

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Study of Paul's First Letter to Timothy – Part 12

I. Exposition of Chapter Four (continued).

A. Verse 15 – “Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.”

1. The word “meditate” means; “to keep on giving serious consideration to something—to ponder, to let one’s mind dwell on, to keep thinking about, to fix one’s attention on.”¹ This word has an alternative meaning, or we could say, a complementary meaning. Dr. Gordon Fee explains:

“Paul now sums up the concerns of the previous verses: **Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them. The first verb may mean ‘give your mind to’ (cf. KJV, ‘meditate upon’), but it also frequently is used for ‘cultivating’ or ‘practicing,’ the latter thus picking up the athletic metaphor from verses 7–10.**”²

2. “...that your progress may be evident to all.” – The word “progress” means; “to change one’s state for the better by advancing and making progress”³ From this we see that an important ingredient to growing in our Christian life is by filling our mind with the Word of God and putting it into practice (cf. Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3). A. Duane Litfin writes:

“Timothy was to give his careful attention to Paul’s instructions; indeed, he was, literally, ‘to be in them’ (or, to give himself wholly to them). As he would do so his progress would be evident to all observers and his problem of low credibility, implied throughout this section, would be alleviated.”⁴

B. Verse 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.”

1. The words, “...take heed...” mean; “to be in a continuous state of readiness to learn of any future danger, need, or error, and to respond appropriately—to pay attention to, to keep on the lookout for, to be alert for, to be on one’s guard against.”⁵
2. Paul warns Timothy to, first of all, keep a watch on his life and, secondly, to keep an eye on his doctrine (teaching). Warren Wiersbe writes:

“Examine your own heart in the light of the Word of God. Note that Paul put ‘thysself’ ahead of ‘the doctrine.’ Paul had given this same warning to the Ephesian elders in his farewell message: ‘Take heed therefore unto yourselves’ (Acts 20:28). A servant of God can be so busy helping others that he neglects himself and his own spiritual walk.”⁶

3. “...for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.” – By watching and keeping guard over his life and doctrine, Paul tells Timothy he will “save” himself and those who he ministers to. The word “save” is the common word, “sozo”. Greek scholar, Dr. William Mounce, gives us insight when he writes; “For the most part, this verb denotes our being spiritually saved from sin, though in some instances the verb means to heal a person from an illness (see heal) or to rescue someone from danger.”⁷ In this context, it seems that the last part of this definition would apply. Paul is saying that if Timothy keeps a watch on his life and doctrine, he and his congregation will be saved from danger. The dangers of deception, scandal and spiritual shipwreck (1:19) come to mind. Notice how Kenneth Wuest translates this verse:

“Keep on paying careful attention to yourself and to the teaching. Constantly stay by them, for in doing this you will both save yourself and those who hear you [from the false doctrines of demons,”⁸

II. Exposition of Chapter Five.

NOTE: Concerning the first two verses, Dr. Gordon Fee writes: “In God’s household (note the “family” theme in each case) there is an appropriate way for the leader to treat people—exactly as one does in one’s own family (assuming a cultural ideal of great deference and respect in the home).”⁹

¹ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 351.

² Gordon D. Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1988)

³ Louw and Nida, 154.

⁴ A. Duane Litfin, “1 Timothy,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 741.

⁵ Louw and Nida, 332.

⁶ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 228.

⁷ Mounce’s *Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, William D. Mounce, Gen. ed. (Zondervan Publishers, Grand Rapids, 2006.), 615.

⁸ Kenneth S. Wuest, *The New Testament: An Expanded Translation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1961), 1 Ti 4:12–16.

⁹ Gordon D. Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1988)

A. Verses 1-2 – “Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort *him* as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.”

1. The word “rebuke” means; “to express strong disapproval as a type of punishment—to rebuke, to reproach, to denounce.”¹⁰

2. “...but exhort *him* as a father...” – The word “exhort” is defined as: “to ask, summons, exhort, comfort, or encourage”¹¹ This implies that we’re to speak to older men with respect, yet direct, when we have to bring correction. Timothy was to treat the older men as fathers and the Bible commands that we are to honor our mothers and fathers (Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:2).

“Do not speak angrily to [rebuke; speak harshly to] an older man, but plead with [exhort; encourage] him as if he were your father. Treat younger men like brothers,.” – 1 Timothy 5:1 – Expanded Bible

3. “...younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.”
– A. Duane Litfin gives good insight concerning this:

“Timothy was to appeal to the older men as he would his own father—not with rough rebukes but with gentle exhortations. Young men may be treated somewhat more directly, yet with fraternity as if they were Timothy’s own brothers. Older women were to receive all the respect Timothy would accord his own mother Eunice (2 Tim. 1:5). Younger women were likewise to be treated respectfully, with the absolute purity (*hagneia*; cf. 1 Tim. 4:12) Timothy would grant his own sister. This would safeguard the young minister from reproach.”¹²

B. Verses 3-16 – Paul’s Instruction concerning Widows. Gary Leggett points out the following: “This verse (3) begins a section devoted to widows (3-16). Four classes of widows are mentioned: real widows (verses 3, 5, 9, 10), widows with relatives (verses 4, 8, 16), widows living in pleasure (verses 6, 7), and young widows (verses 11-15).”¹³

1. Verses 3-4 – “Honor widows who are really widows. 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.”

a. “Honor widows who are really widows...” – The word “honor” here means; “to provide aid or financial assistance, with the implication that this is an appropriate means of showing respect”¹⁴

b. “...who are really widows.” – From the context, and according to several scholars, the widows who were “really widows” were those who were really in need and alone. This suggests that some of the widows were able to have provision without the church’s help but were taking advantage of the church. Gordon Fee writes:

“It is likewise too restricting to translate ‘who truly are widows’ (repeated in vv. 5 and 16) as who are really in need. The addition of the qualifier ‘left alone’ in verse 5 and the argument of verses 4–8 make it clear that her being a true widow means at least that she is all alone and in need, that is, that she has no family to support her. But it is equally clear that the ‘real widow’ is one who is godly, given to prayer. In the final analysis there are two classes of widows who do not qualify: those who have family and friends to care for them (vv. 4–5, 8, 16) and the younger widows of verses 11–15.”¹⁵

c. “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.” – As mentioned above, this shows that family members are first responsible to take care of their mother or grandmother who’s a widow.

1) The word “piety” means; “to fulfill one’s socio-religious obligations—to fulfill one’s duties, to complete one’s religious duty.”¹⁶

2) “...to repay their parents...” – The idea here is that children repay their parents for the care they received in their upbringing.

¹⁰ Louw and Nida, 435.

¹¹ Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, 227.

¹² A. Duane Litfin, “1 Timothy,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, 742.

¹³ *The Complete Biblical Library: Acts – Revelation, Volume 2*, (Empowered Life, Tulsa, OK, 2016.), 896.

¹⁴ Louw and Nida, 570.

¹⁵ Gordon D. Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1988)

¹⁶ Louw and Nida, 670.