

Commitment to What Matters

1 Timothy 4:13-16

Introduction

13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. **14** Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. **15** Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. **16** Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Devote, don't neglect, practice, immerse, keep a close watch, persist

Commitment to What Matters

1. Scripture (13)

Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.

Devote yourself—keep giving attention to

- Reading—public reading of Scripture (cf. Joshua 1:8); not just that something is read (like a commentary or good book) but that the Scripture is read

- Exhortation—call alongside—to exhort, comfort, advocate; paraclete—Holy Spirit; Christ Himself; the appeal to the conscience and will of the hearers
- Teaching—instruction

2. Your Spiritual Gifting (14-15)

14 Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. **15** Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress.

Do not neglect—the negative of the same word translated “practice” in verse 15. Don’t fail to practice, to cultivate, to take pains with

Practice these things

Immerse yourself in them—literally, be in them; go on being in them

So that all may see your progress (like a pioneer cutting a path through a dense forest)—this kind of commitment is fruitful of a life others can see and observe. Remember that by definition an elder is to provide a mature spiritual example that others can imitate.

The gift you have

Given you—not merely a human choice or skill

By prophecy—a prophet hears from God, then speaks to people

Council of elders laid their hands on you—
mature spiritual leaders of the church
affirming what the Holy Spirit had done

Acts 20:28

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to
all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has
made you overseers, to care for the church of
God, which he obtained with his own blood.

Pay careful attention to—same word
translated “devote” in 1 Timothy 4:13

3. Yourself (16a)

Keep a close watch on yourself

Intensive form of holding onto, giving heed,
giving attention

*Shepherding others with the Word of God can
never be divorced from your own walk with
God. It is deadly dangerous, eternally so, to
become a professional shepherd of others
while you are failing personally to follow the
Great Shepherd of the sheep (Matthew 7).*

Your private life is not secret with God. He
must rule there. You are not to like be a tour
bus guide who imagines he’s actually been to

the places he has announced each stop at which people get off the bus.

4. The Teaching (16b)

and on the teaching.

You cannot shepherd people apart from divine instruction. Your own ideas and example are insufficient to supply all they need. Your goal is for them to follow Christ, not merely you.

Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Persist—abide, remain, continue

The spiritual survival and health both of yourself and of those you shepherd depends on your faithful commitment to these things that matter.

Conclusion

1. Scripture (13)
2. Your Spiritual Gifting (14-15)
3. Yourself (16a)
4. The Teaching (16b)
 - 1 and 4 go together
 - 2 and 3 go together