



THE GUARDIANS: GOSPEL

GUARDIANS

A COMPANION GUIDE

Central Wesleyan Church
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Guardians - A Companion Guide

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Church leaders are called by God, not self-appointed. God works in a dynamic way, involving men and women in the process of calling out His leaders. True leaders beget leaders. This process is vividly shown in 1 Timothy and provides insight into the particular leadership skills necessitated by the Ephesus situation. A true leader is also a shepherd.

Consider King David, who honed his skills alone with sheep, guarding them against predators and their own folly while seeing to it that they were well-fed. Jesus Christ identified Himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10). His words to Peter after His resurrection? "Feed My lambs, take care of My sheep, feed My sheep (John 21)." It is as if Paul, in this letter, was training Timothy in the care and feeding of his assigned lambs and sheep. The human version is notoriously good at creating its own folly within the church. What Paul wrote to Timothy shows that the command of leadership for Christ is as exciting as it is challenging.

What do you believe about God's commands? **God's commands are: (circle all that apply)**

THE GUARDIANS: GOSPEL

Paul's encouraging Greeting to timothy

¹ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope,² To Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Timothy 1

- God's suggestions to be weighed and considered.
- Given because God needs you to obey.
- Universal in every biblical instance.
- Only to be obeyed if fully understood.
- Likely to be convenient.
- Usually easy because it is God's will.
- Ultimately non-negotiable to those who are under His authority.

When God calls a person to leadership for Him, the "call" can be disobeyed, but the privilege and the protection of being in the center of God's will then passes to another. In this case, Paul had, of course responded in obedience, and in the letter's opening he reminded his young protégé Timothy that God's command always comes paired with His enabling through Jesus Christ, our Hope. Every leader who takes their calling seriously asks themselves at some point, "Can I do this well enough?" The fortunate ones learn that the answer is no. You can't lead for Christ "well enough." But Christ through you? Now that's godly leadership!

Several principles illustrate this point. Match the first half of these principles of godly leadership on the left with its remaining words on the right.

Principles of Godly Leadership

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. God enables... | ___ a. it's what you surrender on the altar |
| 2. God asks for your availability, ... | ___ b. when kneeling in prayer |
| 3. Don't put a question mark... | ___ c. the unable. |
| 4. It's not what you bring to the table... | ___ d. where God has placed a period. |
| 5. A leader is never so strong as... | ___ e. not your ability. |

A leader for Christ stays where they have been called unless or until the Lord calls them elsewhere. This calling out is typically authentically without self-instigation. Stay the course! Does your calling have any struggles? Difficult challenges? Rocky relationships? Threats from inside? The Ephesus church had these, and Paul, the experienced, mature leader, reached out to Timothy, undoubtedly knowing the loneliness of leadership but for God. At every turn in the letter, Paul did what an excellent leader does; he pointed Timothy back to the all-surpassing sufficiency of our Lord.

Multiple leadership lessons emerge from the first chapter of Paul's letter to Timothy.

1. A called leader is _____ to God (v.1).

- *Which part of yourself have you thought you could hold back, instead of being fully "all in", set apart for Christ?*

2. A leader for Christ is _____ in regard to encouraging other leaders (v.2), rather than competitive.

- *Who is the leader that God has nudged you to care for by encouraging in some way today?*

Paul's Charge

³ *As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, ⁴ nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.*

While Paul greeted Timothy with words of encouragement about the blessings that are found in Christ alone, he also charged Timothy in verses 3-11 to stay where he was, to lead in the cause of Christ, and to protect the Truth found nowhere else but in the glorious gospel. It can be enormously tempting to consider another "pasture" when the "sheep" don't seem very cooperative. Satan excels at seeding a challenged leader's thoughts with lies. You may have some familiarity with these thoughts yourself! See how many

deceptive thoughts you can complete on the downward ladder that can lead to fleeing a position:

- The grass is likely to be _____ elsewhere.
- If I don't see the _____, this must not be the place for me to serve.
- Serving God isn't supposed to be this _____.
- I need to go somewhere where I'm better _____.
- Maybe God didn't really _____ me, or it wouldn't be this hard.
- If at first you don't succeed, _____.

An accurate name for Satan is the Great Deceiver. He would have you believe that you should not serve God this way, in this place. The truth is, if your work is really hard and the rewards are difficult to perceive, this likely is precisely where the Lord has called you! Discontent with a difficult place most often illustrates immaturity on the leader's part. If the task were easy, there wouldn't be a need for a leader.

ASSESSMENT:

To which of these six deceptive thoughts are you most susceptible?

APPLICATION:

Why do you think that is?

What do you desire the Lord to do?

3. Leaders are _____ to stay the course in challenging situations (vv.3-4).

- Where does the difficulty of your task cause you to wonder about continuing on?

When the going gets rough, the deprivations many, the discouragements relentless, and the rewards seemingly few, how tempting it can be to think that the circumstances must mean that a person is not in the center of God's will and would find more success elsewhere. Yet the flaw in this thinking is written across the pages of God's Word! Rough going? Deprivations? Discouragements? Lack of rewards? Paul knew all this and more, as did Abraham, Moses, David and all others who were called and commanded by God to go and lead. **The hallmark of perseverance, despite every obstacle, is a signature sign of leadership.**

Paul and Timothy in Ephesus were engaged in furthering the cause of Christ in a multiplicity of ways. Paul was concerned with vast areas of churches and the mentoring of those who were charged with them. Timothy's concentration was in one particular city of probably small house churches. In both cases, leadership does not stop at the church doors. It is a "uniform" for Christ that never comes off. A Christian leader is held to that standard at all times and in all situations. **Leadership for Christ is a high calling and a wondrous privilege, bathed in the enabling power of the Lord Himself.**

⁵ Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, ⁶ from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, ⁷ desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm. ⁸ But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, ¹⁰ for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹ according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.

4. Leaders are to love with _____ integrity and faith (v.5).

- In what situation are you finding it difficult to love?

5. _____ of disregard for correct doctrine and Christlike behavior, leaders function best when they wisely exercise spiritual discernment (v.6).

- Could there be a brewing situation among some in your church body that you have ignored or chosen to not see?

6. Spiritual leaders possess boldness to be _____ by calling sin what it is, according to the Bible (vv.7-11).

- Since the Bible is clear about sin, what about you?

False teaching must be challenged. Gospel distortions, additions or related self-aggrandizing efforts incite disputes in the church. Idle talk and gossip can distract from Truth. In fact, idle talk can be an attractive distraction for church members, rather than facing up to sin struggles and less than honorable inclinations. Has social chitchat supplanted searing heart searches at your church? Is a watered-down gospel making inroads among the people entrusted to you? One way that you guard the gospel is to preach it in all its truth. The Bible is full of socially unpopular subjects. These, too, must be taught in the context of Christ's saving grace.

Paul Glories in Christ's Salvation

¹² And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, ¹³ although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

7. Those who lead for Christ are _____ by the glorious gospel (v.11).

- What about God's Word and Him revealed in it is filling your mind and heart today?

What a wondrously high standard God has set for those entrusted with guarding His gospel! Does your mind thrill at the thought of all the richness of the character of God that He has invested in what you teach and how you are to live? To preach to change lives, your own life must demonstrate that same edge-of-your-front-row-seat amazement at who God is and what He has done and is doing. **To preach the word of God, you need to enjoy it. To minister, you need to marvel!**

APPLICATION:

Take a moment to marvel at God's saving work in your life. In the space below, thank God for the changes He has made in your life.

¹⁵ *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*

¹⁶ *However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.* ¹⁷ *Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Paul marveled. In verses 12-17, he expressed his overwhelming gratefulness to Jesus Christ for His salvation and grace. What had Paul been previously? Chief among sinners! What was he now? An example of Jesus's longsuffering grace, so that others could see what God had done in him and seek the same wondrous redemption.

8. A leader for God is _____ faithful for ministry (v.12).

• *In what aspect of your ministry have you particularly struggled with faithfulness? Is it in talking with others one-on-one? Confronting sin? Dealing with finances?*

9. Leaders for Christ are _____ about their own sin nature and His rescue of them from the penalty for and power of sin (vv.13-15).

• *Have you been involved in covering up how your life has changed? Have you neglected to keep the main thing (the gospel), the main thing?*

10. To be _____ about Christ's work in your life helps to provide a pattern for future believers (v.16).

• *What is there about God's work in your life that would encourage others, and can you be candid about it?*

11. Those who effectively lead for Christ are _____ that God's nature is supernal and superior to all else (v.17).

• *What is it about Christ's nature that needs more attention in your own life right now?*

Leadership is costly, and the leader will need much of Christ! It is Christ who enables the leader, and not the leader himself. For those among the leader's people who don't yet know Christ, **ignorance makes a difference in God's mercy, unlike unrepentant idleness. Problems unaddressed tend to worsen, just like a shepherd's sheep left to their own resources when they've headed into dangerous territory.** A leader who addresses challenges within the church is aided by the humility of knowing what they are but for Christ.

Paul used himself as "Example A" to illustrate that **transformed sinners become convincing witnesses for Christ.** When Paul worshiped the Lord using some of God's attributes in verse 17, how it must have encouraged Timothy! **Leaders are limited, but God is not! God is altogether worthy of honor; leaders are not.** Leaders serve not to honor self, but to honor God. If God is completely superior in every way, and we serve Him, then we can relax, right? Not exactly...

Paul Entreats Timothy

¹⁸ *This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,* ¹⁹ *having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck,* ²⁰ *of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

12. Those who serve the Lord as leaders are _____ to wage the good war against opposition to the gospel (v.18).

- Where do you see opposition to the gospel affecting your particular church family?

13. When the gospel is rejected, leaders are _____ to constrain wrong influences within the church (vv.19-20).

- What will happen if you aren't conscientious about constraining a threat to the truths of Jesus Christ among your people?

A truly great leader cares more about the spiritual growth of others than they do their current comfort. There are times when the solution involves releasing false teachers among the church to the greater world. The deeds of such people declare themselves more clearly when they are not able to cloak them within the body of believers, and they are forced to decisively consider which direction they will choose. **You may not like war, but you are in one; in fact, you are charged with waging it. But it is a good war! Leaders for Jesus Christ are in a war for the hearts and minds of people.** Key "weapons" in the war against the church are faith and a good conscience. Paul has laid out eloquently the **characteristics he finds in a leader who is used by Christ**:

- Consecrated (v.1)
- Caring (v.2)
- Committed (v.3)
- Christ-like (vv.4-5)

- Cognizant of incorrect doctrine (v.6)
- Corrective (vv.7-10)
- Captivated (v.11)
- Counted faithful (v.12)
- Clear about sin and salvation (vv.13-15)
- Candid (v.16)
- Convinced of God's superiority (v.17)
- Compelled (v.18)
- Conscientious (vv.19-20)

When Jesus hung on the cross, He had fought the good fight, and was fighting it still until the end. He hung there alone. When David tended sheep, he did so alone. When David served as king, there was no room for two on the throne. Ultimately, as a leader for Christ, you will experience many times where difficult tasks or tough decisions must be accomplished alone.

Yet God has equipped you with His characteristics, including the list above. **In order to guard the gospel, the leader must first want God Himself.** Is your desire for God Himself, or for God's blessings, what you will gain, what He will give you? **God gives His leader all they need to serve well.** Does the privilege of helping others accurately and personally know God far outweigh the difficult challenges you encounter? What will you ask God to develop in you as a leader?

ASSESSMENT:

Which of these twelve characteristics is God speaking to you about, right now?

APPLICATION:

In the space below, write a prayer of confession and commitment. Confess your weakness to the Lord, commit yourself to Him in this area and ask for His anointing to enable you to demonstrate anointed leadership through it.

ANSWER KEY

What do you believe about God's Commands?

- ULTIMATELY NON-NEGOTIABLE TO THOSE WHO ARE UNDER HIS AUTHORITY

Principles of Godly Leadership:

- 1 and c – GOD ENABLES THE UNABLE
- 2 and e – GOD ASKS FOR YOUR AVAILABILITY, NOT YOUR ABILITY
- 3 and d – DON'T PUT A QUESTION MARK WHERE GOD HAS PUT A PERIOD
- 4 and a – IT'S NOT WHAT YOU BRING TO THE TABLE, IT'S WHAT YOU SURRENDER ON THE ALTAR
- 5 and b – A LEADER IS NEVER SO STRONG AS WHEN HE IS KNEELING IN PRAYER

Multiple Leadership Lessons

1. CONSECRATED
2. CARING
 - a. GREENER
 - b. FRUIT
 - c. DIFFICULT

d. APPRECIATED

e. CALL

f. QUIT

3. COMMITTED

4. CHRIST-LIKE

5. COGNIZANT

6. CORRECTIVE

7. CAPTIVATED

8. COUNTED

9. CLEAR

10. CANDID

11. CONVINCED

12. COMPELLED

13. CONSCIENTIOUS



od highly values a quiet and peaceable life. Such a life is the opposite of chaos and disorder. God created the world in an orderly way. There was nothing chaotic, disquieting or disorderly about what He did. God brings His same ability to create something out of nothing, and beauty where all was formless and void, to create godly men and women for His kingdom purposes, for His church.

To focus on the gospel, God has established layers of order. Those layers exist in terms of authority, inner life and outer life. In other words, internals drive externals. A God-ordered life is attractive to others.

How can a spiritual leader properly obtain and maintain order in the church they lead?

Using the words provided, fill in the blanks below:

inner, outer, prayer, order, others, authority, quiet, peaceable, godly, reverent

1. A spiritual leader knows that order in his _____ life leads order in his _____ life.

THE GUARDIANS: ORDER

¹ Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

1 Timothy 2

2. _____ precedes peaceful lives.

3. A church needs _____ to live as the body of Christ.

4. Leaders train their people in prayer for _____, including those in _____, not just for self.

5. A prayerful life is different. What are the four characteristics of a prayerful life? (First answer is given)

- Quiet
- _____
- _____
- _____

Faithfulness in “inner” life leads to order in “outer” life. Paul is teaching leaders to concentrate on God-established order in the church. As a spiritual leader, consider the following when evaluating your church with regard to godly order:

Yes/No

____ Have I established some guidelines for worship that mirrors God’s Word?

____ Am I aware of individuals who are recognized by others as leaders within my church body?

____ Am I training them in godliness, particularly in regard to inner life?

____ Have I listened to God’s prompting regarding those He would raise up as leaders?

____ Do I ever let popularity concerns triumph over “purity before God” concerns?

____ Am I cognizant of specific areas in which church members may tend

toward sin (i.e., in 1 Timothy 2, men raising fists in anger, women talking in ways that resemble gossip or distorted teaching)?

___ Do I address those “danger areas” proactively and sensitively?

___ Do I believe that my church is currently threatened by wrong teaching?

___ Do I feel a sense of guardianship to correct wrong teaching?

___ Do I feel deeply responsible for clear, correct teaching?

___ Do I take the lead in valuing prayer as of first importance?

___ Do I pray as often as I should for God’s church and those who may “come and see”?

___ Am I aware of obstacles or hindrances to proper teaching that seem impossible to correct?

___ Do I believe that God is the God of the impossible?

___ Have I identified sources of distraction within the church?

___ Have I addressed distractions in a way that sets limits on them?

___ Do I believe I can correct everything that distracts people from hearing God’s Word?

___ Does my inability to correct everything hinder God?

___ Do I clearly understand the pattern of male headship in the ultimate authority of God’s church?

___ Do I need to do more to train up men in my particular congregation?

___ Have I identified women whose inner lives are highly focused on the Lord?

___ Am I providing opportunities for godly women to influence others in teaching, etc.?

___ Have I permitted a church structure that women use to usurp roles men should have?

___ Do I teach God’s Word so as to also train my people in godliness?

___ Am I careful to model godliness with the highest of standards in my own life?

___ Am I able to concentrate on what is most important for God’s people to know?

___ Am I able to enter into worship with confidence in God?

___ Does my church include a variety of people who are culturally diverse?

___ If so, do I train my people to worship without compromising another person’s ability to concentrate?

___ If my church is not multicultural, is it because my teaching or training or heart only reaches one type of individual?

___ In an effort to be right before God, am I too rigid?

___ Do I need to grow in the area of orderly worship that allows people to focus on God?

___ Am I winsome in my love for Christ?

___ Is my joy in the supernal nature of God and His work infectious?

____ Am I teachable?

____ Do I recognize my own areas of weakness?

⁸ *I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; 9 in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing,¹⁰ but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.*

Ephesus was a church that wasn't at peace with itself. Do you sense something like that in your church? In 1 Timothy 2:1-7, Paul urged prayer for peaceful lives, so that everyone could gain knowledge of the truth that's found in Christ alone. In verses 8-15, Paul described behaviors that reigned in distractions common to the early church. Is it really such a stretch to imagine a church leader today also having to deal with men who are angry and spiritually irresponsible, or women who are dressed to distract or are busybodies gossiping among themselves about the latest popular person?

¹¹ *Let a woman learn in silence with all submission.* ¹² *And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.*

Key to this passage is grasping the meaning of the word "silence" in verses 11 and 12 as it was intended in the original Greek. That word is *hesuchia*, and it is used only twice more in the New Testament. The first was in Acts 22:2, when Paul spoke to the crowd acting as an angry mob. Yet when they heard Paul speak to them in Aramaic (their language), they became very quiet (i.e., silent). The other instance is in 2 Thessalonians 3:12. There, *hesuchia* was used in regard to "busybodies," who were urged to settle down in the Lord (i.e., be silent) and earn their keep instead of being idle. Those uses of the word are a far cry from the interpretation made by some (many?) people, who conclude that a woman must be kept from ever speaking in a church setting!

Comparison and Contrast the Greek word for "silence," *hesuchia*

What "silence" is not here

Noise

Disturbance

Movement

A Chaotic Life

Inability to Take In

Discord

What "silence" is here

Quietness

Tranquility

Stillness

A Quiet Life

Openness to Listening

Peace

Reflect on the following questions:

1. Which do I see as my own internal condition, *hesuchia* silence or its opposite?

2. How would I characterize the majority of my church's people, in a condition of *hesuchia* silence, or disturbed and stirred up?

3. What is my role in regard to the church and those who are not peacefully prepared to worship God and grow in Christ?

How does a leader deal with distracting behaviors? There are numerous ways to address the issue of distractions. Which of the following are new options for you in your situation? Check all that you have not yet attempted.

- ☐ Distinguish between cultural diversity and inappropriate distractions.
- ☐ Teach from the “pulpit” specifically about distracting, ungodly behaviors when it scripturally fits.
- ☐ Incorporate right behaviors (normally the opposite of the distractions) as specific prayers for the church.
- ☐ View as unacceptable failure to deal with a problem that distracts from absorbing the gospel.
- ☐ Recognize that tough calls are part of a leader’s special responsibility.
- ☐ Enlist the help of other church leaders in specifically modeling distraction-free behavior.
- ☐ Emphasize personal responsibility for godliness with integrity.
- ☐ Speak specifically to a person who is unaware of distractions he or she is causing, but pray first for tact, clarity and the recipient’s teachable spirit.

- ☐ Use humor when appropriate and not irreverent.
(Be careful about that though, lest it seem to trivialize the problem.)
- ☐ Pray privately about the distracting issue. Ask God, not only to remove the distracting behavior, but also to give you courage and strength.
- ☐ Without betraying names, ask another trusted, mature Christian leader how he or she deals with the issue.
- ☐ Care enough about those who are distracted to stay on the problem until it is solved.
- ☐ Be willing to be unpopular about some things.
- ☐ Never deal with something by phone or in writing that is more appropriately said face to face.

Since Paul directed his remarks particularly toward women in verses 11-12, it is helpful for a leader to recall that **God’s ways are always higher than man’s ways**. What at first seems to be an unusually strong restriction for women was actually something else entirely. Women were not commanded to be silent because they had nothing of value to contribute. His instruction was instead, a positive command to *learn*. Traditionally, women were not considered worthy of education. Paul instead instructed Timothy to guard the behavior of his church so that women *could* learn the wonderful truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ! Each condition of establishing order actually enhanced and elevated the current situation of God’s people. Men were to lift hands in *prayer*, not in anger, and women were to be *silent* so that they, too, could learn.

Order is necessary so that people can concentrate on what is most important: the gospel of Jesus Christ. An orderly church’s leader trains his congregation in prioritizing prayer and in minimizing actions that distract. Disorder in a church is a cry for leadership. Is your church “crying?”

Picture for a moment a simple church meeting place. It has four corners where the walls meet and is elevated above the ground, with stairs ap-

proaching the doorway. Underneath are pillars that support the building. Imagine that four of the pillars are beams that are showing signs of weakness. The **four pillars of an orderly church** that were important for Timothy to emphasize included:

1. Focused, intentional _____ for all people
2. Faithfulness in a worshiper's _____ life
3. Foundation of knowledge of _____ about God and Jesus Christ
4. Freedom from _____, particularly in dress and disquiet

How is your church doing in these four areas? In what areas is it lacking?

As a leader, rank yourself in the following areas, so that 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Uncertain, 2 = Disagree and 1 = Strongly Disagree.

- ___ There are always ways to improve the order of the church God has entrusted to me.
- ___ I am very motivated to correct disorder in my church body.
- ___ My ideas, while potentially good, will never be as great as what God has determined the church should be and do.
- ___ The more I choose to pray, the more my church will reflect that.

- ___ How intent I am about developing my own relationship with God will be reflected in the health of my church.
- ___ Men need encouragement to pray and worship.
- ___ Women need training to become sensitive to distractions.
- ___ The environment of my church should make focusing on the gospel of Jesus Christ the primary activity.
- ___ A godly, peaceful life is anything but boring.
- ___ I would rather confront a problem than allow wrong focus or wrong teaching to gain a foothold.

ANSWER KEY

Obtaining and Maintaining Order in the Church

1. Inner, Outer
2. Prayer
3. Order
4. Others, Authority
5. Quiet, Peaceable, Godly, Reverent

Four Pillars of an Orderly Church

1. Prayer
2. Inner
3. Truth
4. Distractions

To be blunt, not every believer can qualify to be a church leader. In fact, very few will, and from among those qualified, it is the Lord God who must stir up the call. Is this unfair, that there are positions within service to God having certain requirements or standards that as a result restrict the believer's access to them? To answer this question, it may help to ask other questions. Is it "fair" that only women can give birth, and men lack the necessary ability? Is it "fair" that only those with requisite education and successful performance on a multiplicity of exams can perform brain surgery?

More questions will help with answering this concern about access to service as a believer. Is anything that God does or prescribes or commands unfair? Is it in His nature to be stingy, even with positions of service? Did the Lord set about to ensure that a believer would be unfulfilled in serving Him? The answer to these three questions is a resounding no, no, and no. There is another question to consider: what happens when a particular position or

THE GUARDIANS: LEADERSHIP

Qualifications for Pastors

1 Timothy 3

¹ This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. ² A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; ³ not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; ⁴ one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence ⁵ (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); ⁶ not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. ⁷ Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

area of service has absolutely no standards or requirements? When serious responsibilities are entrusted to virtually anyone? These kinds of thoughts bring the serious inquirer to a sobering truth: **those entrusted with the responsibility of guarding the gospel and church of Jesus Christ must exemplify and adhere to the highest of standards.** Take a survey of your **Trustworthiness to Serve Christ:**

Check only those that are true of you:

- ☐ I want to be faithful more than I want to be comfortable.
- ☐ I am deeply troubled by any sin I become aware of in my life.
- ☐ I look to God's Word rather than men's approval for guidance.
- ☐ I am careful not to covet another church's numbers or status.
- ☐ I am not put off that I must work hard to serve faithfully.
- ☐ I do not think that my way is better than God's way.
- ☐ I care about confidentiality more than I care about showing that I know something.
- ☐ I am the same kind of leader whether someone is watching or not.
- ☐ I see hard things as opportunities to honor God, rather than irritating burdens.
- ☐ I do not see a conflict between loving my family and loving God.
- ☐ When someone is difficult to love, I don't write them off, but ask God to love through me.
- ☐ I am willing to make time to listen to any in my church who want to meet with me.

- ___ I lay aside certain freedoms out of caution lest I cause someone else to sin.
- ___ I am teachable, and respond to criticism with openness to change where warranted.
- ___ I am not threatened by others in my church who may do some things better than me.
- ___ I practice vulnerability instead of remoteness, asking trusted others for specific prayer.
- ___ I understand that my church leadership position does not exist solely to meet my needs.
- ___ I take care not to complain at home to family about difficult situations within the church.
- ___ I find great fulfillment in serving Christ and want His “well done,” not fame in this life.
- ___ I take great joy in helping others to gain an ever higher view of God and His plans.
- ___ I am willing to confront laziness or lack of commitment from staff members.
- ___ I am also willing to see my work as partly that of a trainer, so I don’t expect perfection.
- ___ My first response to criticism of my leadership is not to be defensive, but to listen.
- ___ I live privately as I do publicly. There is no part of my life that causes me to feel ashamed.

- ___ I value spiritual maturity in myself and others.

- ___ I recognize that I am seen as a role model and regard that as a caution at all times.

For each of the above lines that you did not check because they are not true of you right now, in the space below write a brief prayer request pertaining to the leadership behavior that is indicated and the growth you desire to see.

Now, make a list of at least 2 trusted, mature Christians (including your spouse), to whom you will take these prayer requests. Ask them if they will agree to commit to pray about these so that your trustworthiness for Christ’s purposes can be further developed.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

God has prescribed high standards for church leaders. These qualifications point to underlying principles of leadership. **The state of your home reflects on your leadership.**

Believers model the transforming power of the gospel in the way we live our personal lives, in our homes and for some, in church leadership. A family’s shepherding can be difficult, but far more complex and still greater are the challenges that go hand in hand with shepherding God’s church.

Put another way, **sound shepherding shows leadership.** Can you guarantee that you will raise wholesome, spiritually sound children who become mature young adults? No. The Bible illustrates that this is not always the case. But you can do what is wise and right in heading off trouble before it begins, in modeling Christ-like attributes and in making your home a haven of spiri-

tual joy and closeness. You can deal decisively and lovingly with wrong behavior. You can love your wife as Christ loves the church. At home, we first demonstrate our loving concern for the eternal good of others, even at the (frequent) cost of our own comfort. **Leadership is credibility and capability to influence people in a God-given direction. If a leader's family does not respect their leadership, it is unlikely that they can lead God's church.** If you can't guard your family, are you really ready to guard God's church? Conversely, if things are falling apart at home, that man may need to concentrate his efforts toward being a spiritually sound husband, father and head of his household, rather than taking on the responsibilities of church leadership.

What God prescribes is always sound and best. God's high standards for church leaders are sound and best. Is God legalistic? If legalistic means adhering to a standard that draws a clear line between right and wrong, then the answer is yes. But His is a "yes" covered over with grace. One message from the Lord's high standards is that **actions illustrate our inner spiritual condition.** Another take-home lesson (literally) is that **a leader's reputation, and therefore their effectiveness for Christ, is determined by what they do everywhere, not just in relation to God's church.** Clearly, this passage teaches that Satan sets traps for church leaders. ***Will you give in to OR guard against the traps Satan will surely set for you?*** Though leadership is about God's equipping of a person who is not interested in personal fame, it is equally true that the **world watches leaders for Christ.**

ASSESSMENT:

Which of these **18 qualifications for church leaders** is most challenging for you? Place a check mark beside it;

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> blameless | <input type="checkbox"/> gentle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> husband of one wife | <input type="checkbox"/> not quarrelsome |
| <input type="checkbox"/> temperate | <input type="checkbox"/> not covetous |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sober-minded | |

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> of good behavior | <input type="checkbox"/> rules his own house well |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hospitable | <input type="checkbox"/> children are in submission with all |
| <input type="checkbox"/> able to teach | <input type="checkbox"/> reverence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> not given to wine | <input type="checkbox"/> not a novice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> not violent | <input type="checkbox"/> not prideful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> not greedy for money | <input type="checkbox"/> good testimony among outsiders |

APPLICATION:

Why do you think that is?

What will you now ask the Lord to do in you to address this, after you confess it?

Qualifications for Deacons

⁸ Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, ⁹ holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. ¹⁰ But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. ¹¹ Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. ¹² Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. ¹³ For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

The word “likewise” is included here because Paul addressed not just pastors, but also deacons. While the specifics of deacon ministry in the Ephesian church remains a mystery, a ‘*diakonos*’ (deacon) was at very least a ministering servant who took a leading role in the church. Churches today who do not appoint deacons certainly have ‘leading servants’. Paul’s qualifications are therefore as valid today as they were then.

Likewise means, “in the same way, similarly, in like manner,” so that the **standards for deacons are basically the same as for pastors**, although the position of deacons is subordinate to and under the authority of pastors. Deacons participate in the servant leadership of the church in a variety of ways. It would be inaccurate scripturally to think of deacons as less vital; God’s standards show that He takes the role of deacons very seriously, and He has expectations that are nearly identical to those of pastors in regard to the lives of deacons. These **qualifications for leadership center around trustworthiness to influence others**. Based on verses 9-13 given above, cross out the incorrect answer to each of the following;

1. To be a trustworthy leader, your conscience must be (mostly muted; sensitively pure).
2. Trustworthiness in leadership should be (tested by prior actions; known by eye contact).
3. (Adequate time; intuitive guesswork) is necessary in order to assess trustworthiness.

4. Servant leaders must (be a lifelong Christian; have a reverent wife).
5. (Less than perfect health; a chaotic home) would disqualify a potential leader.
6. A modest income or too many relatives (would; would not) disqualify a potential leader.
7. The position of deacons (is; is not) subordinate to that of pastors.

Why did Paul advocate the testing of a potential servant leader first, before he is given a particular role as deacon? **Faithfulness in little things predicts faithfulness in larger responsibilities**. Where is this principle seen in terms of biblical examples? Consider Joseph, who ministered to others from his jail cell, or David, who faithfully tended his sheep sight unseen until plucked from the field to be chosen as King. Think of Stephen, who was trustworthy in meeting the needs of widows within the church before ministering in power until martyred for the cause of Christ. Which of the following are “**little things**” that can demonstrate trustworthiness over time? Check all that apply (*hint: 3 do not apply*)...

1. ___ Showing up early to set up chairs or a room prior to worship
2. ___ Staying after services to help put things away
3. ___ Writing a book on a personal journey to faith
4. ___ Faithfully giving financially to God’s church
5. ___ Opening your home in hospitality to others
6. ___ Offering someone a ride to church who would be otherwise unable to attend
7. ___ Doing the less-visible tasks; cleaning church bathrooms, making coffee

8. ___ Folding bulletins or stocking supplies
9. ___ Providing meals for sick church members on occasion
10. ___ Praying individually and participating at prayer meetings
11. ___ Wearing the finest, most tailored clothes at church
12. ___ Refusing to participate in gossip
13. ___ Being scripturally prepared for lessons
14. ___ Consistent service as greeter, usher or the like
15. ___ Absence of evidence of critical spirit or cliquishness
16. ___ Refusing to take credit for good work, instead giving honor to God
17. ___ Overtly talkative, always has the answer
18. ___ Steps in and helps on the spot without being asked

Consider the following **two possibilities for a servant leadership position in your church**. The need is for someone to oversee the distribution of small monetary contributions and food contributions given to widows and families caring for orphaned children. These two groups of people have grown in your congregation due to the spread of HIV disease in the area and the resultant deaths. Oversight of this portion of your church's ministry is too much for the pastor to continue to handle. There is a choice to be made, and you as pastor have prayed about God's guidance in showing you who to approach. Here are your potential choices:

Possibility #1

Tebogo – A father of 4, Tebogo scratches out a living selling wood scavenged from structures that are being dismantled. His wife cares for the

children, and they have attended your church since the first month of its inception. Tebogo has often repaired a rotten board or leaking roof on the building where you meet, and he and his older children stay after services to help put away chairs and return the room to its normal classroom use. Tebogo has some occasional fevers from malaria, though he almost never misses church.

Possibility #2

Kopano– One of the only villagers to have attended anything beyond the first few grades of school, Kopano has learned how to work a calculator and is employed by the government to help with utilities accounting. He is a young adult who has been attending church for the past 5 months at the urging of his older cousin, and seems to like it. He is married and has one child. His sister's family lives with his own. Kopano speaks English as well, a result of his education.

Which potential servant leader do you believe the Lord is calling for this ministry with widows and families caring for orphans? Why?

Now consider the following and see if you would re-do your choice:

Observing faithfulness in little things happens over time. Taking the time to know a person's character is one of the most overlooked prescriptions for leadership, to the peril of many a church. Paul will soon plant the 'patience' and 'wisdom' seeds firmly in Timothy's heart in chapter 5 (verse 22):

22 Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.

Pastors who seek God’s prompting regarding potential leaders among their church family will find Him faithful. A faithful leader does not give in to pressure to fill a need with an untested person. **Someone who has not been tested is not qualified to serve as a leader in Christ’s church.** Furthermore, acumen in business or commerce does not mean that a person will be a sound church leader. **The world’s standards are not acceptable for leaders in Christ’s church.** Special skills, elite education, popularity, social status or even perfect health are nowhere evident in God’s standards for leaders. Instead, issues of character like humility, faithfulness, honesty, soundness, maturity and trustworthiness are the vital matters. Nowhere does scripture suggest that a church leader may compromise on these attributes. The task would be too daunting; it would seem impossible to find servant leaders, but for God. It is He who makes all things possible!

God promises special rewards to those who serve well (v.13).
These include: 24

- a. Obtaining for themselves a _____.
- b. Obtaining a great _____ in the faith which is in Christ Jesus

The Church of the Living God

*¹⁴ These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly;
¹⁵ but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:*

*God was manifested in the flesh,
Justified in the Spirit,
Seen by angels,
Preached among the Gentiles,
Believed on in the world,
Received up in glory.*

Paul felt that the qualifications and issues of God’s leaders in the church were too urgent a matter to wait for his next visit to Ephesus. **He underscored that proper conduct is of urgent importance for church leaders to understand and enact (v15). The calling of a leader for Christ is incredibly high, and the view is majestic. Guarding the church of the Living God, the “pillar and ground of truth,” is the special responsibility of the church pastor.** After Timothy read Paul’s description of the gospel in the final verse of this chapter, imagine his renewed attitude toward his challenges and responsibilities. God will grow His church. You may be in need of more leadership tomorrow. Knowing what God has already done through His Son, will you ask God to reorient your thoughts toward His highest plans for His church?

ASSESSMENT:

Where do you have some work to do in regard to leadership that meets God’s standards within your church?

APPLICATION:

List the steps you will take to deal with that leadership issue in the coming weeks.

ANSWER KEY

Trustworthy Leadership Sentences: (correct answer given here, not crossed out answer)

1. SENSITIVELY PURE
2. TESTED BY PRIOR ACTIONS
3. ADEQUATE TIME
4. HAVE A REVERENT WIFE
5. A CHAOTIC HOME
6. WOULD NOT
7. IS

“Little Things” That Can Demonstrate Trustworthiness:

(incorrect answers given here)

- WRITING A BOOK ON A PERSONAL JOURNEY TO FAITH
- WEARING THE FINEST, MOST TAILORED CLOTHES AT CHURCH
- OVERTLY TALKATIVE, ALWAYS HAS THE ANSWER

Two Possibilities for Servant Leadership

(correct choice)

TEBOGO

Special Rewards to those who Serve Well:

GOOD STANDING

BOLDNESS



Believers in Christ have been warned. People have been deceived, and consequently, they distort the pure truths of scripture. Distorting scriptures never works out well, as in the examples Paul cited to Timothy: hypocrisy, dulled consciences, forced singleness and food abstinence were some of the results. God's perfect world has been tainted by earth's present state of fallen-ness. Note how Satan has taken what is good (truth, conscience, marriage, food), and distorted it. Yet, God has offered His people freedom within the process of sanctification as they conform to His image. This freedom permits us to enjoy God's creation within the protection of God's will.

Use the following words (in random order), to fill in the blanks below. It may help to draw a line through each word as you use it.

wrong thinking/doing; "first alert"; responsibly; effective; faith; sanctification; deception; bought; prayer; restrictions.

THE GUARDIANS: MINISTRY

Train for Godliness Rather than Falling for Falseness

¹ Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, ³ forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; ⁵ for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

1 Timothy 4

1. God's leaders must expect that some will abandon the _____ and fall into _____.
2. One of Satan's most _____ weapons is deception.
3. Lies that are taught become lies that are _____ (i.e., believed).
4. A seared conscience fails to alert a person to _____.
5. A tender conscience serves as a _____ system about venturing into dangerous territory.
6. Knowing God's truth frees believers from false _____.
7. Good leaders model _____ embracing freedom in Christ.
8. God's word and _____ sanctify His gifts.
9. _____ takes the threat out of common life.

Since a dulled conscience is so dangerous, what do you think are several actions you can take to help awaken the consciences of your church members?

In what ways have you observed or been concerned about self-imposed restrictions in terms of diet, lifestyle or activities among your church family?

Describe the process of sanctification. How adequately do you believe that you are training your flock in the process of sanctification? Could they describe it to you? (3-part question)

⁶If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. ⁷ But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. ⁸ For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. ⁹ This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. ¹⁰ For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. ¹¹ These things command and teach.

Paul was now writing with a particular focus on what comprises a good minister of Jesus Christ. An effective pastor is well-nourished spiritually, and serves up a banquet of good teaching to others. **Feeding on God's Word is essential for spiritual strength.** Are you a "malnourished minister?" There will be a famine in the flock if the minister is malnourished. Or are you spiritually obese, knowing a great deal about the Lord but keeping it all to yourself, like a "hoarder?" **There is a worldwide famine for the word of God.** People are hungry for it, although in most cases they don't even know for what they so long. These lost people are filling themselves with what is ultimately empty, unsatisfying, and very definitely not life-giving. As a man called by God, does your heart hurt for these who have had their fill, but of

the wrong things? Some have even heard things in churches that are fables or embellished stories. **Knowing God's truth sensitizes true leaders to what is false.**

Paul knew precisely what was needed in order to address the counterfeit and feed the famished. Godliness requires training. It takes work to shape up, not just physically, but especially in terms of character. Some people (even pastors), do not so much train, as count on coasting by making it to the finish line more on emotion than by being expertly prepared. The Greek word in verse 7 for "exercise" is *gumnazo*, from which we get the word gymnasium. It meant literally to train as the Greek athletes who competed in Olympiads, or in this case, to train in Christ-likeness, to be disciplined about gaining expertise, to become fit, to keep step, to conform to virtue, to preserve, to strive, to contend. Two other times this word *gumnazo* (to exercise, to train) is used in this way, both in Hebrews. "But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14). "Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Hebrews 12:11). As a minister, do you train hard to give your best to God's church, or do you coast along on a wind of enthusiasm? Test yourself...

For each of the following, which of them are examples of TRAINING and which are examples of COASTING? Place a "T" or a "C" beside each example:

1. ___ I choose my sermon passage the day before.
 2. ___ I attend seminars like this one and listen carefully.
 3. ___ I think seminars are mostly a chance to get away and visit.
 4. ___ When I wake up, I think about what I want to do that day.
 5. ___ I set an alarm to wake up early, with my day already mostly planned.
-

6. ___ I simply trust the Holy Spirit to give me the words when I preach.
7. ___ I prepare by studying my Bible, praying and thinking hard.
8. ___ I trust the Holy Spirit to give power to what I've prepared.
9. ___ I care more about an emotional response than accuracy when it comes to preaching.
10. ___ I typically prefer to read a good book about faith rather than read my Bible.
11. ___ I make certain that I read my Bible for myself each day.
12. ___ I want people to respond to the thunder in my voice.
13. ___ I prefer to multitask rather than set aside time alone with God.
14. ___ On sermon days, I skip my quiet time with God because I will be with Him all day.
15. ___ I feel like my time is my own and I give generous parts of it to Christ.
16. ___ I feel like I've basically learned all I need to to be an effective pastor to my people.
17. ___ I think that repetition is important, so that I personally look afresh at familiar scriptures.
18. ___ I want to preach so that church members come straight to me with their difficulties.
19. ___ I want to preach so that church members are equipped to go to Christ and His Word with their difficulties.

20. ___ If I get to study for the next 50 years, I don't think I would ever know all there is to grasp about God.
21. ___ I skip steps in sermon preparation because I already know the passages so well.
22. ___ I can not wait to give out God's Word each time we meet at church; nothing excites me more.
23. ___ Though it takes discipline, I study to learn and see new things each time I teach a passage.
24. ___ There is a sin I repeat often, but I ask forgiveness and just go on.

No exercise has benefits to equal training in godliness, not even World Cup Soccer. How can a leader ever be in proper spiritual shape, unless he relies on the Lord as his "personal trainer?" **Submitting to training in godliness brings benefits now and in the future, to self and to others. Let your "workout" be used to get the Word out!** Your labor, your training, has eternal purpose.

Minister by Example, Holding Nothing Back

¹² Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. ¹³ Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. ¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. ¹⁵ Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. ¹⁶ Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

Some in churches have an unfairly negative attitude toward younger pastors. Where this begins is not clear, since it is not scriptural. **The Lord values youthful examples of godliness.** We are to value them, too. Jesus Christ, our model in all things, was a young man. So was Timothy. In many parts

of our world, men who live for Christ are in short supply, particularly young men. Church leaders, how are you inspiring young men (including the very young), to see God's call on their lives and their pivotal role in our world? How do you include them in your work? In what ways do you share your passion for Christ with them? What expectations and responsibilities do you assign to them?

Maybe you are now a young pastor. Regardless, consider your life in light of the six dimensions of an exemplary life for Christ. Pretend for a moment that you are reading your own "report card" on your behavior in these areas. Prayerfully write a brief evaluation of *yourself* in regard to these **6 areas of setting a godly example in:**

1. Word _____

2. Conduct _____

3. Love _____

4. Spirit _____

5. Faith _____

6. Purity _____

ASSESSMENT:

Which of these six areas was most convicting to you? _____

APPLICATION:

Write a prayer about this area, asking God to change what is not honoring to Him in your example.

What verse, passage or person from anywhere in the Old or New Testament encourages you in regard to what you just asked God to change in you?

Your Father God expects you to be an example for Him. He delights in refining you. Your life as a leader for Christ lived out among others *in your church and community* has immeasurable strategic potential. **There is always more to learn of Christ. What you know should be evident in how you grow.** Verse 15 instructs the leader to *meditate* on these things. The eastern view of meditation is to empty your mind, but the God of the Bible means for His man to *fill* your mind with Himself as expressed through His Word. A key command is to give yourself entirely to thinking on, reading in and teaching on God's Word; no holding back.

Which of the following are examples of being "all in", holding nothing back as if it were impossible or untouchable by the Lord? Place a check by examples that illustrate this command:

1. __ I am serious about ministering with integrity.
2. __ I schedule time for studying God's word without interruption.
3. __ I avoid doing things that may stretch my abilities.
4. __ I do not waver when my leadership may be costly.
5. __ I refuse to let my work for God control my life.
6. __ I am watchful for those God is calling to serve Him unreservedly.
7. __ I think the way I do little things may impact more than my sermons.
8. __ I believe that refusing to change is refusing to believe God.
9. __ I do not ask other people to do hard things for the cause of Christ.
10. __ I know that my greatest need as an example is personal holiness.
11. __ I read my Bible for my own refinement, not just to help others.
12. __ I view serving God in my calling as pastor/leader as a privilege.
13. __ I am not troubled by the spiritual indifference of others.
14. __ I am willing to get up earlier, work longer, and study more.
15. __ I won't give more effort until I am more rewarded.
16. __ I can't imagine doing even one day without entrusting it to Christ.
17. __ I am excited now about things I plan to teach in six months.
18. __ I prefer not to make decisions, choosing instead to procrastinate.

19. __ I am willing to face unpleasant circumstances without wavering.
20. __ I would rather give in and compromise than be criticized.
21. __ I will be disappointed if life as a pastor doesn't get easier.
22. __ I believe that some tasks are beneath that of a pastor like me.
23. __ I believe there is value in doing humble tasks as the church leader.
24. __ I look for ways to express love in action for my church family.
25. __ I believe that sharing God's word is one of my most important jobs.
26. __ I do not think it is important to know church members' names.
27. __ I believe that praying for my church family is extremely important.
28. __ I have watched faithful leaders and want to be a bit like them.
29. __ I am not comfortable with influencing others through my life.
30. __ I think of prayer ministry as something others do for me.

Persevering in sanctification as a leader *will* affect others. Superior calling requires superior character. There are three "D's" that summarize this Doctrine of Ministry: **Die to self, Dive into God's Word and Depend on Christ.** Are you "all in?" What a privilege to be a minister of the gospel, to know the pleasure and promise of the Bible, to apprehend and comprehend the inestimable grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, to feast on His faithfulness and then share the richest of fare with others!

ANSWER KEY

Fill in the blank:

1. FAITH, DECEPTION
2. EFFECTIVE
3. BOUGHT
4. WRONG THINKING/DOING
5. "FIRST ALERT"
6. RESTRICTIONS
7. RESPONSIBLY
8. PRAYER
9. SANCTIFICATION

Examples of Training versus Coasting:

TRAINING:

- #'s 2,5,7,8,11,17,19,20,22,23

Examples of Being "All In," Holding Nothing Back:

ALL EXCEPT #'s 3,5,9,13,15,18,20,21,22,26,29,30

How do you see others within the church you serve – as a necessary but problem-creating part of church, without which there would be no ministry? A distraction from what you most love, which may be time alone with God, settling in with your books to study, or planning worship? Do you see them as an appreciative audience for your sermons? Or do you see others as *the reason for your leadership*, a flock in need of a shepherd?

At first glance, the 5th chapter of 1 Timothy can seem like a puzzling jumble of admonitions about widows and elders. At this point in his letter, Paul was addressing Timothy on matters that could be challenging to the early church. What stands out is the wise counsel of God in regard to *relationships*. Maybe you have heard someone respond to the greeting, “How are you doing?” by saying, “I’d be just fine if it weren’t for people.” **Every leader, every believer, faces challenging relationships. Your most difficult situations within the church will likely be related to relationships.** Yet the truth is, **the heart of the Christian faith is about relationships – first with God,**

THE GUARDIANS: FLOCK

Can You Relate?

¹ *Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers,*

² *older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.*

then with others. It is not an exaggeration to say that **how you relate to others will make or break your success as a leader for Christ in His church.** Sheep will wander, flounder and enter into danger without the guarding, guiding benefit of a shepherd who knows them and invests himself in their well-being.

Finish each of the following sentences according to your own tendencies, as truthfully as possible:

1. As a general rule, when church is over and people are milling about, I feel

2. When I see someone from my church around town and they begin to speak with me, I am

3. If a church member calls in the evening with an emergency and wants me to come, I feel

4. I feel as though the list of people with needs who want the church to help is

5. If I could rid the church of one “type” of person, it would be

Since all leaders face challenges regarding relationships, the things you wrote to conclude those five sentences may help you identify areas in which there is much to learn. Paul took two sentences to lay the foundation for right relationships within God’s church. Basically, **God expects His leaders to treat church members as family**. That makes perfect sense, since they are, in fact, family under God our Father. Just as in our nuclear families some individuals may be less easy to love and more “high maintenance” than others, so it is on this side of eternity with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

When someone addresses a fellow believer as “brother” or “sister,” it is not just some kind of throwback to an earlier time and old-fashioned ways of addressing one another in church. It is a true statement. The verbs expressed in verses 1 and 2 apply to each gender group and each age category; neither older nor younger men or women are to be rebuked (Greek *epipleso*, “chided,” “struck” or “beaten with blows”). That should be obvious.

More to the point, the church leader is to exhort (Greek *parakaleo*) his brothers and sisters, that is, to “call upon,” “encourage” or “entreat” someone to do something, in the context of aiding, helping, comforting or beseeching. All interactions within a family should be cloaked in the purity that characterizes those who truly desire to follow Christ. **There is no hidden agenda, tainted desire, manipulation or selfish motive in Christlike relationships. Leaders see a better way, a higher destination, and act so as to guide others biblically.** That is the motivation behind the various instructions that follow in this passage.

Words and titles matter. **Respect and love are reflected in titles of address.** Each time you have the opportunity to interact in relationships within your flock, do you seize that opportunity? Do you resent calls and crises that interrupt the planned flow of your day? Would you rather “relate by appoint-

ment?” Do you wait for church members you know less well to come to you, or do you believe your role includes leading by initiating ways to deepen those relationships as well? Steps to do so need not be unduly taxing. To which of the four groups Paul mentioned do you personally have the most difficult time reaching out in respectful, warm, encouraging ways? Who are the most needy among your flock? The most maligned? In general, are women less esteemed where you live? If so, since that is unbiblical, your leadership is required to teach and model a different way. For Timothy, the most needy were those who were widows.

³ *Honor widows who are really widows.* ⁴ *But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.* ⁵ *Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day.* ⁶ *But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.* ⁷ *And these things command, that they may be blameless.* ⁸ *But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

⁹ *Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man,*¹⁰ *well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints’ feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.*

¹¹ *But refuse the younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry,*¹² *having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith.* ¹³ *And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.* ¹⁴ *Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.* ¹⁵ *For some have already turned aside after Satan.* ¹⁶ *If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.*

It must have been really hard to turn a widow down, but Paul advocated that under certain conditions. Was he thoughtless? Prejudiced against women? Heartless? Women were without status in that time and culture. The fact that Paul even *mentioned* them was a far cry from the ancient Jewish prayer, “God, I thank you that I am not a Gentile, a slave or a woman.” Paul understood the plight of those women, and he wanted Timothy to deal with authentic needs without developing a culture of entitlement.

Under God’s design, **families are to care for their widowed relatives**. When churches step in and usurp that role, they interfere with God’s best plan. In fact, to deprive families of their rightful role is to hinder their growth and development in Christ. **Children and grandchildren are indebted to their parents and elderly family members. Character is developed by assuming responsibility.**

Wanting to do what is right, church leaders can find it hard to set limits on generosity, but **sometimes a handout is not the best response. As stewards of His generosity, God’s church and specifically its leaders, must determine the wisest use of resources.** A fairly intimate knowledge of specific situations is necessary in order to make that determination. Paul set limits. The responsibility for determining eligibility as a widow falls first on the family. If there is a family, *they* are to care for her. If not, the widow must meet certain criteria involving age, faithfulness to God, possibility of remarriage, etc. Paul showed Timothy through this example that establishing criteria respecting the role of the family of origin is a proper step in stewardship of the church’s resources.

Exhibiting too much generosity in terms of handouts within a church’s flock can actually lead to undesirable behavior. **People who grow in relationship do so by assuming responsibility for themselves.** They learn to depend on God themselves, to search God’s Word for guidance themselves, to take appropriate steps to address a difficulty *themselves*, to acknowledge when further help is needed *themselves* – all within the guidance of the Bible and the Holy Spirit. The wise pastor trains his people to see the amazing sufficiency of God in resolving the challenges of life.

What do Paul’s words to Timothy regarding widows have to do with you in your church’s situation? Was 1 Timothy 5 really written for this day and this time? **All of the Bible is written for all times.** Principles from the “widow issue” hold true for responding to a variety of ongoing support issues within the worldwide church today. Concerns about determining who receives assistance from scarce resources could keep a pastor awake at night. They are not meant to do so!

Using the words provided (in random order), fill in the blanks below regarding **1 Timothy 5 Guidelines for Determining Ongoing Support** (which mirror the steps Paul advocated):

clarify enabling heard dependent idleness Family of origin
favoritism privileged connection

1. **DISCERN** (verse 3) – listen carefully, asking questions. People long to be _____.

2. **DETERMINE FAMILY RESOURCES** (verse 4) – God has designed His world so that _____ is the primary source of physical and emotional support.

3. **ESTABLISH COMMITMENT TO CHRIST** (verses 5, 10) – For continued ongoing support, recipients should have a valid _____ to the church.

4. **DETAIL CRITERIA** (verses 5, 9, 11) – Put into writing the necessary minimum benchmarks for consideration. That helps remove from the table claims of _____.

5. **BE REALISTIC ABOUT EXPECTATIONS** (verses 11-13) – Younger widows remarry and may even do so out of the faith; drug addicts may return to their addictions; someone with a repetitive sin may fall. It is wise to _____ from the beginning the parameters under which aid can be received in a given case.

6. **RECOGNIZE THAT HANDOUTS ARE NOT ALWAYS HELPFUL** (verses 13-15) – Instead, they may encourage _____ rather than resumption of a responsible life. Idleness is a tool well exploited by Satan.

7. **ENLIST OTHERS** (verse 16)– Churches are blessed with generous members who are _____ to assist in support situations. They find great joy in being used by God. Discourage the idea that the institution itself is to provide all assistance, as if it were divorced from the actual saints who make up its people.

8. **TEACH AND ENCOURAGE CHRISTLIKE SELF-RELIANCE** (verses 1-16) – The Lord Jesus Christ spent years working as a carpenter with stone or wood. Paul made tents. Lydia dyed cloth purple. From the beginning of creation, God designed work to be part of the fulfillment of mankind on earth. From the pulpit, teach self-reliance that depends on God's _____. It is biblical.

ASSESSMENT:

What is one area in which your church struggles with ongoing support for members? (It may not be money, but instead medical help, homes for orphans, lodging for the displaced, etc.)

APPLICATION:

Identify all areas in which the way this need is currently being addressed departs from biblical guidelines, using the eight steps above.

Ask your elders, or a group of two or three other trusted members of your flock, to pray specifically about this with you. Watch for God to show you your next step. Who will you ask to pray?

Respect Your Elders

¹⁷ Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.¹⁸ For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."¹⁹ Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.²⁰ Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.

²¹ I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.²² Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.

²³ No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.

²⁴ Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later.²⁵ Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.

There is some debate about exactly whom Paul intended in this passage on "elders." Did he mean those men who act in a leadership capacity within the church, or perhaps those men who serve as deacons, or was he referring here to those who are pastors? For the purposes of this study, the assumption is that Paul was referring to Timothy and fellow pastors-elders. **Serving Christ's church is worthy of double honor! It is an honor to study, give out and unpack God's Word, and drive home its basic truths.** It is also

hard work. In fact, only those who walk the same path – who serve as pastors themselves – truly know the enormity of the weight of responsibility that lies heavy on the shoulders of a pastor. Only his compatriots grasp the daily-ness of surrendering that burden to Christ, feeling the easing of the yoke and the joy of walking with Him. Other pastors also understand the contending of the Great Accuser, who attempts to pile trouble on a church's chief guardian on a daily basis.

How refreshing it is to see the Bible entreat God's people to recognize that the pastor works extremely hard and should not be hampered in any way from giving out the gospel! Just as an ox was not to be prevented from enjoying the very wheat it was separating from the chaff as it trod the fields, **God's people are not to discourage and undermine** their pastor as they prepare and give out the banquet of God's Word each week. If only church members would recognize their very solemn responsibility in this area!

In case someone missed the point, Paul quoted another Scripture, reminding the flock that the pastor was worthy of their full-fledged support. **Nothing undermines a pastor more than a critical mindset among his flock.** Just as a parent must train his own children to respect him, so also a pastor must train his own church to respect his God-given authority and *honor* him. Scripturally-mature church members play a pivotal role in honoring their pastor and expressing it when they are party to even subtle challenges to his authority.

Pretend that you are overhearing comments as people enjoy fellowship and stream out after a Sunday service. Which of the following are honoring? *Circle the number beside each honoring comment. Which are dishonoring? Mark their numbers with an X.*

1. I wonder which pastor is preaching next Sunday; then I'll decide whether or not to come.
2. You know, when we had our last pastor, he/she wouldn't have allowed that kind of crazy music.

3. Did you see the way he/she used a computer during their preaching? Why do they think they need anything but a Bible?
4. I don't see anybody my age here. I want our pastor to be young!
5. Every single week I can hardly believe it when the sermon is over. I learn so much, I want it to go on and on.
6. I don't know why, but I just can't get into the worship without the songs we used to sing. I don't think my pastor understands.
7. You know, I feel like I hardly know our pastor. Why doesn't he/she just ask us over to their house for dinner?
8. I was watching during the sermon to see who came today. It just doesn't look to me like very many people are here.
9. I'm in charge of counting the offering this month. Our giving is down! What's the pastor going to do about it? The money must keep coming in.
10. My sister was sick in bed for two days before our pastor came. I can't believe he/she doesn't understand what an emergency it is to have someone so sick.
11. I don't think my pastor even likes me. He/she never picks me to be in charge of anything. I guess I'm just going to stay uninvolved, in case leadership wants me to do something important.
12. I would absolutely put gas in their car and get my pastor lunch if they would let me do it – anything to help them out a bit so they can use their time for the Lord's work. I'm so grateful.
13. You know, people are saying there is a better preacher at that new church. Let's see what we think.

14. Did you hear that story Suma told me? She said that all those new pew Bibles were paid for with money that should have been spent for Sunday school lessons.

If a leader did not keep their eyes on Christ, it would be easy to become discouraged. God's Word says "double honor"! Those who labor in God's Word, in His doctrines, those who work hard to do that with excellence, aren't just worthy of "honor," but of "double honor" – the fatted calf times two! The coat of many colors twice over! God knows. God sees. It is enough. Yet a wise leader acknowledges that some criticisms are valid. A careful mechanism is described by Paul for those situations in which an elder is wrong and the legally valid number of witnesses are available. It is to the benefit of all other pastors and churches if those leaders engaged in ungodly behavior are removed.

Cross out the wrong word choice to make each sentence below correctly describe Laboring in **God's Word and Doctrine**:

1. The gospel is to be proclaimed (**with without**) shame.
2. Words that are (**confusing clear**) are to be used.
3. It is (**better worse**) to divide a passage into more sermons than to force too much into one lesson.
4. Doctrinal terms such as "justification" or "atonement" (**should should not**) be explained in words the average listener can grasp.
5. It (**is is not**) enough to explain a doctrine; it must also be shown how it matters in the life of the believer.
6. Using contrasts such as "self-righteousness and Christ's righteousness" (**clarifies confuses**) the application of a doctrine.
7. A pastor (**should should not**) know the passage from which they are teaching so well that they could describe the content nearly line by line.

8. Though teaching is a gift, I (**should should not**) approach it with fear and trembling.

9. I (**grudgingly joyfully**) submit to the demands of giving out God's Word rightly and with excellence.

Slaving Away

¹ *Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed.* ² *And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.*

In New Testament times, many slaves had hired themselves out for a stipulated period of time as a way of working off debts. That was perhaps not true of every slave, but the principles remained the same. Since in their culture those same "bondservants" could potentially worship in the church in Ephesus, their behavior as slaves would speak volumes about the value of their faith in Christ. **No position in a society or culture is devoid of impact when it is lived for Christ.** In fact, humbly doing what is right in less than optimal circumstances speaks volumes to a world that craves something more than the emptiness of self-absorption.

Authority is to be respected, not always because the person deserves it, but because it honors God. A slave's owner may himself be drawn to faith in Christ by the behavior of his servant. In fact, **it is so like the character of God to use those who are weak in the world's eyes to impact those in power.** Nothing escapes the marvelous math of God who exponentially affects a dying world through the weakest of vessels, all the while using those weak vessels to bring glory to Himself!

Pastor, do *you* sometimes feel like a slave? In fact, you *are* a bondservant to your Master Christ. Yet others may treat you as though you are *their* slave, too. Have you overheard hurtful conversations that tell you that not all your

people are truly with you in your understanding of God's plan for His church? Are there times when you realize your decisions are second-guessed, and maybe even third-guessed?

Does that seem unfair? The truth is, those things are *not* fair. **Life is unfair.** Generally, pastors *are* under-honored. Some of your flock *do* think they know better than you, but God says "press on!" Finish the race *and* keep running hard! He will deal with your true adversaries. Let nothing stop you from loving God's Word and loving His confused flock. In fact, **relationships are key to growing in godliness.** Love the flock – even the fickle ones!

ANSWER KEY

Guidelines for Determining Ongoing Support:

1. Heard
2. Family of origin
3. Connection
4. Favoritism
5. Clarify
6. Dependent Idleness
7. Privileged
8. Enabling

Honoring vs. Dishonoring Statements

- Honoring: #5 and #12.
- All the others are Dishonoring.

Laboring in God's Word and Doctrine

The *incorrect words*, which should be ***crossed out***, are:

1. With
2. Confusing
3. Worse

4. Should not

5. Is

6. Confuses

7. Should not

8. Should not

9. Grudgingly

THE GUARDIANS: MOTIVES

What Money Can't Buy

³ *If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, ⁴ he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, ⁵ useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.*

⁶ *Now godliness with contentment is great gain.*

⁷ *For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸ And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

¹⁷ *Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. ¹⁸ Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share,*

¹⁹ *storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

The world runs on “wants.” What drives economies and nations is the desire for *more*. Advertising thrives on planting the seed of “I want *that*... I need *that*... *When* I have *that*, I'll be happy/fulfilled/satisfied/powerful/admired...” The entire purpose for which we were created is deeply distorted by this mindset, so that instead of finding immense joy in knowing, loving and honoring our Father God, the focus is on *self* and what *I* can obtain. Paul was finishing the last pages of his letter to Timothy when he made what to the World of Wants is a startling statement, “Godliness with contentment is *great gain*.” It is almost as if all the cars screeched to a halt (especially the ones that others envy), and all the cash registers froze in place before the “ka-ching” could sound, as every head turned at these words.

How could anything be better than having everything that you want? Why want godliness? What does godliness look like? As a pastor, do people see it in you, a leader of God's church? *If* they see *godliness*, what are they likely to see?

Write a **description of godliness** here:

Though it can be difficult to describe, believers know godliness when they see it. There was a particular attitude associated with godliness that God had inspired Paul to emphasize here: contentment.

A simple definition for **contentment** is **wanting nothing more, being satisfied, possessing a peaceful frame of mind**. Godliness and contentment together suggest a potent condition of being Holy Spirit-led, so that the per-

son is fully ready to minister to others and not at all needy or distracted by wants. The opposite of contentment is need, want, lack, deficit or distress. As a pastor, can you stand before your church and honestly say that you are content, lacking nothing, because you are in *Christ*?

Make a list of **Things to Be Content About** that is true for you:

1. Example: Your *calling* as a pastor

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

Although leaders are to aim for godliness with contentment, there are some **Things to NOT Be Content About**. List those that are true for you:

1. Example: Knowing Christ as fully as I might.

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Can you stand before your congregation without a trace of self-pity and say, "I just walked to this church and it took me an hour, but I am *content*. Our water supply is drying up. My son has a fever, my wife says my daughter can't read without glasses, and we don't have those either. My brother has no job and his children have come to live with us. Yet I am content. Why? How? How can I be otherwise, knowing that Christ is true in all that He has said? I am living, I am breathing. I am here today to tell you that God is *good*! He will supply all my needs in Christ Jesus, and I am *content*."

As long as we live in this sin-darkened world, there will be things to be less than content about. Paul warned Timothy again about false teachers, for one. He was to *contend with*, not be content with them. If Paul warned Timothy then while there were still living eyewitnesses to Christ, it must be at least as true for today. The false teachers' desire for godliness was not authentic, but rather, was related to what they could get in exchange for it. It is no small thing to be greedy, to want to excess. God's Word likens this to corruption of the mind. **Greed distorts good desires**. It is good to desire godliness. But **when the real motivation is *great gain*, everything but godliness is expressed**. Write the opposite, godly attribute to each one listed as part of the person who in their greed, seeks godliness for their own gain:

Greedy Ungodly

Greedy Ungodly

1. refuses Christ's words

embraces Christ's words

2. proud

3. knows nothing

4. obsessed with disputes

5. envious _____
6. strife-filled _____
7. speaks abusively _____
8. evil suspicions _____
9. useless wrangling (friction) _____
10. corrupt mind _____
11. destitute of truth _____

APPLICATION:

Have you encountered a false teacher? Without recording his name, reflect on whether they fit the “greedy ungodly” characteristics:

What is the lesson here for you?

A proud person who refuses Christ’s words knows *nothing*, the Bible says. **Pride leads to ignorance. A healthy church is a humble church.** Further, an obsession with disputes and arguments over words can signal a corrupt mind. Leaders should be on the alert for this kind of mindset and not fall into their debate trap. Not all arguments or disputes over words have pure intent! **Men with corrupt minds thrive on friction.** Notice the word “whole-

some” in v. 3 (Greek: *hugiano*); **God’s words are good for us.** Your people need to hear their strengthening truth. **What is within men comes out.** Do you want what is expressed to be wholesome? Then give men and women the whole sum of God’s word. Saturate them in His truth.

Picture a man who has just achieved what defines him as successful; he either brokered the major client contract that sets his company on a new level, or he found that his property is a veritable prodigious diamond mine, or he has become the tribal chief of a village. For a moment, assume that this man attends your church, and that the very next Sunday you will be preaching on 1 Timothy 6:9-10. Do you feel kind of sick? Thinking this might be a week to postpone that subject? Not at all. **It isn’t the money, it’s the motive that matters.**

Everyone needs to be reminded that “you can’t take it with you.” **Nothing this side of eternity matters so much as faith in Jesus Christ, and a desire for others to know Him.** The successful man needs to hear this from God’s Word, and through you. The Bible does not say that *money* is a root of all evil. It says is the *love of money* is the trouble! **Priorities are determinants. Unsound priorities lead to unsound paths.** This is as true of the *leader* who more highly values the rich man, as it is of the rich man who loves his money himself.

Match the following sentences with their proper endings regarding **The Love of Money**:

1. The world thinks ‘he who dies... _____ is the price of their toys.
2. If you can’t take it with you... _____ with the most toys wins.’
3. No man ever regretted not having... _____ God’s Word and people.
4. The only things that last are... _____ have you put yourself in it?
5. When the offering plate passes... _____ more toys on his deathbed.
6. The difference between a man and boy... _____ enjoy it while you’ve got it.

In some cultures, the ability to obtain much has birthed a new malady and even television shows about it; *hoarding*. Hoarders own homes that are packed to the rafters with “stuff,” often with price tags still attached. These people can barely move around in their homes, having long since covered over even their beds and kitchens with every conceivable kind of item, and find it unbearable to part with anything. They are literally lost among their worldly goods. The result is that family and friends can never visit and a great shame sets in. Those who intervene and try to clean out and help the hoarder are met with great resistance and little long-term success. The hoarder believes that keeping things is essential to that person’s security and identity. **The idea of saying inwardly, “Mine, mine mine,” is contrary to the truth that everything belongs to God.** Some of the worst family feuds are known to occur regarding who gets what after a relative dies. The love of money is truly a root of all kinds of evil. **The antidote to greed is not just generosity, but *sacrificial* giving and living.**

At a recent baptism, an adult male said the following just before his immersion. “I know now that He owns me. I am *His* property.” The joy of this insight and the clarity with which he said it is understandable only to those who *also* know the depth of confident assurance that is possible when the matchless grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is known. Truly knowing that we are Christ’s own puts all else in right perspective.

APPLICATION:

How has the Lord dealt with you as a leader about the love of money?

What work still needs to be done in you in regard to money and those who have it? Write your response in the form of a prayer to the Lord.

It’s Going to be Worth It

¹¹ *But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.* ¹² *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.* ¹³ *I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate,* ¹⁴ *that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing,* ¹⁵ *which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords,* ¹⁶ *who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.*

Timothy, like all good leaders, had been privy to straight talk about real threats in this letter. Paul wrote knowing that his blunt words would also be read and reread by many others in the larger church of Jesus Christ. As his letter circulated, church members were all ultimately made aware of false teachers, the worship of money, the requirement for very high standards among church leaders, the need for orderly worship, the importance of example in living for Christ and the value of relationships within the church and the proper administration of support in that context.

Paul had a few lines of space left on the scroll. He used them to tell Timothy to run away from men of corrupt mind, and to run *toward* certain attributes that are present in a godly man; righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Paul charged Timothy to fight the good fight and take hold of eternal life. Didn’t Timothy already have it? Absolutely! The actual words, “lay hold on” (verse 12 – Greek *epilamban omai*), mean to take by the hand, to assume, to take upon oneself in order to obtain and possess. **Possession of faith leads to a profession of faith.** Timothy was to show others through his life what a man of God (the words Paul used to address him in verse 11), *looks like*. **A leader shows that they know where they are headed.** How can you lead when you don’t know the way? Godliness must be *pursued*. The implication is that **there are observable characteristics of the family of those who share eternal life in Christ.**

Which of the following are **characteristic of godliness expressed through a man**? Check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reverence for Christ | <input type="checkbox"/> Forgiving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitivity to others | <input type="checkbox"/> Resolute |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Righteous anger | <input type="checkbox"/> Quick-tempered |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patience | <input type="checkbox"/> Eager to worship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Superficiality | <input type="checkbox"/> Hungry for more of Christ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humility | <input type="checkbox"/> Content in circumstances |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Generosity | <input type="checkbox"/> Committed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Partiality | <input type="checkbox"/> Seeking the lost |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desire for fame | <input type="checkbox"/> Available |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sense of wonder | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-confident |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strength in difficulty | <input type="checkbox"/> God-confident |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prayerfulness | |

Which of the aspects of godliness that you checked do you most need to pursue today?

Just in case Timothy lost sight of the God they pledged their lives to, Paul did what every good leader should do; **every excellent leader leaves their people with a high view of God. Motive matters and there is no greater motive than the matchless grace of God.** Whatever must be faced, whatever

er heartache there is to endure, whatever injustice must be suffered, when victory in some situation seems less than assured or when God's answer seems slow in coming, a leader never loses sight of the God they serve. In verses 15 and 16, a majestic picture emerges. God's timing is *always perfect*. God's ways are always blessed. God is the absolute ruler of the world, supernatural over every earthly king and lord and not subject to the finality of death. He is bathed in light so intensely bright that He cannot be fully perceived. God will ever be in charge! Are you in the habit of leaving your people with a high view of God? Will you take Paul's example to heart and do this when you teach and preach?

A Gospel Worth Guarding

²⁰ *O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—²¹ by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen.*

The earnestness with which Paul addressed Timothy in his concluding remarks was a cry straight from one leader's heart to another. Just as God had in mind for Timothy to take these words to heart and live them out, God speaks to His leaders today. You did not attend this conference by accident. It was the Lord who caused the circumstances of your life to enable you to be here. Will you let His words sink in deeply? **A sacred trust is worth giving your all for.** In his previous words, Paul had reminded Timothy that **God's reputation is sound in the heavens.** Here was the bottom line. **Give your all to guard the gospel. Guard the gospel by giving it out until you "give out!"** Let nothing distract you. It's going to be worth it. God's grace will be with you all. **God's people and God's gospel are worth guarding. You are called to be a Guardian.**

ANSWER KEY

Godly Attributes:

1. EMBRACES CHRIST'S WORDS
2. HUMBLE
3. KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT GOD AND HIS WORD
4. GIVES SOFT ANSWER
5. CONTENT
6. PEACEMAKER
7. SPEAKS KINDLY
8. TRUSTING
9. SEEKS ACCORD
10. PURE IN MIND
11. FULL OF TRUTH

Characteristics of Godliness:

All apply *except*-

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|-----------------|----------------|
| SUPERFICIALITY | QUICK-TEMPERED |
| PARTIALITY | SELF-CONFIDENT |
| DESIRE FOR FAME | |

