

“Youthful Maturity”
1 Timothy 4:12
(Preached at Trinity, July 4, 2021)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Beginning with verse 6 and continuing to the end of the chapter Paul is giving the qualities of an excellent minister of the Lord Jesus Christ.
1 Timothy 4:6 NAU - "In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus"
2. I’ve stressed that although Paul is writing this to Pastor Timothy to remind him of the importance of maintaining excellence in his life and ministry, these expectations are important for us all. All of us should strive to maintain excellence in our lives. All of us are servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. All of us must be zealous to maintain sound doctrine and moral purity—to discipline ourselves unto Godliness.
3. Last week our attention was focused upon the authority of the pastor. With authority, great caution must always be exercised. All authority is delegated by God and care must be given so that the authority is not abused. The pastor must conduct his ministry maintaining the authority of the office, but with a heart of service and humility. Authority and humility are too often strangers, distances apart. The pastor speaks with authority because God’s Word possess infinite authority.
4. Now as we arrive at **Verse 12** Paul makes a statement that may sound strange to our ears, “Let no one look down on your youthfulness. . .”
We worship youth in our culture and place little value upon age. We have largely abandoned the concept of respect due to age. Most people under the age of 30 believe they are just as wise as those in their 70’s or 80’s and would certainly not expect someone to look down upon them because they are young.
The phrase, “look down on” is from a single word that means to think lightly of, or even stronger, to despise. It refers to a strong disrespect.
5. As we read **Verse 12**, we presume that Timothy must have been quite young. In today’s context we would presume he must be in his twenties. A pastor in his twenties might have difficulty garnering respect from the older members of his congregation.
 - A. During Paul’s day anyone under 40 was considered youthful.
When Timothy joined Paul on his second missionary journey he would have probably been in his twenties. It’s not likely Paul would have brought someone younger on such a dangerous journey. By the time Paul wrote this letter Timothy would have been in his 30’s.
 - B. At Ephesus there were two classes of men. Those under 40 were referred to as the “young men” and those over 40 were the “elders.”
 - C. Pastors needed to be men of maturity. Paul wrote in **Chapter 3** that a pastor must not be a new convert implying also that he would not be youthful.

6. This is a testimony to the respect that this culture held for age. Even at forty Timothy would have still been considered youthful. Age was highly honored in antiquity.
1. An old African proverb maintained, “When an elder dies, a library burns to the ground.” – in other words, a lifetime of knowledge passes away.
 2. The Bible puts value and respect upon age.
Leviticus 19:32 NAU - "You shall rise up before the grayheaded and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the LORD."
 3. Respect for age is not a groundless respect. With age comes experience and experience usually brings wisdom.
7. Age is not as important as maturity. Charles Spurgeon was called to pastor New Park Street Chapel at the age of 19. David Brainerd, missionary to the American Indians, was known for his piety. He died at the age of 29.
Robert Murray M’Cheyne, pastor with the Church of Scotland, a man of deep piety and prayer, died when he was only thirty. His daily Bible reading plan is still used by many today, testimony to his dedication to the Bible.
8. Spiritual maturity comes through experience.
Experience in walking with Christ. Experience with being led by the Holy Spirit.
Experience in warfare with the evil one. Experience with rightly handling Word of God.
Experience in gaining dominion over the flesh.
9. How was Timothy to garner respect? We saw last week there is authority attached to the pastoral office, but respect wasn’t something he could command or gain by throwing his weight around. He would be respected if he demonstrated the maturity of his office and of his life. He would need to earn their respect.
Paul reminded Timothy that his example would have much greater impact than his age. Once again, while Paul is giving the qualities of an excellent minister, much of this applies to each of us as Christians. Christian maturity transcends age. It is a maturity that comes by the Holy Spirit. It is the fruit of our salvation and should be the marvel of the world.
Paul tells Timothy to be a Christian example – “an example of those who believe”
10. The word for example is τύπος from which we get our word “type.” A typewriter would leave the image of each letter as it hit the paper.
Paul gives several areas that this maturity is most manifest. We need to examine them carefully -- "speech, conduct, love, faith *and* purity"
They describe the example we must display before others and are the true measure of our maturity.
- I. Paul says we must be a Christian example in speech – λόγος – our words are important
- A. Our words reveal our heart
Matthew 12:34 NAU - "You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart."
1. A man can counterfeit many of the Christian graces - but the tongue will soon expose him.
 2. No man can control the tongue – it demands a change of heart. We need purified hearts and sanctified tongues.
James 3:8 NAU - "But no one can tame the tongue; *it is* a restless evil *and* full of deadly poison."

- B. Paul reminds Timothy that as a pastor he must labor to control his tongue – a most difficult work. This is true for every Christian.
There are several areas that are a particular danger:
1. The vain glorious tongue - self-centered, ego-centric,
Is that you? In conversation is it mostly about you? Are you inclined to dominate conversations, always talking about yourself and your experiences?
There is great value in silence—speaking when it is needful and sharing what they need to know.
 2. The murderous tongue
Speaking in a manner which tears down others.
 - a. Gossip, slander, a critical spirit.
 - b. Undue sarcasm designed to injure
It is so much easier to tear down than to build up.
 - c. It sometimes lashes out in anger.
 3. The Vulgar Tongue
 - a. Unclean, vulgar speaking – vain and undisciplined
 - b. Sometimes it's just careless speaking—endless babbling.
Matthew 12:36 NAU - "But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment."
 4. The Lying Tongue
 - a. The pastor must speak honestly. He must not be a flatterer.
 - b. There must be confidence in his trustworthiness
Of course, this includes us all. Christians should be known by their honesty and integrity.
 6. The Murmuring Tongue
 - a. He must avoid complaining and murmuring
Human beings have a sinful propensity for complaining. We learn it from childhood. We are seldom satisfied, seldom content. Even in the midst of God's richest blessings we are prone to complain.
 - b. The dangerous thing is we don't really see how guilty we are of this sin and how evil it is.
We try to mask our murmuring by directing our complaints against other men. Politics make us skillful murmurers.
- C. Instead of all of these negative, sinful uses of the tongue, we must use our tongue as an instrument of grace.
1. Christians must learn to speak less—gaining mastery over the tongue. It is a slow process as the Christian matures.
 2. We must learn to limit our speaking to uttering words of grace
Ephesians 4:29 NAU - "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a *word* as is good for edification according to the need of *the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who hear."

II. In Christian conduct or behavior

- A. It is important that we understand the nature of Christianity
1. Christianity is more than a set of principles or doctrines. Christianity is never viewed in the abstract. It is never simply a subject of discourse. It is possible to go to hell with our Bible in our hand and doctrine on our lips.
 2. Christianity involves a changed heart that is fixed on Christ, a transformed character – it affects a person’s conduct.
 3. Nothing is worse than a Pastor who does not exhibit this change. Christians must demonstrate this wondrous change wrought in us by God’s grace.
- B. We’ve seen in **1 Tim. 3:2** that a pastor must be “above reproach”
1. The pastor must strive to demonstrate what he preaches – hypocrisy destroys the reality of what he preaches.
1 Timothy 4:16 NAU - "Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you."
 2. How he lives is as important as what he says
James 3:13 NAU - "Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom."
 3. By being obedient to Christ we teach others to be obedient to Christ. By being diligent in living a disciplined life we teach others to live a disciplined life.

III. In love - ἀγάπη

- A. This is the greatest evidence of our Christian conversion
1. By nature we are consumed with self-love
 2. Christianity changes our heart enabling us to love others
- B. Love is the highest motivation for service
1. We serve God because we love Him
Never with a motive to gain approval but simply as an expression of our delight in Him.
 2. This love for God must be the driving force behind the Pastor’s labors. Only then will he be diligent. Only then will he continue in spite of disappointment.
 3. The excellent pastor serves men because he loves them and he loves them because they are loved by Christ.
 - a. He rejoices to see the brethren grow
 - b. He rejoices to see the sinner converted
 4. As mature Christians, we love even if the love is not returned. We must understand the weakness of our humanity.
 - a. We must look beyond misspoken words
 - b. We must even look beyond hateful words

IV. In faith

- A. The Pastor should demonstrate genuine faith
 - 1. Faith always manifests itself with outward evidence
 - a. Saving faith is always demonstrated by a holy hatred of sin
 - b. Saving faith is always demonstrated by a works of obedience
 - c. Saving faith is demonstrated by prayerfulness
 - d. Saving faith is an absolute yielding to the authority of God and surrendering of one's whole life to God
 - 2. The Pastor should demonstrate a life of faithfulness
 - He should be steadfast in his service
 - Few who begin the office of pastor will finish
- B. The Pastor should demonstrate an Absolute Trust in God
 - 1. When difficulties come the Pastor must demonstrate his confidence that the church belongs to Christ and He will provide.
 - 2. Most important, the minister must have faith in the power of God's transforming grace. He preaches with confidence that God's Word is sufficient.
 - 3. He must be a man who rests upon the strength of God to conduct his ministry.
 - 4. May others see your mature faith demonstrated in your steadfast life built upon the rock of Christ.

V. In Purity – the Greek word implies sinlessness of life, of moral conduct.

- A. Purity is an expression of the heart – a heart purged of all that is impure.
 - 1. It describes moral correctness
 - 2. The pastor's speech and conduct must reflect the purity of his heart
- B. The excellent pastor must give himself to the matter of mortification – of purging his life from anything impure.

2 Timothy 2:22 NAU - "Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love *and* peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart."

 - 1. The pastor must follow after purity and holiness – he must flee sinful lusts.
 - 2. A man can disqualify himself from leadership in God's church by his actions
 - 3. This purity must be the goal of every believer. It is yet another mark of Christian maturity.

Conclusion:

- 1. Paul's focus in **Verse 12** is encouraging Timothy to give great attention to his example, an example of Christian maturity.
But this must be the focus of every believer.
- 2. And while the pastor must live as an example to his congregation, he is still only a sinful man whose example will never be perfect. Looking to any man as your absolute model is bound to disappoint.
This is why we must keep our eyes fixed upon our Master. We must strive to be like Him.
Hebrews 12:2 – "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith;"
- 3. Pray for one another. We need continual grace as we grow in maturity. Pray for your pastor – these are high standards. And pray for yourselves.
1 Timothy 4:12 NAU - "in speech, conduct, love, faith *and* purity, show yourself an example of those who believe."