

February 7, 2021 - I Timothy 5: 12-25 - "Cautions within the Ministry"

### Introduction:

In the very resourceful book "Releasing Your Church's Potential", Dr. Robert Logan remarked, "I believe that the enemy divides all people into two categories: those he can ignore and those he has to fight. I want to be one of those he has to fight." He continues on to quote a WWII bomber pilot: "If you're taking flak, you're over the target." Timothy was taken flak because he is dealing with corrupt leaders and Paul was giving him the needed ordinance.

The Apostle Paul charges Timothy to teach and lead the congregation in Ephesus on the matter of putting in place the proper perspectives regarding biblical eldership. This strong statement *I charge thee before God*...in verse 21 reflects the seriousness of the job of leaders in the church. Many churches have had great trouble because sin in the leadership was not directly dealt with. It's important that everyone understand that leadership in the church does not shield one from accountability, it makes one even more accountable. So he continues in his mentoring...

### I. Be cautious in the affirmation of others. (5:22-23)

1. The best way to prevent unqualified elders from serving in the ministry is not be "impulsive in the "laying on of hands". Laying on of hands refers to ordination and to the affirmation of one suitable for public ministry. There is a pitfall to this and that is if one waits in serving the Lord until they are granted a title. This means they are more concerned with image (how it appears to others) than with substance. We are all called to serve.

2. The second piece of advice Paul give him in this single verse is beware of ***koy-no-neh'-o*** - partaker. That is to make one's self a partner in their sins. We are to be examples not stumbling blocks. We all have enough sin of our own; we do not need to add to the sins of others. There are many ways we can do this. We can share in the sins of others by setting a bad example before them. We can share in the sins of others by condoning what is wrong or by just ignoring them in their sin. We too can be guilty by association with those that walk in sin.

Illustration: Years ago a pastor was visiting the local druggist. He mentioned to him a man who was attending his church, and the druggist spoke very critical of him. "Why do you say that about him?" he asked. This man replied, "I know that man. He goes to your church. He has owed me money for six months and he has never paid a dime. I've got no use for him."

3. When we live carelessly, we fall into the snare the devil puts out for us. We then fall into reproach. The reproach in this context would be the accusations the community would make toward the guilty party, as they mocked him about being a church leader. If leadership is not an example of a born again believer, than believers will not follow. Paul tells Timothy keep, *tereo*/ tay-reh'-o it literally means to exercise watchful care over your own uprightness, keep yourself pure *hagnos* has to do with uprightness' or honor. ---Proverbs 4:23

British Field Marshal Montgomery is credited with the following statement concerning leadership: Leadership is the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose and the character which inspires confidence.” A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way. “Any person can steer the ship but it takes a leader to chart the course”--- Dr. John Maxwell.

4. Verse 23 is a personal note from Paul to Timothy. Timothy had obviously committed himself to total abstinence from wine. He wanted to be a model of spiritual virtue. Timothy had taken a vow of abstinence from all wine. He didn't want to be a stumbling block to a weaker brother, he wanted to take the highest vow of spiritual commitment such as the Nazarite took in the Old Testament who was most of all devoted to God and abstained totally from wine and strong drink. Water in ancient times was impure, heavily alkaline and often carried disease.

5. Paul's advice to “use a little wine because of your stomach was recognizing the medicinal use of wine. In our day with pure water we would be better to follow Timothy's example and totally abstain so as not to lead others to sin. I have a total abstinence policy of alcohol, yet I have been known at times to take a little cough syrup, for my chest sake. God uses natural remedies and the work of doctors in healing, as well as the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit and folks they don't contradict one another. **And Jesus answering said unto them, they that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. Luke 5:31** There is a time to call the doctor I don't care how much faith you say you have.

## II. Beware sin can be hidden (5:24-25)

1. Sometimes it is easy to see the struggles and sins men have; but with others, the sins are hidden. We all have areas of our lives that God is dealing with; and sometimes the area is something clearly evident to others. But sometimes it is not as apparent; some people are regarded as holy just because they are good at hiding their sin!

2. Good works are always eventually revealed; but sins are sometimes hidden, and will be evident only at the judgment. These words are meant to be a caution to Timothy in his appointing of leaders. Sometimes what one sees on the outside isn't really an accurate picture, so we need to take it slow, so we can wait on God for discernment. Good deeds are obvious. They can't be concealed. They will come out in the assessment process.

## Conclusion:

These qualities are qualities EVERY Christian should possess and be striving for. The leader is a person that these qualities are evident in their life. Being a real leader is more than having a title; it is being able to inspire others to follow you. If a congregation wants its elders to be successful in their work, they need to create an environment in which they may serve with joy.