

# (Through the Bible) 1 Timothy 3-4

by Chuck Smith

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of being like God and the qualifications for church leaders, highlighting the need for blamelessness, godliness, and the power of the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 1:19:32

**Scripture:** 1 Timothy 3:1

**Topics:** "Christian Living", "Spiritual Warfare"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the phrases used by Paul in his letter to Timothy, emphasizing their importance and truthfulness. The speaker also highlights the struggle of trying to be like God while facing hindrances and temptations. Drawing from Romans chapter 7, the speaker acknowledges the inner conflict between the desire to do good and the inability to consistently perform it. The sermon also emphasizes the challenges of living a Christian life in a world filled with seductive influences, particularly in the last days. The speaker encourages believers to make a firm commitment to live for God and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to navigate these challenges.

---

## Transcript

Tonight we will be studying 1st Timothy 3 and 4. It is interesting, as Paul writes to Timothy on several occasions, he uses phrases that are interesting to me. He said, this is a faithful saying. It's worthy of all acceptance.

Here he says, beginning chapter 3, this is a true saying. Again, he'll say, this is a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptance. He'll say, without controversy.

He speaks to Timothy with interesting phrases, affirming the truth of what he is declaring to him. This is a true saying. If a man desires the office of a bishop or overseer, he desires a good work.

Not a good position, but a good work. The word episkopos, which is translated here, bishop, is really a word that means an overseer, one who takes the oversight. The word translated elder is the word prospeteri, or prospeteros.

The prospeteros, the elder of the church, the name implies an older man. And in the communities, they had as the governors of a community, the prospeteros. The English had the aldermen, who were appointed as the judges within a community.

And the term aldermen is actually elder men. It was declared that a person should not be a prospeteros unless he was over the age of 50. The episkopos, on the other hand, was the man who was the overseer.

He was often the minister of the church, one who would oversee the church. And from this, we have a great division in the church today between the Episcopalians, which comes from the episkopos, and the Presbyterians, which comes from the prospeteros. So the difference between a church being ruled by the elders or the church being ruled by the episkopos, the overseer.

And it is interesting, though, as you look at it in the Word of God, they probably were one and the same. As you study it in the New Testament, the use of the words are often interchangeable. And when Paul was writing, he addressed the elders, but, of course, that would include the episkopos also.

When he called for the elders of Ephesus, it would have been wrong for him to have called for the elders without the episkopos. And so, as you look at it throughout the New Testament, a strong case can be made that the terms are almost synonymous or interchangeable, at least in their usage in the New Testament. So if a man desires this office of an overseer of the church, he desires a good work.

But these are the qualifications for the man. The overseer then must be blameless. Now, that ought to just about exclude anybody.

He must be the husband of one wife. In that particular time, the marriage vows were, in the pagan world, not really held in high esteem. The Greek culture had a saying that every man should have a mistress for his entertainment, a concubine for his sexual pleasure, and a wife to bear his legitimate children.

But the wife was looked upon as more or less a chattel, an object. Now, in none of the cultures in those days did a wife have the right of divorce. That was something that only the husbands had.

And even in the Jewish culture, a husband could get a divorce for just about any cause. And even to that time, in the Jewish culture, in many areas, polygamy was practiced. Josephus speaks about those that had three or four wives.

And polygamy was a practice, even in that time, in the Jewish communities. The church is to be a separate and distinct entity within the world. Standards that are higher than the world's.

And thus he establishes the standard for the episkopos, a man who was an overseer in the church, he should be the husband of one wife. He should be vigilant. That is, in his overseeing of the flock of God, he needs to take careful oversight.

He needs to be sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, and able to teach. So, these are the beginning of the qualifications. Next of all, he's not to be given to wine.

No striker, that is an abuser, not greedy, a filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous. One that rules well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man knows not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? He's not to be a novice, less being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

So, this is what Paul instructs Timothy as the qualifications for an episkopos, an overseer. Now, if you will read Paul's letter to Titus, he gives to them the qualifications of a presbyteros, an elder. And you find that as he gives the qualifications of an elder, they are pretty much similar to the qualifications of an episkopos

or an overseer.

Next, he turns to the deacons. And likewise, must the deacons be grave or sober, not double-tongued, not given to much wine. This is, of course, a little interesting in that the overseer, the episkopos, was not to be given to wine.

The deacon was not to be given to much wine. That probably is cause for a lot of persons to seek the job of a deacon rather than an elder. Paul the Apostle in writing to the Corinthians said, all things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient.

Some things can impede my progress towards my goal. All things are lawful for me, but not everything builds up. Some things tear me down.

All things are lawful for me, he said, but I will not be brought under the power of any or the influence of any. We have a very interesting case in the Old Testament when God commanded Moses to build the tabernacle and he gave him specific instructions as to the materials and the dimensions and the sizes, the whole thing. He gave him his careful instructions in building.

Once they had built the tabernacle, had set it up, had set up the altar and the whole framework for the sacrifices, the time came to inaugurate now the temple or the tabernacle worship of God. And so the altar was built, the sacrifice was placed upon it and fire came from heaven and sort of lit the fire of the altar. A supernatural manifestation of God.

The presence of God came down. The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. The priests, because of the glory of the Lord, sort of swooned.

They weren't able to stand up. And in the midst of this moving of God among the people, a couple of Aaron's sons got excited. And they had little bowls with incense that they were to offer before the Lord.

And they went in to offer this incense in the excitement of the moment. And the fire came from the altar of God and consumed them. And later, God commanded Moses to speak unto Aaron that when they were doing the service to God, they weren't to drink wine.

Made very specific commandments. The intimation is that the two sons of Aaron perhaps had been drinking a little wine and had lost their sense of good judgment. And that is why they were consumed by the fire of God when they sought to offer strange fire before the Lord.

God wants us to serve Him with a clear head, with a clear mind. Now, a lot of people get very godly minded when they get drunk. And we've had them call the house at two, three in the morning.

And my wife sleeps on the side where the phone is. I don't know why, but she does. Sometimes the phone will ring in the middle of the morning and someone will start telling, I want to tell you what a wonderful husband you have.

And she'll say, here, tell him. And she hands the phone to me. The praise that comes from the lips of a drunk really don't do much for you.

That's what they may think when they're drunk. But what do they think of me when they're sober? And so in our worship of God, no artificial stimulants. He wants our worship and praise to come from a heart and from a mind that is not under some kind of a false stimulant.

So, the overseer, the one who had the responsibility of overseeing the church, not to be given to wine. Whereas the deacons, and these were the people who oversaw the more practical aspects of the church in those days, the administering of the church's welfare program and things of this nature. They were not to be given to much wine.

The wine in those days, of course, was drunk by just about everybody. It was mixed three parts of water to two parts of wine. And of course, at that ratio, it would take an awful lot to get a person drunk.

And usually you get too full before you could get drunk. But it was a diluted form and really it was drunk in lieu of the water, which in many places was not fit to drink. You remember Paul said to Timothy to take a little wine for your stomach's sake and your oft infirmities.

So, a deacon not to be given to much wine. We are told not to be drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. They also are not to be greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of God in faith in a pure conscience.

And let these also first be proved and then let them use the office of the deacon being found blameless. So, much of the same requirements for the elders are also for the deacons. These deacons are to prove themselves.

And even so, wives. Now, in our King James, you notice must their wives is added. Because the translators thought that he was probably referring to the wives of the deacons, which is possible.

But it is also possible that Paul is just referring to the deaconesses. And that this is in reference to those women who would take an activity within the church body in the office of a deaconess. And so also, wives are to be grave, not slanders, sober, faithful in all things.

And let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children in their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus. And so Paul here writes the qualifications for these offices.

And he said, These things write I unto thee. I hope to come unto you shortly. But if I don't, if I have to tarry here a while, I want you to know how you ought to behave yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of truth.

Timothy was left at Ephesus by Paul to strengthen the church. It is to Timothy in Ephesus that Paul is writing and instructing him in the things of the government of the church. Now, having declared the qualifications for the deacons, the overseers and the deaconesses.

Again, when you get to these qualifications, we realize that very few people could really qualify for these offices. These characteristics and traits that are required for those in leadership roles are stricter than the average, you might say. It takes a life of commitment.

And many people may, as the result of these requirements, feel unqualified to take a position of authority within the church. And so, Paul in verse 16 declares, and without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. Godliness is godlikeness.

Great is the mystery of being like God. These characteristics and traits that are described are the characteristics and traits of God. God wants us to be like Him.

A man who is an elder in the church or an overseer in the church is really one of God's representatives to the people. And one of the most awesome responsibilities is that of being God's representative. People looking at the leadership to understand God.

God wants me to be like Him so that as people look at me, they can understand what God is about. And that is all the understanding that many people will ever have of God is what they observe in the life of the followers of God. So each of us are God's representatives to the world.

But, those who take the position of an elder or an overseer have even a greater responsibility of being God's representatives to the people. And God doesn't take lightly how we represent Him. James tells us that we should not be many masters knowing that we receive the greater condemnation.

We are told unto whom much is given, much is required. And so for those who are in the position of overseeing, there is a tighter standard by which they must live. Blameless.

Of good reputation really even outside of the church by the manner of life that you live that it doesn't bring blame unto Jesus Christ or to the gospel of Jesus Christ. It has been the sad tragedy of the church's history that not often does the leadership take that awesome responsibility of representing God seriously enough. Paul talks about falling in the snare of the devil.

And Satan surely seeks to trap ministers. And it is always a tragedy and a very sad thing when you see a servant of God being trapped by the enemy because of the reproach that it brings upon the gospel. As Nathan said to David concerning his sin with Bathsheba, you've caused the enemies of God to blaspheme.

The problem, of course, is that Satan, I think, works harder on those who have a greater influence than those of lesser influence. I think that the more the Lord uses you, the greater are the temptations that the enemy places in your path. This past year, two of the most promising, talented of the young ministers in our Calvary Chapel outreaches fell into the snare of the enemy.

One, thank God, has been delivered and has been restored. But the other is still ensnared. And it grieves me.

It breaks my heart. Because I love these young men like a father loves a son. And I was just so thrilled with their ministry.

The effectiveness of their ministry. The effectiveness of their communication. Their ability to teach.

It was a thrill to see what God was doing through their ministry and through their lives as they were touching thousands of people. And to see them ensnared by the enemy is just a tragedy and a grievous thing to my heart. Great is the mystery of being like God.

God wants us to be like Him. That's His purpose in creating us. And when He created us, He created us like Him.

He made us in His image and after His likeness. It was the purpose of God that we be like Him. What is He like? God is love.

God wants love to dominate our being. God is pure. God is holy.

He wants us to be pure. He wants us to be holy. God is kind.

God is compassionate. God is patient. He wants us to be kind, compassionate, patient.

He wants me to be like Him. Great is the mystery of being like God. Because I say, Hey, yes, I want to be like God.

But how to be like God is another thing. There are many people who accept that, yes, being like God is the greatest thing that could possibly happen to a person. And they try to be like God.

But we find that whenever we try to be like God, there are other forces at work within us, hindering us from our goals. As Paul the Apostle described in Romans chapter 7, I consent to the law of God that it is good. But I find that there is another law at work within my members, within my body.

And the good that I would, I do not. And that which I would not, I do. I consent to that which is good.

But how to perform it, I just can't find. And we find ourselves in that position so many times. I consent, this is right, this is good.

That's what I ought to be doing. But how to perform it, that's where the problem lies. And he cried out, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? Great is the mystery of godliness, being like God.

It's a great mystery that has been solved. It was solved in the Incarnation. So without controversy, great is this mystery of godliness.

But God solved the mystery through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ for God was manifest in the flesh. A plain, clear, positive declaration that Jesus Christ is God. God was manifest in the flesh.

And the purpose of the Incarnation was to bring man to a God-likeness or to help us to be like God. God was manifest in the flesh. He was justified or proved to be righteous in the Spirit.

The Spirit led him in the wilderness to be tempted of the devil and he passed every test. He resisted the temptation. He remained true and obedient unto the first principles of God.

He was justified or proved to be righteous in the Spirit. He was seen of angels. After his temptation, the angels came and ministered unto him.

Also, it has been suggested that the angels had never seen God until the Incarnation. Great is the mystery of being like God. God was manifest in the flesh.

Justified in the Spirit. Seen of angels. God dwells in a light that man cannot approach.

Those who had visions of God never had a vision of a form. There was always just that brightness of the glory that shone forth from His being. Looking directly into a light.

A brilliant bright light. All you can observe is just light. Have you ever been out in the woods at night and it's been dark and someone turned one of those five-cell flashlights in your eyes? Have you ever been a kid at camp? Those counselors always carry those five-cell and they put it right in your eyes.

All you see is the bright light in your eyes. You don't see the flashlight. You can't even see the counselor.

All you see is this bright light that is shining in your face. But you have no sense of form because all you can see is the light. You don't see the little bulb.

You don't see the filament within the bulb. You just see the brilliance of the light. So God, the glory of His presence, so overwhelming.

The brilliance that comes forth from this Creator of the universe. Call it energy or whatever you wish that must be emanating forth from God. It is possible that the angels had never even seen the form, but only the brilliance coming forth from His presence until He was made flesh and He was then seen of angels.

He was preached unto the Gentiles as Paul tells King Agrippa concerning his Damascus Road experience. He tells him that the Lord had called him to go unto the Gentiles, to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God. And then he was believed on in the world, all over the world, those who believe on Jesus Christ, those who believe upon God who was manifest in the flesh.

And then he was received up into glory. He said, I came from the Father. I'm going to the Father.

In his return to the Father, the cycle was complete. His ministry was accomplished. Jesus came to manifest to man what God is.

And He was the true and the faithful witness. All that we need to know about God, we discover in Jesus Christ. No man has seen the Father at any time, but the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father.

He hath manifested Him, made Him known, declared Him. God who at sundry times and in different ways spoken to our fathers through the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by His own dear Son, whom He hath made heir of all things, who was the effulgence of His glory or the outshining of His glory. So, He fulfilled His purpose in manifesting God to us.

And He fulfilled the purpose of redeeming the world back to God through His death upon the cross. So, now as He returns to the Father, He is promising that He is going to send to them the Holy Spirit. One who would come alongside of them to help them.

I will not leave you without help, He said. But I will pray to the Father and He will give to you another helper, even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive. And He tells us that when the Spirit comes we will receive power.

What kind of power? Power to be like God. Great is the mystery of being like God. You cannot be like God with your best effort, no matter how hard you try.

It isn't within our nature or our power to change our nature to be like God. The only way I can be like God is through the power of the Holy Spirit working in me and changing that nature. And so, the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the church was the proof that Jesus had indeed ascended to the Father.

Because that was His promise. When He came to the Father, He was going to send the Comforter. It is necessary for you that I go away because if I go away, if I go not away, the Comforter cannot come.

That helper, the Holy Spirit. But if I go away, I will send Him. And so, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit and through the power and the working of the Holy Spirit within my life, God-likeness is now possible.

And as I am yielding myself day to day, the work of the Holy Spirit in me every day is making me a little more like God. As Paul the Apostle said, I have not yet apprehended that for which I was apprehended, neither do I count myself perfect. But I'm pressing towards the mark.

What is the mark? Being like God. God-likeness. And so, I'm on my way.

And, as John said, Beloved, now are we the sons of God. It doesn't yet appear what we're going to be, but we know when He appears, we're going to be like Him. One of these days, His work will be complete in us and we will be just like God.

And the purposes of God will now be accomplished in His creation for man, for God created man to be like Him. And through Jesus Christ, I, and the power of the Holy Spirit, I am being restored into the image of God. Great is the mystery of being like God, but that mystery is solved in the Incarnation and through the work of the Holy Spirit that Jesus has sent.

Now the Spirit speaks expressly that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. Here Paul speaks of a departure from the faith. There are some who claim that such a thing is an impossibility.

But the Spirit speaks expressly that in the latter times, there would be some who would depart from the faith. Jesus, in speaking of His return, said, when the Son of Man returns, will He find faith on the earth? The question. He also told His disciples that because of the iniquity of the earth abounding, the love of many will wax cold.

And so it means that living in the last days is going to be living under a great pressured situation. We are finding that to be true. The opportunity of fulfilling a person's fantasies for sin are all around.

You can indulge yourself now in just about any type of a sinful fantasy that you may desire. Read the personal columns in your Santa Ana Register. Any kind of a experience that a person may desire is available for a price.

Pornography, the openness of our society, the breakdown of the moral values, has opened a door of opportunity for anyone to just indulge themselves in their flesh. Jesus said, because the iniquity of the earth shall abound, the love of many will wax cold. The Spirit speaks expressly of the latter days that many will be departing from the faith.

It is not easy to live the Christian life in this world in which we live today that is so totally given over to the flesh. You cannot look at any of the media without being exposed in some way or other to the things of the flesh. It's not easy to live a Christian life now.

These last days, it's going to be harder to keep the faith. It's going to take a positive commitment. As Daniel, you're going to have to determine in your heart that you're not going to defile yourself with the opportunities in the world around you, but that you're going to live completely and totally for God, a life of God-likeness.

And you cannot do it without the power of the Spirit. So, the Spirit speaks expressly of the last days. It's going to be tough.

Many will depart from the faith giving heed to seducing spirits. And how much seduction is in the world today. Seductive spirits are in the world today.

I mean, it's there. It's all around you. The seductive spirits.

And to doctrines of devils. And I'll tell you, in our society today, men are espousing the doctrines of devils. Telling you that any kind of life is acceptable to God.

The Lord said because they did not want to believe the truth, God turned them over to believe a lie. And men would believe a lie rather than the truth. And I have found this so true today.

You take any kind of a screwy heresy and it can spread all over the world in six months. If you want to become popular, just dream up some new heresy for the church. Oh, how I wish to God that they would be more careful in the things that they allow to be proclaimed.

I wish they would just stick to the word of God. People are so reticent to receive the truth. But so ready to receive a lie, a heresy.

People are so ready to believe that California is going to get wiped out during the Olympics in an earthquake. How many people have called all worried, you know. Oh my, you know.

This earthquake is going to come. I've lived through at least ten of these visions and it hasn't come yet. Now, I'll tell you what's going to happen.

I'll make my own predictions now. When the Olympics are over and the earthquake did not hit, they are then going to start taking credit that their prayers kept it from happening. I mean, there's no way they're going to lose.

They fasted and they prayed and they saved California. Look how that thing in just a couple of weeks time has swept through the whole community. Our switchboard has been swamped this week with this nonsense.

Hey, if you want to predict that there's going to be an earthquake in California, man, there's nothing to that. Of course there's going to be. I mean, this is earthquake country.

We're surrounded by faults. But I predict that we won't have a major earthquake during the Olympics. Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron.

I really wonder how these evangelists and all can really sleep at night with all of the gimmicks that they pull. Speaking lies in hypocrisy. I don't know if you've been cursed to be on their mailing list or not, but we keep a file.

And the things that they can dream up to extract money from people. And you wonder, how can they do that? In the name of God, how can they tell such outlandish lies? The only answer is their conscience has to be seared with a hot iron. They have no conscience.

For them to live in palatial mansions, do the things they do, and then get up and say, friends, we need your money. Our tour guide in Israel gets after me. He said, you don't know how to operate a tour.

He said, tour leaders with famous names never travel with the people on a tour. They don't travel on the jets with the people. They fly over in their own private jets.

And they don't get on the buses with the people. They get in private limos, and they'll meet the people twice during the tour, and then fly home in their jets. He said, you travel all around with the people.

He said, you never make deals with the tourist shops and all. And he said, you just don't know how to operate a tour. He said, now, you ought to come and watch some of these fellows at work.

The conscience is seared with a hot iron. How in the name of God can they do these things except their conscience is just seared with a hot iron? Now, in some of these last day weird things, there are those who will be forbidding to marry. Of course, marriage is becoming almost a thing of the past.

It's move in with me. And there are so many just move in relationships without marriage. That's the thing of the day.

Abstaining from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. A lot of the cult things and occult things get into vegetarianism. But Paul tells us these things, meat is to be received with thanksgiving, of course.

For the meat is sanctified by the word of God in prayer. So, pray over your meal and eat it. If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine wherein to thou hast attained.

So, remind the brethren of these things, Paul said, writing to Timothy. If you do, then you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ as you nourish them in the words of faith, sound good doctrine, but refuse the profane and old wives' fables, but exercise thyself rather to godliness. Now, you can waste a lot of time in earthquake scares, reading a lot of the junk that's published.

Better to exercise yourself unto godliness. Bodily exercise profits a little or for a little. It doesn't really forbid it.

It's good. It's got a little profit to it, but more profitable is godliness. It's profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

Years ago, when I really made my choice between medicine as a career and the ministry as a career, as the Lord was dealing with me and speaking to my heart concerning the ministry, He pointed out to me that by going into medicine, by becoming a medical doctor, by ministering to people's physical needs, I could help people, but at the best, it would only be temporal. So they're strong and healthy and live for a hundred years. But if I would go into the ministry and minister to the spirit of man, healing the spirits, bringing spiritual healing, that I would be involved in something that would benefit them eternally.

And He more or less put it up to me. How do you want to benefit man? In a temporary way or in an eternal way? And when He put it to me that way, I had no choice. Now Paul is saying the same thing about exercise.

Physical exercise has temporal benefits, but godliness has eternal benefits. Now we are living in a day of, you know, sort of a craze, you know, this physical exercise. Jogging, aerobic exercises.

The other night my wife and I were eating at a restaurant. We looked across the street, we saw all these heads bouncing up and down and all. And man, the whole time we were eating, they were bouncing.

I did admire them. And I didn't eat dessert. But this bit of physical fitness, it's a craze, it swept America.

And that's alright. Paul's not really coming down on it. I mean, bodily exercise has some value.

Toning up yourself and all that, you know, there's nothing wrong with that. But godliness, exercising yourself in godliness, hey, that you will reap eternal dividends. Let me tell you what.

I used to be about the most physically fit person around. In time, it'll get all of you. I mean, you may, you know, go for it for a time, sure, it's great.

But ultimately, who was it, the guy that did all the writing on everything you want to know about running? How about that? Died of a heart attack while he was jogging. Mr. Fix. You know, better watch out for that jogging.

It's dangerous to your health, you know. It'll wipe you out. There are things that have temporal value.

There are things that have eternal value. And a man who is wise will engage in those things of eternal value. He will choose the eternal over the temporal, if you're really wise.

There are things that can bring you temporal gain. There are things that can bring you eternal gain. The man who is wise will choose the eternal over the temporal.

So, Paul is telling Timothy the same. Bodily exercise will probably... Timothy was a younger man, probably keeping in shape. It was fine.

But hey, don't neglect the godliness. Spiritual exercise. Now again, this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.

It's... Again, Paul uses this phrase. It's a true saying and it's worthy that all should accept it. And that is that the spiritual is superior to the physical or the material.

That it is better to exercise yourself in spiritual matters than in physical matters. One has only temporary value. The other is of life now and also that which is to come, the eternal.

And because of this declaration, Paul said, the superiority of the spiritual over the physical, which is the opposite of the worldly view. Therefore, we labor and we suffer reproach. The world reproaches us.

They take an opposite view of this completely. The time in church to them is a waste of time because we trust in the living God who is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe. Jesus died for the sins of the world.

But only those who believe receive the forgiveness of sins. Jesus died to redeem the world, but He will only take His treasure out of it. And so He died and is the Savior of all men, but specifically those who believe.

He provided salvation for all men, but not all have received it. These things, Paul said, you should command and teach. Let no man despise thy youth.

How old was Timothy? Well, he had been with Paul now, traveling as a companion for 15 years. Assuming that he was 15 years old when he started out with Paul, and that's probably a little young, but let's say that he was only 15. He's at least 30 years old now, so he's not just a kid.

When Paul said, let no man despise your youth, you shouldn't be thinking of some 15, 16-year-old kid. Timothy is probably 30 or more at this particular point. But when the elders were not really considered elders until they became 50, there was that tendency to look down upon a younger man as lacking in the wisdom that comes from age and maturity.

So let no man despise your youth, but instead be an example of the believer in the Word, in your manner of life, in love, in the Spirit, in faith, and in purity. Set the example, Timothy. Now what Paul writes to Timothy is good for all of us.

We should be examples of what a Christian is. Paul said to the Corinthians, you are living epistles known and read of all men. As a Christian, the world is watching you.

Be an example of the believer. Not unto the believer, but of the believer. What a believer should be.

This is how a believer should live. This is how a believer should act and react. Be the example of a believer in your words.

The word conversation there is an old English word that just doesn't mean when you're conversing with each other. But in your manner of living, your total manner of living, let it be as becomes godliness in Christianity. In your love, the agape, in the Spirit, in faith, in purity.

Now till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine. So these are the three things that were done in the early church. The reading of the Scriptures.

It was a very prominent and common practice in the early church when the Christians gathered together to read the Scriptures. These letters that Paul sent to the churches were to be read to the churches. So he tells Timothy, give attendance to the reading of the Scripture.

There's value in just the reading of the Word of God. But then also the exhortation as you are then prompting people to act upon the Word. To be doers of the Word and not hearers only.

Now trust in the Lord. Now give thanks to God. And so the exhorting of the people and then also to the doctrine.

And neglect not the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the Presbyterian. So Paul here is mentioning how that when Timothy had hands laid upon him by the Presbyteros, by the elders. They laid hands on Timothy and a prophecy came forth and in the prophecy, Timothy's ministry was declared, directed.

And now Paul tells them don't neglect that gift that was given to you by the Word of prophecy when the elders laid hands on you. Meditate upon these things. Give yourself wholly to them that your profiting may appear to all.

Take heed to yourself and unto the doctrine. Continue in them. For in doing this, you will both save yourself and those that hear you.

Interesting. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them.

For in doing this, you not only save yourself, but you save others. It is important that we are reaching out. Important for our own continuance that we go on and that we're pressing on and that we're reaching out.

There's really no place for stagnation. This is something that I think that we all ought to really carefully examine our own hearts. The Bible says, Now let a man judge himself, for if we will judge ourselves, we will not be judged of God.

And I think that we should all examine our own hearts and our own present relationship to Jesus Christ. And as I examine my present relationship to Jesus Christ tonight, is there a time in my walk with the Lord that I was more fervent than I am tonight? Is there a time when I was more excited about the things of Jesus than I am tonight? Is there a time when I was more diligent in my serving the Lord than I am tonight? And if in the examining of your heart, your present relationship, and your past experiences, if tonight you do not have a deeper, richer, more enthusiastic relationship with the Lord, then you are in a backslidden state. If at any time in your walk with God, your relationship to Him was richer, more committed than it is tonight, then you are in a backslidden state.

And you should be very careful about that. The Spirit speaks expressly concerning the last days, that because the iniquity of the world will abound, the love of many is going to wax cold. Are you one of those in which the love is waxing cold? And it should cause us very serious consideration.

Jesus said to the church of Ephesus, I have this against you, because you have left your first lot. Now repent. Do thy first works over, or else I will remove the candlestick out of its place.

There is a story told of a man who was lost in a blizzard. And as he was just blindly walking through the snow, blinded by the blizzard, he was becoming tired and weary until he just stumbled and fell. And he just felt, well, I'll lie here for a little while.

I just don't have the strength to go on. But as he was lying there, he came to the realization that what caused him to stumble was a body that was lying there being buried in the snow. And so, realizing that there was another person there, he picked them up, felt that the pulse was still there, picked them up, and started trudging through the snow, carrying now this other person with this superhuman effort.

And within 15 feet, he came to the door of a cabin where he was saved. But he came to a very interesting discovery. And that is, in saving this other person, he in reality saved himself.

That's what Paul is saying to Timothy. Take heed to yourself and to your doctrine, continuing in them, for in saving others, you'll really save yourself. You see, you cannot minister unto others without being ministered to by the Lord.

I've often said the best way to learn is to teach, because you have to study so much more in order to be able to give out, that in teaching a subject, you really learn the subject thoroughly. And the best way to learn is to teach. The best way to develop is to give, to give out.

Take heed to yourself and to your doctrine, continuing them, for in saving others, in reaching out to others, you'll find that it will be your own salvation, it'll be your own enrichment, it will be to your own blessing, strengthening in the things of the Lord. Shall we pray? Father, as your Holy Spirit has, again tonight, caused us to look in the mirror, to see the truth, to face the reality of what we are, help us, Lord, not to be

so foolish as to just go away and forget what we saw. But Lord, I pray tonight that there might be within our hearts that renewed commitment to the things of the Lord, things of the Spirit.

Lord, we know that we are in the last days. Many have departed from the faith, been caught up with these seducing spirits, following after the flesh, turning away from the things of God, being drawn into the things of the world. God, help us in these days to be like You.

God, give to us a renewed experience in the Spirit that we might walk in the Spirit and live in the Spirit and be led of the Spirit. A new sense, Lord, of spiritual values, the examination of our priorities, our energies going into those things that are going to fail and those things that are going to crumble and those things that are going to be reduced to ashes while we neglect the eternal, physically fit, but spiritually bankrupt. God, may that not be our case.

Renew our hearts in the things of the Spirit. I walk in life with Thee. In Jesus' name, Father.

Amen. May the Lord be with you to guide and direct you this week in the path of righteousness for His namesake. May you be empowered by the Holy Spirit that you might be blameless, walking in love, walking in the things of the Spirit, a witness to the world around, an example of what the believer ought to be, bringing glory unto God through your commitment to Jesus Christ.

God, help you. In these last days, to stand strong, to stand firm, giving heed to things of the Spirit, to the doctrine, saving others, saving yourself. In Jesus' name.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/6/SID6615.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/through-the-bible-1-timothy-3-4/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**