

Dear friends and family,

Have you ever been to the doctor with new symptoms, something that maybe you've never experienced before? After telling the doctor your history, symptoms, and problems, maybe you're given a prescription for a new medicine. At that moment, perhaps the doctor taught you how to use that new prescription. He probably reviewed how often to take it, the dosage, whether to take it with food or without, and what side effects may come along with it.

In 1 Timothy 4, Paul outlines something very similar for Timothy. Paul shares that the Bible is the great medicine that all people need. He then goes on to explain how to use it, apply it, and live a new life using God's word as the focal point. In verse 11, he tells Timothy to "*Prescribe and teach these things.*" A pastor, similar in role to that of a doctor, is to **prescribe** the right medicine and **teach** how it is to be used properly.

"The Bible is the cradle wherein Christ is laid."

-Martin Luther

"Nobody ever outgrows Scripture; the book widens and deepens with our years."

-Charles Spurgeon

"Unless we form the habit of going to the Bible in bright moments as well as in trouble, we cannot fully respond to its consolations because we lack equilibrium between light and darkness."

-Helen Keller

"The Bible is the book of my life. It's the book I live with, the book I live by, the book I want to die by."

-N. T. Wright

"The Word of God

*well understood and religiously obeyed
is the shortest route to spiritual perfection.*

*And we must not select a few favorite passages to the exclusion of others.
Nothing less than a whole Bible can make a whole Christian."*

-A.W. Tozer

"I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible.

*Take all of this Book that you can by reason and the balance by faith,
and you will live and die a better man.*

It is the best Book which God has given to man.”
-Abraham Lincoln

Pastor's Point of View

The big question:

What is your understanding of the importance of being constantly nourished on the Word?

One of our founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin, tells of the difficulties under which the Bible was read in the home of his great-great grandfather, who lived in England during the reign of Queen Mary. Christianity was being oppressed and owning a Bible was against the law. His family had one Bible among them all and it had to be hidden in their home at all times. He tells of how it was taped to the bottom of a stool. Each night, the family would gather around his great-great grandfather, as he turned the stool over in his lap to read aloud from scriptures. One member of the family would always stand by the door, keeping watch for the authorities.

Day 1 - READ 1 Timothy 4:6

1. The context of 1 Timothy 4 focuses on three points. They include instructing in correct doctrine, protecting the church from apostasy, and accomplishing these by being constantly nourished in the word. How would constant study of Scripture lead to accomplishing the first two points?
2. Reflecting on Ben Franklin's family history, I can appreciate the freedom I have in owning several and leisurely reading my Bible.
3. Have you ever had to hide your Bible for fear of oppression or persecution?
4. Considering that we have the Bible in abundance, in our own language, and the freedom to use it, how dedicated are we in being constantly nourished in it?
5. Take a moment to thank God for the freedoms we have. Take a moment and make a plan to read your Bible consistently this week.

Day 2 - READ 1 Timothy 4:11-12

1. Verse 11 gives a command to Pastor Timothy. What is a pastor commanded to do?
2. What character traits are the Pastor to have in verse 12?
3. What is the Pastor to do to be an example of those who believe?
4. In what ways have Pastors notably failed in these areas of appropriate character traits, in living as an example of a believer and as an example to other believers?

Day 3 - READ 1 Timothy 4:13

1. In the NASB, the text of verse 13 reads, “give attention to the *public reading of Scripture*”. Any time you see Italics in scripture you know those words were added to the English translation but are not in the original language. This is notable as the instruction here is to give heed to reading. The context of the passage given in verse 6 explains what we are reading, Scripture. Public reading is more difficult. The Aramaic word used in this passage means “to read” and *can* include public reading, but it is more than that. The original word implies not just reading, but *knowing* and *owning*.
2. How would your Bible study be different if you were focused on *reading, knowing, and owning* Scripture?
3. Exhortation simply means “comfort and consolation”. Does your Bible study time bring you comfort? Do you take consolation when you are being taught Scripture?
4. Therefore, teaching includes: reading, knowing, owning, comforting, consoling, and publicly professing Scripture. Preparing a sermon or a Bible study often includes all of these aspects and leads to effective teaching.

Day 4 - READ 1 Timothy 4:14-16

Focus today on your personal spiritual gifts.

1. In what ways are you gifted by the spirit?
2. Are you currently using or neglecting these?
3. What might you be called to be doing in the church? What have you done in the past that perhaps you no longer want to do? Why is that?
4. What does it mean to watch your life and doctrine closely? Why is this important?

Take note that the Pastor has a responsibility to “ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.” This does not mean that the Pastor has any ability to save anyone. Paul, in fact, makes this plainly clear in his other writings (Rom. 10:9-10, Eph. 2:8-9). It does, however, mean that the Pastor must clearly teach right and true doctrine, keeping the church clean of apostasy.

The emphasis of verse 16 is to “pay close attention to yourself and your teaching”. Paul tells Timothy to persevere in these pursuits, which means to “continue on with persistence that suits the objective”. What is the objective? The objective of every preacher of the gospel should be to see sinners repent and be saved. May this be the focus of our hearts, that we pursue sound doctrine, study the Scriptures and long for the salvation of the lost. May God richly bless you this week with a deeper knowledge of him.

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.” Ephesians 1:17

In faith and sound doctrine,
Pastor Matt

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*Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us **RUN** with endurance the race that is set before us -- Hebrews 12:1*

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