

**I OVERVIEW OF I TIMOTHY**

**Purpose:** To give encouragement and instruction to a young leader (Timothy).

**Author:** Paul.

**Audience:** Timothy, young church leaders and believers everywhere.

**Date/Setting:** About 64 A.D., just prior to Paul’s final imprisonment in Rome.

**Blueprint:**

- 1) Instructions on right belief (1:1-20)
- 2) **Instructions for the church (2:1-3:16)**
- 3) **Instructions for the leaders (4:1-6:21)**

**Megathemes**

Theme	Importance
<b>Sound doctrine</b>	To defend the truth, we need to know it. We must cling to the belief that Christ came to save us regardless of doubts raised by the Enemy and from people who twists the words of Scripture for their own personal gain.
<b>Public worship</b>	Christian character must be evident in every aspect of worship. We must rid ourselves of any anger, resentment, or offensive attire that might disrupt worship or damage church unity.
<b>Church leadership</b>	Church leaders must be wholly committed to Christ. Seek to develop your Christian character first before taking on the responsibilities of church leadership. Be sure to seek God, not your own ambition.
<b>Personal discipline</b>	To stay in good spiritual shape, you must discipline yourself to study God’s Word and live a godly life. Exercise your spiritual abilities or they will atrophy.
<b>Caring church</b>	Caring for the family of believers demonstrates our Christ-like attitude and exhibits genuine love to non-believers

**II BACKGROUND**

After delineating the qualifications of church leaders (**I Timothy 3:1-13**), Paul referred to the mystery of godliness (**I Timothy 3:16**) and explained that mystery as God’s redemptive plan that previously had been kept secret, but now has been revealed. That plan included Jesus putting on humanity and being incarnated into the world, His sacrificial death as the only possible payment for our sins, his resurrection from the dead, and His ascension; all precursors for the infilling of believers with the Holy Spirit.

However, many false apostate teachers taught an overlaying works-driven theology that certain acts of omission (e.g., abstinence from marriage and certain foods) were essential to a right relationship with God (**I Timothy 4:1-5**). Paul strongly encouraged Timothy to not only reject such heretical works-oriented teaching, but to proactive in this way in his pastorate.

It is quite true that rules help us maintain proper boundaries in life, but when adherence to regulations becomes an attempt to “earn” righteousness or salvation, they become eternally deadly. Instead, Timothy needed to **pursue godliness**.

Paul then changed the focus to spiritual fitness, indicating that physical exercise has only limited benefits, while spiritual discipline has eternal value (**I Timothy 4:6-10**). Lastly, he instructed Timothy to set an example for others by practicing godly living and helping others by engaging in godly teaching (**I Timothy 4:11-16**).

### III SCRIPTURE

#### HOW TO QUALIFY AS AN OVERSEER (3:1-7)

##### I Timothy 3 - Qualifications for Leaders

**(1) Introduction to good work of spiritual leadership:** Paul has just written that women are not to hold positions of authority in the church; but does not want to leave the impression that just any person of masculine gender is automatically qualified. There are distinct spiritual qualities that Paul will soon elaborate on.

Paul indicates that if a man desires the position of a bishop, someone with oversight in the church (e.g., presbyter) or important leader, he has to meet several performance-based criteria. Such a person may also sometimes be called an elder (πρεσβυτερος; presbuteros) or a pastor (ποιμην, poimen), which means “shepherd”.

**“On the question as to the terms presbyter and episcopus, it is sufficient here to state my own conclusion, that they represent slightly different aspects of the same office, pastoral and official; aspects which came naturally into prominence in the Jewish and Greek societies respectively which gave birth to the names.” (White)**

**He desires a good work:** A good spiritual leader desires to do a good work which can only be fulfilled by good, noble, honorable men of integrity who are committed bondservants of Jesus Christ (**Romans 1:1; Jude 1**). Spiritual leadership in the church isn’t all about titles and honor and glory; **it’s all about work. Jesus said: “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all” (Mark 9:35).**

**“For it is no light matter to represent God’s Son in such a great task as erecting and extending God’s kingdom, in caring for the salvation of souls whom the Lord Himself has deigned to purchase with His own blood, and ruling the Church which is God’s inheritance.” (Calvin)**

**(2a) Qualifications for bishops:** God has specific qualifications for leaders in the church. Leaders are not to be chosen: (1) at random; (2) because they volunteer; (3) because they aspire to the position; or, (4) because they are “natural leaders.” Instead they should be chosen primarily on how they match the qualifications listed in **I Timothy 3:2b-7**, which establish indicators of godly character and spiritual maturity that portray the true measure of a man.

Moreover, the qualifications for leadership have nothing to do with giftedness. God may easily create gifts in a man, because gifts are given by the Holy Spirit as He wills (**I Corinthians 12:11**).

**Spiritual leader qualifications do not include: (1) going to seminary; (2) being an eloquent orator; (3) being an expert teleprompter reader; (4) having natural or spiritual gifts; or, (5) giving money and/or volunteer time. What qualifies a man for spiritual leadership is a godly character established according to the clear criteria that Paul now enumerates on in the next six verses.**

**(2b-7) List of qualifications for leaders in the church:** The following are fifteen (15) specific characteristics that establish clear indicators of godly character and spiritual maturity:

1. **Blameless:** Literally means, “Nothing to take hold upon.” There must be nothing in his life that others can take hold of and attack the church. This is a man who lives a righteous life that can be seen as righteous. No one can stand up and rightfully accuse the man of grievous sin, as he is beyond reproach, demonstrated by a track record of behavior.
2. **Husband of one wife:** Literally means a “one-woman man.” The idea is that his love and affection and heart is given to one woman, and that being his lawful and wedded wife. It does not mean the leader be married (if so, then both Jesus and Paul could not be spiritual leaders in our churches), nor remarried if his wife had passed away or was Biblically divorced.

This means that the Biblical leader is not a playboy, an adulterer, a flirt, and does not show romantic or sexual interest in other women (i.e., strange flesh), including the pornographic depictions or images of women.

3. **Temperate:** Someone who is not given to extreme and compulsive behavior, showing the spiritual fruit of self-control. A temperate man is always reliable and trustworthy, and does not exhibit wide swings of vision, mood, or action.
4. **Sober-minded:** Describes a man who is able to think clearly and with clarity. They are not constantly joking, but know how to deal with serious subjects in a serious way.

“This does not mean he has no sense of humor, or that he is always solemn and somber. Rather it suggests that he knows the value of things and does not cheapen the ministry or the Gospel message by foolish behavior.” (Wiersbe)

5. **Hospitable:** Men who are willing and able to open up their home to both friends and strangers.
6. **Able to teach:** Men skilled enough in the Bible to teach, either in a public (gift of teaching) or one-on-one setting (gift of exhortation).
7. **Not given to wine:** Men who are not addicted to wine or intoxicating drink. This verse, in itself, does not prohibit godly leadership from imbibing alcoholic beverages; but clearly discourages it.
8. **Not violent:** A man who is not given to violence either publicly or privately; men who can let God fight his cause.
9. **Not greedy for money:** The King James Version puts it far more memorably: not greedy of filthy lucre.
10. **Gentle:** The kind of man who takes Jesus as his example, not the latest action hero.
11. **Not quarrelsome:** The kind of person who is not always fighting over something or some issue.
12. **Not covetous:** This is a more encompassing than greedy for money. The covetous man is never satisfied with anything, always demanding something more or different.
13. **Who rules his own house well:** A godly leader demonstrates his leadership ability first in his own home (**Deuteronomy 6:6-8**), where our Christianity is first demonstrated.

14. **Not a novice:** New converts should not be given leadership too quickly, since the leader should be well-past the novice stage in their spiritual development (**Hebrews 5:10-14**).
15. **A good testimony:** These characteristics must be evident to all, even unbelievers to see. The potential leader must be a good Christian outside the walls of the church, as well as inside the church.

Examining ourselves with these character indicators should humble us and give us a sense of exactly how surrendered to Jesus Christ we are.

### HOW TO QUALIFY AS A DEACON (3:8-16)

**(8a) Deacons, the practical servants of the church:** An example of the appointment of deacons is in **Acts 6:1-6**, where the apostles saw the need for those to provide daily assistance to the widows among the church. Their qualifications are much the same as those for “bishops”, as practical service is also leadership and necessary for a church to maintain its vitality.

It is a large mistake to see one office as more prestigious than the other, though bishops have more responsibility before God. Each is more a matter of calling than of status, as God wants pride taken out of the equation.

**(8b-12) List of qualifications for deacons:** Paul lists the six (6) specific performance-based qualifications to be employed in the deacon selection process:

1. **Reverent:** A man showing consistent proper respect towards both God and man (**Romans 12:18**).
2. **Not double-tongued:** A man who speaks the truth the first time, with no intent to deceive or communicate misinformation or disinformation, even at the risk of personal loss.
3. **Holding the mystery of the faith:** Those who can adhere to accurate and proper doctrine, out of sincere conviction of wanting to know and thereby live the Truth (**Hebrews 11:6**).
4. **First be proved:** A man who demonstrates his fitness for office in the church by his conduct. To be more recognized than appointed.
5. **Likewise their wives:** It is difficult to know if Paul referred to female deacons (e.g., Phebe, in **Romans 16:1**) or wives of male deacons. The original wording permits either possibility.

If he is speaking mainly of a male deacon's wife, it is appropriate because a man's leadership in the home can be evaluated, in part, by his wife's conduct. Is she reverent, not a slanderer, temperate, and faithful in all things?

6. **Not slanderers:** Which is literally, not devils. A man not given to speech which tears down others.

This may be properly enough translated slanderers, backbiters, tale-bearers, for all these are of their father, the devil, and his lusts they will do.” (Clarke)

**(13) Promise for deacons:** God will remember the faithful service of deacons with crowns; even in tasks which the world considers as menial. **God's Kingdom extends to every act of serving.**

**(14-15) Paul's reason for writing Timothy:** Paul's purpose for writing this letter was to give Timothy, as a leader in the Ephesian church, practical information on how to address all matters; especially difficult issues.

Paul then emphasized that the church is the House of God, which must be, very consciously, the place where God is. This is what makes a church more attractive than anything else. The Church is God's house for several reasons: (1) He is the Architect; (2) He is the Builder; (3) He lives there; (4) He provides for it; (5) He is honored there; and, (6) He rules there.

In the ancient Greek language, "church" was a non-religious word for a group of people called together for a purpose. The living God has called His people together for His purpose.

The pillar and foundation of the church is truth (**John 8:32**). Tragically, many churches today sell truth short and are therefore left with weak pillars and stand on shaky ground through apostate teaching (**II Peter 2; Jude 1**).

"The Church is the pillar of the truth because by its ministry the truth is preserved and spread . . . Paul will not acknowledge the Church except where God's truth is exalted and plain." (Calvin)

"When the Church stands boldly out, and preaches the Word, it is the pillar of the truth; when it is hidden in the Roman catacombs, and cannot proclaim the Savior's name to the world, still there lives the truth deep in the hearts of believers, and they are then the ground of the truth." (Spurgeon)

**(16) An early hymn to express the foundation of Christian truth:** The following precepts must be preached and believed by the church to provide it a strong foundation against the attack of apostates and demon oppression: (1) God was manifested in the flesh; (2) Jesus was justified in the Spirit; (3) Jesus' ministry seen by angels; (4) Preached among the Gentiles; (5) Believed on in the world; and, (6) Jesus was received up in glory. Let's expand on them one at a time.

- **God was manifested in the flesh:** This is the essence of the incarnation; that God the Son, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, added to His deity, humanity, and was thus manifested in the flesh.
- **Jesus was justified in the Spirit:** Jesus was justified by the Spirit not that He was once sinful but made righteous, but that He was declared to be, by the Holy Spirit, what He always was; completely justified before the Father. This declaration was made at His baptism (**Matthew 3:16**) and at His resurrection (**I Peter 3:18; Acts 2:32-33**).
- **Jesus' ministry seen by angels:** The ministry of Jesus, both on earth and through the Church, is of great interest to angelic beings. There were many instances when Jesus was seen by angels (**Mark 1:13; Luke 22:41-43**); especially at the resurrection (**Matthew 28:2-7**).

"The Godhead was seen in Christ by angels, as they had never seen it before. They had beheld the attribute of justice, they had seen the attribute of power, they had marked the attribute of wisdom, and seen the Prerogative of sovereignty; but never had angels seen love, and condescension, and tenderness, and pity, in God as they saw these things resplendent in the person and the life of Christ." (Spurgeon)

- **Preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world:** Paul himself did his best to fulfill these statements. He was busy preaching Jesus among the Gentiles and bringing the world to belief through the power of the Holy Spirit.

“God’s way of creating faith in men’s hearts is not by pictures, music, or symbols, but by the hearing of the word of God. This may seem a strange thing, and strange let it seem, for it is a mystery, and a great mystery, but a fact beyond all controversy; for ever let the church maintain that Christ is to be preached unto the Gentiles.” (Spurgeon)

- **Jesus was received up in glory:** This reminds us of Jesus’ ascension (**Luke 24:51**), His finished work on our behalf (**Hebrews 1:3**), and His present intercession for us (**I John 2:1**). Jesus ascended into heaven in a resurrection body; yet it was a body that still retained the marks of His great work of love for us. It still had the nail prints in His hands and feet, the wound in his side, all of the marks of His suffering on our behalf (**John 20:24-29**).

“He was so received because his work is finished. He would never have gone into his glory if he had not finished all his toil. He would have accepted no reward had he not fully earned it.” (Spurgeon)

Jesus is the perfect fulfillment of these descriptions of Christian character. We trust that Jesus will transform our life according to the same character, as we focus on Him and seek to have the Mind of Christ (**Philippians 2:5**).

## HOW TO IDENTIFY A FALSE TEACHING (4:1-5)

### 1 Timothy 4 - Being God’s Man

**(1) A warning from the Holy Spirit – False doctrine in the end times:** Paul reveals a warning from the Holy Spirit that a proliferation of apostasy, deception, and false teaching would mark the “last days”, as he saw its increase in Ephesus. Jesus and the apostles also repeatedly warned against them (**Mark 13:21-23; Acts 20:28-31; II Thessalonians 2:1-12; II Peter 3:3-7**).

Moreover, people became legalistic and thought they could justify themselves before God with their works (**Ephesians 2:8-10**).

In referring to “last days” in 64 A.D., was Paul 1949 years off the mark? No, even in the time of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century church, history had already reached that brink, and has run parallel to it ever since. As it turns out, the latter times describe a broad era, not a couple of years. As an example, “New Age” has been around for many centuries.

The “last days” began with Christ’s resurrection and will continue until His return. There isn’t more false teaching today; it is the same, only modern technology spreads Satan’s lies faster and further in the depraved world that he is championing.

Paul identified three specific certain dangers would mark the latter times: (1) Danger of apostasy; (2) Danger of deception; and, (3) Danger of false teaching. These are the work of human response to deceiving spirits.

**Do not depart from the faith:** Because of the danger of the latter times, if Timothy were to remain a faithful minister to God’s people, he must keep a dead reckoning on the truth; the faith, the essential teachings and the fundamental oracles of Christianity. If any of these were lost, not much else really mattered.

“A man may hold all the truths of Christianity, and yet render them of none effect by holding other doctrines which counteract their influence; or he may apostatize by denying some essential doctrine, though he bring in nothing heterodox.” (Clarke)

Deceiving spirits refer to demonic angelic beings who seek to deceive men and women and to entice them away from the truth (**Ephesians 6:11**). Some lies are so powerful that they have an evident spiritual dynamic behind them; crafted and marketed by deceiving spirits to confuse and deceive us. Note that demons are theology majors; having their own systems of doctrine.

**We find the first demonic doctrine in Genesis 3. There Satan, speaking through a serpent, taught Eve that she will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God (Genesis 3:4-5). Since then, every demonic doctrine has found its way back to this root: the idea that we can be gods, and operate independently from God. It also made Eve doubt God's goodness.**

These deceiving spirits have been around since man first walked the Garden of Eden, as they arrived after Satan's rebellion (**Isaiah 14:12-15**) before man was created. In the latter times, more and more people in the church will depart from the faith and accept these false teachings as truth.

**It is hard to say if there is more false teaching today, or if it is merely a case of modern technology being able to spread the lie better. But the old saying is certainly true today: a lie travels express, the truth goes on foot, and more people within the church are following these doctrines of demons.**

**(2-3) Nature of their departure from the faith and embracing doctrines of demons:** This describes those who depart from the faith. This certainly means those who willingly embrace falsehood to justify their sin or pride; but it also refers to those who claim to be teaching Scripture, while just using it as a prop for their own ideas (e.g., eisegesis).

Paul condemns conduct that is indicative of a "departure from the faith". Men were: (1) speaking lies in hypocrisy, willingly embracing falsehood to justify their sin or pride, and, (2) having their own conscience seared, through the conflict between what they knew was right before God and their actual conduct. They rejected the testimony of their conscience, they embraced sin, and incredibly still felt "justified" (e.g., Gnostic theology).

**The false teachers were inspired by Satan, who always offers a clever imitation of the real thing (II Corinthians 11:14). Their methods focused on adhering to stringent rules to attain righteousness, rather than teaching about following Jesus Christ. Their attitude about Christ showed the counterfeit source of their message.**

**Legalism often accompanies a departure from the faith. People who have rejected the true source of righteousness are driven to create their own sense of righteousness. When man has no absolutes, man becomes absolute (Romans 1:21-23). Paul decisively condemned this sort of legalism in Colossians 2:20-23.**

Their seared conscience, which at one time would have convicted them of their departure from the truth now doesn't reply at all. It is as if the nerve endings of their conscience have been burnt over and are dead to feeling. Paul knew what it was to have a dead, burned conscience. Before he surrendered his life to Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, he felt completely justified in his persecution of Christians and hatred of Jesus. He needed a wake-up call; which the Lord graciously provided.

**"They bear the marks of their hypocrisy as evidently and as indelibly in their conscience in the sight of God, as those who have been cauterized for their crimes do in their bodies in the sight of men." (Clarke)**

**Legalism 101: Forbidding marriage and commanding abstinence from foods:** This describes the legalistic teaching of those who have departed from the faith. They taught that following this list of man-made rules that one was justified in God's sight (i.e., works-driven theology) that you would be more holy to God if you didn't marry and didn't eat certain foods.

There have always been those in the church who regard themselves as more spiritual than God Himself, and have a stricter set of rules for living than God does.

We often think that if we sacrifice something for God (e.g., right to marry or to eat certain foods), then He owes us something. This is legalism at its worst; attempting to manipulate God into giving us something. We think we can make God indebted to us, make Him our servant and make ourselves His master. **In this we fulfill the original doctrine of demons; that we should be gods.**

Countless millions through the centuries have sought to sacrifice something, and make God owe them blessing, or forgiveness, or mercy, or whatever. That is the religion of self-flagellation; it is not the relationship with Jesus Christ described in the New Testament: being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24).

“The controversy is not about flesh or fish, or about black or ashen colours, or about Wednesday or Friday, but about the mad superstitions of men who wish to obtain God’s favour by such trifles and by contriving a carnal worship, invent for themselves an idol in God’s place.” (Calvin)

**(4-5) Refutation of legalism that marks those who have departed from the faith:** When we receive things with thanksgiving, with an abiding sense of gratitude towards God, we receive the blessings of food, shelter, and comfort **as gifts, not as rights.**

Addressing anthropomorphic-driven dietary restrictions, Paul shows that food created by God is good and what we eat does **not** make us more righteous before Him. What we eat does not make us more righteous before God though what it may affect our health. This issue was settled once for all when God spoke to Peter in **Acts 10:9-16.**

### HOW TO BE A POSITIVE EXAMPLE (4:6-16)

**(6) How to tell you are fulfilling your call:** Notice that the pastor’s job is primarily instruction of the brethren with life and practice as well as words. A pastor is fulfilling his call if he is: (1) instructing his brethren in holy living and practices; and, (2) providing discernment of God’s Word.

To be a good minister of Jesus Christ, a pastor must remain anchored in God’s Word, providing accurate life-changing doctrine for daily living.

**(7-10) Keeping priorities straight:** Paul cautions Timothy to keep his priorities straight by remaining focused on the Word and not on things that come from man. To do this, he must exercise his spirit (**Hebrews 5:14**) as he would exercise his body; in which development comes only with exertion and proper feeding. The greatest effort must be put into learning God’s Word, the only offensive weapon of our spiritual armor, **not man’s word.** Bodily exercise is good for a while, while exercising unto godliness is good for all eternity. No pain/no gain in God’s Gym.

Are you out of spiritual shape? In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century society, there is much emphasis placed on physical fitness, but what about spiritual fitness which is vitally important? It is not an option to develop our faith through using the abilities God has given us (Galatians 5:22-23) to serve in His Kingdom. We must exercise our faith!!

The word godliness comes from the old English word Godlikeness; it means to have the character and attitude of God. This was a worthy goal, much more worthy than the potential attainments of physical exercise.

Paul then exhorts Timothy to reject profane and old wives' fables as priority must be kept on eternal things, not temporal things.

Paul then goes on to explain the value of godliness; both in its temporal and its eternal sense. Godliness makes this life better. Though it does not make this life the most comfortable, or richest, or most pleasurable, or easiest; it undeniably makes it the best, the most contented, and the most fulfilling life one can live in this world (**Ecclesiastes 12:1-3**).

**"I assure you, and there are thousands of my brethren who can affirm the same, that after having tried the ways of sin, we infinitely prefer the ways of righteousness for their own pleasure's sake even here, and we would not change with ungodly men even if we had to die like dogs. With all the sorrow and care which Christian life is supposed to bring, we would prefer it to any other form of life beneath the stars." (Spurgeon)**

At the same time, godliness is the **only guarantee of a profitable life which is to come**. There are many pleasures or achievements in this world that do not even pretend to offer anything for the life which is to come. Only godliness is the path to eternal life and happiness: (1) Sin and vice offer nothing for the life to come; (2) Genealogies and pedigrees offer nothing for the life to come; (3) Worldly success and wealth offer nothing for the life to come; (4) Personal fame or beauty offer nothing for the life to come; and, (5) Achievements in learning or the arts offer nothing for the life to come.

**We trust in the living God:** This is to be the great motto of the Christian life. Even as David challenged Goliath in the name of the living God (**I Samuel 17:26; I Samuel 17:36**), so our trust in the living God empowers us to accomplish great things for His glory (**Proverbs 3:5-6**).

**Savior of all men:** There is only one Savior for all men; not that Christians have one Savior and others have another savior (**John 14:6**). The key is the point **especially of those who believe**. Christ's propitiatory sacrifice is **adequate** to save everyone, but is only **effective** in saving those who come to Him by faith (**John 3:16; Romans 10:9; Ephesians 2:8**).

**(11-16) Five personal instructions:** Since Timothy was about 30 years young he was vulnerable to the errors of youth which bring the often justified criticism of those older. To address this, Paul called him to live a life that was so godly that no one could despise his youth. He told him to be an example by what you say (i.e., word), what you do (i.e., conduct), in love, in attitude, in faith, and in purity.

**These are the criteria by which to assess a pastor. If he is smart, if he is funny, if he is cool, if he dresses sharp, if he is popular, or if he is any number of other things matter little. You must look for a pastor who is an example in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.**

**Instruction #1: Teach sound doctrine:** Timothy was exhorted to not enter the pulpit with speculations and opinions and theories of men, but to fearlessly bring God's Word before God's people and let God dictate the future course of the church. Timothy's primary call was to present Biblical doctrine, and to give heed to that doctrine.

**Paul called upon Timothy not to teach theories but to authoritatively command with the authority based on God's revealed will. This revealed will is located in 39 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books (II Timothy 3:16). Anything else that has been written (e.g., apocrypha, Book of Mormon) is not God's revealed will (Revelation 22:18-19).**

**Instruction #2: Center on God's Word:** Timothy was also told that he must give attention to reading, exhortation and sound doctrine; as each of these things are centered on God's Word. He must give attention to these things in both his private life and in his public ministry.

**Instruction #3: Cultivate spiritual gifts:** Timothy was warned to not neglect the gift that God has given and not waste them for eternity. In the parable of the Ten Talents, we learn that we should not bury what abilities God has given to us, but to be good stewards of the gifts and resources He provides. He owns and provides everything, and we manage it effectively for His glory. We risk losing our spiritual gifts if we don't put them to work. God wants you to use them regularly in serving Him and others (**Romans 12:4-7; II Timothy 1:6-8**).

**Instruction #4: Fill your mind with God's Word:** Paul called Timothy to meditate on God's Word and the work of God in his life. This is not emptying our minds; which is the goal of Eastern meditation (i.e., surrendering to the Void in the Tibetan Book of the Dead), but filling our minds with God's Word (**Philippians 2:5**).

Meditation is essentially a lost practice among Christians as we are willing to fill our minds with virtually anything but God's Word. The world has plenty of garbage out there that we must filter out or it will become a part of us.

**Instruction #5: Give 100%, 100% of the time:** Timothy was encouraged to give it his all, to put forth a maximum effort, and by doing so, his progress would be evident to all. Often, progress is not evident because we do not give ourselves entirely to the pursuit of God and His will.

Often we fall short of all we can be for God because we are passive in our Christian life; we simply do not give ourselves entirely. Jesus warned against this passive attitude in the parable of the talents, where the servant who did nothing was severely rebuked. He warned the church at Laodicea in Revelation 3:15 about being lukewarm.

Save both yourself and those who hear you: "And just as the unfaithfulness or negligence of a pastor is fatal to the Church, so it is right for its salvation to be ascribed to his faithfulness and diligence. It is indeed true that it is God alone who saves and not even the smallest part of His glory can rightly be transferred to men. But God's glory is in no way diminished by His using the labour of men in bestowing salvation." (Calvin)