



# 1 Timothy

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**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. 1 Timothy 4:14**

Paul – after telling his young protege Timothy to be an example to the believers, and to give attention to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine – now reminds him to “not neglect the gift that is in you.”

Based on an analysis of the word translated as “gift” here, this is surely not referring to something that was uniquely endowed to him at the time Paul will mention next, but it is the whole body of who he is as a person, recognized as such by those who ordained him. It is referring to his life as created by God, his circumstances, his training as a youth, his growth into an adult, his meeting Paul and being mentored by him, and so on. All of this was recognized as his gift that was found in him. For a very thorough study of this, refer to the commentary on this verse by Albert Barnes.

It is this concept of the whole person that “was given to you by prophecy.” In other words, the elders saw this young man’s qualifications, and they pronounced over him that he was suitable to the task of being an elder – with all that the job entails (and which Paul has been carefully detailing to him once again) and they noted this when they laid their hands on him. The laying of the hands did not impart this gift. Rather, it was an acknowledgment that it existed, and that it would be exactly what was needed for the church to move forward.

This recognition was noted “with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.” This act was a formal pronouncement, and a solemn act which acknowledged the gift in Timothy, and that it was now to be set apart for the glory of the Lord. The laying on of hands is an act, like baptism,

which is intended to relay a truth to the world of a certain state of things. One is not saved through baptism, nor do they receive any special gift at the time of baptism. A careful study of the descriptive verses concerning baptism in Acts, and Paul's prescriptive letters to the church, will clearly show this. The same is true with Timothy's ordination here.

Having said that, there was certainly a divinely inspired selection of Timothy by Paul. The leading of Paul to Timothy is recorded in Scripture, and the marvelous father/son relationship which grew up between them is carefully noted for us to see and understand that the Lord was behind them coming together. It is a beautiful thing to read and understand, because through such things, we can then look back on our own lives and see how God has woven them together in a similar fashion. What at times may have seemed out of control, is later realized to be perfectly orchestrated by the Lord.

Life application: We are all a product of the many variables which wove our life together. Because of this, we all have a gift which we can use for God's glory. This should be sought out and fanned into flame so that our particular abilities are properly used and not neglected. This is what Paul is reminding Timothy, and this is what we should pursue in our own lives.

**Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.** 1 Timothy 4:15

The Greek word translated as "meditate" is used only here and in Acts 4:25 where "the people plot vain things." In classical Greek, it gives the sense of attending to something carefully. Thus, by implication, it would be to revolve something around in the mind – meditate, ponder, imagine, etc. Paul is asking Timothy to be diligent in caring for the things he has been instructed in, and to think on them constantly.

He then says to, "give yourself entirely to them." Paul's obvious intent is that Timothy was not to merely have head knowledge of these things, but to put them into action, devoting his time and energy completely and wholly to accomplishing them. The more distractions he allowed into his life, the less effective he would be in being the example that Paul has so carefully admonished him to be.

And the reason again is obvious. Paul follows up with, "that your progress may be evident to all." The spiritual growth of a pastor is something that should be lifelong. There should be no time that he is not moving forward in the faith. If he stagnates, then those he teaches will likewise stagnate. It is for this reason that Paul had just told him to not neglect the gift that is in him.

Life application: The job of a pastor who cares about his responsibilities is a tiring and difficult job. If it appears that he is beginning to stagnate, it may be that he is having trials that he is keeping to himself. It is always a good thing to have an attentive eye on how he is progressing, and to offer a sympathetic ear to his situation. A trusted confidant is a valuable thing for his position. Maybe you are the one to be such a person.

**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 4:16**

Paul now closes out Chapter 4 with words which support what he has already said a few verses ago. He begins with, "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine." Scholars generally agree that it should say "to the teaching" rather than "to the doctrine." What is noteworthy is that Paul implores Timothy to first take heed to himself. If he cannot tend to himself, then his teaching of others would naturally be faulty as well. The words of Paul are always logical and orderly.

Next he says, "Continue in them." Taking heed to oneself, and right teaching for the man of God, are things that are never to be set aside. Rather, pursuing these things should be a daily practice. In our walk with the Lord, there is nothing static. We are either moving forward in right conduct, or we are moving backward. This is what Paul is saying to Timothy here.

Finally, he closes out the verse with, "for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you." The words appear to be pointing to works-based salvation, but that is not the case at all. In teaching right doctrine, those who are taught will be saved (if they choose to accept God's gracious offer in Christ). In caring for the salvation of others, a minister is demonstrating that he cares for his own salvation. It is the gospel which brings salvation to men. Paul is ensuring that Timothy understands that he has an enormous responsibility in teaching the word.

Life application: Right doctrine really matters. If false teachings are introduced into a church, those who have not yet come to Christ, and are led astray by these teachings, will never be saved. What a terrible burden to bear... all for the sake of being unwilling to study and show oneself approved in that which is proper.