

Timothy's Charge and Challenge – Proper Youthful Conduct

A. As a young preacher of the Gospel, Timothy had been given tremendous responsibilities and faced many formidable challenges:

His goals:

- Strengthen his brethren by faithfully preaching the Gospel in its purity:

1 Timothy 4:6 "If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed."
- Stand against those who teach false doctrine: 1 Timothy 1:3-4 "As I urged you when I went into Macedonia--remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith."
- Influence others to live faithful lives by earning their respect and conducting himself as a mature well-behaved Christian as an example to them.

1 Timothy 4:12 "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."

His obstacles:

- He had big shoes to fill. Paul was an apostle, a zealous and mature Christian who had personally converted many of these brethren to Christ. Timothy would have to work hard to earn their respect.

- The young are not generally considered wise. Older people sometimes attach too much value to the “common wisdom” handed down through stories. As Timothy taught the truth that conflicted with these fables (vs 4), some would be reluctant to change their views.
- False teachers were working hard to destroy the good teaching that Paul and Timothy had done. In Paul's absence, Timothy would need to be assertive in bringing God's truth with authority. His youth would make this even more challenging.
- Pagan immorality was rampant among young and old alike. As Timothy worked among the churches, some might expect him to behave like other young people they knew.

Application: The challenges that Timothy faced are not that different from those you face as a young person trying to influence others for good. Unfair though it may be, some older people may group you together with other young people they know. There may be a tendency to be somewhat dismissive of even godly wisdom, when it is being dispensed by someone without great experience. Yet, despite these challenges, there is a powerful tool for you to use to gain an influence among those you know – proper godly conduct.

B. “Let no one despise your youth.”

1. Respect is not something that can be demanded – it must be earned. This requires patience, time and effort on your part. Yet it can happen. As a young man,

Jesus earned the respect of those older than Himself - "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." Luke 2:52. You can do this too!

2. Remember also, that godly older people are pulling hard for you! We may not be fully aware of all the challenges you are facing, but we know it is tough to live as godly young people in this society. We are praying for you and want to help.

3. Focus on what you can change and not the things that are outside your control. You control yourself and how you conduct yourself. Cultivate godly conduct and your influence will certainly grow!

1 Timothy 4:12 - "Be an example to believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

- Use speech that is in keeping with a godly heart. Ephesians 4:29 – "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth..."
- Show humility when dealing with others. James 4:6 - "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." God is not alone in His reaction to arrogance; most people resist those who are prideful.
- Show gratitude to those who are kind and generous to you. God expects us to express gratitude for His blessings.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 - "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." When someone does something kind for us or serves us, even in a small way, expressing our sincere gratitude

shows a good heart.

- Be helpful when the opportunity arises. Galatians 6:10 – “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”
- Stand for the Truth. Ephesians 4:14-15 - “...that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ...”
- Grow in maturity. Titus 2:6-8 - “Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, 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.”

C. Apart from God and His word, you do not have the strength to live as you should.

1. 1 Timothy 4:13 - “give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”

Cultivate your desire to live a godly life and an understanding of how to do it by spending time in God's word. Not only does faith come by hearing God's word (Romans 10:17), but so do knowledge and wisdom.

2. V. 15 - “Meditate on these things.” Let them become part of your thought and decision-making process.

3. **V. 15** - "Give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all." People will notice. You will be a light to both young and old alike.

4. **V. 16** - "Take heed to yourself and the doctrine." This will take time, effort, determination and patience. But it is well worth it!

D. Enjoy the results of your effort! V. 15 - "Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those that hear you."

1. Paul expected that Timothy would be successful in his work among these Christians.

2. By conducting yourself as God would have you to, you will be successful in accomplishing His will for you!