



1 Timothy 4: Training in Godliness, 4-5 March

Personal Preparation 1

There are all sorts of performance measures to work out what a good mechanic, good accountant or good computer programmer should look like, but what does a 'good minister' (1 Timothy 4:6) look like? In Paul's instructions to Timothy in chapter 4, this is what we're going to learn about this week. And like what we discovered in chapter 1 (v3-4), much of it has to do with how the leader responds to false teaching, and how he should go about instructing his church.

Read 1 Timothy 4:1-5

What's the false teaching that Paul warns Timothy about?

What does Paul say about these false teachers? v1-2

Even today, how can Christians fall into the trap of thinking they have to abstain from certain good things? Why do you think this false view of things can become attractive?

What understanding do we need to have (v3-4) to remedy this false view?

It's easy not to be thankful and take for granted the many good things that God provides for us. So spend some time thinking and then thanking God for the good things you enjoy – food, drink, relationships, holidays, and possessions.

Group Discussion

Share with your group – is there any sort of physical training that you do, or have done in the past? Why is physical training hard to incorporate into life?

In our group time this week, we're going to focus on the key verse, verse 8– 'For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.' But to understand this verse, let's get it in context of the passage.

Read 1 Timothy 4:1-5:2

1. Training for physical health requires you to cut out certain activities and incorporate new activities into your life. It's similar to training for godliness. According to verse 7, what do we need to cut out?



2. From what you discovered in personal preparation time, what did these 'old wives' tales' include?

From one perspective, false teachings are like 'old wives' tales' – untruths that lead to nothing productive. But on the other hand, they are also teachings that come from 'deceiving spirits and demons' (v1). This makes us realise that what's at stake is hugely serious. What is in conflict is not two different view points on subjective religious matters, rather there is either truth that comes from God, or falsehood that comes from Satan. And 'in later times' (v1) does not mean a time in the distant future. When Paul was writing this letter, he meant 'now' otherwise he wouldn't say that Timothy has to take action now!

3. Paul is telling Timothy to cut out false teaching, but according to verse 6, what should be on the diet for the person who wants to grow in godliness?

4. How can we stick with the truths of the faith and good teaching?

5. Why do you think godliness has value both for this life and the life to come? v8

6. 1 Timothy 4 has lots to say about the activities that Timothy should be engaged in as a 'good minister'. If you had to formulate a job description for a 'good minister' from verses 4:6-5:2, what points would you include?

7. There is so much emphasis in this chapter on: 'pointing things out' (v6), 'commanding' (v11), 'public reading' (v13), 'preaching' (v13), and 'exhorting' (5:2). In other words, teaching! But according to v12, it can't be teaching by itself. What else should Timothy do? And why do you think this is so important?

Notice that 'purity' is mentioned twice – 4:12 and 5:2. Obviously, this is something that leaders in the church need to be reminded about.

8. Paul is very strong in telling Timothy to not neglect his gift of teaching, but be diligent in it. Why does Timothy need to be encouraged in this way? What do you think could tempt Timothy to give up on it?

9. What encouragements can you give Garnet, and all those involved in teaching the bible (including kidzbiz leaders and growth group leaders) at freshchurch to keep going in the activity of teaching?

10. How can we all watch our life and doctrine closely?