

## 1 Timothy #15

August 3, 2025

### Series: Body Essentials: Imperatives for Church and Leaders

#### Today's Message: Evaluate the Fitness of Your Pastor! Pt 2; 1 Timothy 4:12-16

1 Timothy 4:6-16 is Paul's instruction to Timothy for how to be a faithful minister. Of course, every pastor that reads these verses will read them prayerful allowing the Spirit to search his heart shining the light of the Word of God onto his work and, if he is willing, to pray that the Spirit would pierce and penetrate his heart revealing the authenticity of his motives and purposes in ministry.

These verses also provide the local church with a standard by which to evaluate the fitness of their pastor. It is by this standard, the Word of God, that a church can determine the pastor's weaknesses and strengths. In the first part of this message last week, we were introduced to six essential tests of a faithful pastor. These are clear: an excellent minister will warn his people of error and false teaching; he will clearly be devoted to Jesus Christ; he will study and handle the Scriptures well; he will be led by Scripture and not influenced by godless myths and of wives' tales; he will be growing in godliness and hard work; and he will teach with authority. These criteria will protect both the pastor and the church. But the church has a responsibility to watch and see if the pastor is progressing in these areas.

Today we look at five more rules of measure. Again, Paul writes to Timothy teaching him what is most important. But there is a strong help for the church in these verses so that the church can safely evaluate a minister's fitness for the office of pastor.

#### l) (4:12) It is essential that the pastor set a good example of spiritual life and vitality.

##### A) The power of a good example

- 1) There is a potential roadblock. For Timothy it was his youth.
  - (a) His lack of experience could prejudice the church against him.
    - (i) Today, it may be that a pastor will be judged by his lack of charisma, or lack of connections with important people, or lack of education, or many other areas deemed important to people.
    - (b) But Paul teaches Timothy the most excellent way to earn the respect of the Church. But how?
- 2) How to earn the respect of the church despite his youthfulness (experience) or lack of charisma, connections, or education: Paul gives us five of the most excellent ways to earn respect AND also to show an example of what ALL believers are to exemplify in their daily lives:
  - (a) "Set the example for believers (or, of those who believe)"
    - (i) **In speech.** Listen to your pastor's speech.
      - (a) Jesus taught us how to test our hearts, which is the origin of our words. He said, "For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. The good man out of his good treasure brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of his evil treasures brings forth what is evil." (Matthew 12:34b-35; see also Ephesians 4:26, 29 and 31)
        1. I battle with my natural man, which often erupts in negativity, complaining, and fear.
          - a. I must battle this, and no doubt you have a similar battle. What comes out?
    - (ii) **In life (conduct).** Is your pastor directed by biblical convictions. Are they his center of gravity?
      - (a) James 3:13: "Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom."
        1. Hypocrisy speaks a louder message than anything he teaches.
    - (iii) **In love.** Is your pastor willing to make personal sacrifices for the good of others?
      - (a) John 15:13, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."
        1. He gives his time and energy to those he ministers to help strengthen them.
    - (iv) **In faith.** Is he faithful and committed to the Lord and to His work? Is he trustworthy?
      - (a) 1 Corinthians 4:2: "Now it is required stewards that they be proved faithful."
    - (v) **In purity.** Primarily sexual purity in both actions and in the heart and mind.

- (a) Paul admonished Timothy to “flee from youthful lusts. (2 Timothy 2:2)”
- B) APPL: The test is not whether a pastor is funny, smart, cool, or charismatic. But does he consistently set a pattern of godliness and spiritual vitality, and does he continue growing more godly in these areas?
- II) **(4:13) It is essential that your pastor is thoroughly bibliocentric in his ministry.**
- A) One key proof is this: He will bleed Scripture in everything he does: in reading, preaching and teaching.
- 1) Paul told Timothy of three essential duties, and a good pastor will follow this instruction.
    - (a) He will devote himself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching (exhortation) and teaching.
      - (i) The reading of Scripture: In every gathering of the saints.
        - (a) They would have read the OT as well as the epistles of the apostles.
          1. Christ-centered and focused: John 5:39b: “These (OT) Scriptures teach about Me.”
        - (ii) The preaching (exhortation): Expository preaching clarifies the Scripture by way of **exhortation** and teaching. Exhortation takes the form of warning, rebuke, counsel, comfort, and always challenges the listener to take action on some moral point of application.
        - (iii) The teaching of God’s word: To clarify and make clear what is the meaning of a text.
      - 2) Paul bled Scripture. In fact, to these same Ephesians Paul ascended to the fact that he did not refrain from “proclaiming the whole counsel of God. (Acts 20:27)”
        - (a) APPL: A body of believers must see to it that the pastor has ample time to study the Scriptures.

III) **(4:14) It is essential that your pastor be careful not to neglect the pastoral gifts he has been given.**

A) Timothy was not beyond the temptation to neglect his gift and defect to another occupation.

    - 1) There are many pressures that lead to the “neglect” the gifts associated with the ministry of the Word such as evangelism, preaching, teaching, counseling, and leadership.
      - (a) Weariness from being stretched too thin, or too many responsibilities not related to pastoral ministry.
      - (b) An ongoing sense of conflict between pastoral responsibilities and responsibilities at home.
      - (c) Financial pressures both within the church and in personal life.
        - (i) If not handled well these pressures can lead to poor time management. Spread thin.
      - (d) Conflicts within the local church and a feeling of not pastoring effectively through the conflicts.
    - B) The antidote. Paul exhorts Timothy in the following ways:
      - 1) 2 Timothy 2:1: Be strong in the grace that is IN CHRIST JESUS.
      - 2) 2 Timothy 2:3-6: Live to please God: Flee from the entanglements of everyday life. *Stay in your lane.*
      - 3) 2 Timothy 2:22: Flee from fleshly desires and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace **ALONG WITH THOSE WHO CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD.**
        - (a) In other words, don’t *go it alone*. The Lord hasn’t designed Christians to be like lone wolves.
          - (i) The pastor (as well as each of us) needs accountability and trusted counsel.

IV) **(4:15) It is essential that the pastor be fully engaged in his work as pastor.** (This is related to 4:14)

A) “Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them...”

      - 1) He must be single-minded.
        - (a) Even if he is spread too thin, his heart and mind must be occupied with preparation, prayer and planning. **It is a 24/7/365 calling with pitfalls!**
          - (i) My wife gave me great counsel at a critical time. She said, “My husband, your integrity as a husband, father and pastor begins and ends at home.” I will never forget that.
          - (ii) But keep in mind, the pastor is never off duty. That requires full dependence on God.
      - B) “...so that everyone may see your progress.”
        - 1) Through all the conflicts and trials and temptations the church should be able to detect spiritual growth in knowledge, wisdom and maturity. This is what it means to “grow in grace.”
        - 2) Your pastor should be willing to have his life scrutinized. “Life in the fishbowl.”
          - (a) Like Paul told Timothy in 4:12, his life is to be an example to believers of what a believer is to look like. So, he must be gracious when he is confronted when he stumbles, and gracious when he is recognized for doing well.

V) **(4:16) It is essential that the pastor exemplifies perseverance in growing in holiness and in ministry.**

A) He has to watch his life and teaching, testing both for consistency, to benefit himself and the church.