

**Subject: A Good Minister of Jesus Christ**

**Scripture: 1 Timothy 4:6-16**

Paul has already described the qualifications of church leaders (pastors in 3:1-7; deacons in 3:8-13). Paul is not finished with his instruction and challenge for pastors. We will use his phrase in verse 6 as the main topic of this section: “a good minister of Jesus Christ.”

The word “good” means noble, excellent, or admirable. Paul used the word “good” in 3:1 to describe the ministry of a pastor. Here in verse 16 he uses the word “good” to describe the man in that ministry.

The word “minister” (Gk., *diakonos*) means servant and has the idea of someone who is useful. The minister is called to be excellent in his usefulness to Jesus Christ. The minister is first and foremost a good minister of Jesus Christ (belonging to Christ, faithful to Christ, serving Christ) and not just a servant of the church. What does God’s Word say about a good minister? We find eleven things in the text. Please write these down so you will know how to pray for me.

**A good minister warns God’s people of false teaching (vs. 6)**

The pastor is a protector. One of the shepherd’s main jobs is to protect the flock from danger. Remember that Timothy is pastor in Ephesus, and Paul had warned the church in Ephesus about false teachers. **Acts 20:29-31**<sup>29</sup> *For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.*<sup>30</sup> *Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*<sup>31</sup> *Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.* False teaching was not just a problem in Ephesus. It was a widespread problem then and now, as Paul said about the latter times (1 Tim. 4:1).

**A good minister feeds upon the Word of God (vs. 6)**

A malnourished pastor will have a malnourished church. R. G. Lee used to tell preacher boys, “You can’t drink skim milk all week and preach cream on Sunday.” When I was in my early 40’s, I developed a heart rhythm issue and saw a cardiologist. I think it was on my second of third visit I was sitting in the doctor’s office and somehow I had my medical records and I looked to see what I could find. The doctor had dictated something like this: “Mr. Anderson is a 40-something year old, well-nourished male.” At that I didn’t want to read much more. I do like to eat more than I should, but I like to feed on God’s Word. Man does not live on bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

**A good minister rejects all false teaching (vs. 7)**

The flip side of being in the Word is avoiding all false doctrine. “Profane” describes something the total opposite from what is holy or found in Scripture. “Old wives’ fables” refer to myths fit for old women or tales that only senile or gullible people would believe.

**A good minister disciplines himself in godliness (vs. 7-9)**

Godliness is one of Paul’s main topics in 1 Timothy: 1:4, godly edifying; 2:2, a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty; 2:10, women professing godliness; 3:16, the mystery of godliness; 6:3, the doctrine which is according to godliness; 6:6, godliness with

contentment is great gain; 6:11, follow after godliness. In 2 Timothy 3:5, he warns against those who have a form of godliness, but deny its power.

Bodily exercise profits the body a little and for a time. Godliness profits the soul a lot and for time and eternity. Bodily exercise requires discipline and so does godliness. This is a faithful saying that everyone should accept as true and important. I've seen people come to the gym and they stay for a while and then go. You don't see them anymore. I've seen the same thing in the church. They exercise in godliness for a time and then they drop out.

#### **A good minister works hard and endures opposition (vs. 10)**

“Labor” means to work to the point of being exhausted. The pastor may get tired in the work, but he doesn't get tired of the work. What keeps him going? He trusts (hopes) in the living God. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. Hope is no better than its object. Misplaced hope will bring disappointment and destruction. Hope in the living God brings salvation and blessing. God has provided salvation for all people, but it is applied only to those who believe.

#### **A good minister teaches with authority (vs. 11)**

This is a far cry from a lot of modern preaching and teaching. Preaching today is usually entertaining, but not convicting, popular but not powerful, interesting but not life-changing. Teaching with authority is based on a strong commitment to the authority of God's Word. The pastor is God's watchman who stands and says, “Thus saith the Lord.”

#### **A good minister sets a worthy example for others (vs. 12)**

There are six ways that he is to set a good example (in his speech, lifestyle, love, attitude, faithfulness, and holiness).

#### **A good minister focuses on Bible instruction (vs. 13)**

“Give attendance (attention)” means to devote his life to these things: public reading of God's Word, challenging the people to apply what they have been taught, and doctrine (teaching or the systematic explanation and application of God's Word).

#### **A good minister uses his spiritual gift (vs. 14)**

The gift probably refers to every gift and ability that God gave Timothy. Spiritual gifts and abilities come in all shapes and sizes and in different combinations. We should think of spiritual gifts like an artist's palette where he mixes some basic colors and comes up with different hues and shades of color. Every pastor, just like every person, has his own unique gifts. The important thing is to make the most of what we have.

#### **A good minister is absorbed in his work (vs. 15)**

A minister must be single-minded and not be like the double-minded man in James 1:8, who is unstable in all his ways. When not involved in ministry, the minister is preparing, praying, or planning for it. He is consumed by his work.

**A good minister remains faithful in his life and service (vs. 16)**

This verse describes the quality of persistence and perseverance. The one great goal of ministry is for the pastor and the people he serves to be saved and to be faithful so that one day they will meet in heaven and look back together and say I'm thankful we were on this journey together, learning and growing together, struggling together, praying for one another and encouraging each other along the way, and now here we are by the grace of God.

If I had to pick one verse that is the guiding principle of my life and ministry it is this:  
***1 Corinthians 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.***