

“The Pastor’s Excellent Work”
1 Timothy 4:6-7
(Preached at Trinity, May 30, 2021)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Verses 1-5** Paul pointed out the serious nature of the heretical teaching taking place at Ephesus. There were heretics making heretics. Paul declared the reality that some would fall away from the faith and it would continue until the end of the age.
2. Beginning with **Verse 6** Paul directs his attention to Timothy himself to encourage him in the difficult task he has been appointed to do. Paul is going to give some qualities of an excellent minister of the Lord Jesus Christ.
In **Verses 6-7** Paul states the importance of maintaining sound doctrine in the work of every pastor.
1 Timothy 4:6 NAU - "In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus"
The word translated “good” is καλός
It is different from the word which implies a moral good - ἀγαθός
καλός speaks more of worth - excellent, choice, surpassing, precious, useful, commendable, admirable
2. Paul is writing to Timothy, a pastor who has been sent to Ephesus to put things in order. Paul is reminding Timothy to maintain excellence in his work.
We must not dismiss, however, that excellence is expected of every believer.
We represent Christ upon the earth and should reflect His glory in all that we do.
3. We also need to remember that Paul is writing to the church that they might know how to conduct themselves as a church – (See Chapter 3:14-15).
Paul is continuing this instruction for the benefit of the church.
Paul wants Timothy *and* the church to know the qualities of an excellent minister.
God demands that the church maintain high standards.
4. Most people evaluate a pastor using the wrong criteria – They base their judgment upon the size of the church they pastor, the building programs they accomplish, the number of baptisms they perform, the positions they hold in the denomination.
We must know the biblical qualities of an excellent pastor and then pray that your pastor might be able to live up to those qualities.
5. What are the qualities of an excellent minister of the Lord Jesus Christ?

- I. The excellent minister of Christ is foremost a servant
 “a good *servant* of Christ Jesus” KJV: “a good minister of Jesus Christ”
- A. The word translated “servant” is δίακονος Of the 29 times it is found in the NASB - minister 7, servant 19, deacon 3 – “one who executes the commands of another, esp. of a master, a servant, attendant”
1. The other word we often see translated as servant is δοῦλος which literally means a bondservant or slave.
 The word δίακονος carries more of an idea of usefulness or utility.
 2. The primary responsibility of the pastor is to execute the commands of Christ as His Lord and Master. He is a servant to be used of the Master
 3. Every believer must begin each day by asking, “How can I be of the greatest use to my Master today?”
- B. What are the characteristics of a servant of Christ?
1. He does the will of his Master
 - a. He has no will of his own – Thy will be done
 - b. He has made a vow and tied himself to his master to walk in obedience.
Psalm 119:112 NAU - "I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes Forever, *even* to the end."
 2. He is satisfied with the Master’s provision
 A good pastor should not be continually seeking the larger church with larger salary. Our chief desire should be to advance the cause of Christ, not merely our own ambitions.
 3. He stands up for the honor of his Master
 He is concerned that in everything he brings Christ honor
1 Corinthians 10:31 NAU - "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."
 4. He considers the service of God the best service.
- C. Being a good servant demands serving God’s people
Mark 9:35 NAU - "Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant (δίακονος) of all.”
1. The people of Christ cannot be separated from our union with Christ – We are one.
Matthew 10:40 NAU - "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."
 2. By serving the people of Christ we are serving Christ
Matthew 25:40 NAU - "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even* the least of *them*, you did it to Me."
- D. Being a good servant demands vigilance – to be useful to Christ demands that we be ever alert and watchful
1 Thessalonians 5:6 NAU - "so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober."
1. A good minister is always alert against spiritual slothfulness
 2. A good minister is always alert against temptation

II. The Excellent Minister of Christ is careful about the doctrine he teaches.
He must be a teacher of sound doctrine

"In pointing out these things to the brethren"

- A. What is meant by "these things?" What things?
1. Paul uses the phrase three times
Verse 6 – "In pointing out these things to the brethren"
Verse 11 – "Prescribe and teach these things"
Verse 15 – "Take pains with these things"
 2. It refers to the things Paul has been teaching.
It refers to sound doctrine – the testimony of Scripture
Paul is telling Timothy to remind the brethren of the things sanctified by the Word. The Bible declares what is holy and what is sin.
 - a. The fall brought man an unholy moral autonomy – the knowledge of good and evil from a corrupt mind –
Romans 1:21-22 NAU - "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools,"
 - b. The Bible is the only correct standard
The excellent Pastor continually points to sound doctrine
2 Peter 3:1-2 NAU - "This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ² that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior *spoken* by your apostles."
 - c. Knowing that we are prone to forget, the excellent pastor continually puts the congregation in remembrance by teaching sound doctrine.
- B. The Pastor's primary duty is to be a teacher of the Scriptures
1 Timothy 3:2 NAU - "An overseer, then, must be . . . able to teach,"
Ephesians 4:11-14 NAU - "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine . . ."
1 Timothy 4:11 – "These things command and teach."
2 Timothy 4:2-4 NAU - "preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.
διδασχῆ - teaching, doctrine.
John Owen – "The first and principal duty of a pastor is to feed the flock by diligent preaching of the Word."
- C. Paul tells Titus in **Titus 2:1 NAU** - "But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine."
And then in verse 15 he adds, "These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you."

- D. God demands a high standard
1. The world says, “no body’s perfect” “we’re only human”
 2. The worldly religious man says, “We can’t judge others, we’re all sinners”
 3. God has a higher standard. He says, “Be perfect!”
Matthew 5:48 NAU - "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."
 4. The standard of perfection is the Word of God
2 Timothy 3:16-17 NAU - "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."
 5. The good pastor must continually push his congregation towards perfection – and to be satisfied with nothing less.
 - a. To be labeled a perfectionist today is a bad thing. It is a derogatory term.
 - b. This doesn’t mean legalism. It doesn’t imply trying to make yourself acceptable to God.
We are people of grace. Christ is our perfection.
 - c. But holiness sets a high standard.
- E. The reason for our worldwide spiritual famine is the absence of good biblical preaching and teaching
Amos 8:11 NAU - "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord GOD, "When I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, But rather for hearing the words of the LORD."
1. Our churches are by and large malnourished – they are only receiving junk food.
 2. The good pastor must feed his congregation with the nourishing food of God’s Word.
Hebrews 5:13-14 NAU - "For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil."
 3. Truth is our best weapon against error.

This leads to the next logical characteristic of the excellent pastor

III. The excellent pastor is a student of Scripture.

1 Timothy 4:6 NAU - "*constantly* nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following."

To be a preacher of the Bible demands biblical knowledge.

A. Biblical knowledge demands study

1. The excellent Pastor continually feeds upon the Word of God The word “nourished on” comes from a compound Greek word ἐντρέφω
ἐν – preposition of various uses (in, on, at, by, with, among)
τρέφω – feed, nourish, bring up
Literally: to feed on – A Pastor must continually feed on the Word of God
Psalm 119:103 NAU - "How sweet are Your words to my taste!
Yes, *sweeter* than honey to my mouth!"
2. The word translated “which you have been following” is from a word meaning “follow closely, or give careful attention to”
In other words, the pastor must continually feed upon the Word and follow it closely. He must give careful attention to it so that he might be equipped to rightly share it with others.

B. Study demands the careful guarding of time

1. This is particularly difficult if the pastor is bi-vocational. It should always be the goal of every church to support their pastor full-time.
2. This was one of the functions of the deacons – **See Acts 6:1-7**
Acts 6:4 NAU - "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."
Acts 6:7 NAU - "The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith."
3. The pastor must carefully consider his “spare” time

IV. The excellent pastor avoids unholy teaching

Verse 7 – "But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women."

“Worldly” - βέβηλος - vile, godless, irreligious. False doctrine is vile and wicked.

A. We must never reach the place where we believe we are invulnerable to the effects of false teaching. We must not entertain it. We must not receive heretics.

- 2 John 1:10 NAU** - "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into *your* house, and do not give him a greeting;"
1 Corinthians 10:12 NAU - "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall."

1. The pastor must give careful attention to accuracy. The Bible must never be handled carelessly. He guards against the constant barrage of misinformation.
2. Paul compares false doctrine with the superstitious beliefs passed down by old ladies. We refer to “Old wife’s tales” – beliefs that are not based on fact. We often hear the term today, “urban legends.”
 - Can you catch a cold by going outside without your coat?
 - Don’t go swimming right after you eat.
 - Feed a cold, starve a fever.
 - Chocolate can give you acne.

2. We must be particularly cautious in the internet age
There are many damnable cults seeking your attention. There are many movements today that misapply the Gospel.
2 Peter 2:1-2 NAU - "But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. ² Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;"
 3. The excellent minister must guard himself that he might continue to protect the flock
- B. There have been some who have educated themselves into unbelief
1. It is dangerous to be continually searching for something new
 2. It is a dangerous thing to spend time investigating what God has not revealed
Deuteronomy 29:29 NAU - "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law."
We must guard against speculation

Conclusion:

1. Paul always placed high emphasis upon the purity of doctrine. Timothy was at Ephesus with a particular mission, to set in order the purity of doctrine. He had to stand boldly against the false teachers commanding them to forsake their wicked false teaching.
2. Every one of us must be careful what we believe. We need to be students of God's Word. We need to surround ourselves with pastors and teachers we can trust. We need to avoid teachers who do not uphold the truth.