



1 Timothy

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These things command and teach. 1 Timothy 4:11

The order of the Greek is “Command these things and teach.” Timothy is charged with ensuring that what has been relayed to him thus far be commanded to the church. The word for “command” is *paraggellō*. It means “to charge, give a command that is *fully authorized* because it has gone through all the *proper* (necessary) channels” (HELPS Word Studies). In other words, Paul didn’t arbitrarily make up the directions for Timothy to pass on. Instead, they are authoritative because he is the designated apostle, having been personally commissioned and instructed by the Lord Jesus. The words are prescriptive, and they are binding.

The words here are inclusive of all that has been presented so far in the epistle. This is certain, because he uses the same term, “these things,” in verse 3:14, speaking of all that preceded that verse. In other words, he gave instructions up to that point and then said, “These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly.” He then explained why those things were written to him, and that followed with an explanation of “the mystery of godliness” which was an explanation for having written up to that point. He then showed what was contradictory to the mystery of godliness, and also what was in accord with it. Therefore, the word “command” is inclusive of all directions given by him up to this point.

Paul tells him to command those things, but also to “teach.” In other words, Timothy wasn’t just to say, “The requirements for being an elder or a deacon are...” But he was to explain the reason for those requirements. This is important, because in understanding why a command is given, it will then ensure that the people will more readily follow through with it in the future.

Life application: A wise leader will give the reason for his decisions, and not just bark out commands. At times, giving a command without the reason for it is necessary, but this should not always be the norm. When people understand why they are being instructed to do something, they will – if they agree with the reason – generally be more content to continue obeying the directive in the future.

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. 1 Timothy 4:12

Here we see a truth that youth does not preclude being a preacher, or teacher of the law. Nor does it exclude being an overseer. Paul's words of Chapter 3, which say that he is not to be a novice, are speaking of maturity in Christ, not physical age. Understanding this, Paul says, "Let no one despise your youth." The age of Timothy is unknown, but he was obviously so young that some may have thought him unfit to be an overseer of the church. Some scholars have identified him in his 20s. Others figure him between 38 and 40 years old at this time. Where this is derived from is not stated, and such ages can only be mere conjecture.

Regardless of his age, because of his youth, Timothy's actions may cause some to despise him. When we see someone younger than ourselves acting in an inappropriate manner, we will often make a judgment on their actions because of their age. This is the intent of Paul's words here. Paul wanted Timothy to avoid this pitfall, and to be held in esteem despite his age among those in the congregation. In order for this to be realized, he continues with, "but be an example to the believers."

Timothy's life was to be dedicated to right and proper living in the presence of all, but Paul specifically mentions "believers." They would have their eyes on him, and if his actions were not proper, the congregation would follow suit. This truth is seen throughout the books of Kings and Chronicles where the leader of Israel set the example. As the king pursued holiness, so did the people. As he pursued wickedness, the people followed suit. The same thing is seen in any leader. The people will follow the example of the leader, and their habits will emulate his.

In order to ensure then that those in the church would pursue godliness, he tells Timothy to be a proper example in six specific ways, beginning with "in word." This signifies his speech and conversation concerning Scripture. It then includes preaching and teaching others in proper doctrine. The word used specifically signifies the expression of a thought, and so it can also include his normal conversation with those whom he associates.

Next, Paul says, "in conduct." The word signifies the manner of life displayed to others. It is the "the outward behavior from an 'up-turn' of inner beliefs" (HELPS Word Studies). This is

followed with, “in love.” This signifies that Timothy is to have a truly loving attitude towards those of the faith. Whether one likes the person or not is not considered. He is to love them nonetheless, and his attitude is to be reflective of this.

Paul then says, “in spirit.” These are the external attributes which are directed towards others, such as being meek, forgiving, helpful, patient, kind, and the like. He then notes, “in faith.” There are always times when people will be disheartened or anxious. But Paul admonishes Timothy to never let down his unshakable, complete, and wholehearted confidence in God, and in His promises. A leader who demonstrates such confidence is truly necessary when the congregation faces immense challenges.

Finally, Paul notes, “in purity.” It is a word used only here and in 1 Timothy 5:2. It signifies the quality of cleanliness, but especially in chastity. Thus it is a word concerning morality. Timothy was being implored to always reflect an attitude of the purest moral conduct, never allowing there to be a hint of impropriety in his actions.

Life application: Leaders in a church are people, just like all others, but they are expected to live their lives in a state of constant wholesome conduct before those they minister to. As this is a difficult thing for humans to do, it is appropriate that congregants help the leader along by not bringing him into a tempting or difficult situation. When all are cautious concerning wholesome character, it will be an easier thing for the leader to not get drawn into temptation himself.

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

Paul’s words, “Till I come,” give the hope of the apostle that he would, in fact, be coming to Ephesus at some point. He has already said once, in verse 3:14, that this was his intent. However, due to his absence, there was a need for doctrine to be established and maintained, and there was the need for Timothy to be the one to ensure that it was properly laid out for the people. And so Paul gives him three specific exhortations to ensure things would operate properly. The first is that he was to “give attention to reading.”

The public reading of Scripture was something practiced in synagogue, and that then carried over to the church. In Luke 4, it is recorded that Jesus read openly from the book of Isaiah “as His custom was.” In other words, there was a public reading of the Scriptures which was followed with words of explanation or instruction. This is then repeated in Acts 13. The Scriptures were read, and then Paul stood to speak. In 2 Corinthians 3:14, Paul mentions this same practice as well. Now he explicitly instructs Timothy to carry on this practice. Thus it shows us that it is something which is expected in all churches. The Scriptures are to be read, and then they are to be explained.

Next he says, “to exhortation.” The Greek word gives the sense of “holy urging.” It “is used of the Lord directly motivating and inspiring believers to carry out His plan, delivering His particular message to someone else” (HELPS Word Studies). In context, it can refer to exhortation, warning, encouraging, and comforting. A modern “life-application” sermon might be used for exhortation.

And finally Paul notes, “for doctrine.” The Greek signifies instruction and teaching. It is properly applied teaching which then extends to necessary lifestyle modifications.

These things Paul specifically instructs Timothy to do. They are intended for the soundness of the church, and for the well-being of the congregants. To be deficient in any area, will then lead to a congregation which is not sound, and which can be easily swayed merely by a change in leadership. And how many times does this come to pass! One pastor moves out, and another moves in and changes the core doctrines of the church while the congregants stew in an unholy broth. This occurs because there was not the application of reading, exhortation, and doctrine all along.

Life application: The Bible is the word of God. Unless it is read and taught constantly and properly, there will be a sad void in the soundness of a congregation. Within a single changeover of leadership, the people can go from adherence to God’s word, to accepting perversion and false teachings. History has shown this to be true time and time again. Beware! Stand on the word! Follow the sound path of Scripture! Pursue Christ!