

January 03, 2021 - I Timothy 4: 12-16 - “Live the Life of a Believer”

Introduction:

In 2020, the people of planet Earth have faced bushfires in Australia, a plague of locusts in East Africa, floods in Jakarta, multiple earthquakes in Puerto Rico, a murder hornet invasion, and of course the global China coronavirus pandemic that has brought modern society to a screeching halt. In Hong Kong, freedoms were curtailed. In the U.S., the California forest fire again raged and in mid-Michigan, a catastrophic dam failure exacerbated a flood, ripping out bridges and devastating the region. Not to mention the horrific political environment and a very questionable election. Well, the year is behind us and a new year has dawn.

In 360 plus days, when the year is over, will we be looking back with dismay, anger, or with regret? Will we be satisfied with our accomplishments? Will we have made a difference a real difference for the Church of Jesus Christ? George Barna research group reveals the Christian Church did poorly as of the last few years.

Almost half of Millennials (47%) agree that it is wrong to share one’s personal beliefs with someone of a different faith in hopes that they will one day share the same faith. Look at the mess that got us into? “Consequently, more and more people are engaged in hybrid faiths, mixing elements from different historical eras and opposing theological perspectives,” Barna’ group stated. “In some ways, we are creating the ultimate ecumenical movement, where nothing is deemed right or wrong, and all ideas, beliefs and practices are assigned equal validity. Everyone is invited to join the dialogue, enjoy the ride, and feel connected to a far-reaching community of believers. 71% say they will develop their own slate of religious beliefs rather than accept a package of beliefs promoted by a church or denomination. Morality is relative and there are no absolutes. Only one-third (34%) believe in absolute moral truth. Just because they don’t believe doesn’t make it so.

Jesus stated the truth of this reality in [Matthew 7:13-14](#).

Three-quarters of adults (75%) believe that God is motivating them and others to connect with Him through different means and experiences than were common in the past. (We then have to trash Hebrews Chapter one and others) 68% of self-identified Christians have heard of spiritual gifts, a decline in the past decade; a minority (roughly one-third) can actually identify a biblical spiritual gift they claim to possess. Half of all self-identified Christians firmly believe that the Bible is totally accurate in all of the principles (not the facts, just the principles) that it teaches. Barely one-quarter of adults (27%) are confident that Satan exists and now you know...you know why 2020 was such a wrenches year. If the church will make a difference it will be because it is different.

If I am seeking to live my life on purpose for God, then I will be concerned about living a life that others will look to and want to know about the Christ I follow.

So what advice does Paul give Timothy here that we need to also apply and seek to follow? Well, he says we can live a life that others will by setting a good example in . . .

I. Keep Progressing in the word (v. 12)

I. How do I make an impact and a difference in others' lives? That's what this text is about. As a godly Pastor Timothy was to grow spiritually so that the whole church could see his spiritual progress and imitate it. Timothy was a man of youth yet if he behaved as a true believer the world would take notice.

1. It begins Paul says in **Speech**.

Verse 12, He says to set an example; Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word...that is how you speak. It was a wise man who once said: "The best way to judge the character of a man is not by what others says about him, but by what he says about others." The way we use our tongues reveals the condition of our hearts. "

James taught in 1:26 "Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless."

If Christians want to earn the respect of others and live a life that others look to, then we must set an example with our speech. "People with sharp tongues often end up cutting their own throats." - Anonymous

I heard about a man who wisely prayed, "Lord, help my words to be gracious and tender today, for I may have to eat them tomorrow." We would all do well to pray the prayer of David, who said: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer." - Psalm 19:14

2. **One's Conversation** really relates to one's behavior and Lifestyle...what is your lifestyle like? Are you living a secular life or a Christian life? Paul told the church, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind...Ephesians 4:23

3. **Love is another example** of the believer. Sadly, too many Christians are not loving. "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." - John 13:34-35. The way we love one another, forgive each other, encourage each other, prayer for each other should be something that will draw others to want to know the difference Christ can make...

4. **Faith - *pistis*** ... Faithfulness means you're all in! You're all in with respect to being there, to following through, to keeping your Word. That's faithfulness. And that's the kind of example that will draw others to Christ.

5. **Purity**---If one is going to live a life that attracts others to Christ, then we must pursue a life of purity. It is difficult to find anything to attract someone to Christ if they are living an impure life. A tossed salad might look good. But I learn that it was prepared with hands that were unwashed and dirty, I soon lose my appetite. Chastity; Be ye holy as I am holy...

II. Paul's Personal Instructions (13-6)

1. **Reading... exhortation... doctrine:** These are the things that Timothy must give attention to; each of these things are centered on God's Word. He must **give attention** to these things in both his private life and in his public ministry. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, we note this in verse 14. . Every Christian has at least one grace gift from the Spirit. Note the word "given" comes from the Greek word "did'-o-mee; to give (used in a very wide application, give, grant, hinder, make, minister. They are given so you can use them in ministry to others!

2. In verse 15 Paul called Timothy to *meditation* on God's Word and the work of God in his life. Timothy was encouraged to give it his all, to put forth a maximum effort, and by doing so, his progress would be evident to all. Often, progress is not evident because we do not give ourselves entirely to the pursuit of God and His will. Devote yourself fully to Christ (v. 15) Timothy's spiritual life and ministry were to be the absorbing, controlling things in his life...not just sidelines that he occasionally practiced.

3. So in verse 16, he summarizes, and he says this: "Take heed to yourself and unto teaching, continue in them "**Take heed**" means pay attention. Focus your attention in on two things, yourself and your teaching is what he says. Without giving heed to his **life**, Timothy might suffer shipwreck. Without giving heed to doctrine, Timothy might lead others astray or leave them short of God's salvation. Those who hear him as a pastor should be hearing doctrine. Timothy's primary call was not to entertain, amuse, or even help with practical things – it was to present Biblical doctrine, and to give heed to that doctrine.

4. Take spiritual inventory (v. 16) "if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers." Of course, the word saved isn't the narrow definition of salvation from eternal condemnation, but the wider definition of the process of being saved. It's the whole sanctification process. Once you are saved, you grow and become mature. If you persevere in what you know and how you live, you'll grow, be sanctified; salvation will be manifested and you'll prove your salvation. Also, the salvation of people you are ministering to will be proven. You will grow and others, too. Examine your own heart and life in the light of God's Word.

Conclusion:

History is replete with examples of Christian's men and women who believe that God would work through them to make a significant difference. Joseph, Daniel and Esther... What is going to count is what difference I make for the better for others and for God?

She will be in traction for about 3 days after surgery and in hospital for 7-10 days as far as we know. Heather will be there with her. I'm not allowed because of covid. Thank you and our church family for keeping Brianna and the rest of us in prayer. We're sorry to hear that Bob and Pam also have covid and pray for their recovery as well.