

We are now going to take a look at Paul's heart as one who disciples. My impression of Paul in his early days was that he was an intense, driven man – not one given to taking into consideration any degree of sensitivity. This epistle is one of so-called Pastoral Epistles – given that the letter is an intensely personal one written to a person whom Paul had become a father in two ways. First, Timothy had been led to the Lord by Paul. Second, (and these two points are mutually inclusive – you cannot have one without the other) Timothy had been raised spiritually by Paul. Timothy had been with Paul for about 15 years, serving as Paul's beck and call.¹

The balance of getting the Message out and genuine concern for others around is important. In his early years as a believer, his central thought was the fulfillment of the Great Commission – which was as it should be. However, in his later years we see developing the apostle with a tender heart. I think there should be a balance. On one hand we need to understand the urgency of the Great Commission and on the other hand, we need to understand that ministry also includes the heart that is broken in humility and tenderness by the Spirit of God. Harshness in ministry just sends the wrong message both to the local church and to the unbeliever. Here in 1 & 2 Timothy we see the heart of Paul - a spiritual dad who is writing to his spiritual son. There is a sense of urgency because of difficulties at Ephesus¹ and also because Paul has a concern for the well-being of Timothy.² Again, here is the picture of a balance that has come into Paul's life one of urgency for the message but one of tenderness towards Timothy, his spiritual son.

The Great Commission revisited.

¹⁸ **Then Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”** Matthew 28:18-20 (Holman Christian Standard Bible).

The key here is follow-through. When Jesus said to “make disciples” He was not just referring to getting the nations into a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. No. Making disciples strongly makes the point that we need to not only be involved with spiritual obstetrics but also spiritual pediatrics.³ We must concern ourselves in the same way Paul did with bringing the lost to Christ and also leading them as young believers to a point in their spiritual growth that they, too, can lead others to the Lord. This is the cycle that is to be unbroken down throughout the church age. When Jesus said He was going to be with ALL disciples (that's what He did say) there is not only the strong

¹ [1 Tim 1:3](#)

² [1 Tim 1:18; 4:12](#). Cf. [1 Cor 16:10, 11](#)

³ A favorite term of Dr. John DeBrine of Songtime USA

point of Jesus not abandoning His disciples but that He was making the point that this cycle was not to be broken. To do so, is to disappoint Jesus and He WILL require an account of that failure. Now let's turn to 1 Timothy.

The Importance of Follow-through Given to Timothy.

¹⁸ Timothy, my child, I am giving you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies previously made about you, so that by them you may strongly engage in battle, ¹⁹ having faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and have suffered the shipwreck of their faith. 1 Timothy 1:18-19 (Holman Christian Standard Bible).

Interesting reference to the call of Timothy at the beginning of his Christian ministry – “do not forget your calling.” There is really no room for kicking back and coasting in this whole business of ministry – that *is* what we are talking about here – the business of ministry. Maybe I should refer to these matters of business but I wish to make this strong point – that we should consider the Christian witness – the Christian ministry as serious *business*. We need to be engaged with our Christian faith as priority ONE. I've said this many times – believers do not have the option of retiring from ministry. Nor can they say “not my job.”

Tending to these important matters is a matter of life or death. Note Paul's commentary on those who have fallen aside – he uses two metaphors. First he charges Timothy to engage strongly in battle. This warfare faces two fronts: spiritual and moral.⁴ These two fronts appear in the rest of this letter. The second metaphor comes from the nautical. Those who do not attend to the engagement of follow-through are in danger of shipwreck. Shipwreck was a common experience in Paul's day. He himself experienced shipwreck.⁵ So this whole experience of follow-through is important not only to the discipler but to the one being disciplined.

Be a Good Citizen of this Age Is a Good Witness for Christ.

¹ First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, ² for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. ³ This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2:1-4 (Holman Christian Standard Bible).

I find it interesting that Paul takes up valuable space in his letter to Timothy for this kind of advise. But it's not a stretch. First it is helpful for evangelism - even follow-through

⁴ Read commentary in The Complete Biblical Library, World Library Press (out of print), Galatians - Philemon volume, page 384, 385

⁵ [Acts 27](#); [2 Cor 11:25](#).

that the believer be in a stable national environment.⁶ Second it is just a good witness for the Christian to be a good citizen. McGee says: “...*Civil government is a gift from God, and we ought to give thanks for it and pray for it. Many of us fall short of praying for our government in order that we might continue to live quietly and peaceably.*”⁷ Even when the government may be considered less than honorable we still need to pray for the leaders. Anarchy is not a good option for the existence and operation of the church.

Be a good citizen of the local church.

¹⁴ I write these things to you, hoping to come to you soon. ¹⁵ But if I should be delayed, [I have written] so that you will know how people ought to act in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. 1 Timothy 3:14-15 (Holman Christian Standard Bible)

It’s not as though Timothy was clueless about these matters of behavior in the church body. Indeed, note how Paul addresses this matter “...**so that you will know how people ought to act in God’s household...**” It’s more a matter of giving weight to what Timothy already knows. Paul is lending his apostolic authority so that Timothy may exert this as a high priority at Ephesus. We must NOT neglect these matters because the church of the living God is the pillar and foundation of God’s truth. Note the metaphor of the builder’s trade. We indeed are master tradesmen constructing the residence of God’s Truth – we need be sure to not overlook this important point.

The Alternative Is a Church That Is Ineffective and Filled with Error.

If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished by the words of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. 1 Timothy 4:6 (Holman Christian Standard Bible).

What things? Read the rest of the chapter. Churches that neglect the important matter of “the words of faith” will inevitably shipwreck. It is not simply a matter of church attendance but a matter of seeking nourishment of words of faith.² These are the things that matter to the minister (that’s you and me). Without this follow-through there *will* be error. If we allow the ear that wants to be tickled to call the shots we will fail in our mission to fulfil the Great Commission.

Respect the Older Man in the Church.

Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, 1 Timothy 5:1 (Holman Christian Standard Bible)

I think more correctly – do not give them a “gold watch” and put them out to pasture. Certainly older men can step out of line – but the important undertone of this chapter is proper behavior within the church. Expect great things of older men and God will bless that church with an effective ministry. I’m going to stop here and continue on next time.

⁶ We recall this from our study of Acts 17.

⁷ —J. Vernon McGee's Thru The Bible

Endnotes begin here.

1. Quoting from Shepard: *"Returning from Rome, the Apostle probably went first to visit the Churches in Asia and Macedonia. According to Lightfoot he visited Collossae and Laodicea, then came back to Philippi. He next made his journey to Spain (II Timothy 4:10). Following that he returned to Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3), leaving Timothy in charge and going on to Macedonia where he wrote I Timothy. He next visits Crete and leaves Titus in charge and returns, passing by Miletus to Crinth, where he wrote the letter back to Titus. (II Tim. 4:20). Later he went to Troas (II Tim. 4:13, where he was arrested (II Tim. 4:20) and carried on to Rome. In the prison in Rome he wrote II Timothy. Later in A. D. 65 - 68 he was executed outside of Rome on the Ostian Way."* Shepard THE LETTERS and LIFE of ST. PAUL, Page 570.

2. *Pastors are often evaluated on the basis of the wrong criteria. Their effectiveness is frequently gauged by the size of their church, their building program, their popularity, their educational background, the number of books they have written, or their radio or TV exposure.*

While such things may have some significance, none of them are biblically valid criteria for assessing a man of God. The Puritan genius John Owen wrote, "A minister may fill his pews, his communion roll, the mouths of the public, but what that minister is on his knees in secret before God Almighty, that he is and no more" (cited in I. D. E. Thomas, A Puritan Golden Treasury [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977], 192). The true criteria by which a man of God must be evaluated are found in the New Testament. In 4:6–16, Paul summarizes them. They form the standard by which every ministry is to be measured. —MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The