

easy. It is the keeping them up which causes the problem. But the verb here is the old and common one meaning to "stay by the side of a person or thing." Stay by them, stick to them, see them through--these are phrases which express the idea of the verb. Taking it in relation to the previous phrase, the idea is "be everlastingly at the matter of framing your own life and your teaching so that both are on right lines and pleasing to God." Stickability is an essential ingredient of sound leadership.

Conclusion

As one takes an overview of these injunctions which Paul, the veteran missionary-pastor sent along to the young bishop-elder-pastor Timothy, he is impressed with the dignity and high calling of the office of Christian leadership. It is nothing to be treated lightly. It is serious business. But what a joyous privilege to be activated along the lines of which these texts speak. You ask, why? Take a good long look at the final phrase: ". . . for in so doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." The culmination of the matter is that you will further your own salvation (i.e. give evidence of its reality) and bring about the salvation of others (because they see the work of God in your life). God grant this for all of us now and always! Amen.

THE EPISTLE OF FIRST TIMOTHY "Christian Leadership" III

Introduction

1. Leaders are not born--they are made! That's what some people have urged. It is in a large measure supported by the Word of God. It is what God does in the life that really counts--and oh, what He can do with that person who is wholly committed unto HIM!

2. Paul has already dealt with the areas in which the leader is to be a man of virtue (v. 12). His development is with the arduous tasks as outlined in reading, exhortation, and doctrine (v. 13). But there is more! Leadership is an endless task. It demands and requires full effort.

3. In summation, therefore, Paul beseeches Timothy to gird up his loins and be active in three major items. Grasp these rules for leadership and you have some poignant opportunities for spiritual health in the service of the Lord!

1. CONSIDER YOUR GIFT. v. 14.

The present active imperative is a strong case for prohibition. Timothy had been neglecting what God had provided for him. This was to stop! He should not be so careless. The gift should be exercised. Four major items are listed about the gift:

- a. As to its nature--inward.
- b. As to its origin--God.
- c. As to its mediation--through prophets.
- d. As to its attestation--laying on of hands.

Here was a ministration of the Spirit given to Timothy which God had given in answer to the prayer of the elders. It is something solemn and not to be neglected. He had the current, but did not throw the switch for its use. Most likely what was involved is "exhortation and doctrine" (v. 13). These are activities

related to the pastoral office (cf. 1:3).

Leadership, if it is to fulfill its God-given responsibilities, will give some thoughtful penetration of the past. What has God given my life? The answer to this will evoke a dedication which nothing else can equal.

2. AIM FOR PROGRESS. v. 15.

The word for "profiting" is a word which means to "strike forward." It is a term found elsewhere in the Word (cf. of Jesus, Luke 5:52; of Paul, Gal. 1:14). Progress in the life of a leader is to be evident before "all." Actually, as the leader progresses, so does the group. But how is a leader to grow? The Word gives the answer in two wonderful verbs:-

- a. Meditate. This is the verb which portrays the ruminant animal chewing the cud. Since it is the present active imperative, the idea suggested is of constant meditation. The OT uses a verb with a similar thrust (cf. Joshua 1:8; Psa. 1:1-2). In the NT this verb is used here in Acts 4:25 only. Some prefer the translation "be diligent" but the AV is a good choice and should be preserved. The mind of the child of God is equivalent to his mouth, hence he is to utilize this for meditation. What is he to meditate upon? The text affirms: "these things," but what are these? The answer is found in the context where a variety of wonderful truths are offered: all the virtues of v. 12 and the truths of vv. 13, 14. If one puts his mind to these "things", it will amaze even the most doubting that God is working progress.
- b. Give thyself. This verb is also the present imperative. As such it commends the mind of God to us. It means to "spend thyself wholly in these things." It affirms the need to spend time in them. It urges being "up to one's ears" in them. There is no time here for waste. There is time for legitimate rest, but the best of the life should be "in the gift."

John Morley wrote a biography of W. E. Gladstone in which he records the key to the success of the great British Prime Minister. Gladstone answered with one word: "Concentration." It is this which Paul urges upon Timothy and all who would be spiritual leaders. One needs to throw himself completely into his ministry--mind, mouth, and members--all of them and always. If anything distracts one from the main purpose of life, let it be dealt with firmly!

NOTE:

Whereas the consideration of one's gift is thoughtful penetration of the past, the aiming at progress is purposeful concentration on the present. One more item needs to be mentioned: literal examination of the future. Here it is.

3. FIX YOUR PURPOSE. v. 16.

- a. Take heed. This is the present active imperative of the verb which means "to rest upon as one pays attention to." One is reminded to "keep up to the mark all the time." A leader must give himself a great deal of attention before he gives attention to his lessons! On this word one can readily see the rightness in saying: "be more afraid of yourself than of the world!" The man is God's important factor in preaching the Word. This emphasis brings in the whole gamut of truth relating to personal spiritual health (cf. 2 Cor. 13:5; Psa. 26:2; 1 Cor. 9:27). Constantly give heed to the doctrine is also urged. The drastic changes in beliefs ought to be adequate reason to provide all with careful and constant scrutiny at this juncture.
- b. Continue. The beginning of things is often full of excitement and comparatively