



**1 Timothy 4:6-16**  
*Seek To Be Worthy of Emulation*

6 If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.

7 But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness.

8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.

10 For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.

11 These things command and teach.

12 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.

13 Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

14 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.

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

16 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.

What makes a man a good elder or minister? What makes his ministry a success? What qualities does he need to have?

If we turn to the world for advice on that particular subject, we should expect to hear that a good elder has all the same qualities that we would look for in a good businessman. That he is able to grow the church, both numerically and monetarily, that the business, so to speak grows under his directorship. We also might expect to hear that a good elder is also a dynamic, Charismatic, and personable public figure. That he speaks well, is interesting, that he puts people at ease, and says the kind of things that people want to hear. By and large those are the kind of elders and ministers who receive national attention.

We could expect that from the world, they only guages for success that they can understand generally are in terms of popularity or profit. Noses and Nickels we might put it. What might surprise you though is that often pastors themselves are tempted to measure their own success in exactly the same terms, for instance one recent Barna poll revealed this:

*“A national survey among pastors revealed that a majority feels they are doing an excellent or good job in leading people spiritually in relation to 12 of the 13 areas of performance evaluated. (The exception was in the area of raising money for ministry.) In fact, the larger the church is, the more likely the pastor is to feel pleased with his performance as its leader.”*

But I think George Barna in his comments on that poll showed very well the terrible shortcoming of that method of estimating the success of a ministry:

*Barna confessed confusion over that outcome. "Pastoring is a difficult job," he acknowledged, "and it's important not to become discouraged by the magnitude of the spiritual battle in which we are engaged - after all, we know that we are aligned with the winning camp. However, it's a bit troubling to see pastors feel they're doing a great job when the research reveals that few congregants have a biblical worldview, half the people they minister to are not spiritually secure or developed, kids are fleeing from the church in record numbers, most of the people who attend worship services admit they did not connect with God, the divorce rate among Christians is no different than that of non-Christians, only 2% of the pastors themselves can identify God's vision for their ministry they are trying to lead, and the average congregant spends more time watching television in one day than he spends in all spiritual pursuits combined for an entire week. "Pastors, alone, cannot be held accountable for the spiritual disrepair of America. But it's worrisome when there is a strong correlation between church size and self-satisfaction, because that suggests that attendance and budget figures have become our mark of success. It's troubling when our spiritual leaders cannot articulate where we're headed and how the Church will fulfill its role as the restorative agent of our society. Maybe the comfort afforded by our buildings and other material possessions has seduced us into thinking we're farther down the road than we really are."*

It's worthwhile noting that Noses and Nickels was never how the bible gauged the success of a ministry or whether an elder was a good minister, a good a servant of Jesus Christ –

Paul for instance, in writing to Timothy, one of his most faithful assistants, in this letter says that there are two qualities that particularly mark out a good elder, and that is soundness of doctrine he teaches and the holiness of his life. Orthodoxy and Godliness. To essential qualities that cannot be separated. When a man has those qualities, those who are under his oversight will prosper spiritually, but when they are absent, inevitably regardless of how wealthy or large or well known his ministry becomes the people will spiritually stagnate.

So let us look at the qualities that Paul encouraged Timothy to continue in.

**First** he said Timothy must have Good Doctrine, that is Good teaching or theology, biblical theology. The words of faith that he learned from scripture and that sound doctrine that he learned from the inspired Apostles and in particular his teacher Paul. Paul of course points out that he was learning this biblically based theology all his life first from His Grandmother and Mother and then from Paul himself

*2 Tim 3:14 But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them,*

*15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

*16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,*

*17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Paul throughout his ministry pointed out that the Apostles doctrine and the teaching of the scriptures were one, they were not contradicting the deposit of faith that had gone before merely adding to it, and completing it. That is why the early church was able to use the Old Testament as their scriptures and why in their preaching the Apostles were constantly quoting and applying the Old Testament and showing how Christ had fulfilled it.

What Timothy must avoid the tendency to deviate into the teaching of that to anything else, and in particular into the non-biblical opinions of men, the philosophies of the world, the popular sayings and maxims of the culture. He warns him here to *reject profane and old wives fables*. These things might interest people, they might be popular, but there was no power in them. Paul even warned that the time would come when people in the church would prefer to hear those popular fables and *not* to hear sound doctrine – **2 Tim. 4:3** *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

But why would he warn Timothy about that, why would any elder who knew the truth turn from it to the preaching of fables and myths?

Because Paul knew that at heart, we have a longing, a desire to be approved and applauded by men. Deep down in every elder and pastors heart there is a desire to be idolized, we all want to be the Joel Osteens and the Rick Warrens, not the unknown small church Pastor, known only to Christ and His people. It is hard to be satisfied just with knowing that you are doing what Christ commanded and no more. So it was that Calvin wrote:

*“Men frequently aim at something else than to approve themselves to Christ; and consequently many are desirous of being applauded for genius, eloquence, and profound knowledge. And that is the very reason why they pay less attention to necessary things, which do not tend to procure the admiration of the common people. But Paul enjoins Timothy to be satisfied with this alone, to be a faithful minister of Christ. And certainly we ought to look on this as a far more honorable title than to be a thousand times called seraphic and subtle doctors. Let us, therefore, remember, that as it is the highest honor of a godly pastor to be reckoned a good servant of Christ, so he ought to aim at nothing else during his whole ministry; for whoever has any other object in view, will have it in his power to obtain applause from men, but will not please God. Accordingly, that we may not be deprived of so great a blessing, let us learn to seek nothing else, and to account nothing so valuable, and to treat everything as worthless in comparison of this single object.” – John Calvin*

**The Second thing** that Paul said that the Elders of the Church must have is Godliness, Good theology alone is simply not enough. **“Right Doctrine without a godly life is of no value; while a godly life without right doctrine is not possible.”- New Bible Comm.**

No Timothy was what would have been considered a man who was kind of young to be an elder, he was probably only in his 30s. This would have made it difficult for people to look up to him, and indeed they might have despised him had he shown all the common failings that you tend to find in young men, impetuosity, pride, intemperance, lack-of-common sense. And so instead of those qualities, Paul needed to study to be an example of Godliness, a man who would set an example. For the people of God and who would have a good reputation before them.

He identifies the kind of qualities, that make for a Godly man in verse 12:

First, ***word and conduct*** – Not only what he said, but what he did

In his ***Love*** towards Christ and His Bride the church – that kind of thing can be seen in the way that a man is willing to spend himself on her. Willing to sacrifice himself for her.

***Spirit*** – There not just his ardor for God, but the overall spirit of the man. It was said that Jonathan Goforth "He was an electric, radiant personality, flooding his immediate environment with sunlight that was deep in his heart and shone on his face. And God used him in mighty revivals." It was as true of Goforth as of Robert M. M'Cheyne that all who knew him "felt the breathing of the hidden life of God."

***Faith*** - Devotion

***Purity*** – Chastity temperance. Too many have blighted the church. 7<sup>th</sup> commandment violations.

Cultivating true Godliness far more important than exercise - These things far more important than exercise - Only godliness has a future as well as a present value, at the time this probably leaned towards fasting and other modes of self-denial, hair shirts, etc., not ascetical enterprise involving training the body,

What makes it especially difficult is that preaching the truth will will involve hard labor, and will bring one under condemnation of others

There is so much more I could say, but let me leave you with one application:

***But why is it so important to cultivate and continue on in sound doctrine?***

Verse 16 - 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.***

“His blood will I require at thy hand,” (Ezekiel 33:8,)