

# Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday February 22, 2023 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

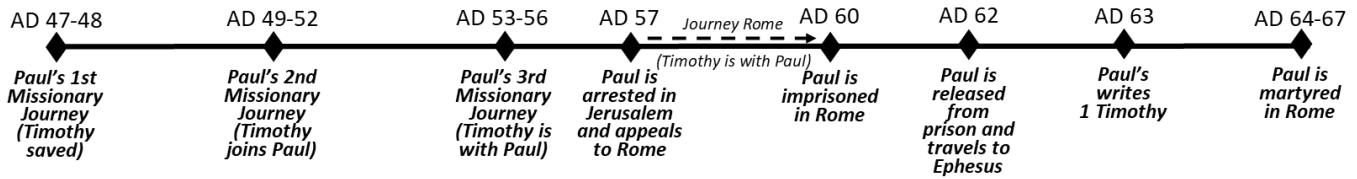
## Honoring 1 TIMOTHY GOD

HONORING GOD  
“Your Walk Is Your Work”  
*1 Timothy 4:11-16*



### Key Reminders for 1 Timothy:

- (1) 1 Timothy is a personal letter
- (2) 1 Timothy is written by Paul to Timothy, his apprentice in ministry
- (3) 1 Timothy is known as a “Pastoral Epistle” (or letter)
- (4) 1 Timothy was written to address problems in the church at Ephesus and encourage their pastor, Timothy
- (5) 1 Timothy was likely written about AD 63



**1 TIMOTHY QUIZ: How Much You Do Know About 1 Timothy?** Test yourself to see how much you know about know about 1 Timothy by answering to the best of your ability the following questions.

- The book of 1 Timothy was written by who? (circle one)
  - Timothy
  - Epaphras
  - Paul**
  - John Mark
- The book of 1 Timothy was what kind of letter? (circle one)
  - A "circular letter" written to be circulated among several churches through out Asia Minor
  - A "prison epistle" written by the apostle during his imprisonment for his faith
  - A "revelatory letter" written to warn of the second coming of Christ.
  - d.** A "pastoral letter" written to encourage the pastor in dealing with problems facing the church
- (True or False) We are not told Timothy's father's name in the Bible, but we are told of nationality? [] True [ ] False  
*\*True, we don't know Timothy's father's name but we are told in Scripture that he was Greek.*
- (True or False) Timothy grandmother's name was Eunice and his mother was Lois. [ ] True [] False  
*\*False, the names are reversed. Timothy's mother was Eunice and his grandmother was Lois. Timothy's mother and grandmother were Jewish and came to Christ as the same time as Timothy, during Paul's first missionary journey.*
- Timothy was born and raised in what small town in Asia Minor? (circle one)
  - Iconium
  - b. Lystra**
  - c. Derbe
  - d. Ephesus
- Timothy came to know the Lord through the ministry of Paul when? (circle one)
  - During Paul's journey to Rome in his appeal to Caesar
  - b.** During Paul's first missionary journey
  - c. During Paul's Damascus road experience
  - d. During the early Christian crusades
- (True or False) Paul recruited Timothy to join him in his second mission journey through Asia Minor. [] True [ ] False  
*\*True, On Paul's second missionary journey Paul journey back through Asia Minor and the towns where church and ministries had been started during his first missionary*

journey. At Lystra, where Timothy was from, he recruited Timothy to join him in his second missionary journey. Timothy would join Paul and would remain his close companion throughout the rest of Paul's life.

8. When this letter was written to Timothy he was serving in the ministry in what capacity? (circle one)
- Timothy was a travel companion to Paul in his second missionary journey
  - Timothy was serving as an amanuensis (secretary) to Paul helping him write the books that now appear in our New Testament
  - Timothy was serving as the pastor of a strategic church in Asia Minor (**Ephesus**)
  - Timothy was imprisoned in Rome because of his faith
9. (True or False) The primary purpose of the apostle's letter to Timothy was to address the false teaching of Zoroastrianism in the church at Ephesus. [ ] True [✓] False  
 \*False, Zoroastrianism is a legitimate religion, a monotheistic pre-Islamic religion of ancient Persia founded by Zoroaster in the 6th century BC, but it is not what the church of Ephesus was struggling with in the first century. Paul does not identify the particular false teaching confronting the church at Ephesus while Timothy was pastoring the church, but the context of the letter suggest that it was perhaps a combination of kind of Gnosticism and the Judahizers of that day.
10. The last three letters (epistles) written by the Apostle Paul before his death were the "Pastoral Epistle" which consisted of what New Testament books?
- 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Philemon
  - 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus
  - 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Jude
  - 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Hebrews

If you got:

10 out of 10 = Timothy expert

8 out of 10 = (2X) You're getting there!

6 out of 10 = (4X) Ought oh!

4 out of 10 = (6X) Not a good listener!

2 out of 10 = (8X) You must have failed S.S.

0 out of 10 = (10X) Are you sure your saved?

9 out of 10 = (1X) No body's perfect!

7 out of 10 = (3X) What happened!

5 out of 10 = (5X) Not good!

3 out of 10 = (7X) Bro. Buddy's a terrible teacher!

1 out of 10 = (9X) Your membership card is due!

Just kidding!

*"<sup>11</sup> These things command and teach. <sup>12</sup> Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. <sup>13</sup> Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. <sup>14</sup> Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. <sup>15</sup> Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. <sup>16</sup> Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you." -1 Timothy 4:11-16 (NKJV)*

There is really no other way to see these last verses of chapter 4 of 1 Timothy (vv.11-16) as any other than personal instructions and encouragements to Timothy. By the very words recorded in the verses we may infer Timothy was struggling with some insecurity and feelings of inadequacy in ministry and his ability to lead this church and these people through the perils they faced. Knowing some the background to this letter that we just looked at we can quickly discern why that might have been... why Timothy might have felt some sense of insecurity and inadequacy. These may also alert us to some of our insecurities and struggled with feeling like God can't use us or that we don't have what it takes (not gifted enough) to be used by Him.

*What might have caused Timothy to feel inadequate and insecure? What causes us to?*

### **3 Possible Allusions to Timothy's Insecurity:**

- (1) **Youthful inexperience** - The first part of **verse 12**, Paul's words to Timothy are these, **"<sup>12</sup> Let no one despise your youth..."** Implied is the idea that Timothy may have felt intimidated and inadequate for addressing some of the challenges he faced, particularly in the church because he was young and inexperienced. He was "green" not yet "wet around the collar"... cliché we use to indicate this kind of problem. We know that Timothy was young when he began to serve with Paul and he was perhaps still in his late teens to early twenties when he was left in Ephesus to care for this troubled church. If he was young, we can be certain that he was spiritually mature enough and adequate for the task or the seasoned Apostle Paul would not have committed Paul to such a task. Paul saw something in him that indicated that Timothy was beyond his years spiritually and was ready/prepared for such a calling, or he would not have subjected him to the job. This is often an "excuse" we give and may legitimately feel ourselves when we are asked to serve, or offered an opportunity to be used by God... and it may not be that we are "young" in age, but we may feel grossly inadequate because we are "young" in our own eyes spiritually, or that we are not mature enough in our faith to handle what God may be calling us to, or in a way God wants to use us. Our own feeling of "youthful/immature inexperience" may cause us to miss out on the blessing of serving and being used by God.
- (2) **Past failures** - Look back at Paul's words again in **verse 12** of our passage, **"<sup>12</sup> Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity."** Notice Paul's words there in the second half of that passage. We don't know much about Timothy past, but we do know that he was perhaps as young as 15 years old when he was saved, and likely still in his teens when he joined Paul's missionary team. As a youth, Timothy, was likely like most teens, struggle with the things teens struggle with, immature outburst, youthful lust and struggles, immature ways of looking at the world. He had a lot of growing up to do, which evidently he did very well. The implication of scripture is that Timothy was mature beyond his years as stated before. Paul's trust in him with the church at Ephesus is evidence of this. Yet, Timothy knew Timothy. He knew his internal struggles, which not

doubt were not different than ours. He likely struggles with temptations and sins much like us which may have cause him to feel conviction as well as an unworthiness to be used. Our past, as well as present struggles and failures can cause us to feel inadequate for God to use us, insecure about our abilities, and unworthy of being used. Remember that God uses broken people to minister to broken people. As I have said before, “God can hit a straight lick with a crooked stick.” And that is exactly how he works. He doesn’t use perfect preachers to preach His word because there are none. He uses saved sinners called to preach, aware of their own brokenness before him to preach. There are not perfect preaches, nor perfect Christians, nor perfect church members, nor perfect preachers. We must not feel unqualified to be used of God because of our past or even present struggles. When we confess our sins to God in genuine repentance and confession He forgive us and cleanses us and puts us back out there. He doesn’t shelve us or bench us. He want’s to use those who are willing to be used buy in even in their brokenness. I’ll just say this, “Churches like to shelve and bench people, that God desire to use!” We do need to **“conduct ourselves in love, in spirit, in faith and in purity”** as Paul says as we rise about our past failures so that we don’t fall again.

**(3) Lack of knowledge** - Really Paul’s words to Timothy in the rest of these closing verses (vv.13-16) speak to this... notice **verses 13** and following, **“<sup>13</sup> Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. <sup>14</sup> Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. <sup>15</sup> Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. <sup>16</sup> Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”** Paul encouragement to Timothy here seems to be indicative of his feeling of inadequacy at a lack of knowledge and knowing enough. Paul encourages him to study hard, be well prepared, and give himself to growing in knowledge to help him feel more secure in his leading of the people. I get this one! I think the more prepared we are, the more studied up we are, and taught ourselves, the better we are able to help others with their struggles. There is no substitute for the hard work of study and preparation in help one to deal with this feeling of insecurity and inadequacy of knowledge.

Now beyond that and maybe in addition to that... perhaps a larger summary of that, Paul really show us that our work as believer in the Christian life is related to our walk... the title of this study, **“Your Walk Is Your Work.”** In other words, “Timothy, if you are feeling insecure and inadequate in your work, it could be related to your walk!” Be diligent in your walk and your work will fall into place. **“Your Walk Is Your Work.”**

#### **ILLUSTRATION: WILLIAM CAREY**

*William Carey, often called the father of modern missions, was a shoe cobbler by trade before he went to India. He kept a map of India in his shop, stopping every so often to study and pray over it. Sometimes, because of his preaching ministry, his shoe business suffered. One day a friend admonished him for neglecting his business. “Neglecting my business?”*



said Carey, looking at him intently. **“My business is to extend the kingdom of God. I only cobble shoes to pay expenses.”**

- *What do you think about that quote? What was Carey saying?*
- *Do you agree or disagree? To what extent?*
- *Do you think this is an important perspective for a Christian/believer to have? Why?*

No matter what your occupation, every Christian should have Carey’s mentality, **“My real business is to extend God’s kingdom; I just work to pay expenses.”** In other words, every Christian is in the ministry.

Ephesians 4:11-12 states, **“<sup>11</sup> And He (God) Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”**

I believe that at least a part of my job is to equip you to do the work of the ministry. If you are a saint (= “holy one,” true of every believer) then you’re in the ministry! Like it or not as a believer/a Christian you are in the ministry!

**“We are all missionaries. Wherever we go we either bring people nearer to Christ or we repel them from Christ.” -Eric Liddell, Scottish Missionary (“Chariots of Fire”)**

Some may be supported so that they work full-time in their ministry. But every Christian, like William Carey, should see their main business as serving God.

Since that is the clear teaching of the New Testament, it ought to be of great concern to every Christian to know how to fulfill the ministry... the work that God has entrusted to him or her. It seems as if there are droves who are either burning out on ministry because they are exhausted, or bombing out of ministry because of moral failure.

***Why do you think this might be true? Why are many burning out of ministry? Why do you think there is such moral failure in ministry? What affect does this have on the church and the kingdom (work)?***

Timothy’s danger was that he would just fade out of the ministry because his timid personality had a tendency to want to avoid conflict. The fact is, you can’t preach God’s truth without confronting error and offending some people. So Timothy was in danger of neglecting his ministry (4:14).

Some of you are not involved in any kind of ministry for the Lord. Maybe you burned out, bombed out, or just faded out. Frankly, ministry is battle, and who likes war? The tendency of the flesh is to let someone else do it, especially if it's a hassle. Maybe you justify your lack of involvement by thinking, "I'm not all that gifted anyway." But remember, in the parable of the talents, it was the guy with only one who buried it and was rebuked by his master because he didn't use it to further the master's interests. If you know Christ as Savior, you're called to serve Him in some capacity. In our text, Paul gives us a basic lesson of Christian service that will enable us to fulfill our God-given ministries

**KEY THOUGHT: *Your walk with Christ is the necessary basis for your work for Christ.***

*"<sup>11</sup> These things command and teach. <sup>12</sup> Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. <sup>13</sup> Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. <sup>14</sup> Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. <sup>15</sup> Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. <sup>16</sup> Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you." -1 Timothy 4:11-16 (NKJV)*

See it there in **verse 16** of our passage, **"Take heed to yourself (your walk) and to the doctrine (work)..."**

NIV = "Watch your life and doctrine closely..."

NLT = "Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching..."

NASB = "Pay close attention to yourself and to the teaching..."

ESV = "Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching..."

It's the same principle Paul imparted to the Ephesian elders when he said, **"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock"** (Acts 20:28).

First, your walk; then, your work. **Your work for the Lord must always be the overflow of your walk with the Lord.** I define ministry as being full of Jesus Christ and that spilling over (overflowing) onto others. That means that your ministry will be backed by a life of integrity; you are imparting to others what you have because you walk in reality with Christ. If we all would learn this simple but profound principle, that our walk with Christ is the necessary basis for our work for Christ, we would avoid burning out, bombing out, and fading out in the work He has given us to do.

## **PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR WALK WITH CHRIST**

One reason the church is often short of workers is that so many who attend church are not really walking daily with the living Lord.

- They have fallen into the American self-centered way of life.

- They attend church because it meets some of their personal needs.
- If it fails to meet their needs, they either shop around for another church that does meet their needs or they stop going altogether.
- They are living for self and using God and the church to help self be more fulfilled.
- Sometimes volunteering to serve in the church helps meet a need to feel useful, so they sign up.
- But even their service has a self-focus. They do it because it meets their needs.

If I have just described you, I say to you in love, you are not living the Christian life. The Christian life is not living for self and using God and the church to meet your needs. The Christian life involves denying yourself daily and living under the lordship of Christ. We are no longer our own; we have been bought with the precious blood of Jesus. We no longer live for ourselves, but for Him who died and rose again on our behalf (2 Cor. 5:15). As we live each day with our hope fixed on the living God, He shapes our character in conformity to Christ and then uses our changed lives as a witness of His saving grace so that others come to know Him and grow in Him.

So ministry is not volunteering for Jesus, or doing a job because the pastor or the church needs your help. Ministry is based on dying to self and living to please Jesus. God never calls us primarily to a task. Rather, He calls us to Himself. Before I can *do* something for God I must *be* something in relationship with God. I can only impart to others in ministry what I possess from my walk. Therefore, the primary responsibility of every believer is to develop godliness through the daily discipline of a walk with the Lord Jesus.

Timothy was relatively young when Paul wrote this, maybe even in his twenties (a mere youth from my perspective now!). We would consider that young... but in that culture age was more highly regarded than even in ours. Paul wrote, *“<sup>12</sup> Let no one despise your youth...”* in part for the church, so that they would not shrug off Timothy’s teaching with the excuse that he was too young to know what he was talking about. But Paul also wrote it for Timothy. He’s saying that even if you’re younger in years, you can have a ministry if your message is backed by a godly life, and sound doctrine (you grounded in God’s Word). Notice it in verse 12, *“<sup>12</sup> Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”*

Paul mentions five areas (the KJV and NKJV “spirit” is based on weak manuscript evidence and should be omitted):

### **5 Areas of Godly Living: (Godly Walk)**

(1) **Speech** (*word*) - There’s a convicting one, for starters! How’s your speech? Has your tongue been tamed by the power of God’s Spirit? As James 3 tells us, the tongue can be an instrument for great evil or great good, depending upon whether it is under the control of the flesh or of the Spirit. **Ephesians 4:29** commands, *“Let no unwholesome [lit., rotten]*



*word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear.”*

There is no place for name-calling, sarcasm, profanity, ridicule, gossip, blaming, destructive criticism, angry words of threat and revenge, griping, complaining, lying, filthy talk, or dirty jokes. Instead a godly person will use words to build up others and show them grace: encouragement, praise, appreciation, gratefulness, cheerfulness, understanding, sympathy, testimony, truth, caring correction and warning, and helpful counsel. So often, even in Christian homes, family members rip into one another with rotten words and never confess their sinful speech and ask forgiveness. Walking with the Lord Jesus means bringing your speech under His lordship and judging yourself when you sin with your words.

- (2) **Conduct** (*KJV = conversation*) - In modern jargon, your lifestyle. This points to your behavior which should testify to your commitment to Jesus Christ. Honesty, integrity, how you spend your time and money, your priorities, your attitude toward possessions, your personal appearance, the way you maintain your home, the way you treat people—all of these factors should add up to show that Christ is Lord of your life.
- (3) **Love** - This focuses on your relationships. Biblical love is not a gushy feeling, but rather a self-sacrificing, caring commitment which shows itself in seeking the highest good of the one loved. Since the highest good for each person is that they glorify God in their lives, love is committed to help each person grow in submission to Christ’s lordship. Paul spells out the qualities of love in 1 Corinthians 13. Each of us should frequently evaluate our conduct toward others, especially in our homes, by that list.
- (4) **Faith** - This could point to faithfulness or reliability, a fruit of the Spirit. Or, it could point to the faith we are to have toward God. We call ourselves believers, and yet all too often we are not believing believers! We aren’t expecting God to work. We aren’t trusting God with our problems. But in order to carry on any significant ministry, we must be men and women of faith. We have leaned upon God in our own trials and have proved Him to be faithful. So we can ask and trust God to work in the lives of those to whom we minister.
- (5) **Purity** - This means moral purity, not just outwardly, but in the thought life. Sexual immorality always begins in the mind. Walking with Christ means taking “every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5). As soon as a wrong thought pops into your mind, you confess it and turn from it. You “put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts” (Rom. 13:14).

A survey of American pastors revealed that 20 percent view pornographic material at least once a month (*Leadership* [Winter, 1988], p. 24)! And only 64 percent of evangelical seminary students think that watching pornographic movies is morally wrong (David Wells, *Christianity Today* [1/15/88], p. 25)! Is it any wonder the American church lacks God’s blessing? I believe that a man who yields to viewing pornography at least once a month should not be in leadership until he gains victory. Purity in thought and deed is essential for ministry.

**READ: Ephesians 5:1-21** – *What is Paul here telling us about the Christian walk?*

**QUOTE: Mahatma Gandhi** – I’ve shared this quote with you before and we’ve talked about this. You may find this quote offensive, or at least troubling. I’ve even heard some Christians says, “I wish we would quit using this quote.” I suspect I know why. It does not portray Christians and the church today in a favorable light. Mahatma Gandhi said about Christianity and Christians, **“I like your Christ, but I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ.”** We know that Gandhi was not a Christian. He was a Hindu leader... a false and pagan religion. So why let him lend commentary on Christianity. It’s just his observation, and I frankly I find it interesting telling... *What is he saying about Christianity? What is he saying about Christians? Why do you think he said this?*

**Thus your walk with Christ is the necessary basis of any work you do for Christ.** Since the Lord wants every member of His body to function in serving Him, pay attention to your walk. You don’t have to have all these qualities in perfection before you start serving the Lord. But you do need to be growing in each area, bringing every aspect of your life into submission to the lordship of Christ. Then, as you relate to others, you slop over what you have of Christ to them; you are ministering.

But ministry doesn’t happen automatically. It requires attention and work as well...

### **PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR WORK FOR CHRIST**

Notice Paul’s words again in verses 14-16 of our passage, **“<sup>14</sup> Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. <sup>15</sup> Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. <sup>16</sup> Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”**

Notice Paul says, **“Take heed to yourself...”** In other words, “pay attention to yourself.” Since Timothy’s spiritual gift was in the area of public ministry of the Word, he was to focus on that. Note the importance of the ministry of the Word in the church assembly... **“reading”** it (v.13) (especially in a culture where many slaves would have been illiterate); applying it to life (**“exhortation” v.13**); and, teaching (**“doctrine” v. 13**). Paul exhorts Timothy not to neglect his gift (v.14), to take pains in making progress in it (v.15), and to persevere in it (**“continue in them,” v.16**), which implies that it won’t be easy or automatic. There is much more that could be said, but I want to point out five things concerning spiritual gifts...

### **5 Things To Remember About Spiritual Gifts:**

**(1) God has given every believer at least one gift** - A spiritual gift may be defined as “a God-given ability for service” (Dr. Ryrie). While there are a lot of debatable aspects

about spiritual gifts, it's significant that in each of the four New Testament passages dealing with spiritual gifts, it is stated that each believer has one (Rom. 12:3-6; 1 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:7; 1 Pet. 4:10). You have not been left out. God has gifted you to serve Him.

(2) **Your gifts will be recognized and confirmed by the Body** – Normally, believers receive a spiritual gift at conversion. Of course God can bestow other gifts subsequent to salvation as He deems necessary to equip a person for a specific ministry. Apparently God revealed to Paul what Timothy's ministry was to be. The elders at Timothy's home church affirmed Paul's prophecy. So they laid hands on Timothy, prayed for him, and he received the gift of teaching for his task (see 2 Tim. 1:6). God does not normally reveal your gift supernaturally. As you grow in Christ and get involved in serving Him, other believers begin to confirm your gift. They will say things like "You're good at that," or, "God ministers through you in that area." I remember even when I was in college and would take a stab at teaching, as unpolished as I was, people would tell me how much it had helped them. If every time you try to teach, you see people squirming in their seats, looking at their watches, and not coming back the next time you're scheduled, maybe your gift is in another area!

(3) **Your gifts must be exercised and developed** - Even though Timothy received his gift in a rather dramatic fashion, he had to work at developing it. Note the words Paul uses to exhort Timothy to exercise and develop his gift (4:14-16), Don't neglect it. "Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them." Make evident progress. "Pay close attention." "Persevere in these things." In 2 Timothy 1:6, Paul had to exhort Timothy to kindle afresh his gift. The fire was dying out. The spiritual muscle can atrophy from non-use. Although spiritual gifts are God-given, they're not automatic or fully developed. You must make a commitment to fulfill the ministry God has given you... "be absorbed in these things."

It's a good idea for a new believer (or one who doesn't know his or her gifts) to try as wide a range of ministry experiences as possible. As you do certain things, you will narrow down your field of interest and ability until you discover your area of gift. Then concentrate primarily on your area of gift, while remembering that every Christian is responsible to serve in most areas. In other words, just because your gift isn't helps doesn't mean that you never help others. But you focus in your area of gift. You work hard to develop your ministry skills in that area. A common mistake many pastors make, especially as a church grows, is neglecting the ministry of the Word. They start doing everything else, or often become more like the manager of a company, and the teaching ministry suffers. But a pastor's main work is preaching and teaching to equip the rest of the church for their ministries (4:13-16).

(4) **Your gifts, when backed by godliness, should be exercised with confidence in the Lord** - As I emphasized already, giftedness must be accompanied by godliness. But my point here is that when gifts are backed by godliness, they can then be exercised with the quiet confidence that your faith is in God and you're doing what He wants you to do. So

when opposition comes (as it often does), you don't quit in anger or frustration. You persevere. Think about Timothy...

- Timothy was a timid fellow.
- Perhaps he was threatened by the older Ephesian elders.
- Maybe he felt inadequate ministering in the shadow of a man like Paul.
- Maybe he was afraid of people.

Paul says, *"These things command and teach."* (v.11). The word "command" refers to an order passed down a military chain of command. What Paul is saying is, "Timothy, exercise your gift with confidence and authority, backed up by your godly life!" And, persevere when opposition comes (v.16).

Perhaps this especially applies to the gift of teaching. You can't be a people-pleaser and preach God's truth. The Bible isn't God's handbook of helpful hints for happy living. It gives us God's sure truth, His commandments for life. It confronts sin and selfishness. God's spokesman had better not beat around the bush.

**Hugh Latimer**, who later was martyred by Bloody Mary used to say to himself before he preached at the royal court, *"Latimer, Latimer, thou art going to speak before the high and mighty king, Henry VIII, who is able, if he think fit, to take thy life away. Be careful what thou sayest. But Latimer, Latimer, remember thou art also about to speak before the King of kings and Lord of lords. Take heed thou dost not displease Him."*

But it also applies to every spiritual gift when the person is growing in godliness. If you're walking with Christ, then you have a vital contribution to make to His body. We should never do it with arrogance or confidence in ourselves. But the point is, God wants to use you to impart something of Christ to others. It's not humility, but rather the sin of being too self-absorbed, if, like Moses when God called him, you refuse to do what God has gifted and called you to do. And you're not being faithful to Him if you quit at the first sign of difficulty.

- (5) Remember that eternal issues are at stake in the exercise of your spiritual gift –** Notice again verse 16, *"<sup>16</sup> Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you."*

Did you notice his words... *"You will save both yourself and those who hear you"* (v.16). Paul obviously is not talking about being saved by works. We are saved by grace through faith apart from works (Eph. 2:8-9). But there is also a future aspect to salvation. Those who are saved will persevere and they will influence others to be saved as well. This may apply more to those with gifts of teaching or evangelism, but it also applies to someone with the gift of helps or giving or showing mercy. As you grow in godliness and exercise

your gift faithfully as unto the Lord, He will use you in the eternal salvation of lost people.

You need to remember this especially when opposition comes. Timothy was not in an easy situation in Ephesus, where he had to confront these false teachers. No doubt he was being attacked. It would have been easy to say, “Why bother? Why take this flak? I’m out of here!” But Paul says, “Timothy, remember that eternal issues are at stake! You must persevere in the salvation you have received. Those hearing your message need to be saved and to persevere. So when you’re discouraged, when you’re being attacked, don’t quit! Eternal issues are at stake.

## CONCLUSION

**Stan Mikita**, a star center for the Chicago Blackhawks hockey team, used to get in a lot of fights during games. He stopped one day when his daughter, **Meg**, who was eight at the time, asked a very grown up question, “**How can you score a goal, Daddy, when you’re in the penalty box all the time?**”

If I might rephrase the question, How can you work for the Lord if you aren’t walking with the Lord? If you have trusted in Christ, you’re on His team. You’re in the ministry. You are as responsible as I am before God to fulfill your ministry. To do it, pay attention to your *walk* with Christ; that’s the foundation. And, pay attention to your *work* for Him. Don’t neglect the gift He has entrusted to you.

### Some concluding question to ponder:

- (1) **How would this church be different if every member viewed himself or herself as a minister of Jesus Christ?**
- (2) **How godly does a person need to be to get involved in ministry?**
- (3) **How important is it to know your spiritual gift and what difference does it make?**
- (4) **Why are so many Christians suffering “burnout”? Is it inevitable? How can it be avoided?**