

# What to Avoid—and What to be Absorbed In

1 Timothy 4:7-16

# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



A publication of **DISCIPLE**, the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. —*Psalm 145:11*  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —*Joshua 22:5*

2017.7.9



## Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you?  
...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?
- According to 1 Timothy 4:7-11, one way to stay "on track" spiritually is to avoid speculative arguments (like those late night "bull sessions" that were a staple of college life!). But isn't this "closed minded"? Read Acts 17:21. Is there really any danger in just discussing new ideas? What's the big deal?

According to 1 Timothy 4:7, the alternative to "discussing new ideas" is **not** "discussing old ideas". **What** is it? **Why** is it important to clarify what the alternative **is**, and **isn't**?

- According to 1 Timothy 4:12-14, a second way to stay "on track" spiritually is to have pastors who focus on teaching, on exercising their spiritual gifts, and on modeling maturity to their churches. Tell about a time when **you** were strengthened to stay "on track" spiritually through **your** pastor's:  
 teaching of the Bible       exercise of his spiritual gifts       modeling maturity before you

Who will tell us about a time when you were at risk of derailment due to a lack in one of these?

- According to 1 Timothy 4:15-16, the result of faithful pastoral leadership is successful ministry—in fact, Pastor Doug **equated** ministry success with perseverance. **Why** is perseverance so important?

Why is it **necessary**? Why is it so **rare**?

**Are you absorbed in progressing spiritually?**  
For free biblical hope and help, write to  
**Counseling@tcc.org**

## Application-Challenge

- Pray for the pastors and church staff—that they would faithfully pursue God, teach the Scriptures, and model godliness.
- Pray for yourselves—that you would apply biblical truth and faithfully pursue God and godliness.
- Develop a spiritual enrichment plan—regularly reading and studying the Scriptures, focus on application (using Talking Points, Walking Points), and by reading a good systematic theology (such as *Christian Beliefs* by Wayne Grudem or *A Survey of Bible Doctrine* by Charles Ryrie).
- If you would like to know God personally, contact us at <connect.tcc.org>. Scroll down to the Ministry Information Request section and mark the first or second checkbox. We look forward to helping!

# Sermon Summary

In 1 Timothy 4:7-16, Paul encourages Timothy to be a good servant of Jesus Christ, constantly nourishing himself and his congregation on Biblical truth. Paul provides some practical instructions in a list of “dos and don’ts”—positive and negative commands to help Timothy stay on track:

Negative Commands	Positive Commands
Have nothing to do with worldly fables... (v.7)	Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.
	Prescribe and teach these things (v.11)
Let no one look down on your youthfulness. (v.12)	Show yourself an example of those who believe. (v.11)
	Give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching (v.13)
Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you (v.14)	
	Pay close attention to yourself and your teaching (v. 16)
Do not sharply rebuke an older man (5:1-2)	...rather appeal to him as a father.

Pastors are to avoid speculative arguments while promoting sound doctrine and spiritual discipline (vv. 7-11). Paul urged Timothy to get into the spiritual gymnasium. The word “discipline” is translated to “gymnazo.” It pictures an athlete preparing his body for competition. For Timothy, the training is spiritual, not physical, and his purpose is “godliness,” not physical fitness. Our incentive for pursuing godliness in this life is linked to the hope we have in Jesus Christ in the next life. Our lives have two phases. We are living now in phase one, which lasts 70-80 years. But life doesn’t end at the grave. When we die as Christians, we are ushered into phase two of our lives, and its duration is much, much longer. It is with this second phase of our life in view that we are labor and strive towards godliness.

At this point in his letter, Paul pauses and says to Timothy, “Prescribe and teach these things” (v. 11). Timothy was a relatively young man giving leadership to a more mature congregation; thus, he sometimes struggled with confidence. In addition, he probably felt inadequate to fill Paul’s shoes as a pastor. Timothy couldn’t control his age or the fact that he wasn’t Paul, so Paul encouraged him to focus on things he did have control over...his conduct and his character. Paul says that pastors are to focus on teaching and exercising their spiritual gifts while modeling a godly maturity that is beyond their years (vv. 12-14). Character speaks louder than age, much louder. That is true for us as well. You will be judged by your character. Are you trustworthy? Are you gracious? Do you do what you say you are going to do when you say you are going to do it? Are you setting a good example for others? Do people see Jesus in you, or just you in you? Is your life worth emulating? These are important questions.

In verses 13-14, Paul advises Timothy on how he should conduct his ministry. He states, “Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.” In the first century, most people were illiterate, and therefore depended upon public readings to hear God’s word. But Paul’s pastoral responsibilities did not stop at just reading the Scriptures. Using the Scriptures as his authority, he was to exhort and teach and instruct God’s people in God’s will and way. The pastor’s goal is to set God’s Word before God’s people in such a way that they know what God wants them to know, believe what He wants them to believe, and are motivated to do what he wants them to do. This involves teaching and exhortation. My effectiveness or ineffectiveness as your pastor is on display in your lives. It is one thing to teach God’s Word clearly, it is quite another to exhort you in a way that you are motivated to change—to imitate Christ. This is why we have an application/challenge every week, because God wants us to do something with what we have learned. He wants us to change! Paul concludes his list of do’s and don’ts with perhaps the most helpful positive command a young minister could receive: the result of such faithful leadership will result in successful ministry (vv. 15-16). It can be difficult to measure success in ministry. There are always things that you could do better. The work is never done, because none of us in this life will achieve perfect Christlikeness. Ultimately, the success of a ministry is up to God.

Here at TCC, we as a church body will continue to minister to each other and our neighbors with the same mission upon which we were originally founded: Together we are seeking to transform ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Christ.

**Monday**— Read 1 Timothy 4:6

- Paul told Timothy, “In pointing out **these things** to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus...” That’s pretty vague; how in the world are we to know what “these things” are?
- As Pastor Dan is wont to say, “**Context is king!**”—so let’s read the previous five verses to figure out what “these things” are. First, the identity of the men who teach “these things”: they are men who... “fall away from \_\_\_\_\_” (v. 1). Instead of listening to good doctrine, they “pay attention to...” **what?** And, what has happened to their conscience (v. 2)? **Not good!** The content of their deceitful, demonic message is that they “forbid \_\_\_\_\_ and advocate \_\_\_\_\_”
- According to v. 4, **what’s wrong with** telling people to stay single and to “eat clean”? What did God say about marriage (see Genesis 2:17)? What did God say about all foods (see Mark 7:19c)? These demonic teachers are **saying exactly the** opposite things God says about marriage and foods. Now, we know what “these things” (v.6) are! But notice how Paul broadens “these things”: “**Everything created by God** is good...” What **didn’t** God create?
- Read Isaiah 5:20. Now, google “What does ‘woe’ mean?” How serious is it to reject what God calls “good”? Do those things seem like a big deal to you? If not, what does that say about what has shaped your values? What should you do?

**Tuesday**— Read 1 Timothy 4:6-8

- Paul tells Pastor Timothy that if he’ll point these things out to the believers in his church, he’ll be “constantly nourished on the \_\_\_\_\_” (v. 6). Notice the contrast: “some will fall away from \_\_\_\_\_” (v. 1)
- It’s fine for **grandmothers** to tell kids myths and fables (v. 7), but what happens when **pastors** and **churches** tell myths and fables? Which of these “church myths” have you personally encountered:
  - “We’re all God’s children—God would **never** send someone to hell.”
  - “The Bible was written by ‘pre-scientific men’ and the stories of creation can’t be trusted.”
  - “Jesus is the only way to God—but there are many ways to Jesus.”
- “Worldly fables” contrasted with “the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine”, but **something more** than just knowing/hearing doctrine is necessary. **What else is necessary** (v. 7b)? What are some things you already routinely discipline yourself to do?
- Complete this chart:
 

	Discipline of the Body	Discipline of the Soul
How profitable is it?		
Holds promise for which life?		
- What’s your personal response to this?

**Wednesday**— Read 1 Timothy 4:7b-10

- Pastor Doug noted that whenever Paul uses the phrase, “It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance...” he means—well, how else can you say it?! He means, “**This is true. Trust it! Accept it! Do it!**” So, **which** one do you discipline **more**—your body or your soul? What changes do you need to make?
- Paul said that there’s a certain attitude which **enables** people to labor and strive for “soul fitness” more than “bodily fitness”. What is it? “Because we have fixed our hope on \_\_\_\_\_” (v. 10).
- Read 1 Corinthians 15:16-19. What is the alternative to “fixing our hope on the living God”?
- On what is **your** hope fixed—this life or the next? What evidence do you have for that answer?

**Thursday**— Read 1 Timothy 4:11-13

- Pastor Tim was commanded to “prescribe and teach” these things. Look up “prescribe” at Dictionary.com. What do you learn?
- Americans **love** autonomy—so how do we react when our pastors “**lay** (something) **down as a rule to be followed**”? Read Hebrews 13:17. How does God say we **should** react when our pastors “prescribe” something for us to do? Do you make it a joy for your pastors to keep watch over your soul?
- Now we see **why** Paul had to say, “Let no one look down on you, Pastor Tim!” (v. 12a)! But notice **how** pastors are to gain respect. The **world** would say “Assert yourself!” and “Be empowered!” Not so in the church. Read Luke 22:25-26. How do we gain respect? Specifically, pastors are to be “exemplary believers” (1 Timothy 4:12b). What are instances of “exemplary speech, conduct, love, faith and purity” you’ve seen in your pastors (previous or current)? Did that cause you to “look **up** to them” (v. 12a)?
- In v. 13 Pastor Tim is commanded to “give attention to” (the Greek word means: “devote thought and effort to”) exposition of, and exhortation based upon, the Scriptures. **Why** do you think that’s so important? Do you think that this is that prominent at TCC?

**Friday**— Read 1 Timothy 4:14-16

- Timothy is commanded “not to neglect the spiritual gift within him”. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, then answer these questions:
  - What differs—and what doesn’t (v. 4)?
  - What differs—and what doesn’t (v. 5)?
  - What differs—and what doesn’t (v. 6)?
 A bit repetitive, isn’t it?! Do you think there might be some certain point Paul wants to drive home?! **What is it?**
- Verse 7 begins with a **contrast** (“but”). In contrast to all that diversity within unity (v. 4-6), there is **only one purpose and goal** for spiritual gifts. What is it? The alternatives of using one’s spiritual gift for the **common** good is using it only for **one’s own** profit—or **not using it at all**. When have you seen those abuses of spiritual gifts? What was the result? The believers in Corinth were excited about spiritual gifts—for their own individual good rather than the common good (1 Cor. 14:12, 17).
- Verse 8-11 gives the **proof** (“for/because”) that spiritual gifts are to be used for the common good (“for to one...but to another” 9x). **Each** believer has a spiritual gift (v. 7a), **but who decides which one** you get (v. 9)? (And don’t forget the goal: the **common** good.)
- Now, back to 1 Timothy 4:14-16. Isn’t it interesting that although supernatural abilities are divinely bestowed, they can be neglected (v. 14) and we need to make progress (v. 15) in their employment. God’s role is to give; our role is to develop and deploy. **What is** your spiritual gift? **Are you “taking pains”** in developing and deploying your gift for the common good of TCCers (v. 15)? **Are you “absorbed in”** making progress in enhancing the common good (v. 15)? Is your progress **evident to all** (v. 15)? **To which do you pay closer attention** (v. 16) to:
  - diet and fitness, or to:
  - growing in godliness (v. 8-15)?

**Saturday**— Reread 1 Timothy 4:6-16

- Summarize the key things you learned.
- List the things you must:
  - begin** doing: \_\_\_\_\_
  - stop** doing: \_\_\_\_\_
  - give **greater** attention to: \_\_\_\_\_
  - give **less** attention to: \_\_\_\_\_