

May be Evident to All

By Russ Earl

In 1 Timothy 4:13-15, Paul gives Timothy this command: "*Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.*"

Paul was encouraging Timothy to continue to grow in faith. Paul here instructed Timothy to give attention to reading. For Timothy it would refer to public reading of the scriptures and private study. The same command should be applied today, we should give attention to such things, as they are honorable in the sight of God.

Timothy was then instructed by Paul to give attention to exhortation. For Timothy it would refer to public preaching and teaching of the gospel, and the singing of songs, as they build one another up as well. This could also be done today by our attendance in the worship assemblies and anytime that the saints are gathered together (Hebrews 10:23-25).

Paul then instructed Timothy to give attention to doctrine. This obviously would be sound doctrine. We shouldn't be absorbed with doctrinal errors of the day but be concerned with the spreading of the true doctrine and gospel of Jesus.

Timothy was being reminded not to neglect the things that had been laid before him and on him. Timothy had received the gift by the laying on of hands from the elders (v.14). He was instructed by Paul, not to neglect such a gift.

So why was Paul encouraging Timothy to do such things? Was he not already a good and faithful brother in Christ? Was he not one that could be looked up to as an example? Certainly, however there were some who perhaps despised young Timothy because of his youth. In 1 Timothy 4:12 Paul records for us: "*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.*" How could Timothy be an example to the believers, by following Paul's commands that followed.

People have not changed, individuals are despised today for numerous reasons. It's hurtful to see when people who fervently love the Lord and are striving to do what is right, are despised. Despised for being so young, for being a female, or for simply being to zealous for good works. These are not hindrances to anyone, no one should be despised for trying to do well and do the will of the Lord.

Paul is telling Timothy in these verses how to erase all doubt from the minds of doubters, scoffers and those who despised him. Paul tells Timothy that by not neglecting such things as these then he would prove his faithfulness, loyalty to the Lord and his heart that belonged to the Lord to do His will, and no one else's.

Paul tells Timothy when he does these things his progress, his growth in the faith "*will be evident to all.*" Timothy's works, faithfulness, and growth should have been evident to those doubters all ready, but Paul shows him how to more clearly show others his growth and his deep desire to learn more of the Lord. This would prove how much Timothy had grown in faith, knowledge and love of the Lord and the brethren.

We should have such boldness as Timothy and Paul. That we want all to see how much we have grown and how we are continuing to grow. Not to be done out of pride or anger but to show others and the Lord what is important to us. Growth should be sought after to show we are not after the world and its wisdom but the word of God and the Lords commands are foremost in

our minds. Paul says to "*give attention*" to these things. So let's take the advice of the old apostle and let's give attention where it belongs, on the things of the Lord. When we do so, our growth will be "*evident to all*"