about. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

Isaiah 52:13

See, my servant will act wisely;
he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.

Philippians 2:7

but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

PAUL, PETER, JAMES, JUDE, and JOHN all refer to themselves as servants in the text of scripture.

2 Corinthians 4:5

For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

Joshua 1:1, 2

After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them--to the Israelites.

Joshua 24:14

Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness.

Joshua 24:29

After these things, Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of a hundred and ten.

Acts 9:36

Now in Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity, which she continually did.

(Secrets to Inner Beauty by Joe Aldrich)

Humpty-Dumpty was pushed, and the king's best men couldn't put him back together again. Sin has broken all of us, and we can't put ourselves back together, but God can. He does beautiful work and desires that we yield ourselves whole-heartedly to Him as candidates for beauty. We are already sons; He wants us also to serve. Servants are beautiful. Check your wardrobe. The ones who will hear "well done, thou good and faithful servant" will be wearing towels that are worn, faded and patched because of heavy use.

(Spiritual Authority by Watchman Nee)

As a delegated authority we are not to express our own views nor to itch to interfere with others' affairs. Some seem to consider themselves as supreme court justices. They pretend to know everything in the church and everything in the world. They have a ready opinion on anybody and everything, freely dispensing their teachings as if they were the gospel. A subjective person has never learned discipline, nor has he ever been seriously dealt with. He knows all, and can do all. His opinions and methods are as countless as the many items in a grocery store. Such a person is basically unqualified to be an authority, because the basic requirement for being God's delegated authority is to entertain no thought or opinion in oneself.

p. 119

(Victorious Christian Service by Alan Redpath)

I cannot work my soul to save,
 For that my Lord hath done;
 But I will work like any slave
 For love of God's dear Son.

p. 76

Christ has no hands but our
 hands to do His work today;
 He has no feet but our feet to
 lead men His way.
 He has no tongue but our tongue
 to tell men how He died;
 He has no help but our help to
 [bring?] them to His side.

We are the only Bible the careless
 world will read;
 We are the sinner's gospel, we
 are the scoffer's creed.
 We are the Lord's last message,
 given in deed and word;
 What if the type is crooked?
 What if the print is blurred?

What if our hands are busy with
 other work than His?
 What if our feet are walking
 where sin's allurements is?
 What if our tongues are speaking
 of things His lips would spurn?
 How can we hope to help Him and
 hasten His return?

(From Don's reference card file--source unknown)

We now come to chapter 4:6-16 and examine LAW #10:

"Leadership Involves Being a Good Servant."

William Barclay says of this passage:

Here is a passage close-packed with practical advice, not only for Timothy, but for any teacher or any servant of the Church who is charged with the duty of work and leadership in the Church.

p. 111

Hiebert says:

Having set forth the fact of the coming apostasy, Paul tells Timothy how to fortify himself and the churches under his care against error. He is to find fortification through a faithful ministry (vv. 6-11) and through becoming personal conduct (vv. 12-16).

p. 80

Guthrie says:

The apostle now begins a personal directive to Timothy, which serves at the same time all ministers of the gospel who are called to deal with similar situations.

p. 94

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out:

From his warning of the apostasy to come, Paul turned to Timothy and exhorted him to pass along these same warnings to others in the church. One of the works of a good ministry of Christ Jesus is that he is a faithful conduit of the truth to other Christians.

2 Timothy 2:2

And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

Psalm 71:17, 18

Since my youth, O God, you have taught me,
 and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds.
 Even when I am old and gray,
 do not forsake me, O God,
 til I declare your power to the next generation,
 your might to all who are to come.

v. 6 By continually making known these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourishing yourself on the words of faith and the good teaching which you have closely followed.

Here at the beginning of the study we have the KEY VERSE to LAW #10 of THE LAWS OF LEADERSHIP:

"Leadership Involves Being a Good Servant."

Paul is now turning to Timothy's conduct in view of apostasy.

Paul starts out by saying:

"BY CONTINUALLY MAKING KNOWN THESE THINGS TO THE BRETHERN."

In other words, by teaching these things (referring to what he has just finished speaking about in verses 1-5) "TO THE BRETHERN."

Hendriksen says:

Timothy must warn against coming danger. He must point out what will be the outcome of certain errors which in their initial form were manifesting themselves even now but which as to their further development belonged to the future. He must make plain to the leaders and to the people of Ephesus and surroundings what the Spirit has distinctly revealed as to the nature of the approaching falsehood and as to the way in which it should be combated. Hence, the expression "these matters" refers to the things touched upon in verses 1-5.

p. 149

Barclay says:

The word that is used for laying these things before the brothers is a most suggestive word. It does not mean to issue orders; it means rather to counsel, to advise, to point out, to suggest. It is a gentle, a humble, and a modest word. It means that the teacher and the leader must never dogmatically and pugnaciously and belligerently lay down the law. It means that he must not issue his instructions with the dogmatism of a dictator or the arrogance of a tyrant. It means that he must act rather as if he was reminding men of what they already knew, or suggesting to them, not that they should learn from him, but that they should discover from their own hearts, what is right.
p. 111

Paul says:

"BY CONTINUALLY MAKING KNOWN THESE THINGS TO THE BRETHREN,"
that is, to the brothers and sisters in the body of
Christ.

The next phrase says:

"YOU WILL BE A GOOD SERVANT OF CHRIST JESUS."

This is the KEY PHRASE in this particular study.

LAW #10 says:

"Leadership Involves Being a Good Servant."

(Celebration of Discipline by Richard J. Foster)

Learn the lesson, that if you are to do the work of a prophet, what you need is not a scepter but a hoe.

--Bernard of Clairvaux

As the cross is the sign of submission, so the towel is the sign of service. When Jesus gathered His disciples for the Last Supper they were having trouble over who was the greatest. This was no new issue for them. "And an argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest" (Lk. 9:46). Whenever there is trouble over who is the greatest there is trouble over who is the least. That is the crux of the matter for us, isn't it? Most of us know we will never be the greatest; just don't let us be the least.

Gathered at the Passover feast the disciples were keenly aware that someone needed to wash the others' feet. The problem was that the only people who washed feet were the least. So there they sat, feet caked with dirt. It was such a sore point that they were not even going to talk about it. No one wanted to be considered the least. Then Jesus took a towel and a basin and so redefined greatness.
p. 110

But when we choose to be a servant we give up the right to be in charge. There is a great freedom in this. If we voluntarily choose to be taken advantage of, then we cannot be manipulated. When we choose to be a servant we surrender the right to decide who and when we will serve. We become available and vulnerable.
p. 132

(Victorious Christian Service by Alan Redpath)

As we turn to this book, I pray that the Holy Spirit will burn into all our hearts that the Lord Jesus Christ has the supreme claim upon the life of each one of us. May you make your prayer as you read these messages, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do, and how wilt Thou have me to do it?"

p. 15

Have I painted a rugged picture for you? Well, my friend, it is a rugged task, you know. And if anybody is to undertake Christian work in my church, I am determined that they should know at the outset what is involved, and then they will never be able to blame me for ignorance. Some may resign because the price is too great to pay, but a hundred people with a burden are better than a thousand without. It is quality and not quantity that God is looking for; this is an age of mass production, but in the spiritual sense God deals with men one by one.

p. 39

Hiebert says:

Paul draws the picture of "an excellent servant of Christ Jesus" by describing his characteristics (v. 6), activities (vv. 7-9), motivation (v. 10), and duty (v. 11).

p. 80

(Life's Not Fair but God Is Good by Robert H. Schuller)

Anybody can be a blessing. You only need three things: A head, a heart, and hands. You only need to be able to give a look, a word, a touch. Anyone can be a channel of a blessing.

p. 134

(A Burden Shared by David Roper)

If I follow Paul's analogy, he's saying that we leaders who make the galley go, so to speak, are mere under-rowers. We're just part of the crew, seated down below decks in the lower seats, pulling on our own oar with all the other folks.

We're not up on top; that's the Captain's place. We set neither the course nor the cadence. It's His task to determine the heading and call the stroke.

This is something quite different from the usual picture of the pastor on the poop deck, resplendent in full regalia with telescope in one hand and tiller in the other, the only one who knows where the church is going, with everyone else down below.

No, the apostle wanted to be regarded in a much different way--as one of God's galley slaves, down in the hold with the rest of God's people, pulling on an oar like everyone else.

Paul's perspective should be ours: We're not the ones to call the shots and control the ship. That's the Captain's job. The direction a church goes, the speed with which it develops, and the size to which it grows are His prerogatives. Our job is to fix our eyes on Christ and row.

Furthermore, as Paul says, we are "stewards of the mysteries of God." A steward in Paul's day was simply a butler whose job it was to rummage around in the pantry and bring out bread and wine for family meals. And thus, Paul, like a good Roman steward day after day descended into his pantry--God Himself--and brought out the good things of God's Word on which others could feed.

That's our task as well--hiding ourselves in God and in His Word, learning His secrets so we can impart them to others.
pp. 134-35

As Hudson Taylor learned, "There are three stages in every great work of God. First it is impossible. Then it is difficult. And then it is done!"
p. 143

KINDNESS--A MARK OF GRACE

Despite his busy schedule during the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln often visited the hospitals to cheer the wounded. On one occasion he saw a young fellow who was near death. "Is there anything I can do for you?" asked the compassionate President. "Please write a letter to my mother," came the reply. Unrecognized by the soldier, the Chief Executive sat down and wrote as the youth told him what to say. The letter read, "My Dearest Mother, I was badly hurt while doing my duty, and I won't recover. Don't sorrow too much for me. May God bless you and Father. Kiss Mary and John for me." The young man was too weak to go on, so Lincoln signed the letter for him and then added this postscript: "Written for your son by Abraham Lincoln." Asking to see the note, the soldier was astonished to discover who had shown him such kindness. "Are you really our President?" he asked. "Yes," was the quiet answer. "Now, is there anything else I can do?" The lad feebly replied, "Will you please hold my hand? I think it would help to see me through to the end." The tall, gaunt man granted his request, offering warm words of encouragement until death stole in with the dawn.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

BELONGING AND SERVING

The Gospel Herald once published this pointed illustration: "When little Wilhelmina was crowned queen of Holland, the happy child was too young to realize the gravity and importance of the occasion. She was overwhelmed by the sights and sounds of the festivities. As thousands cheered when they saw her, she wondered what it involved on her part. 'Mama,' she asked, 'does this mean that all these people belong to me?' Smiling, her mother shook her head and replied, 'No, dear child, it means you belong to all these people!'"

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

PREREQUISITE FOR SERVICE

While visiting Franklin D. Roosevelt in the White House, Wendell Willkie asked, "Mr. President, why do you keep that frail, sickly man Harry Hopkins constantly at your elbow?" Without hesitation Roosevelt replied, "Mr. Willkie, through that door flows an incessant stream of men and women who almost invariably want something from me. Harry Hopkins desires only to serve me. To do that well, he must stay near me!"

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

John 20:21

Jesus therefore said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

LANSING

From the interesting 12-page program distributed by the Lansing Council at its Rally held May 3rd, we print the following, which we believe will be a blessing to our readers:

**Ten Maxims for Servants--
Are They Yours?**

(To be pondered on our knees).

1. Prepare the way for Jesus--do not attract people to yourself.
2. Learn to do things by prayer--use prayer as your first resort--not your last.
3. Keep the vision of lost, but savable souls--see the world with the eyes of the reaper.
4. Work by love and gentle means--win rather than drive.
 5. Die to selfish ambition--yours is not a money-making proposition.
 6. Concentrate on your job--you are not in it for a social good time.
 7. Avoid partiality--bring blessing wherever you go.
 8. Do not fight your own battles--let God defend you.
 9. Die to your independence--be willing to "live of the gospel."
 10. Do not be fastidious or fussy--learn the lesson of contentment.

(From Don's reference card file--source unknown)

Margaret Clarkson has captured the thought of what is involved in being a servant in her great hymn:

So Send I You

So send I you to labor unrewarded,
To serve unpaid, unloved, unsought, unknown,
To bear rebuke, to suffer scorn and scoffing;
So send I you to toil for me alone.

So send I you to bind the bruised and broken,
O'er wand'ring souls to work, to weep, to wake,
To bear the burdens of a world aweary;
So send I you to suffer for My sake.

So send I you to loneliness and longing,
With heart a hung'ring for the loved and known,
Forsaking home and kindred, friend and dear one;
So send I you to know My love alone.

So send I you to leave your life's ambition,
 To die to dear desire, self-will resign,
 To labor long and love where men revile you;
 So send I you to lose your life in Mine.

So send I you to hearts made hard by hatred,
 To eyes made blind because they will not see,
 To spend, tho' it be blood, to spend and spare not;
 So send I you to taste of Calvary.

"As the Father hath sent Me, so send I you."

(From The New Church Hymnal. Copyright - 1976, #238)

(Growing More Like Jesus by Richard L. Strauss)

Missionary Dan Crawford had a difficult time following in the steps of David Livingstone, who gave his life ministering the Word of God in Africa. Crawford didn't have the same impressive personality as his famous predecessor, and had trouble winning the loyalty of the tribal people. Even his supporters at home were not sure he could carry on the work. But by God's grace, he did win the hearts of the people and went on to have a marvelous ministry among them.

When he died, a well-worn copy of the New Testament was found in his pocket with a poem inscribed in the flyleaf by his own hand, revealing the secret of his success:

I cannot do it alone!
 The waves dash fast and high;
 The fog comes chilling around,
 And the light goes out in the sky.
 But I know that we two shall win in the end--
 Jesus and I.

Coward, and wayward, and weak,
 I change with the changing sky,
 Today so strong and brave,
 Tomorrow too weak to fly,
 But--He never gives in!
 So we two shall win--
 Jesus and I.

Our part is simply to abide in Him. His part is to live His life through us and reproduce His character in us. When we do our part and let Him do His, the world will begin to see His beauty in us and will be drawn irresistibly to Him.
 pp. 240-1

(Principle-Centered Leadership by Stephen R. Covey)

In effect, every morning they "yoke up" and put on the harness of service, thinking of others.

See yourself each morning yoking up, putting on the harness of service in your various stewardships. See yourself taking the straps and connecting them around your shoulders as you prepare to do the work assigned to you that day. See yourself allowing someone else to adjust the yoke or harness. See yourself yoked up to another person at your side--a co-worker or spouse--and learning to pull together with that person.

I emphasize this principle of service or yoking up because I have come to believe that effort to become principle-centered without a load to carry simply will not succeed. We may attempt to do it as a kind of intellectual or moral exercise, but if we don't have a sense of responsibility, of service, of contribution, something we need to pull or push, it becomes a futile endeavor.
p. 34

"BY CONTINUALLY MAKING KNOWN THESE THINGS TO THE BRETHREN, YOU WILL BE A GOOD SERVANT OF CHRIST JESUS."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

To do this, however, Timothy first had to keep himself nourished.

"NOURISHING YOURSELF ON THE WORDS OF FAITH AND THE GOOD TEACHING WHICH YOU HAVE CLOSELY FOLLOWED."

There are 2 PARTS to the "nourishment" that is to sustain Timothy in his ministry in Ephesus:

1. "THE WORDS OF FAITH,"
2. "THE GOOD TEACHING."

Hiebert reminds us:

Every good minister must take care to nourish his own soul on the truths which he is supplying to others. It is quite possible for him to become so busy finding food for the flock that he fails to nourish his own soul with the food he prepares.
p. 81

Guthrie says:

There is no better means of spiritual nourishment than a constant dwelling upon the great truths of the faith, which Timothy had had the inestimable privilege of receiving at first hand from the apostle.
p. 94

Barclay says:

Timothy is told that he must feed his life on the words of faith. No man can give out without taking in. He who would teach must himself be continually learning. It is the reverse of the truth that when a man becomes a teacher he ceases to be a learner. A man must ever feed his own mind before he can feed the minds of others; he must daily know Jesus Christ better before he can bring Christ to others. To bring others to the faith a man must himself feed upon the faith.
p. 111

Lenski says:

Every good servant of Christ is constantly "nourished" by them (durative present passive, the dative of means). Since he is fed on them he is the kind of man and of a minister that he ought to be. The connotation of "nourished" is strength and health.
p. 628

Hendriksen warns:

A minister who neglects to study his Bible and the doctrine based upon it atrophies his powers by disuse.
p. 150

Wiersbe says:

The "good minister" preaches the Word that he himself feeds on day by day. But it is not enough to preach the Word; he must also practice it.
p. 55

Demarest says:

The good minister of Jesus Christ majors on positive teaching. Such a minister will be engaged in a continual process of spiritual nourishment. The "Words of faith" and "good doctrine" become the staples in the daily diet of the one who would be a true servant of Jesus Christ. This is why daily study of the Scriptures, with periods for reflection and meditation, are such an integral part of the life of the Christian. A day without intentional reflection on the Word of God is like a day without nourishment. Down through the centuries, believers attest to this universally. There simply is no substitute for the daily nourishment that we need from God.

And the fast-food outlet approach is inadequate. Believe me, I've tried it! The greater the pressure and the more rapid the pace, the more I need to take significant blocks of time regularly for study and reflection upon the Bible and the great truths of the faith. A quick bite here and there, Jack-in-the-Box style, just doesn't do it.
p. 195

1 Peter 2:2, 3

like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

Matthew 4:4

But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"

Jeremiah 15:16

When your words came, I ate them;
they were my joy and my heart's delight,
for I bear your name,
O Lord God Almighty.

"BY CONTINUALLY MAKING KNOWN THESE THINGS TO THE BRETHREN,
YOU WILL BE A GOOD SERVANT OF CHRIST JESUS, NOURISHING
YOURSELF ON:

1. "THE WORDS OF FAITH,"
2. "THE GOOD TEACHING WHICH YOU HAVE CLOSELY FOLLOWED."

There are 2 THINGS here involved in "NOURISHING" oneself:

1. FEEDING ON THE WORD,
2. OBEYING THE WORD.

The true food is "FAITH" and not "the doctrines of demons."

Jude 3

Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

It is not only "THE WORDS OF FAITH," but "THE GOOD TEACHING WHICH YOU HAVE CLOSELY FOLLOWED."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

This last phrase probably refers to Paul's own instructions to his young disciple which Timothy had faithfully carried out.

Barnes says:

The word used here means, properly, to accompany side by side; to follow closely; to follow out, trace, or examine.
p. 165

It does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. The meaning here seems to be, that Timothy had followed out the doctrines in which he had been trained to their legitimate results; he had accurately seen and understood their bearing, as leading him to embrace the Christian religion.
p. 165

OCCUPIED "FOR" OR "WITH" JESUS?

An unknown author has summed up the lesson of Luke 10 in these poetic words:

"Martha in the kitchen, serving with her hands;
Occupied FOR Jesus, with her pots and pans.
Loving Him, yet fevered, burdened to the brim,
Careful, troubled Martha, occupied FOR Him.

Mary on the footstool, eyes upon her Lord;
Occupied WITH Jesus, drinking in His word.
This one thing was needful, all else strangely dim:
Loving, resting Mary, occupied WITH Him.

So may we, like Mary, choose the better part:
Resting in His presence, hands and feet and heart;
Drinking in His wisdom, strengthened by His grace,
Waiting for the summons, eyes upon His face.

When it comes, we're ready, spirit, will, and nerve;
Mary's heart to worship, Martha's hand to serve;
This the rightful order, as our lamps we trim,
Occupied WITH Jesus, then occupied FOR Him!"

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

Now in the remaining verses of this passage, Paul is going to give Timothy a further opportunity to follow the good teaching that he is going to share with his young understudy.

There are 10 COMMANDS that are going to be given in these remaining verses.

v. 7 But be shunning unhallowed and old womanish tales. Be training (exercising) yourself toward godliness;

The word "BUT" forms the contrast here.

COMMAND #1:

"BUT BE SHUNNING UNHALLOWED AND OLD WOMANISH TALES."

1 Timothy 1:4

nor to pay attention to legends and endless genealogies, which give rise to endless speculations rather than (acceptance in faith of God's administration) the divine training that is in faith.

"We are what we eat." The apostle tells Timothy to nourish himself on the good stuff, not on the junk food.

2 Peter 1:16

For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

But since Timothy was to be a channel of God's truth to others, he was to "have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales."

Hendriksen says:

Timothy must be nourished. Of course he must use the proper victuals. He must not feed on trash.
p. 150

These worldly, old wives' tales had nothing of nourishment within them for the spiritual man.

Hendriksen says further:

They are nothing but drivel, and belong to the category of silly superstitions which old women sometimes try to palm off on their neighbors or on their grandchildren.
p. 150

Wiersbe says:

These are, of course, the false teachings and traditions of the apostates. These doctrines have no basis in Scripture; in fact, they contradict the Word of God. They are the kind of teachings that silly people would discuss, not dedicated men and women of the Word! No doubt these teachings involved the false doctrines just named (4:2-3). Paul also warned Titus about "Jewish fables" (Titus 1:14). Paul warned Timothy about these same "fables" in his second letter (2 Tim. 4:4).
p. 55

Paul tells Timothy to "BE SHUNNING" these things, and this is in the present tense. It ought to be something that is going on all the time.

Barnes says:

That is, refuse to pay attention to them, or reject them. Do not consider them of sufficient importance to occupy your time.
p. 165

Barnes says further:

Old women's stories; or such as old women held to be important. The word is used here, as it is often with us, in the sense of silly.
p. 165

Lenski says:

The two adjectives are also full of disdain: "profane," with not a sacred thing about them, unworthy of a truly religious person's attention; "old-womanish," unworthy even of a sensible person's attention, fit only for senile, silly old crones to chatter about.
p. 631

Hiebert says:

The reference is not to 4:1-5, for that is still future, but to 1:4. Timothy already has people coming to him with these fables. In disdain Paul characterizes them as "profane and old wives' fables." The first adjective points out that there is nothing sacred about them, while the other indicates their futile, senseless nature; they are nothing but silly fictions, fit only for senile, childish old crones to chatter about.

p. 81

Lock says:

. . . such as old women tell to children, quite unfit for strong young men who have to be trained to discipline themselves.

pp. 50-51

J. Vernon McGee says:

As a young boy I remember there were a lot of sayings that the older people would quote to us children. I remember one dear Christian woman who had some peculiar ideas. One was that everybody should take sulphur and tartar mixed with a little honey or molasses. I was fed that because my mother listened to her. I took enough sulphur and tartar to make a small mountain! I have no idea whether it did me any good or not, but she thought it was the only thing I needed as a boy. Similarly, when it was discovered that I had cancer I was given over a hundred books on diet to help rid me of the cancer. I couldn't have followed one of these books without contradicting another! One said to eat plenty of grapes, the other said not to eat grapes. One would say to take honey, another to keep away from it. I decided to listen to the Great Physician and to leave my case in His hands.

p. 448

I can remember several things in my childhood: First of all, the cure for everything that a little boy had was castor oil. And if you took cod liver oil on a daily basis, you would never get sick. I proved them wrong on that because I got sick every time I took it.

I also grew up believing that if you went to the swimming pool in the summer you were probably going to get polio.

"BUT BE SHUNNING UNHALLOWED AND OLD WOMANISH TALES. BE TRAINING (EXERCISING) YOURSELF TOWARD GODLINESS."

COMMAND #2:

"BE TRAINING (EXERCISING) YOURSELF TOWARD GODLINESS."

What Paul is telling Timothy is to nourish himself with health foods and exercise.

The doctrines should be followed by practice.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Timothy was to devote himself to much more manly pursuits. Paul introduced an athletic image with the words "be training yourself." The verb here is gymnaze from which comes the English gymnasium. But Timothy's training was to be for godliness, not physical fitness. Paul often used athletic analogies to drive home the need for spiritual discipline.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

Philippians 3:12

Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:12

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;

2 Timothy 2:4

No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

Someone has said:

Failure to prepare is preparation for failure.

Hiebert says:

. . . instead of occupying himself with such fruitless activity, Timothy is urged to "exercise thyself unto godliness." His chief concern both for himself and for the members of the churches is to be that active, healthy practical piety which ever seeks personal holiness and is completely devoted to God. The present tense means that he is to "keep on exercising" himself thus, as he is now doing. As the Greek athlete disciplines his body with strenuous exercise and rigorous training, so Timothy is to discipline himself in godliness.
pp. 81-82

IN TRAINING

. . . exercise thyself rather unto godliness.
1 Timothy 4:7

Training oneself to be physically fit involves a lot of discipline and hard work. I should know. Some days my usually enjoyable 3-mile lunchtime run can become an ordeal in which I merely try to survive long enough to get back to the shower--especially if a strong wind is blowing. I fight a daily battle to give in to my tendencies to eat more and exercise less. Giving in to those feelings, though, results in a few pounds I don't need, as well as a few more days of sickness.

Likewise, spiritual fitness takes time, effort, and training. It doesn't come naturally. The apostle Paul realized this, for he told Timothy to exercise with the aim of becoming more and more godly. Spiritual training can be a joy, but it is not without discipline. It takes a consistent study of God's Word. It means setting aside time for prayer. It involves putting what we've studied into practice in day-to-day living. It simply means saying no to a lot of activities that want our attention. But the benefits are worth it all. You see, spiritual fitness prepares us for daily battles with sin, for a daily walk with the Lord, and for the strength we will need in helping and training others in the Christian life.

Do you have a plan for keeping yourself spiritually fit? Or are you allowing the muscles of your inner being to become weak and unprepared for the daily stresses of life? Keeping in training spiritually means heeding Paul's admonition and growing daily in the discipline of godliness.

--Kurt E. De Haan, Guest Staff Writer

Leave no unguarded place,
No weakness of the soul;
Take every virtue, every grace,
And fortify the whole. --Wesley

Self-discipline is doing the thing you ought
before doing the thing you like.

(From Our Daily Bread, October 3)

(We Live Too Short and Die Too Long by Walter M. Bortz, II)

"Exercise regularly, eat a balanced diet, and do something nice for someone." This platitude sounds too bland. Exercise and diet are boilerplate; but now we have increasing medical evidence that volunteering has major health benefits, for both those who give and those who receive. People who need people are healthier. Richard Leakey preaches that rather than aggression being our dominant primal habit, cooperativeness is. Being nice to someone has major effects on the neurotransmitters and on the immune system as well. Good Samaritanism may be the new prescription, as the life benefits are tallied.

p. 272

(Principle-Centered Leadership by Stephen R. Covey)

Finally, they regularly exercise the four dimensions of the human personality: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual.

They participate in some kind of balanced, moderate, regular program of aerobic exercise, meaning cardiovascular exercise--using the large leg muscles and working the heart and lungs. This provides endurance--improving the capacity of the body and brain to use oxygen--along with many other physical and mental benefits. Also valuable are stretching exercises for flexibility and resistance exercises for strength and muscle tone.

They exercise their minds through reading, creative problem-solving, writing, and visualizing. Emotionally they make an effort to be patient, to listen to others with genuine empathy, to show unconditional love, and to accept responsibility for their own lives and decisions and reactions. Spiritually they focus on prayer, scripture study, meditation, and fasting.

I'm convinced that if a person will spend one hour a day on these basic exercises, he or she will improve the quality, productivity, and satisfaction of every other hour of the day, including the depth and restfulness of sleep.

No other single hour of your day will return as much as the hour you invest in sharpening the saw--that is, in exercising these four dimensions of the human personality. If you will do this daily, you will soon experience the impact for good on your life.

p. 38

Guy King says:

There are, alas, many weak Christians, but that ought to be a contradiction in terms--the Bible records many instances of such weaklings, but it leaves us in no doubt that it disapproves of them, makes no excuse for them. Indeed, all the teaching is on the other side. Right away back in Joshua i. 6, 7, 9, 18, it is "Be strong . . . only be strong . . . Have not I commanded thee, Be strong . . . only be strong . . ." In Haggai ii. 4, to leaders and to people, it is "Be strong . . . be strong . . . be strong". In I Corinthians XVI. 13, it is "Be strong". In Ephesians VI. 10, it is, "Finally, my brethren, be strong". There it is, then, the oft repeated exhortation, to soldier, to leader, to worker, to believer--be strong. This is not an expectation for the few, it is expected of all; God has no other purpose and proposal for His people than that they be robust in Christian stamina--strong enough to stand up to the blasts of temptation, strong enough to lend an arm to others on the road, strong enough to do solid hard work for God, strong enough to engage victoriously in the battle of the Lord, strong enough to grow still stronger day by day. Such is God's ideal for us. And if for us ordinary folk, how much more for those who are called to the superintendency of the saints--they, like Timothy, will need a special measure of this healthful, virile constitution, that they themselves may stand firm and upright, and that they may help others to stand. So our passage speaks of "nourished", in verse 6, and "exercise thyself", in verse 7.
pp. 73-74

King also says:

. . . the tense of the verb "nourished" suggests that it is not by one outstanding banquet, nor by an occasional feast, but by a regular diet of everyday feeding on good solid fare--not, be it noted, fancy pastries, but honest bread and butter, perhaps with a little jam!
p. 74

v. 8 for physical training (bodily exercise) is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable with respect to all things, holding promise for the present life and of that about to come.

Now Paul gives us the reason for the 2 previous commands.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

As valuable as "physical fitness (exercise)" used only here in the New Testament may be--and Paul did not disparage it--spiritual fitness, or godliness, is much more valuable. Physical fitness is profitable only literally for a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, not merely in its present transient life, but in the life to come, that is, for all eternity. Godliness colors all aspects of temporal and eternal life, bestowing its blessing on all it touches.

I do not think I will ever hear on the deathbed of any person:

I wish that I had run more miles.

J. Vernon McGee points out:

Paul is not saying bodily exercise is wrong. He is saying, "Let's hold things in correct perspective."
p. 449

Are you as anxious about godliness as you are about physical exercise, about athletic events? The physical ends at the end of this life, but godliness is carried over into the next.
p. 449

Wiersbe says:

Phillips Brooks said, "The great purpose of life--the shaping of character by truth." Godly character and conduct are far more important than golf trophies or home-run records, though it is possible for a person to have both. Paul challenged Timothy to be as devoted to godliness as an athlete is to his sport. We are living and laboring for eternity.
p. 56

Guy King says:

The gymnasium of godliness is, for the most part, an open-air stadium, where the fresh breezes of the heavenly heights play upon the soul, empowering it for the exciting demands of the mounting life, or for the exacting call of the running life, or for the exceeding humdrum of the everyday walking life.
p. 76

Hendriksen points out:

He is saying two things: a. that the boon which bodily training bestows, however great it may be, is definitely inferior to the reward which the godly life promises. The former at best bestows health, vigor, beauty of physical form. These things are wonderful and to be appreciated. But the latter bestows life everlasting! b. that the sphere in which bodily training is of benefit is far more restricted than that in which godly living confers its reward. The former concerns the here and now. The latter concerns the here and now but also reaches far beyond it.
p. 151

Guthrie says:

He turns to athletics for his illustration, probably to emphasize the contrast between manly exercise and old wives' tales. There is a further comparison between physical and spiritual discipline. The apostle admits a place for the former but sets a strict limit upon its exercise. It profits only a little. Spiritual training on the other hand is profitable unto all things, or better 'in all directions.'
p. 95

Demarest says:

"I'm physically fit, but spiritually flabby." That may become the epitaph on too many of our headstones.
p. 197

Richard Semaan has written a little tract called "The Daily Dozen: 12 Exercises for Spiritual Fitness."

They are:

1. KNOW THE LORD
2. LOVE THE LORD
3. OBEY THE LORD
4. TRUST IN THE LORD
5. WAIT FOR THE LORD
6. REST IN THE LORD
7. PRAY TO THE LORD
8. HOPE IN THE LORD
9. SERVE THE LORD
10. THANK THE LORD
11. GROW IN THE LORD
12. SHARE THE LORD

(American Tract Society, Garland, TX. Copyright 1988)

"FOR PHYSICAL TRAINING (BODILY EXERCISE) IS PROFITABLE FOR A LITTLE, BUT [in contrast] GODLINESS [which is spiritual training] IS PROFITABLE WITH RESPECT TO ALL THINGS, HOLDING PROMISE FOR":

1. "THE PRESENT LIFE,"
2. "OF THAT ABOUT TO COME."

The promise for "THE PRESENT LIFE" is seen in:

John 10:10b

I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.

"AND OF THAT ABOUT TO COME" is:

the blessed assurance that we will hear from His lips, "Well done thou good and faithful servant."

Let us accept the biblical challenge of:

Hebrews 12:1

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

v. 9 Reliable is the word and worthy of wholehearted acceptance.

This statement confirms what has been said in verse 8.

Hiebert says:

The words of verse 9, "Faithful is the saying," are best regarded as referring to what precedes rather than to what follows. They constitute the apostolic seal upon what has just been said about the superiority of godliness.

p. 83

v.10 For this purpose we are toiling and struggling (wrestling), because we have fixed our hope upon the living God, who is the savior of all men, especially of believers.

The word "FOR" points us back to verse 8 and gives us a reason for what has been said in that verse.

"FOR THIS PURPOSE WE ARE":

1. "TOILING, "
2. "STRUGGLING (WRESTLING)."

Both of these words, "TOILING" and "STRUGGLING" have athletic overtones.

The word "TOILING" reminds us of:

Philippians 2:16

holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

It is a picture of ATHLETIC FATIGUE.

It was Vince Lombardi who said:

Fatigue makes cowards of us all.

It is the will to go on when you hit the wall in the marathon of life.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

"To this end," said Paul, "we labor and strive," that is, to develop the godliness of verse 8.

Hiebert says:

"For to this end we labor," that is, in order that the promise which godliness has may be fulfilled in us. This goal provides the motivation or inspiration of the good minister. With this goal before us, "we labor and strive."
p. 83

Demarest points out:

The picture is of one engaged in demanding and fatiguing toil. To be genuinely engaged in Christian service and ministry requires total fitness, physical and spiritual. The needs are overwhelming. The demands are constant. Only those who are in top condition can do the work required.
p. 197

Hendriksen says:

That Paul and also Timothy are indeed deeply convinced of the reliability of the declaration regarding the gift of life, now and in the future, to be enjoyed by all those who live godly lives, follows from what the apostle now states: **For to this end we toil and strive, because we have set our hope on the living God.**
p. 152

Lenski says:

Toiling and straining means working and contending for others in the offices which Paul and Timothy occupied.
p. 639

The 2nd word that we have translated "STRUGGLING" is an athletic word too that refers to the agony involved in a workout. We have put in parenthesis the word "WRESTLING."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The word "strive" translates agonizometha. I am "agonizing," which is another athletic term. Paul practiced what he had just preached to Timothy.

Colossians 1:29

And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

Hendriksen says:

They strive, that is, in the spiritual arena they struggle against the forces of darkness, in order that they may bring men out of the darkness into the light. They suffer agonies.
p. 153

Wanting to be SPECIALISTS IN SPIRITUALITY, they are:

"TOILING AND STRUGGLING."

"BECAUSE WE HAVE FIXED OUR HOPE UPON THE LIVING GOD, WHO IS THE SAVIOR OF ALL MEN, ESPECIALLY OF BELIEVERS."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Paul knew his struggle was worth it because his hope was set, not on himself, some philosophy of life, other men, or nonexistent gods.

It was set upon the living God.

1 Timothy 3:15

but if I am delaying, you may know how it is necessary for men to be conducting themselves in the house of God, which is the assembly of the living God, a pillar and support of the truth.

"WHO IS THE SAVIOR OF ALL MEN, ESPECIALLY OF BELIEVERS."

John 4:42

and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Again Paul stated that God is "the Savior of all men" since He desires that all be saved, and He provided Christ as the ransom to make that salvation possible. The fruition of this objective is in believers.

1 Timothy 2:4

who is desiring all men to be saved and to come to an experiential knowledge of the truth.

J. Vernon McGee says:

"Specially of those that believe." He is the Savior of all men, but you can turn Him down if you want to. Let me illustrate this for you. They say that a plane leaves the Los Angeles International Airport every minute, and I could get on any one of them (if I had the courage!). All I need to do is get a ticket and get on the plane. It's a plane for everybody, you see, but not everybody will take it. Christ is the Savior of all men, but only those who believe will be saved (see John 3:16, 1 John 2:2).
p. 449

v.11 These things be commanding and teaching.

The words "THESE THINGS" point us back to verses 6-10.

This is COMMAND #3 in a series of 10 COMMANDS in the passage.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary translates "COMMAND" as "insist upon" and "these things" refer to the immediate context. Paul was prodding Timothy to be firm and courageous in his ministry.

(Lincoln on Leadership: Executive Strategies for Tough Times
by Donald T. Phillips)

Even though he thoroughly prepared many of his addresses, it appears that Lincoln possessed a true gift when it came to communicating his feelings and emotions. That talent can be readily observed in one of his shortest and most moving speeches, his farewell remarks to the people of Springfield who'd gathered at the railway station to see him off to Washington. At eight o'clock on the morning of February 11, 1861, the president-elect arrived at the depot with his family to find that more than a thousand of his friends, neighbors, and colleagues had gathered to say good-bye. Moved by their presence, and feeling somewhat obligated to say a few words, Lincoln made the following impromptu speech:

My friends--no one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being, who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in Him, who can go with me, and remain with you and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

pp. 149-50

v.12 Let no one look down on you (think little of) because you are young; but keep on becoming an example of the believers in word, in behavior, in love, in faith, in purity.

We have now come to the KEY PASSAGE to the whole book. It is out of this exhortation to Timothy that we have chosen the key thought of THE LAWS OF LEADERSHIP.

This is COMMAND #4 in a series of 10 COMMANDS in this passage.

1 Corinthians 16:10, 11

Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without cause to be afraid; for he is doing the Lord's work, as I also am. Let no one therefore despise him. But send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I expect him with the brethren.

Timothy is to be maintaining his dignity by being mature spiritually.

Timothy is probably about 35 years of age when this letter is written to him.

Paul turns to the personal life of young Timothy in these closing verses of our passage, verses 12-16.

Hendriksen summarizes this verse by saying:

. . . he should become a model of what the believers are; and this in five respects:

- a. in speech, that is, in personal conversation.
 - b. in conduct, that is, in customs, habits, ways of dealing with people, etc.
 - c. in love, that is, in deep personal attachment to his brothers and in genuine concern for his neighbors, always seeking to promote the welfare of all.
 - d. in faith, that is, in the exercise of that gift of God which is the root from which love springs.
 - e. in purity, that is, in complete conformity, both in thought and act, with God's moral law.
- p. 158

Hiebert says:

He is not to allow them to push him around because of his youth.
p. 85

Lange says:

The youthful overseer of the flock must see that he be in advance of his years.
p. 55

THE LASTING EFFECT OF EXAMPLE

. . . be an example to the believers in word, in conduct,
in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 1 Tim. 4:12

A soap advertisement depicted a little fellow looking intently at his shadow that fell across his pathway. The slogan underneath read: "That's the only thing I can't wash out!" As I studied this clever bit of sales promotion, I was reminded of the shadow of influence we cast on others by our example. Wrong attitudes and actions can make an impression on their minds that is difficult to erase. But we can also leave a lasting effect for good. In fact, as we strive to maintain a loving spirit, a vibrant faith, and purity of life, we will not only encourage fellow believers as Paul instructed Timothy, but we may even influence others to consider the claims of Christ on their lives.

Years ago the communist government in China commissioned an author to write a biography of Hudson Taylor with the purpose of distorting the facts and presenting him in a bad light. They wanted to discredit the name of this consecrated missionary of the gospel. As the author was doing his research, he was increasingly impressed by Taylor's saintly character and godly life, and he found it extremely difficult to carry out his assigned task with a clear conscience. Eventually, at the risk of losing his life, he laid aside his pen, renounced his atheism, and received Jesus as his personal Savior.

Whether we realize it or not, our example leaves an impression on others. Let's ask God to help us make it one of love, faith, and purity of life. --H.G.B.

O Christian, remember you bear His dear name,
Your life is for others to view;
A living sample, men praise you or blame,
And measure your Savior by you! --Anon.

Example is not the main thing in influencing others,
it is the only thing.

(From Our Daily Bread, October 24)

BE THEIR IDEAL!

. . . be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

1 Timothy 4:12

The Sunday School Times carried a testimony of a 16 year-old girl, which shows the powerful influence of a loving example. She said, "Only God knows what my Sunday school teacher has done for me. I was saved when I was 14, but my family made fun of me. I guess I was a weak Christian, for soon I went back to my old sinful ways. As a result, most of the church members turned against me. But my teacher stuck with me, even when I was rude and mean to her. One evening she put her arms around me and said with tear-filled eyes, 'Oh, my dear, I just love you so much. Jesus knows all you've had to fight. Someone held on to me too when I was your age, and it saved me from a life of sin. I understand so well.' Her example and deep concern drew me back into fellowship with the Lord."

Will Houghton penned a similar testimony in verse: "A Sunday school teacher, I don't know his name,/ A wonderful person who never found fame,/ So faithful, so earnest when I was a boy--/ He stuck to his task, though I tried to annoy./ He never was missing in cold or in heat,/ A smile his face lighted the moment we'd meet;/ He taught by example as well as by word,/ This splendid old teacher who honored his Lord./ He helped my young life more than ever he knew;/ From all that he taught me, I've learned to be true;/ I know he's gone on now to join Heaven's ranks,/ But someday in Glory I want to say thanks."

The words "be thou an example" admonish us to be a pattern, an ideal for others to imitate. And you don't have to be a Sunday school teacher to do that. --H.G.B.

May everything I say or do
Flow from a heart that's filled with love,
And every lesson that I teach
Point seeking souls to God above. --D.J.D

THOT: The greatest gift we can give to others is a good example.

(From Our Daily Bread, October 12)

"LITTLE TUGS"

Let no one despise your youth, but be an example.

--1 Timothy 4:12

At the close of his sermon, a pastor directed some special words to the children. He said, "If you visit New York City, you will see great ships coming in from the ocean. They wait outside the harbor until tugs go out to meet them. A cable stretched between the large vessel and the tug enables the small boat to tow the big ship safely to the mooring dock."

"Boys and girls," concluded the preacher, "you can be 'little tugs' for Jesus. You can throw the cords of love to some bigger person--an aunt, an uncle, or even your parents--and bring them to Christ."

Two young girls who lived next door to my home began attending Sunday school and were converted to Christ. They invited their parents to come, and in time both of them had received Jesus as their Savior. The "little tugs" had brought the "big ships" into God's harbor of grace.

Paul's words to Timothy in our Scripture reading remind us that we are never too young to be used by God. Although he was not a child, he may have felt that his youth was a hindrance. But Paul said, in effect, "Through your good example you can be an influence for the Lord."

No matter how young you are, or how insignificant you feel, you can bring others to Christ.

--HGB

Have you noticed that the childlike faith
Of a little girl or boy
Has so often shown to older ones
How to know salvation's joy?

--JDB

**EVEN A LITTLE EXAMPLE
CAN HAVE A BIG INFLUENCE FOR CHRIST.**

(From Our Daily Bread, March 6)

Let us take a closer look at the 5 AREAS where Timothy is challenged to be an example. Timothy is to be an example in:

1. COMMUNICATION,
2. CONDUCT,
3. COMPASSION,
4. CONFESSION,
5. and CHASTITY.

1. First of all, in COMMUNICATION Paul says:

"KEEP ON BECOMING AN EXAMPLE OF THE BELIEVERS IN WORD."

Timothy needs to be careful about letting the Spirit control his tongue. It has been said that "actions speak louder than words," but, many times words speak louder than actions.

(Portraits of Perseverance by Henry Gariepy)

And like the speaker of whom it was said, "He could not have said less unless he had said more," Job satirized: "If only you would be altogether silent! For you, that would be wisdom" (13:5).

p. 75

(Men Who Win: Pursuing the Ultimate Prize
by Steven J. Lawson)

A woman once came to John Wesley, convicted of her gossiping. She confessed that she wanted to put her sinful tongue on the altar. Wesley replied curtly that he did not think the altar was large enough.

Another time, a young lady said to Wesley, "I think I know what my talent is."

Wesley said, "Tell me."

"I think it is to speak my mind," she replied.

"I do not think God would mind if you buried that talent," Wesley said.

p. 121

2. The 2nd focuses on CONDUCT IN BEHAVIOR:

1 Peter 2:15

For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.

1 Thessalonians 2:10

You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers;

3. The 3rd points to the motivating factor of ministry, COMPASSION, where Timothy is challenged to:

"BE AN EXAMPLE . . . IN LOVE."

This is that agape, that love which is produced by the Spirit of God dwelling within us.

4. CONFESSIOIN:

"BUT KEEP ON BECOMING AN EXAMPLE OF THE BELIEVERS
. . . IN FAITH."

Barnes says:

At all times, and in all trials, show to believers by your example how they ought to maintain unshaken confidence in God.
p. 168

Lock says:

Possibly "faith," but more probably, owing to the context, "fidelity," "trustworthiness."
p. 52

5. CHASTITY:

"BUT KEEP ON BECOMING AN EXAMPLE . . . IN PURITY."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

This is a reference to moral cleanness. It is used only here and in chapter 5:2 of a pure mind.

One is reminded of:

Psalm 119:9, 11

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?
By taking heed thereto according to thy word.

Thy word have I hid in my heart
that I might not sin against Thee.

2 Corinthians 10:5b

. . . we are taking every thought captive to the
obedience of Christ,

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is
honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever
is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any
excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your
mind dwell on these things.

Lock says:

[It is a reference to] purity of act and thought.
p. 53

Guy King says:

. . . not only in the moral significance of the word, though that of course; but in the more general connotation: purity of motive as well as of action. Shall we say, practical holiness? What a catena of fruits is here displayed, to enlarge and to enliven the character of any young man destined for leadership.
p. 79

Hiebert says:

"Purity" speaks not of personal chastity but of purity of intention, sincerity of character. Others take "faith" in its usual meaning, with love as the second pair, and interpret "purity" as the concluding element denoting the nature of the life rooted in love and faith.
p. 86

WHAT YOUNG PASTORS NEED

Let no one despise your youth.
--1 Timothy 4:12

As a sensitive young pastor in his first church, John Carmichael felt like a failure. Week after week he stood in the pulpit with great fear and anxiety, expecting the people to reject him. One Sunday morning as the elders solemnly filed into his study for prayer before the service, he felt sure they were going to ask for his resignation.

When everyone was seated, one of the elders said, "John, we are all aware of your nervousness in the pulpit, and we feel for you. We want you to be confident and at ease. We'd like to suggest that when you bring us God's Word you forget about everything but your message and the souls of those who need that Word. And remember, we're praying for you."

Then, continuing to encourage the insecure young man, the elder gently said, "As you look at us before you begin to speak, say to yourself, 'They are all loving me.' It will be true from the oldest to the youngest. We will all be loving you very much." Those warm words lifted John Carmichael's downcast spirit and enabled him to continue his service for Christ.

Young pastors need our love and prayers. (The older ones do too!)

Think of some way you can encourage your pastor today.

--R.W.D.

Send your pastor a note of appreciation or call to thank him for his faithful ministry. Pray for his study of the Word, for his growth and maturity in Christ, for his wife and family.

**THERE WILL BE MORE POWER IN THE PULPIT
WHEN THERE IS MORE PRAISE FROM THE PEW.**

(From Our Daily Bread, November 25)

PREACHING PRACTICE

Be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love,
in spirit, in faith, in purity. --1 Timothy 4:12

A pastor was on a guided tour of a mission field. The leader of the group asked him if he would be willing to greet the believers and deliver a brief message when they arrived. He consented, but was somewhat reluctant because of the language barrier.

The guide, who was familiar with the country, tried to put him at ease by explaining, "I'll interpret for you. We'll practice a few times before the service. I'm sure you'll have no difficulty."

"I'll try," replied the pastor, "even though I'm not in the habit of practicing what I preach!"

We may smile at what the pastor said, but his words express a problem we all face as Christians: We don't always practice what we "preach." What we claim to believe and what we teach to others doesn't always match the way we live. Our actions sometimes contradict all our good words.

And what people see in our lives can make a bigger impression on them than what they hear from our lips.

Paul admonished Timothy to be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Although this instruction was directed to a young preacher in the early church, it also applies to me and to you.

Lord, help us to practice what we preach. --H.G.B.

You claim you're no preacher, but still you do preach

A powerful sermon each day;

The acts of your life are the things that you teach,

And not just the things that you say. --Anon.

AN OUNCE OF EXAMPLE IS WORTH A TON OF ADVICE.

(From Our Daily Bread, April 1)

v.13 Until I am coming, give yourself to the reading, the exhortation (preaching), the teaching.

We come to COMMAND #5 in the series of 10 COMMANDS in the passage.

Here Paul outlines the 3 MAIN TASKS of the minister. You could say:

"UNTIL I AM COMING, GIVE YOURSELF TO" these 3 THINGS:

1. "THE READING,"
2. "THE EXHORTATION (PREACHING),"
3. "THE TEACHING."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Paul exhorted Timothy to attend to his public ministry as well as his private life. In his public ministry, there are 3 things that need to be done.

READ THE BOOK IN 1988

Till I come, give attention to reading,
to exhortation, to doctrine. 1 Timothy 4:13

One day I called on a 92-year-old man who lived in a retirement home. I found him dressed in his best suit, resting on his bed, and reading the Bible. When I entered, he continued as though no one else was there. After a few seconds, I said, "That's a good Book you're reading." "The best," he replied. Then, recognizing my voice, he lowered his Bible and said, "Brother Paul, I'm reading it through for the fourteenth time, and it's better than ever!"

Martin Luther said, "For several years I have read the Bible through twice in 12 months. It is a great and powerful tree, each word of which is a mighty branch. Each of these branches have I well shaken, so desirous was I to know what each one bore and what it would give me. And the shaking of them has never disappointed me."

When we read the Word of God with anticipation and eagerness, as those two men did, we too will experience grand results. We will spend time meditating on its nourishing food for the soul. Our efforts will be rewarded as the Holy Spirit causes the Word to become a part of us--strengthening our inner being.

To help you get started, we have again included a through-the-Bible-in-one-year reading schedule in Our Daily Bread. Why not resolve right now to read the Book of books in 1988. It will make you a stronger Christian. And, like my friend, you'll find that it's "better than ever."

--P.R.V.

My Bible to me is a treasure house
Where I never fail to find
The things I need from day to day
For the heart and soul and mind.

--Anon.

A well-read Bible is the sign of a well-fed soul.

(From Our Daily Bread, January 1)

v.14 Do not neglect the gift which is in you, which was given you through prophecy with the laying on of hands of the elders.

Here we have COMMAND #6.

This could be a gentle rebuke if we translated it:

"STOP NEGLECTING THE GIFT WHICH IS IN YOU."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Timothy's image of himself as a minister was evidently deficient, so Paul reminded him of the fact that God had given him the requisite ability for service. Timothy must not ignore or neglect this basic factor. If others were not to look down on Timothy, neither was he to look down on himself.

2 Timothy 1:6

And for this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

Demarest summarizes the remaining verses by saying:

Paul urges six more things upon Timothy in verses 14-16:
 (1) "Do not neglect the gift that is in you." (2) "Meditate on these things." (3) "Give yourself entirely to them."
 (4) "Take heed to yourself." (5) "Take heed . . . to the doctrine." (6) "Continue in them."

These six are important to each of us as well.
 p. 200

(We Live Too Short and Die Too Long by Walter M. Bortz, II)

Goethe observed, "To be is to do." Life is not a spectator sport. Stagnation is not conducive to good function anywhere in the universe.
 p. 137

(You Can Make a Difference by Gary R. Collins)

At a meeting of financial analysts, corporation president Max DePree was asked an important question: "What is one of the most difficult things that you personally need to work on?"

"The interception of entropy," the executive answered immediately.

"I'm using the word entropy in a loose way," the man went on to explain. "Technically it has to do with the second law of thermodynamics. From a corporate management point of view, I choose to define it as meaning that everything has a tendency to deteriorate. One of the most important things leaders need to learn is to recognize the signals of impending deterioration." Mr. DePree then listed almost two dozen "signs of entropy" that would indicate to him that his company was beginning to deteriorate.

After reading this, I pulled out a piece of paper and started listing signs of entropy that could interfere, not with some giant corporation, but with my life. I will be slipping, I decided, if ever I:

- *Stop trying to keep my class lectures interesting and start relying, instead, on dog-eared notes;
- *Have no time to read;
- *Try to dash off a book too quickly;
- *Am no longer excited about my work;
- *Don't bother to get any exercise;
- *Get more concerned about making money than about making a difference;
- *Stop traveling;
- *Get carried away with ambition and forget my real goals in life;
- *Lose interest in helping younger people grow in their spiritual lives and get started in their careers and marriages;
- *Quit keeping a journal and stop writing out a prayer at least four or five times each week;
- *Lose interest in growing and learning;
- *Stop participating in worship services;
- *Quit praying;
- *Make Bible reading a low priority;
- *Start debating with my critics instead of doing the work that I think God wants me to do;
- *Get sidetracked into areas of ministry and work that may be good, but that pull me from my goals and areas of expertise;
- *Stop planning for the future; or
- *Spend a lot of time thinking about whether or not I will leave a legacy after I am dead.

pp. 51-52

Many years ago Elton Trueblood wrote that vital Christianity has three pillars: an inner life of devotion, an outer life of service, and an intellectual life of clear, rational thinking. We stop growing and slip into mental and spiritual flabbiness when we ignore our devotional lives, avoid serving, or stop thinking.
p. 48

(Search for Identity by Earl Jabay)

A young boy, who lived on a very isolated farm, once went to his father with a request to see the circus coming into town. The father was glad to give his boy the opportunity to have a little fun and be among people. The lad was given four dollars with instructions to first get a haircut and then see the circus.

As the boy sat waiting in the barber shop, a loud commotion was heard out on the street. It was the circus parade! Everyone, including the barber, ran out of the shop and watched the colorful circus people and their stage animals. It was a fantastic parade! The boy loved every minute of it and was thrilled to pieces. But too soon the end of the circus was in sight and the last one in the parade was an uproariously funny clown who delighted the boy no end.

As the clown was passing, the lad stepped over to him and asked nervously, "Who do I pay?"

"Me," said the clown. And with that the boy gave the clown three dollars. The clown took it and walked off.

The boy went back to the barber and, upon having his hair cut, went home, satisfied that he had seen the circus.

Not until sometime later did he discover that he had missed the whole show!

p. 61

(Success, Motivation, and the Scriptures by William H. Cook)

Vance Havner remarks, "Stop praying, 'Lord, use me' and get usable and the Lord will wear you out!"

p. 123

(Never Give Up by Don Hawkins)

As coaching legend Vince Lombardi used to tell his Green Bay Packers. "Weariness is just a state of mind. You're only as tired as you think." The key is mental discipline.

p. 52

TIPS FOR SPIRITUAL HEALTH

Do not neglect the gift that is in you. . . .
Take heed to yourself.

--1 Timothy 4:14, 16

During a recent physical exam, my doctor commented, "It's good to get a checkup and maintain your health while you're well. Don't wait until you are sick." That's good advice for spiritual health as well.

Here are five tips for staying spiritually fit:

1. **Watch what you eat.** Avoid the kind of mental input that is spiritually harmful. Take in the deeper truths as well as the milk of God's Word (1 Pet. 2:2).
2. **Take care of your mouth.** Oral hygiene is important to avoid dental problems. Likewise, clean speech avoids spiritual decay (James 3:6; Eph. 4:29).
3. **Check your vision and hearing.** Look only at what keeps you on the path of righteousness (Prov 4:25). Refuse to listen to gossip and evil speaking, but give attention to wise counsel (Prov. 4:1, 10).
4. **Control stress.** If you are angry or uptight, take control of your life. Learn to say no, and learn to lean on the Lord and be patient (Eph. 4:26; Prov. 3:5, 6; James 5:7, 10).
5. **Check your heart.** Make sure you are doing all you can to keep your "heart" strong and pure (Prov. 4:23; 1 Tim. 1:5).

It's important to take preventive steps to maintain spiritual health. How did you do on this spiritual checkup?

--D.C.E.

Fear the Lord and shun all sin,
Rest in Christ, be pure within;
For if your heart is free from strife,
You'll add good days and strength to life.

--D.J.D.

WHEN GROWTH STOPS, DECAY BEGINS.

(From Our Daily Bread, August 15)

TOE OR TONGUE

One day I listened carefully
 As mouth made friend of foe,
 I could not help but feel so sad;
 You see, I'm just a toe.

I watched the ear attentive be
 Where I could hardly go.
 They would not like to see me there
 For I am just a toe.

The hand, so lovely in its form
 And always on the go--
 I sighed, discouraged, sad at heart
 For being just a toe.

Oh, how I feel so far away
 As guests do come and go.
 I'm covered, hidden all the time
 Because I'm just a toe.

The other day a big brick fell,
 And oh, it hurt me so!
 The Head bent down, the body writhed
 Because I am the toe.

Lovingly I was attended
 So that in joy they'd go,
 For all were aware of me--
 Their tiny, little toe.

In fact, I heard the Head just say,
 "Those lovely feet that go
 To sing and preach the love of God,
 They need this little toe."

It's true, dear friend, when we can't sing
 Or preach, or write or go;
 But why would God form body thus
 If He needs not the toe?

[Interest, Apr 1992. Page 30.]

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

v.15 Be practicing these things, be living (throwing yourself into) in them in order that your progress may be evident to everyone.

In this verse we now have COMMANDS #7 AND 8.

COMMAND #7:

"BE PRACTICING THESE THINGS."

Whereas in verse 14 you have the NEGATIVE side, here in verse 15 you have the POSITIVE side.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary translates the word "PRACTICING" as "give careful thought to."

Guthrie says:

The methods by which the gift may be nurtured are carefully delineated.

p. 98

Hendriksen says:

Over against "Do not grow careless," Paul places, "Let these things be your constant care."

p. 160

Lenski says:

"These things" on which Timothy is to spend his care, in which he is to be, are the ones Paul is speaking of in this paragraph and not merely his charisma in particular. "In them continue to be" is not as unusual an expression as some suppose; R., W. P., reports that Plutarch says of Caesar that he was [in these things], and Robertson explains this by using our "up to his ears." "Be wrapped up in them," Moulton.
p. 647

Hiebert says:

Paul earnestly presses upon Timothy the fulfillment of these duties by means of four present imperatives. The present tense means that he is to continue doing these things as he now is. These imperatives are grouped into two pairs, each pair followed by an explanatory clause.
p. 88

An anonymous poet expresses it this way:

The eye's a better pupil
And more willing than the ear;
Fine counsel is confusing
But example's always clear.

The best of all the preachers
Are the men who live their creeds;
To see good put in action
Is what everybody needs.

(From Our Daily Bread, January 18)

COMMAND #7 is:

"BE PRACTICING THESE THINGS."

COMMAND #8 is:

"BE LIVING (THROWING YOURSELF INTO) IN THEM."

Hiebert says:

"Give thyself wholly to them" is literally, "go on being in them." They are entirely to absorb and engross him. We might say, "Be wrapped up in them." The stated reason for the appeal is, "that thy progress may be manifest to all." It marks the purpose or contemplated result of his wholehearted occupation with these duties.
p. 88

Hendriksen translates it:

In these things be (absorbed). "Be in them," says the apostle, as if to say, "Be in them with your whole heart, with all your soul; be completely wrapped up in them."
p. 160

Barnes says:

The meaning is plain. He was to devote his life wholly to this work. He was to have no other grand aim of living. His time, attention, talents, were to be absorbed in the proper duties of the work. He was not to make that subordinate and tributary to any other purpose, nor was he to allow any other object to interfere with the appropriate duties of that office.
p. 171

(Unlocking Your Sixth Suitcase by John Bradley and Jay Carty with Russ Korth)

This element is their key to breaking through to a high level of achievement in their respective sports:

They have disciplined themselves to focus their attention on a task in which they have committed themselves to excellence.
p. 171

(Laugh Again by Charles R. Swindoll)

Horatius Bonar put his finger on the best solution to such a dilemma when he wrote:

Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
 However dark it be!
 Lead me by Thine own hand,
 Choose out the path for me.

Smooth let it be or rough,
 It will be still the best;
 Winding or straight, it leads
 Right onward to Thy rest.

I dare not choose my lot;
 I would not, if I might;
 Choose Thou for me, my God;
 So shall I walk aright.

The kingdom that I seek
 Is Thine; so let the way
 That leads to it be Thine;
 Else I must surely stray.

Take Thou my cup, and it
 With joy or sorrow fill,
 As best to Thee may seem;
 Choose Thou my good and ill;

Choose Thou for me my friends,
 My sickness or my health;
 Choose Thou my cares for me,
 My poverty or wealth.

Not mine, not mine the choice,
 In things or great or small;
 Be Thou my guide my strength,
 My wisdom, and my all!

pp. 67-68

The purpose behind these 2 COMMANDS in verse 15 is seen in the final phrase:

"IN ORDER THAT YOUR PROGRESS MAY BE EVIDENT TO EVERYONE."

Hiebert says:

The word "progress" ("profit" in the King James is inadequate) contains the graphic picture of a pioneer cutting his way forward through obstacles by means of strenuous effort, like a man blazing a trail through a tangled forest.
p. 88

J. Vernon McGee says:

One of the greatest things ever said concerning Dwight L. Moody was said by a neighbor: "Every time Mr. Moody comes home, you can just tell how much he's grown spiritually." Are you further along spiritually today than you were this time last year? Are you growing in grace and the knowledge of Christ? The only way to do so is by reading the great truths of the Word of God.
p. 450

v.16 Keep on paying careful attention to yourself and to the teaching; keep on continuing in them (sticking to it), for in doing this you will save yourself and those who are hearing you.

We have COMMANDS #9 AND 10 here in verse 16.

COMMAND #9:

"KEEP ON PAYING CAREFUL ATTENTION TO YOURSELF AND TO THE TEACHING."

"ATTENTION TO YOURSELF" takes us back to verse 12, and "TO THE TEACHING" back to verse 13.

COMMAND #10:

"KEEP ON CONTINUING IN THEM (STICKING TO IT)."

According to The Bible Knowledge Commentary, verse 16 summarizes chapter 6:6-16:

Throughout this epistle Paul has been advising Timothy concerning his private life and public ministry. He was to keep a sharp eye on both, persevering in the instructions Paul has offered in the 2 realms.

Barclay says:

He must remember the duty of progress. His progress must be evident to all men. It is all too true of most of us that the same things conquer us year in and year out; that we are the victim of the same faults of temperament and of character; that we fail for the same reasons; that as year succeeds year, we are no further on. The Christian leader pleads with others to become more like Christ. How can he do so with honesty unless he himself from day to day becomes more like the Master whose he is and whom he seeks to serve? When Kagawa decided to become a Christian, his first prayer was: "God, make me like Christ." The Christian leader's prayer must first be that he may grow more like to Christ, for only thus will he be able to lead others to Christ.
p. 118

The reason for these 2 final commands is seen in the statement:

"FOR IN DOING THIS YOU WILL":

1. "SAVE YOURSELF,"
2. and "THOSE WHO ARE HEARING YOU."

"YOU WILL SAVE YOURSELF" from the pitfalls and errors in the ministry, and there will be salvation available to "THOSE WHO ARE HEARING YOU."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Ultimately only God can save. Paul's words are a pointed reminder of the awesome burden of responsibility that congregational leaders carry.

WATCH YOUR DOCTRINE

Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine.
--1 Timothy 4:16

Brian and Heather had moved to a new part of the country. Because they were Christians, they were eager to begin fellowshiping with other believers. In their neighborhood was an active, growing congregation. They liked the people, were thrilled by the music, and responded positively to the informality.

As time went on, however, they both began to feel unsatisfied. As they analyzed what was bothering them, they identified the problem. Although their church had a vigorous program and seemed to be reaching people, it was weak in teaching basic Bible doctrines. People were left to believe whatever they wanted. And the leaders seemed to promote a tolerance of lifestyles that were contrary to biblical standards.

When Brian and Heather realized this deficiency, they decided to look for another church. Without realizing it, this couple had been caught in a subtle trap facing many Christians today. They were not growing spiritually because sound doctrine and the dangers of worldly lifestyles were being minimized.

The instruction Paul gave to Timothy in today's text is relevant to us. We need to give careful attention to what we believe and how we live. Right doctrine, which is the basis for right living, will keep us and others from serious error.
--D.C.E.

Give to me the insight, Lord,
As I read Your Word today,
So I will truly understand
Your message and Your way.
--Monroe

**BETTER TO KNOW THE TRUTH AND BEWARE
THAN TO BELIEVE A LIE AND NOT CARE.**

(From Our Daily Bread, August 5)

(The Existence and Attributes of God by Stephen Charnock)

Every minute that passeth speaks the fewer remaining till the time of death; and as we are every hour further from our beginning, we are nearer our end.
p. 95

There is in every man a stoutness of heart, a stiff-neck unwillingness to good, forwardness to evil. Infinite power quells this stoutness, demolisheth these strongholds, turns this wild ass in her course, and routs those armies of turbulent nature against the grace of God. To stop the floods of the sea is not such an act of power as to turn the tide of the heart. This power hath been employed upon every convert in the world.
p. 418

(Never Give Up by Don Hawkins)

Of all the stories told about Sir Winston Churchill, the legendary leader of England during World War II, perhaps none has had more impact than the account of his commencement address at Harrow, an exclusive prep school from which he had graduated. The war was just underway, and things weren't going very well for England.

After a long, flowery introduction, Sir Winston stood before the graduating class and the rest of the commencement crowd. Following stirring applause, and a lengthy silence, the crusty leader uttered these words:

Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never, never--
in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give
in, except to convictions of honor and good sense.
p. 32

Sir Francis Newport, the English infidel, recognized this truth. The story is told that, as he lay dying, he said to his fellow infidels, "You need not tell me there is no God, for I know there is one, and that I am in His angry presence. You need not tell me there is no hell, for I already feel my soul slipping into its fires. Wretches, cease your idle talk about there being hope for me! I know I am lost forever."

Why would Sir Francis Newport voice such a sentiment? He had persistently refused to admit his need of the Savior, and to trust Christ. Thus he knew clearly that, for him, there was no hope.
pp. 164-65

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: "Leadership Involves Being a Good Servant."

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Joshua 24:14a

Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness.

Joshua 24:15a

But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve,

In Luke 15 the prodigal son says to his father in arrogance:

"Give me so I can go,"

and then in his humility and brokenness as he returns, he says:

"Father, make me as one of your hired servants."

(The God-Players by Earl Jabay)

When, by God's grace, my parishioner chooses this difficult but necessary death, I know that he is truly humble. He is empty of self. The grandiose delusions, the lies, the phoniness, the pride--they no longer work. Neither is there need for them. The confessing person is now true, humble, honest.

Confession empties us of pride as nothing else will. Humility, which is the opposite of pride, is not something we can talk ourselves into--it is the result of deeds. When our Lord wished to teach His disciples about humility, He did not preach a sermon; rather, He acted it out by the deed of washing their feet. Even He humbled Himself. Must we always be humbled by the chastening of the Lord through the violent crises of life or might we elect to be humbled through the deed of making an auricular confession?
p. 112

(Rediscovering Holiness by J. I. Packer)

An alternative alliteration (as if one were not enough!) would be:

1. discerning the perversity, folly, and guilt of what one has done;
2. desiring to find forgiveness, abandon the sin, and live a God-pleasing life from now on;
3. deciding to ask for forgiveness and power to change;
4. dealing with God accordingly;
5. demonstrating, whether by testimony and confession or by changed behavior or by both together, that one has left one's sin behind.

p. 125

This has been poignantly put into verse in a hymn that starts like this:

Search me, O God, my actions try,
And let my life appear
As seen by thine all-searching eye;
To mine my ways make clear.

Search all my sense and know my heart,
Who only canst make known,
And let the deep, the hidden part
To me be fully shown.

Throw light into the darkened cells
Where passion reigns within;
Quicken my conscience till it feels
The loathsomeness of sin.

Search all my thoughts, the secret springs,
The motives that control,
The chambers where polluted things
Hold empire o'er the soul.

No regenerate person in his or her right mind wants to be found cherishing sin! As the great fish got Jonah out of its physical system by vomiting him onto dry land, so the born-again will labor to get sin out of their spiritual system by recognizing and renouncing it in repentance.

p. 137

(Unlocking Your Sixth Suitcase by John Bradley and Jay Carty
with Russ Korth)

Five frogs are on a log. Four decide to jump. How many are left?

Five--because deciding to jump and jumping are two separate actions. Actually, jumping validates the strength of the decision to jump.

p. 181

What a glorious anticipation to hear from the lips of our Savior:

Well done, thou good and faithful servant.

LOWLY SERVICE--GREAT REWARD

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan was especially impressed by a poem someone gave him. It was written by a 19-year-old servant girl whose household chores kept her occupied 12 to 15 hours a day. Later, at a service in Westminster Chapel, London, he read the homespun rhyme penned by this faithful worker and commented favorably upon its contents.

"Lord of all pots and pans and things,
Since I've no time to be
A saint by doing lovely deeds
Or watching late with Thee,
Or dreaming in the dawnlight
Or storming Heaven's gates,
Make me a saint by getting meals
And washing up the plates!

Although I may have Martha hands,
I have a Mary mind;
So when I black the boots or shoes,
Thy sandals, Lord, I find!
I think of how they trod the earth
Each time I scrub the floor.
Accept this meditation, Lord;
I haven't time for more.

Warm all the kitchen with Thy love,
And light it with Thy peace.
Forgive me all my worrying
And make all grumbling cease.
Thou who didst love to give men food
In room or by the sea,
Accept this service that I do,
I do it unto Thee."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

THE SERVANT'S TOWEL

Vernon Grounds, then president of Denver Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary, challenged the graduating class of 1973 with the truth of John 13:15. Dr. Grounds told the graduates that he was going to present to them a tangible symbol that could help them in their future ministries. As the classmates filed quietly to the front, they wondered what it could be--a special Scripture verse, a little book, an inscribed medallion? To their surprise, it was a small square of white terry cloth. One graduate, who has served as an overseas missionary, says, "We were commissioned to go into the world as servants. That small piece of towel, frayed and grubby from years in my wallet, is a constant reminder of that moving moment and of our basic call to serve."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

STUDY #10 - 1 Timothy 4:6-16

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