

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 8

Let a man so account of us,
as of the ministers of Christ,
and stewards of the
mysteries of God.



ADVICE TO A YOUNG MINISTER

Scripture Text: 1 Timothy 4:10-16

Why is it that so few of the modern ministers seem to never have seriously read these directions stated by Paul in today's lesson text? For most, their method of spending their time, the business and pleasures of their lives, and the objectives that they pursue cause them to be just the opposite of what they should be.

No other way is found in the New Testament for doing God's work than by God's spiritual gifts. **1 Corinthians 12:1** says we should not be ignorant about spiritual gifts. **1 Corinthians 12:18** says everyone is set in the body as God pleases. Each has a particular place with a particular work. **1 Peter 4:10-11** says that if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth. There is no other way to success in God's work. Timothy ministered by means of a gift of the Spirit. What is the way to obtain spiritual gifts?

MEMORY VERSE: *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.—1 Timothy 4:16*

DAILY READINGS:

- Mon.—**Joshua 1:1-9** God's charge to Joshua.
- Tue.—**Ezekiel 33:1-9** Responsibility of watchmen.
- Wed.—**Matthew 10:16-33** Men of God can expect persecution.
- Thu.—**Acts 26:12-23** Paul's call to God's work.
- Fri.—**Romans 10** The need for God-sent preaching.

Devotional Reading: Romans 1:1-16 Ready to preach Gospel.

Laborers Suffer Reproach

1 Timothy 4:10-11 The first verse of this chapter told of a departure from the faith, from the great mystery of godliness. Paul exhorted Timothy to press on in the way of godliness, which promises great profit both in this life and in the next. **For therefore**—because we desire to preserve this way of godliness—**we both labor and suffer reproach.** Paul and others like him valued the Gospel of Christ so highly that they were glad to work and be persecuted severely because of their **trust in the living God.** Here the same One is called both **God** and **Savior**, one more proof of the deity of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the God and **Savior of all men**—He died for all (**2 Corinthians 5:15**), was crucified to **draw all men** unto Him (**John 12:32**), is the **Light, which lighteth every man** (**John 1:9**), and is **not willing that any should perish** (**2 Peter 3:9**).

He is the Savior **specially of those that believe.** Only these actually receive salvation. Salvation is for all, but not all have it. Read **Matthew 7:14; John 3:36.** These verses should settle two false teachings, (1) Limited Atonement (that Christ died to save a limited part of mankind) and (2) Universalism (that everyone will be saved). No, the atonement is not limited, but acceptance of it is. God wills all to be saved, but not all will repent. **These things command and teach.** What things? That men should refuse false doctrine and pursue godliness, that godliness brings blessing both now and hereafter, that salvation in Christ is of so great value as to render unimportant any labor or persecution brought by it, and that Jesus saves from sin any and all who believe on Him.

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Youth Is a Powerful Influence

1 Timothy 4:12-13 Let no man despise thy youth. Timothy was a young man, but he should not let his youth lead him into foolish, hasty, extreme, passionate, or worldly action. This would bring the criticism that he was too young to lead. Instead, he must be **an example of the believers**—show what an ideal believer is, that others might pattern after him. **In word**—in what he said and what he taught, teaching the truth, the Gospel of Christ. **In conversation**—in all of his conduct in all places at all times, act in a holy, Christian manner. **In charity**—let the love of God within him rule his conduct. **In spirit**—in the inward feeling and visible attitude in which he lived and acted. **In faith**—living continually with an open channel of trust reaching to God by which to communicate with Him and receive from Him. This also includes the thought of faithfulness to God and to the church in the trust placed in his hands. He must be a faithful steward of **the mysteries of God (1 Corinthians 4:1-2)**. **In purity**—unmixed with sin, sanctified unto God, unspotted from the world, clean in thought and action, giving no one reason to scandalize his good name.

Give attendance to reading—read the Bible, study it, let his delight be in the Law of the Lord; meditate on it every day. Give attendance **to exhortation**—pass on to the people the commands of God and the importance of obedience. And **to doctrine**—teach the people the truths of God, give them a solid foundation in God's Word from which to **grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior (2 Peter 3:18)**.

All through Bible history, in both the Old and New Testaments, there have been young people whom God used in a mighty way. God does not consider the age of a person, but He looks at the willingness and obedience of those He would use in His work. Let no young person feel he is too young to be of service to God. Do not be intimidated because you are young when God has a work for you.

Serving and Continuing Faithful

1 Timothy 4:14 Neglect not the gift—the gift of the Spirit which God had placed in Timothy had (1) set him in his particular place of service in the church and (2) given the spiritual abilities necessary to do that work. Two actions accompanied the giving of this gift to Timothy, (1) **prophecy**—Word from God telling Timothy and others of His choice of Timothy for this work and (2) **the laying on of the hands** of Paul and other elders (**1 Timothy 1:18; 2 Timothy 1:6**). Paul urged Timothy to **neglect not**—to develop the gift by using it, by prayer, and listening to God.

1 Timothy 4:15-16 Meditate upon these things—think deeply and continually on the truths he read, the great salvation of which he was steward in the Gospel, his responsibility in leading the church and winning souls, the goals set before him, and the gift by which he did all. **Give thyself wholly**—not halfheartedly, but make the service of God his one interest and concern.

Two matters Timothy was told to **take heed unto**: First, **thyself**—pay careful attention to his own life that it please God, that he himself obey the Spirit and God's Word, and that his heart remain pure. Second, **the doctrine**—watch carefully to always teach God's Word as it is, the full Gospel, unmixed with error. These would bring two results: First, he would save himself; by remaining true to God, he would assure his final salvation in Heaven. Second, he would save those who heard him; his holy example and teaching of truth would bring them to God. God has chosen to give us His will in a Book. What are we doing with it?

JUST A THOUGHT

Reading is a priceless treasure and a powerful influence.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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