

Paul's letter to every believer.

1

Read 1 Timothy 4:6-16

Our Subject today is – A good minister of Jesus Christ.

A good minister of Jesus Christ is nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained, or where you have closely followed.

A good Minister or a good believer is faithful and obedient to the authority of Christ, that is to His Holy Word.

A good minister is determined to follow the teaching and doctrine of Christ.

A good minister steadfastly follows the example of Christ.

A good minister is completely dependent upon the grace of Christ.

All this takes place when we nourish our own souls. When we satisfy our own souls, and the word of God sinks deep down into our own souls, The Word we speak will be clearer and so life giving to our hearers.

Spiritual food A Camel Story. A great philosopher owned a very sick camel. It was so thin and was wasting away. He was relating the plight to a simple son of the desert, telling him how he had tried all remedies. He had spent so much on various things for his camel but it seemed to get no better. The simple man looked at the camels hollow side, he looked at the ribs sticking out and said oh Mr philosopher, your camel needs just one thing. What is that tell me ! Well it needs food sir, good food , plenty of it. Oh dear me said the philosopher, I never thought of that.

Many don't think of that simple truth.... Are your spirits low do you feel weak do you feel unmotivated. Here is your CURE. Give your soul more nourishment , more prayer , more reading Gods Word more meditating upon Gods word. Then arise and go and do good to somebody where you live somebody around you. That is a sure cure for your misery. Not just once but the good minister is daily nourished.

Nourishment and Exercise

1 Timothy 4:7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. Refuse them in other words don't pay any attention to them, don't think about them. Don't even let them take a moment of your time they are unimportant. **Rather Exercise yourself unto Godliness.** Just as an athlete keeps fit and keeps supple and keeps their muscles toned. This is Gods purpose when we face trials. To exercise ourselves unto Godliness. Train yourselves, exercise yourselves. This implies ceaseless activity in self-denial, and exercise in every Christian virtue. Being enthusiastic and humble will result in a Holy Life. It will result in reverence for Christ.

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2

We maintain fitness for the work that Christ Jesus has called us to do. It was for this that Jesus died to conform us into His own Likeness.

We live in a fallen world where the believers are despised. How then you ask can I then let no man despise me? How can I not bring reproach upon the church? Paul is writing to Timothy a Christian worker but also to every believer. That we should be an **example** to believers. In another Epistle **Philippians 3:17** Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an **ensample**.

Believers are to be an ensample, that is patterned fully and exactly after the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is not just giving head knowledge, saying walk like this, He has provided a pattern. He says follow me as I follow Christ.

He didn't have a car like we do today, He didn't even have a motor bike. He walked He went by donkey. Life was a lot harder. Yet He never complained. He never said I will not come to your village unless the accommodation is good. He never expected any payment for his service. Rather he laboured tirelessly.

What a difference to today's believer who seem so unwilling to give of themselves to give of their time to give of their strength. Who clearly tell you about the terms on which they will come. Is there no sacrifice anymore. Are people no longer sold out for the Lord? Is this the example we want our people to follow?

1 Timothy 4:12 Let no man despise thy youth; **but be thou an example of the believers**, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Be a pattern for the believers.

Be thou an example of the believers - It is natural for the flock to follow the shepherd; if he go wrong, they will go wrong also. If the Shepherd has left the narrow way the sheep will just follow.

In word (but also means in your speech, utterance, sayings) -

In the Word In doctrine; teach nothing but the truth of God, because nothing but that will save souls.

In our everyday speech. Oh to be able to say like *Proverbs 8:8 All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them.* I heard a story of a preacher who went to visit members of his congregation. The first house that he visited he was presently surprised, and very encouraged in that home. When he went to the next home, he did not realise he was visiting a very domineering and difficult lady. The first thing she said was you are late in coming. Yes He said. Where have you been? Well I've been to sister so and so, what a lovely person she is. True she said. How kind

she is she even made me a meal. True she said ill give her that. Then after He spoke of a whole list of virtues, she said Oh but you don't know her like I know her! But where did those words that kind of talking come from? It came from a bitter heart. *James 3:10-11 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. [11] Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?* We must acknowledge the Lord in all our ways *prov 3:6*. Not just some of our ways, not just some of our words.

In conversation - Only let your *conversation* be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: What does it mean well let your actions be in line with the Gospel of Christ. The Word has the meaning *to live as a citizen; to conduct oneself according to the laws and customs*. In the whole of your conduct in every department which you fill in all your domestic as well as public relations, behave well let it be according to the Gospel. We could say that this is part of our Christian witness, people are watching us. Our behavior and lives speak to the lost.

In charity In love to God and man; show that this is the principle and motive of all your conduct. How are we doing? Can we say the Love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts. Remember what scripture says, *without love, we are nothing?* And John said, *If a man say I love God, and hated his brother, he is a liar*. But the Love of God in our hearts blesses those who curse you, does good to those who hate you. The love of God prays for those who spitefully mistreat you. It gives and it forgives. Love is pure and flows from a pure heart. When we have exhausted our store of love, Gods love is only just beginning. Many years ago there was a generation of believers known as the puritans, they lived in a world that was impure. Its wonderful to read accounts of them in them was no guile, no manipulation, no underhand dealing, they were pure and transparent. The opposite of the world in which they lived. That is how we should be. Never the same spiritual temperature of the World in which we live. Your whole life governed by the Love of God your motives being pure.

In spirit - In the manner and character in which you do all things. In the government of your passions, and in a mild, meek, forgiving nature. What sort of spirit are we? Are we like Peter and John when the authorities told them to no more proclaim the name of Jesus they answered, we cannot but speak of the things we have seen and heard. They were Zealous and full of the warmth of spirit, truly inflamed with the love of Christ, and for his glory. Being an inspiration to others. There is a wonderful little story I read. Whilst stationed in Scotland, Colonel Durnford happened to see a small craft had stuck on the coast during a storm. Seeing the hesitation of the fishermen to go to the rescue, he jumped into a boat, calling out, "Will none of you come with me? If not, I shall go alone."

A volunteer crew at once joined him and succeeded in rescuing those in danger. If you genuinely have Love and care in your heart you will be a good example and inspire many.

In Faith, They are steady because they know whom they are serving, they know in whom they have believed. The Christian worker, therefore, must not only labor and strive, but must hope in the living God, whose saving grace is at the disposal of our faith. The faith exercised by the average man results in obtaining only natural things. But of how much more value to pray for someone's understanding to be opened, for the scales of spiritual blindness to fall off. For the seed of the word of God to germinate and grow in a heart. Our faith is in our God. Faith, One who believes from the heart in the Savior. You have heard the phrase halfhearted. True faith is never halfhearted. True faith always gives all out commitment to the Lord.

In Purity Sinlessness of life. Purity denotes a life unmixed with the evils of people in the world who care not for the Lord. The word "purity" (*hagnos*) is always used with a moral sense. It is not limited to sins of the flesh, but covers purity in motive as well as in acts.

1 Timothy 4:13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. To Doctrine what is meant here? In this context it means teaching. Some wisdom from a true preacher I recently heard. He says, "I don't think I've ever believed in preaching doctrine, but to preach doctrinally, and so that it weaves through your message and your people are instructed as well." He went on to say in these lovely doctrines he lifts up his savior, come with me look with me at these wonderful teachings. But all instruction or teaching should be solely based upon the Holy Scripture. One way not to be despised is to be a doer of God's word yourself. People will look at you and say truly they are true Christians they practice what they preach they walk out Gods word.

1 Timothy 4:14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

Neglect not God's gifts groan under our disuse or misuse; and God hearing gives them the wings of an eagle; so that such may say as once Zedekiah did, "When went the Spirit of the Lord from me to thee?" **John Trapp.** No amount of learning and study qualifies us for Gods work, rather it is gods gifting. It is God who gives us distinct ministry gifts. He gives us the gift of understanding and interpreting the scripture. The gift to preach it. This gift or talent must never be wrapped in a napkin and hid in the earth. The gift should never lie dormant and unused, it should be stirred up. Misuse of the gifts is rampant today. The guilty forget that scripture says freely you have received freely give. Besides this brings shame upon the Gospel and upon the Lord. Neglect not, Misuse not. Let the Glory always go unto God.

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1 Timothy 4:15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. In a sense not just these things I have said to you but upon all scripture. Seriously consider and think deeply upon scripture. The scriptures should be read with care and reverence. This is God's word. **Give yourself wholly to them.** Your private life, your business life governed by God's ways. But also, again if the heart is not in the work of God the work of God will be tedious and a great burden. We can only progress in God's work when our whole heart is in it. Let us take special care.

I come to a close with this verse... **1 Timothy 4:16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.**

The believers or ministers' duty is to take heed unto thyself. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Let him watch himself first of all. Watch carefully what you teach. We cannot be too careful when preparing to teach others. A faithful pastor searching the Word of God, day by day, taking care of all the work of his office with loving devotion, will soon find that his trust in God and his certainty of salvation will be strengthened mightily. Because He is strengthened, His hearers will be strengthened. But sadly, when the blind are leading the blind both will fall into the ditch.

I trust that Paul's letter will inspire each one of us to be a good minister of the Gospel. To be fully pleasing to Him and to bring Glory to His name. We live in a fallen world but here is wisdom how we can be an example in life and in teaching.