

## 8. Learning How to Model Sound Doctrine

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to teach and explain sound doctrine. We saw that there were false teachers in the time of Timothy and there are false teachers today. Unless our children understand sound doctrine, it will be easy for them to be deceived. As they learn to explain sound doctrine, they are able to protect others from deception. However, to be effective in teaching others, they must model what they teach by their own example. That will be the focus of our topic today.

In 1 Timothy 4:11-12, we read, “These things command and teach. 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.” The word that is translated “command” means *to command, to charge or to pass along a message from one to another*. Here, we see that Paul was instructing Timothy to pass along the instructions in this book to the Christians in Ephesus and the surrounding area. Timothy was also to teach and explain the things that he was passing along from Paul. Later, Paul would tell Timothy, in 2 Timothy 2:2, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” Timothy was to teach and explain the things he taught so well that faithful men would be able to pass those teachings on to others as well.

However, Timothy was still a young man. Many of those that he would be teaching were much older in age than he was. As a result, Paul knew that the only way these older people would listen to the teaching of Timothy was if they saw that he was living a godly life. Younger people would only follow what he was teaching if he was living what he taught. That is why Paul stressed the importance of leading by example. The word that is translated “example” means *a life that can be imitated*. Paul said a similar thing to Titus in Titus 2:7-8 where we read, “In all things showing yourself *to be* a pattern of good works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.” The word that is translated “example” in 1 Timothy is the word that is translated “pattern” in Titus. We also want to teach our children to lead by example.

Paul gave Timothy six areas in which his life was to be an example. First, he was to be an example in word. Here, we see that he was to be an example by the way that he talked and the words that he said. Second, he was to be an example in conduct. “Conduct” speaks of behavior. James 3:13 says, “Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom.” Godly conduct will cause people to realize that a person is wise. Third, Timothy was to be an example of love. In John 13:34-35, Christ told the disciples, ““A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”” The thing that causes other Christians to really realize that we are led by Christ in our lives is if they see that we love them as Christ loves them.

Fourth, Timothy was to be an example in spirit. At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit comes into our human spirit. Galatians 5:16 says, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” As we walk in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit gives our human spirit the power

to have victory over sin at each moment that we are yielding our human spirit to the Holy Spirit. Fifth, Timothy was to be an example of faith. 2 Corinthians 5:7 says, “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” Later, Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:13 “Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.” When we walk in faith we will hold to sound teaching. Sixth, Timothy was to be an example of purity. Timothy was to be an example of purity in all areas of his life, especially in moral purity. These six things all point to the fact that Timothy was to lead by example in his personal life.

Timothy was also to provide an example by his ministry. 1 Timothy 4:13-14 says, “Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. 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.” Here, we see that Timothy was to lead by example in his public ministry. The word that is translated “give attention” means *to take heed or to do something*. Acts 20:28 says, “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” Here, we see that the elders in Ephesus were to pay attention to their own lives as well as the lives of all of the other Christians. Timothy was to make sure that he did certain things in his ministry.

First, he was to give attention to the public reading of the Word of God. Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Then Romans 10:17 adds, “So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” The Word of God is much more powerful than our words. As a result, Timothy was told to make sure that he used every opportunity to read the Word of God instead of giving his own words or opinions.

Second, Timothy was to give attention to exhortation. The word translated “exhortation” means *to encourage, to comfort or to strengthen*. These things are often done by helping people apply the Word of God to their own lives. Romans 15:4 says, “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” We give people encouragement, comfort and help to strengthen them when we share the Word of God with them and help them apply the Word to their daily lives.

Third, Timothy was to give attention to doctrine. The word that is translated “doctrine” means *doctrine, teaching or instruction*. Titus 2:1-2 says, “But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience.” When sound doctrine is taught, it produces a foundation that results in a person developing a sound faith and a godly life. That is why Timothy was told later in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” Doctrine, along with reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness, will develop men of God that are equipped for every good work.

Fourth, Timothy was to exercise his spiritual gift. This spiritual gift was understood through the

Word of God and was probably recognized by the leadership of the churches where Timothy was serving the Lord when he was invited to join Paul in Acts 16:1-5. That gift is identified in 2 Timothy 4:5 where we read, “But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” Here, we see that Timothy had the gift of evangelist. That gift and others are defined in Ephesians 4:11-13 where we read, “And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Apostles gave us eyewitness testimony of the resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:21-22). Prophets gave us the written Word of God (2 Peter 1:19-21). Those two gifts provide the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:19-20). Evangelists equip the saints to share the Gospel. Pastors (shepherds) equip the saints to minister to one another. Teachers equip the saints to teach and apply the Word of God.

1 Timothy 4:15-16 goes on to say, “Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. 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.” Here, we see that Timothy was to continue to meditate on (think about and put into practice in his daily life) the things that Paul had written to him. Although Paul and Timothy had become full partners in ministry, Paul was able to help Timothy continue in his spiritual growth because they had different spiritual gifts. That is why we all need one another because we are to continue to learn from one another. Paul said that as Timothy put these things into practice in his daily life his continuing growth that was helping him to become more like Christ would be recognized by the other Christians. The same will be true in our own lives and in the lives of our children.

“Take heed” means “*to pay attention to*”. Paul encouraged Timothy to pay attention to two things. First was his own continuing spiritual growth. As we continue to grow and become more like Christ, our lives will have an ever-increasing impact on the lives of others. We will be able to say as Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.” Second was his growth in understanding the teaching about Christ. Here, we see that throughout the rest of our lives we need to have a learner’s attitude so that we continue to grow in our spiritual maturity. Paul told Timothy that as he continued to focus on his own personal growth and on his growth in understanding and applying the Word of God his personal development would cause his ministry to have a growing impact on the lives of those who heard him. The same thing is true for our physical and spiritual children. As they continue to grow spiritually and in their understanding and application of the Word of God, others will grow also. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to model sound doctrine by their lives.