

1 Timothy 4**5-29-05****"Practice & Progress!"****1. Intro:**

- 1.1. Memorial Day weekend: in honor of the nation's armed services personnel killed in wartime.
 - 1.1.1. Also, would like to **honor** all those have served, or are serving in the armed service,...by having you **stand** so we might **pray** for you.
- 1.2. This would be a great chapter to have someone read before they choose the church for their family.
 - 1.2.1. Q: What do you look for in a **church**? - Look for in a **pastor**?
 - 1.2.2. Q: How should the pastor **teach**? - Deal with **false teachers** or **bad doctrine**? – How should he **live**?
- 1.3. **Outline:** Word & Prayer; Nourishment & Exercise; Practice & Progress.

2. WORD & PRAYER! (1-5)

- 2.1. Q: Where do we run for all questions to life & godliness?
 - 2.1.1. The Word of God & Prayer settle the matter!
- 2.2. Wherever the **light** of the **gospel** shines, the **shadow** of **false doctrine** lurks closely behind.
 - 2.2.1. The Christian faith was **preached, accepted, & lived out** in a world where **many ideas** threatened it.
 - 2.2.2. There's always a danger of people **adding** or **subtracting** from the gospel message.
 - 2.2.2.1. Which is John's final warning at the end of the Rev.
 - 2.2.3. Note this comes right after Paul gave us that **beautiful hymn** of 6 solid points of Christology! (3:16)
- 2.3. (1) Some **will depart**(apostacize, fall away, abandon the truth)
 - 2.3.1. Not only possible, but **inevitable!**
- 2.4. Satan & his ministers are at work spreading false doctrine.
 - 2.4.1. 2 Cor.11:13-15 "For such **are** false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore **it is** no great thing if **his ministers** also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works."

- 2.4.1.1. As **God** speaks **truth** & uses people to share it;
so **Satan** speaks **lies** & uses people to share it!
- 2.4.2. “Declaring war may not be **popular**, but it will keep us **faithful**.¹
- 2.4.3. Never does material read, “Danger: Satanic Doctrine Enclosed.
Open at your own risk!”
 - 2.4.3.1. No, false teaching is often accompanied by people well dressed, well manicured, attractive, friendly, & convincing.
 - 2.4.3.2. That’s why we need to know the Scriptures so we can discern truth from error.
- 2.4.4. I wrote in my notes Friday “get a **watch Tower magazine**”.
 - 2.4.4.1. **Story** - Yesterday at B of A parking lot.
 - 2.4.4.2. **Show magazine** – Old one’s. Jn.2:18-22.
- 2.4.5. **What about inside the church though?** Even “*good things*” out of balance are a problem for a church.
 - 2.4.5.1. e.g. Prayer only emphasis; Missions only; Health & Wealth; etc.
- 2.5. (2) **Seared** – may mean:
 - 2.5.1. [1] Their conscience was *stamped* w/the brand mark of Satan’s ownership.
 - 2.5.2. [2] Or, their conscience was “*cauterized*” i.e. made insensible to the distinction between right & wrong.²
- 2.6. (3) **How to spot them?**–They might teeter towards Asceticism[self-denying]
 - 2.6.1. Bodily disciplines do not automatically advance spiritual life.
 - 2.6.2. Col.2:23 “*These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.*”
 - 2.6.3. **Forbidding Marriage** –
 - 2.6.4. It’s my opinion that the R.C. church made a big mistake here in requiring priests to take a vow of celibacy (note: they do not “forbid”, they allow them to take a vow of celibacy).
 - 2.6.5. Not even the OT priests had this requirement on them!
 - 2.6.5.1. Ezek.44:21,22 “No priest shall drink wine when he enters the inner court. They shall not take as wife a widow or a divorced woman, but take virgins of the descendants of the house of Israel, or widows of priests.”
 - 2.6.5.2. Starting w/**Aaron** the very 1st priest...was married!
 - 2.6.6. This past year we saw many priests that took this vow but that didn’t have the gift of celibacy.
 - 2.6.6.1. 1 Cor.7:7 “*each one has his own gift*”(i.e. marriage or celibacy)

¹ Warren Wiersbe; pg.799

² LKGNT; pg.625

- 2.6.7. They've missed out on many men who had the gift of marriage.
- 2.6.8. **Forbidding Foods –**
- 2.6.9. Paul rejects that food falls into 2 categories(good/bad).
- 2.6.10. The Ephesian church believers could relax when it came to food because there was no "food laws".
 - 2.6.10.1. God told Peter, "**kill & eat!**"
 - 2.6.10.2. Here Paul tells Timothy, "**Pray & eat!**"
- 2.6.11. **2 reasons why this shouldn't occur:**
- 2.6.12. [1] God's creation is good! All that God made is good. [Gen.1, 7x's]
 - 2.6.12.1. James 1:17 "**Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.**"
 - 2.6.12.2. Eccl.3:13 "**every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it is the gift of God.**"
- 2.6.13. [2] We must eat **with thanksgiving** what God has created.

3. NOURISHMENT & EXERCISE! (6-11)

- 3.1. **Q:** Want to be **physically fit?** What are the **2** most important things?
 - 3.1.1. Eat right & Exercise! {Spiritually also!}
- 3.2. **Instruct** – Point these things out.
 - 3.2.1. A good pastor or teacher won't run from false teaching but will expose it. {point it out, help others to see it}
 - 3.2.2. We often shy from this so we don't come across as **negative**, or as **know-it-alls**, or just afraid of **offending** someone.
 - 3.2.3. Don't be afraid to say, "**that's wrong & here's why.**"
 - 3.2.3.1. **Conversation w/my J.W. friend** – I distinguished between a Christian vs. J.W. (explain)
 - 3.2.3.2. **Conversation w/Romanian Greek Orthodox man on plane** – Art in America – Then, Jesus taking away your sin(He said on judgment day you will learn what you did wrong & learn from it).
- 3.3. **A good minister** – This should be the **goal** of all ministers.
 - 3.3.1. Often times a pastor is evaluated by his eloquent speech, level of education, air of professionalism, or his busyness. But God wants to know, "**Are you my servant?**"
 - 3.3.2. **But, all Christians are ministers**(or servants).
 - 3.3.3. **There is no higher goal in ministry than this!**
- 3.4. **Nourish** – feeding with the idea of reading & inwardly digesting.
 - 3.4.1. Pres. part. suggests a continual process. (it's a lifetime endeavor)
 - 3.4.2. You can't point out **false doctrine** if you aren't maintaining a steady diet of **truth** yourself!

- 3.4.3. PS: Please don't find your “*truth*” in novels!
- 3.4.3.1. i.e. don't build your eschatology from the Left Behind series!
Nor, your understanding of angels on cheesy TV shows!
- 3.5. Reject – expose the errors we oppose, & develop personal holiness.
- 3.5.1. Exposing error & practicing truth is a powerful antidote to heresy.
- 3.6. Old wives tales –
- 3.6.1. Not just legends or Aesop's fables. He is warning against stories & beliefs manufactured to promote & defend an immoral lifestyle.³
- 3.7. Exercise – *gymnazo* “to train”. Our word gymnasium.
- 3.7.1. Paul's athletic imagery reminds us that **spiritual growth** doesn't happen by accident. It takes sweat, determination, perseverance, & total submission to the trainer.
- 3.7.2. You can't just **avoid wrong**; you must **embrace right**.
- 3.7.3. Just like a tri-athlete must do more than stop smoking, drinking, & stop eating donuts.
- 3.7.4. He/she must also put in the miles running, swimming, & riding.
- 3.7.5. But isn't spiritual discipline an oxymoron? Doesn't “discipline take us right down the road again to legalism?
- 3.7.5.1. Nope, the difference is the motivation!
- 3.7.5.2. Kent Hughes, in *Disciplines of a Godly Man* says, “**Legalism** is self-centered; **discipline** is God-centered. The legalistic heart says, “I will do this thing to gain merit w/God.” The disciplined heart says, “I will do this thing because I love God & want to please Him.”” ☺
- 3.8. Godliness – “This is Paul's term in the pastoral epistles for **genuine Christianity**; it brings together knowledge of & faith in God & the observable response of lifestyle.”⁴
- 3.8.1. Godliness is taking God seriously.
- 3.8.2. We must be Christians in training!⁵
- 3.8.3. And this training will make us **fit for eternity!** (8b)
- 3.8.4. Is Paul against physical exercise? **No!!!** He's just comparing the temporal from the eternal!
- 3.8.4.1. Ps: This has nothing to do w/Salvation; but everything to do w/Sanctification.

³ Adapted from Swindoll; pg.89,90

⁴ Philip Towner; pg.45

⁵ Swindoll; pg.90

- 3.9. (10) Labor & strive for godliness!
 - 3.9.1. Suffer reproach/strive = *agonizomai* / agonize
 - 3.9.2. Becoming godly takes work. It's a struggle.
 - 3.9.2.1. Yet, different from our earthly struggles, for we draw from the strength of our living Lord.(10b)
- 3.10. Both **Discipline & Devotion** are needed to make a winning athlete, & an effective Christian.
 - 3.10.1. Note the balance all the way through this.
 - 3.10.2. Devotion & discipline; public service & private integrity; teaching others & learning & growing personally; exhorting others but 1st examining yourself; avoiding untruth while actively pursuing truth.⁶

4. **PRACTICE & PROGRESS! (12-16)**

- 4.1. Q: What 2 things assure you, you are on the right road of salvation?
 - 4.1.1. Practice & Progress!
- 4.2. (12) There seemed to have been some timidity to Timothy("Timidothy").
- 4.3. Let no one despise your youth! - Do our foreign ambassadors go to other countries w/apologies for carrying messages from their sovereign? No! - Then always remember, every true minister of the gospel is an **ambassador for Christ!**
- 4.4. Phillips translation – “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young; see that they look up to you because you are an example to believers in your speech & behavior, in your love & faith & sincerity.”
 - 4.4.1. If people see Christ in you, they will notice Him instead of your age.
- 4.5. (13) Listen How to teach God’s Word! [Biblical Exposition at its finest!]
 - 4.5.1. Reading = Public Reading.
 - 4.5.2. Exhorting = Preaching. Warn, advise, & urge.
 - 4.5.3. Doctrine = Teaching.
 - 4.5.4. This is how they did it in the **OT times**. [Neh.8:8 “So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped *them* to understand the reading.”]
 - 4.5.5. A practice they continued in the **Synagogue**. [Jesus in Naz. Syn.]
 - 4.5.6. And should be practiced **today!** {Look at how many faithful men died to get that book into your hands}
 - 4.5.7. You don’t absorb God’s truth by **gliding** over it. You must **immerse** yourself in it, **explore** its depths, **take in** its wonder!⁷

⁶ Ibid; pg.94 (slightly adapted)

⁷ Ibid; pg.92

- 4.6. (14) The Gift – teaching. At his ordination.
 - 4.6.1. Giftedness must be accompanied by godliness!
- 4.7. “It takes real effort to grow in the Christian life & to be successful in Christian service.”⁸
 - 4.7.1. Entirely = *absorption in anything*. The mind is to be as immersed in these pursuits as the body in the air it breathes.⁹
 - 4.7.1.1. Have you given yourself entirely to them? – The Christian who is listless about spiritual matters will never make progress.
 - 4.7.2. Progress = pioneer advance.
 - 4.7.3. We must move into new territory & not stay the same spiritually.
 - 4.7.4. There are new truths to learn, new battles to fight, & new victories to win!
 - 4.7.5. Thomas Edison said, “Restlessness is discontent, & discontent is the 1st necessity of progress. Show me a thoroughly satisfied man & I will show you a failure.”
- 4.8. (16) Note the Clergy Combo here!
- 4.9. Take heed to yourself – Socrates said, “The unexamined life is not worth living”.
- 4.10. And to the doctrine – It is easy to correct the doctrine, but much more challenging to live the doctrine.
- 4.11. Save? – Like Phil.2:12 “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”
- 4.12. Preach it, teach it, practice it!

⁸ Warren Wiersbe; pg.799

⁹ LKGNT; pg.628