

1 Tim Lesson 5 Articles

Verse 4:13 Until Paul arrived back on the scene, Timothy was to apply himself to reading, preaching, and teaching. The very brevity of these instructions indicates their genuineness. If these words had come from the second century, the list would have been longer and would have included some reference to the ordinances. Some interpreters see these instructions as a model for public worship patterned after the synagogue. Fee points out that public worship also included prayers (2:1–7), singing (cf. the hymn in 1 Tim 3:16), words of testimony (1 Cor 14:26), and the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11:17–34).¹⁰⁸ Public worship was much more than reading, praying, and teaching. These instructions are not merely a pattern for worship, but they present a positive method of opposing false teaching.¹

THIS passage (Vv 6-10) is close-packed with practical advice, not only for Timothy, but for any servant of the Church who is charged with the duty of work and leadership.

(i) It tells us *how to instruct others*. The word used for *laying these things* before the brothers is most suggestive (*hupotithesthai*). It does not mean *to issue orders* but rather to advise, to suggest. It is a gentle, humble, and modest word.

(ii) It tells us *how to face the task of teaching*. Timothy is told that he must feed his life on the words of faith. No man can give out without taking in. He who would teach must be continually learning. It is the reverse of the truth that when a man becomes a teacher he ceases to be a learner; he must daily know Jesus Christ better before he can bring him to others.

(iii) It tells us *what to avoid*. Timothy is to avoid profitless tales like those which old women tell to children. It is easy to get lost in side-issues and to get entangled in things which are at best embroideries. It is on the great central truths that a man must ever feed his mind and nourish his faith.

(iv) It tells us *what to seek*. Timothy is told that as an athlete trains his body, so the Christian must train his soul. It is not that bodily fitness is despised. The Christian faith believes that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. But there are certain things in Paul’s mind. First, in the ancient world, especially in Greece, the gymnasias were dangerous places. Every town had its gymnasium; for the Greek youth between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, gymnastics were the main part of education. But the ancient world was riddled with homosexuality and the gymnasias were notorious as hotbeds of that particular sin. Second, Paul is pleading for a sense of proportion. Physical training is good, and even essential; but its use is limited. It develops only part of a man; and it produces only results which last for so short a time, for the body passes away. Training in godliness develops the whole man in body, mind and spirit, and its results affect not only time, but eternity as well. The Christian is not the athlete of the gymnasium, he is the athlete of God. The greatest of the Greeks well recognized this. Isocrates wrote: “No ascetic ought to train his body as a king ought to train his soul.” “Train yourself by submitting willingly to toils, so that when they come on you unwillingly you will be able to endure them.”

(v) It shows us *the basis of the whole matter*. No one has ever claimed that the Christian life is an easy way; *but its goal is God*. It is because life is lived in the presence of God and ends in his still nearer presence, that the Christian is willing to endure as he does. The greatness of the goal makes the toil worth while.²

¹⁰⁸ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 69.

¹ Lea, T. D., & Griffin, H. P. (1992). *1, 2 Timothy, Titus* (Vol. 34, p. 138). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

² Barclay, W. (Ed.). (1975). *The letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (pp. 96–97). Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press.