

Two kinds of exercise are considered by Paul. For Timothy, a young man, the matter of activity was important.

a. Physical exercise. A good minister will be expected to have some kind of recreation. This is profitable "for a little." It has a few prospects, circumstances, and objects in view. The extent of profit in this is limited. Fitness of body is a boon--BUT!

b. Spiritual exercise. For Timothy that which is far more profitable is the fitness of the soul. It is profitable for "all things." When moral muscle is linked with spiritual sinew and adopted as daily exercise, the minister of God is fulfilling his divine expectations. He finds that this exercise is profitable right now and throughout eternity! What other kind of exercise has such high dividends?!

5. WORKING FAITH v. 10.

A good minister is one who does trust in the living God. This verb "trust" means to "set ones hope upon" (cf. 1 John 3:3 for same construction). Perhaps this is the primary concern of a good minister, but it certainly is an expectation which cannot be compromised. He must be born again person. He is saved.

The consequence of this "hope on the Lord" is twofold: a. Labour. This is the verb for "growing weary" and means to "work with toil and effort." b. Suffer reproach. This verb means to "agonize" and "contend for a prize or struggle." This is all tied in with spiritual exercise. It is to be expected that a good minister will be poured out as a libation upon the altar of God. Any one worth his salt in the ministry will be of this sort. Woe to those who seek to deter him from such a working faith.

CONCLUSION. The words of v. 9 are the best and most pertinent conclusion. Heed them and your soul will be blessed. Argue not with the Word, but submit thereto. One who so labours will prove to be a good minister and one who will give account before God for the souls of others (Heb. 13:17): Amen.

THE BOOK OF FIRST TIMOTHY

"A Good Minister"

1 Timothy 4:6-10

Introduction

1. When Andrew Jackson became president of the U.S., he was overwhelmed with office seekers. Among them was a minister of the Gospel. Mr. Jackson said to him, "And what do you do here?" He replied, "I am a minister of the Gospel," whereupon Jackson said, "Then go home, my dear man, and preach, for I have no office so high as that." In summary--that is a good minister. He is a man of God who preaches the Word of God (Haggai 1:13).

2. Paul knew of the evils to come "in the latter times" so he urged Timothy to take up the office of the ministry with great seriousness and gravity. Having elucidated many important factors concerning the organization of the assembly, and having warned of perilous times, he outlined some of the activities of a man of God.

3. With what will the minister of God be concerned? What will some of his own qualities be? How will he conduct the affairs of the house of God? Look not, dear friend, to just any source for your answer. Rather, turn to the Word of God. There you will find the answer IF you really want to find it. Consider the following expectations of a "good minister."

NOTE: The word for "minister" in this context is the Greek for "deacon." This term implies a menial "waiting upon" others. It highlights the fact that altho Timothy was a bishop and the administrator for the local assembly, his whole service was unto Christ as a "server." When the minister has an office and not a ministry, he ceases to qualify at this critical point! God is looking for "servers" and not "holders of offices." Even Paul in all his authoritative ministry took a low place in relation to the churches (cf. 2 Cor. 4:5 where the term "slave" is used in connection with his labour unto the Lord).

1. DRIVING ACTIVITY v. 6.

Whatever else, the good minister will be a man who keeps things in a stir! He cannot allow matters to lie dormant. This is made emphatically clear by the verb "put in remembrance." The original for this verb connotes the idea of placing under the eyes of the brethren the things indicated. No room for laxness here.

The "brethren" here are those who are under the administration of Timothy. It is Timothy's responsibility to constantly keep them alerted concerning the matters listed in vv. 4, 5. They are the ones who should hear and need to hear! There is no mention of their unwillingness to be kept alert. The direction of these matters is from the top down and not from the bottom up. Unfortunately, in some assemblies the leadership has become apostate and then this expectation of a good minister is entirely lost. Look for a pastor to be one who will keep modern trends and developments before the brethren lest inroads of unbelief be made. Don't look derogatorially upon a good minister who performs this function of his office! Be grateful. Don't accuse him of "rocking the boat."

2. PROVIDING FOOD. v. 6.

One of the contributory causes of good health is good nourishment. Hence, you can expect that a good minister will be everlastingly at it being nourished in his soul. In the first instance this refers to Timothy. He himself is to be occupied with this nourishing activity. The present tense of the verb proves this. Not an occasional banquet, but a regular diet of feeding on the good solid fare of the Word. Two kinds of solid food are mentioned:

- a. Words of faith. This really has reference to the words in which the faith or the contents of our belief find expression. This is the direction in which a man's time will be ordered--the faith! If anything else is injected, let it not be the main diet!
- b. Words of good doctrine. "Doctrine" is "teaching" and this means that Timothy is expected to feed

his soul upon the bases of all else--the foundation blocks of the faith. Let's not think that doctrine is something which can be taken or rejected at will. It is the very core of our beings! The use of "good" with doctrine obviously indicates that there is "bad" doctrine around.

Paul is not unaware of Timothy's situation. He recognizes that the young bishop has been hard at it. Hence, he writes "whereunto thou has attained." The verb here is in the perfect tense and should be rendered "which" you commenced to follow and still do unto his hour." Consistency in adherence to the faith and the doctrine of the Word is thus acknowledged. Far too many are moved by "winds of doctrine" which blow upon the soul. Steadfastness to the truth is often blatantly and derogatorially referred to as having ones head in the sand. The Word of God proclaims that there is merit and profit in maintaining the faith which has been once for all delivered unto the saints (Jude 3).

3. WATCHING DIET v. 7.

The import of this verse is found in two phrases elsewhere located in the Word. Here they are: "Take heed what you hear" (Mark 4:24) and "Take heed how you hear" (Luke 8:18). In doing this, the good minister will take a negative attitude toward certain things.

Just here many part company. They don't want negatives! How sad. But the Bible says Timothy is to "refuse" and this verb means to "beg off." Being in the present tense, it notes an habitual activity. He is to beg off on the items which are unhallowed (therefore profane) and related to fables tossed insidiously by old women into the pot of discussion! Peter noted a similar refusal (2 Pet. 1:16). Good solid plain food--that's good provender for spiritual growth. Hallelujah. Know what to enjoy and what to avoid. All things neither are profitable nor edifying (1 Cor. 10:23).

4. LIMITING EXERCISE. vv. 7, 8.