

Personal Instructions for Timothy

1 Timothy 5:22-25

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Paul is inspired to add additional personal instructions in leadership behavior.

I. By promoting (or restoring) a man to leadership too quickly, one becomes complicit in their future sins. (v. 22)

Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole assembly. Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, as the LORD instructed through Moses. (Numbers 27:22-23)

They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. (Acts 6:6)

While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:2-3)

Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you. (1 Timothy 4:14)

He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil... They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. (1 Timothy 3:6, 10)

If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent—not to put it too severely. The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. Another reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes. (2 Corinthians 2:5-11)

“If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.”

The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” (Luke 17:3-5)

II. Paul is inspired to recommend to Timothy a little wine for medicinal purposes. (v. 23)

Now the overseer (elder/pastor) is to be above reproach...not given to drunkenness... (1 Timothy 3:2-3)

In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine... (1 Timothy 3:8)

Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink... Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence. (Colossians 2:16a, 20-23)

A. Note that Paul's advice is practical not spiritual.

Then Jesus went throughout all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and sickness. (Matthew 9:35)

B. This is no longer necessary advice for people of most modern, developed nations.

C. Drunkenness is consistently condemned by God.

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit... (Ephesians 5:18)

Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

D. Drinking alcohol can lead to abuse and addiction.

Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise. (Proverbs 20:1)

Who has woe? Who has sorrow?

Who has strife? Who has complaints?

Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes?

Those who linger over wine,
who go to sample bowls of mixed wine.

Do not gaze at wine when it is red,
when it sparkles in the cup,
when it goes down smoothly!

In the end it bites like a snake
and poisons like a viper.

Your eyes will see strange sights,

and your mind will imagine confusing things.
You will be like one sleeping on the high seas,
lying on top of the rigging.
“They hit me,” you will say, “but I’m not hurt!
They beat me, but I don’t feel it!
When will I wake up
so I can find another drink?” (Proverbs 23:29-35)

Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks... (Isaiah 5:22)

E. Drinking alcohol can inadvertently encourage others to stumble and fall.

Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak. For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol’s temple, won’t that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols? So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. When you sin against them in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall. (1 Corinthians 8:9-13)

I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall. (Romans 14:14-21)

III. A person’s true character will always, eventually reveal itself. (v. 24-25)

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them.

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. It is

shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. (Ephesians 5:3-13)