

Age Speaks to Youth

In I and II Timothy we find great admonitions for everyone in general, but especially for our youth and those interested in living a life dedicated to the Lord. One year before Paul wrote I Timothy, he referred to himself in Philemon verse 9, "Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ." So let us consider some sound wisdom by the aged apostle:

I. THE SCARRED CONSCIENCE

I Timothy 4:1, 2

As we navigate these last times, we are warned about "seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." The Bible says in Ephesians 6:12, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." In Revelation 2:20 we read, "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." Psalm 96:4, 5 shows that cultures that leave God out of their lives cannot remove their need of a god to worship and will often make their own god, which becomes a form of idolatry. Compare this to Leviticus 17:7 and Deuteronomy 32:10-18.

God alone is to be worshipped. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 4:8b, "...for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Our Lord here is making reference to Deuteronomy 10:12, 20: "And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul...Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; Him shalt thou serve, and to Him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name." When we say we cannot live without it, him or her; when we say we cannot be happy without it, him or her; when we say it, he or she is my ultimate source of joy or even life itself--you have just named your god. The first two commandments deal with idolatry (Exodus 20:3-5).

Putting gods before God gives in to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils and has the ability to ultimately "sear the conscience." The phrase "seared with a hot iron" is the Greek word, "kauteriazō" which means to cauterize; to brand and by implication to render insensitive. This is why I plead in my preaching that you do not harden your heart against the Lord's dealings with you. We hear the warning in Hebrews 3:8,15; 4:7: "Harden not your hearts." The word "harden" comes to us from the Greek word, "skleruno," Which means to indurate (like hardened clay that is no longer pliable).

II. THE SANCTIFIED CONVERSATION

I Timothy 4:3-5

Sanctified means “to set apart.” I Corinthians 6:11 reminds us, “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” False teachers were setting up forced celibacy and ceremonial dietary laws. When a person is saved, his or her lifestyle sanctifies marriage. Hebrews 13:4a: “Marriage is honourable in all...” And I Timothy 1:4, 5 gives us permission to eat from a wide range of diets provided we pray grace over it. It is not what we do or eat that makes us holy. It is Christ alone, through His grace alone that makes us holy.

III. THE SUSTAINED CULMINATION

I Timothy 4:6, 7

Paul said in Philippians 3:12a, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after...” In the latter part of I Timothy 4:6 Paul said, “...thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou has attained.” Through the words of faith and doctrine we shall attain the highest standing in God’s will.

IV. THE SINCERE CONTENTMENT

I Timothy 4:8-10, I Timothy 6:6

God’s desire for His children is godliness. We need to be doing spiritual exercises to get us to this acme of Christian experience (Jude, verse 20; Psalm 119:11).

Here are some important things to teach everyone and especially our young people:

A. THE CHALLENGE TO YOUTH

I Timothy 4:12

God says that not only should we live right in our youth, but we can be a great example to all ages in the matters of our vocabulary (Colossians 4:6; Psalm 19:14), our lifestyle (Hebrews 6:1), our love (I Peter 1:22), our attitude, our faith and purity (I Timothy 5:22).

B. THE COMMAND TO READ

I Timothy 4:14

The Apostle Paul’s dying request was for Timothy to bring him “the books” (I Timothy 4:16). Walt Disney said, “There is more treasure in books than in all the pirate’s loot on Treasure Island.” Reading will bring you into great mental, emotional and spiritual wealth. I’ve never talked to a well-read person that was not interesting. When a person reads, he has a rich resource from which to draw. James Russell Lowell reminds us, “Books are the bees which carry the quickening pollen from one

to another mind.” Victor Hugo said, “To learn to read is to light a fire; every syllable that is spelled out is a spark.”

C. THE CONFIRMATION OF YOUR CALL

I Timothy 4:15

I Corinthians 12:12, 18: “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”

God has called each and every one of His servants for something special and we’ll never be fully satisfied doing anything other than God’s plan for our lives. Here are some things that will challenge your call:

1. Disappointments

II Timothy 1:1-6. Prov. 13:12: “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.”

Corrie ten Boom said, “There is no panic in Heaven! God has no problems, only plans.”

2. Diversions

Luke 9:62: “And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

3. Detours

Job 23:10: “But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”

Philippians 3:13, 14: “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.