

I TIMOTHY 1:18-20
A LIFE OF FAITH!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to I Timothy chapter 1 as we continue our in-depth study of Paul's first letter to Timothy.

Keep in mind that Timothy is Paul's son in the faith, which means he probably led Timothy to the Lord.

As Paul left Ephesus, he left Timothy there to handle some of the problems that had arisen at the church there in Ephesus.

The idea is just to get back to the basics, get back to the Word of God and it will dispel the false teaching that had crept into the church! Wise words we need to pay attention to.

Picture this letter as words of encouragement and admonishment from a spiritual father to his spiritual son.

It reminds me of what David said to his son, Solomon as the kingdom was being passed down to him. We are told in I Kings 2:1-4, **“Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: ‘I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. And keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; that the Lord may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, “If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul,” He said, “you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.””**”

Very wise words to pass on to his son Solomon and again, I see the same here with Paul and what he is telling Timothy. He will tell him to be aware of the danger of false teachers. The importance of prayer. The role of women in the church. The qualifications for leaders in the church. How we are to conduct ourselves in the church. And much, much more as we will see.

I have called our study this morning – ***A LIFE OF FAITH!***

And it is very important that we know what we believe. It is important that we understand what we believe so we know what to do and what to be focused upon, so we don't get swept away by false teachers or the things of this world!

Many years ago, when I was working in the Intensive Care Unit in Sheboygan, I was caring for an elderly woman, and she was a little confused.

I was in the room and had gotten her up in a wheelchair, her daughter was in the room as well. And as we were talking, she asked me, ***“Have you been to My Best Friend’s Wedding?”***

Now I was trying to be nice to her, understanding that at times she was confused, and gently and very kindly I said back to her, ***“Oh, I don’t even know your best friend!”***

The daughter kind of looked at me very strangely and I did not think much about it then, and I left the room.

As I was talking with the other nurses and saying how cute this woman was, that she even asked me if I had been to her best friend’s wedding, and I smiled.

One of the nurses looked at me and said, ***“Joe, she was asking you if you went to see the movie – MY BEST FRIEND’S WEDDING!”***

I have to get out more! No wonder her daughter was looking at me like that, she thought I was the confused one and I guess I was.

I thought I knew what was going on. I took a firm stand upon what I thought was true.
And in the end, I missed it by a mile!

We have to be careful because the battle is on for our faith and as we saw in our study of Jude, we must earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us!

I have broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into the following main points as we look at this subject – ***A LIFE OF FAITH!***

These points are,

A CALL TO ACTION – I TIMOTHY 1:18

STAY FOCUSED – I TIMOTHY 1:19a

DON'T BE SWAYED – I TIMOTHY 1:19b-20

So with that as our introduction, let's begin reading in I Timothy chapter 1, beginning in verse 18 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word and we look at this subject of – ***A LIFE OF FAITH!***

I TIMOTHY 1

VERSE 18

Here again we see this word “**charge**” and it is a military word that was used way back in I Timothy 1:3 and it means, “***to give strict orders from a commanding officer***” as I have said.

Paul wants Timothy not to give up but to forge ahead in the work that God has called him to do as he was prayed for, and prophecies were given regarding the work God has for him.

Was this a stern warning that Paul was giving to Timothy?

I don't think so, not in the sense that Paul was angry or upset with Timothy.

How do I know that?

Because after Paul gives those orders he says, “**son Timothy.**”

It is like a loving father speaking to his son and warning him, encouraging him, helping him, not out of anger but out of love, out of concern for his son. That is the way I see Paul admonishing Timothy here.

“Timothy, my son. You know what has been spoken of you, the prophecies that were given to you by the Lord, and now you must go forward and do what God has called you to do! Yes, it is not going to be easy, but God is with you, walk in faith!”

And I think we can easily see ourselves in situations like Timothy was in. Not an ideal situation there in Ephesus. Things were tough. And to be put in a situation like that it is easy to run away, but was that what God wanted?

No, God wanted Timothy there in Ephesus to use the gifts that He had given him to take care of the problems that had arisen in the church in Ephesus!

Over the past twenty-eight years here at Calvary I have had to deal with some problems in the church, just a few. Well, more than a few and more than I would like to deal with.

Then why didn't I just walk away?

Why didn't I leave?

Why didn't I just ignore the problems?

Why didn't I . . .

And you can put in there any excuse that causes you, causes me not to do what God has called us to do!

The reason I dealt with these issues, dealt with these problems and continue to deal with them is that God has called me to be the pastor of this church. And, like Timothy, I have to deal with the good, the bad and yes, the ugly!

Make no mistake about this. For Timothy, it is – ***A CALL TO ACTION!***

Now here is the thing. It is easy to become discouraged but if you are doing what God has called you to do, press on, don't lose sight of the Lord.

But why are so many Christians' losing the desire to serve, to move, to go forward in what the Lord has called them to do?

I think the problem is they have left their first love and they have let other things get in the way of their relationship with the Lord. In other words, they have not stoked the fires in their relationship with the Lord and that fire is going out.

And what is then seen in their life is they have lost their hunger for the Scriptures.

They don't go out and fellowship with other believers, they are on their own. They may even say things like, "***I don't need anyone, I have the Lord!***"

And that sounds great, but the Lord said you do need others to help you in your walk with Him.

In Proverbs 27:17 we are told, "**As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.**"

I don't know if you remember this or if you are old enough to remember this, but I do.

I remember when I was a kid, long before I was able to shave, but my dad would take me to the barber shop and every once in a while, someone wanted a shave. And the barber would grab his razor and grab hold of the leather strap on the side of the chair, and he would sharpen that razor.

Back and forth he would go and the reason being is that you wanted a sharp razor to cut the person's beard.

For us, we need each other if we are going to be sharp in our walk with the Lord. We need that encouragement and even correction when we are wrong so that our walk will stay in line.

But how important this is in our lives. That is why I believe Men's Bible Study and Women's Bible Study is so important because it gives us time to discuss the Scriptures, discuss issues in our lives, talk about what we are going through and maybe things that we did that need to be corrected. Iron sharpens iron and we need each other.

Paul put it like this in Hebrews 10:24-25, "**And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**"

You can't stir people up if you are not around them, if you don't spend time with them. And when I say that we are to "**stir people up**" I am not saying we push their buttons and make them angry.

Notice that Paul says that we are to stir them up in love and good works. In other words, like Paul was doing here with Timothy, we are pushing them forward, encouraging them in the work that God has called them to do.

We are not to avoid coming together, even though some are doing this, but we are to exhort them, and it is something that is going to be needed more and more as we see the Lord's return getting closer and closer.

Why is that? Why is that so important to have this fellowship, especially in these days we are living in?

Because the days are going to get more and more evil, there is going to be more pressure to compromise your faith and thus, we need to be there for each other to spur each other on.

I want to share with you what can happen when we don't do what God has called us to do, the trouble we can get in.

It is a story of King David, who was a man who loved the Lord with all his heart. He was a good man.

And in II Samuel 11:1 we are told, **“It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.”**

Keep in mind that they had seasons for war, times when the weather was more suitable to do battle.

So as this season of war comes into place, David sends his military leader, Joab to go and fight against the Ammonites.

Nothing wrong with that so far.

The problem comes as we are told, **“David remained in Jerusalem.”**

Now you might not think much about that, but even though David was the King, he was to go into battle.

Why didn't he go this time?

Maybe he was getting tired of fighting, he has been on the throne in Israel for some 20 years now, and thus, he is around 50 years old, and he wanted a break.

He has been fighting since he was a young man and now, he wanted a rest, maybe to enjoy the spoils of all the victories he has had so far.

Now we might not see ourselves going into a war to fight a battle or refusing to go because we want to stay home.

But the reality is, we are all in a spiritual battle and we need to take up the whole armor of God and not go *AWOL* or absence without leave!

Why is this such a big deal?

Because, as we are going to see that prosperity, idle time will bring us down just as it is going to bring David down!

Keep in mind that all the direct assaults that the enemy mustered against David failed.

But this back door approach is going to be very successful. David is going to allow his flesh to get the better of him. And he will find out that his real enemy is not the Philistines, or the Ammonites but his flesh!

Listen to what transpired next. In II Samuel 11:2-5 we are told, **“Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king’s house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold. So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said, ‘Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?’ Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house. And the woman conceived; so she sent and told David, and said, ‘I am with child.’”**

Maybe it was a hot evening and David, trying to cool off, took a walk on the top of his roof, which was functional back then.

And maybe Bathsheba felt the same way; she wanted to cool off and bathed herself in some cool water.

The problem for David is that he had a lot of time on his hands and as he walked on the roof his eyes caught the sight of a beautiful woman who was bathing.

That first look was not a sin, but the second and third and so on was a sin for David or it led him into sin!

You see, he began to entertain thoughts and ideas, fantasizing about a relationship with her until it finally became a reality.

It is as James tells us, **“But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.”** James 1:14-15.

If you feed and nurture sin, it will grow and give birth to your desires, but it only leads to death, as David will soon find out.

Now the husband of Bathsheba was Uriah, one of David’s mighty men!

And David commits adultery with her and now she is pregnant.

Keep in mind that Uriah is battling the enemy for David and thus, this can’t be his child!

So, to cover this up David comes up with a plan to bring Uriah back from battle to sleep with his wife so he thinks the child is his. But he rejected this offer by David twice because he could not sleep in the comforts of his home with his wife while the other soldiers were doing battle out in the field!

So David comes up with a plan to have Uriah killed in battle and the plan works beautifully!

Keep in mind that David committed adultery and murder, both capital crimes.

How could this happen to a man who loved the Lord, the sweet Psalmist of Israel?

He was not doing what he was supposed to be doing and he was alone with lots of time on his hands while his men were fighting a war!

And the Devil loves to use that free time, that down time you might say, to draw us away from God and into sin!

And I am not saying we can't go on vacation, or we can't have any free time. What I am saying is that when we do, we had better make sure that the Lord is there with us. And He is with us but are we with Him is the bigger question we need to ask ourselves!

We don't see David seeking the Lord in this situation, talk about the Lord because the Lord would not have condoned his actions.

And how true that is in our own lives. When we begin down that path of sin, we stay away from the Word of God, we don't pray, and we don't fellowship with other believers because we don't want to hear what they have to say about what we are doing. And we certainly don't want to hear what God has to say!

We need to be careful, and we need to do the work that God has called us to do. We need to be active in our walk with the Lord!

Thus, as Paul told Timothy, "**wage the good warfare,**" don't give up, he is admonishing Timothy to continue on in the battle for truth!

Make no mistake about it, we are in a battle for the truth, and it seems like in the days we are living in, many times the battle comes from the so-called church itself! But we need to move forward and not give up!

In Acts chapter 20, starting in verse 22 Paul tells us, “**And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.**” Acts 20:22-24.

Don't let situations move you from the course that God has set for you! It may get difficult, or it may be difficult right now. Don't give up, forge ahead in the power of the Lord and see the salvation that He will bring to the situations you are facing!

This is – *A CALL TO ACTION* for Timothy!

As we read on, we will see Paul admonish Timothy to – *STAY FOCUSED!*

VERSE 19a

Isn't it easy to become distracted in life. And that not only applies to our spiritual lives, but also our physical lives.

Look at how many people get into accidents because they are talking on the phone and were distracted from the traffic ahead of them.

Or you are talking with someone and all of a sudden you see that their head turns towards something while you are talking to them. They were distracted.

We see athletes that are distracted because they think they are going to win a race and they slow down or showboat the last part of the race and they lose.

We have seen football players who are running for a touchdown, and they think they have made it only to be tackled or lose the ball or drop the ball before they cross into the end zone!

What are these?

They are nothing more than ***DISTRACTIONS!***

And distractions can also come in our spiritual lives to take us away from what the Lord has called us to do. Thus – ***STAY FOCUSED!***

And I am not saying that every distraction is evil, but these distractions can take us away from that which is the best – ***THE LORD!***

Many, many years ago, when I was a very young Christian, I attended Willow Creek Church and they had these big glass windows from floor to ceiling. And the ceilings were immensely high.

Not only that, but as you looked out the window there was this pond that had all kinds of geese swimming in it.

Yes, you got it. I was distracted from what was being said by the beautiful scenery outside that window!

I remember going to Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa for a conference many years ago and the sanctuary was just plain.

Why did they do it that way?

So your attention, your focus would be up front and you can hear the Word of God being taught. Decreasing distractions in the sanctuary is important because we are easily distracted!

As one writer put it, ***“Our attention often runs to what’s important to us. So distraction can reveal what we love.”***

Let me share this with you and I think you already know how easy it is to be distracted. We are told,

Since the fall of man, people have had trouble staying focused, but we live today in an age of unprecedented distraction. Since you're already reading this on some electronic device, I don't need to elaborate.

Lots of experts are talking about the negative effects this is having on us. Many of us feel it: the buzzing brain, the attention atrophy, the diminishing tolerance for reading, especially reading books.

We're becoming conditioned to distraction, and it's harming our ability to listen and think carefully, to be still, to pray, and to meditate. Which means it is a spiritual danger, an evil from which we need God's deliverance (Matthew 6:13).

Distraction, at least the dangerous kind I'm referring to, is shifting our attention from something of greater importance to something of lesser importance.

Our fundamental and most dangerous problem in distraction is in being distracted from God - our tendency to shift our attention orientation from the greatest Object in existence to countless lesser ones. The Bible calls this idolatry.

This fundamental attention shift disorders us in pervasive ways. We find our tendency to be distracted from the more important to the less important cascading down, detrimentally affecting our relationships and responsibilities.

So, at the deepest level, we are distractible because of our fallen, selfish nature; we have evil inside us. . . .

When we are regularly distracted by something, we need to take note. Our attention often runs to what's important to us. So, distraction can reveal what we love.

This happened to Jesus's friend Martha.

Martha was busy in the kitchen while Jesus taught in her home. When Martha complained that her sister, Mary, wasn't helping because she was sitting at Jesus's feet, Jesus replied,

“Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”

(Luke 10:41-42)

Martha was distracted from Jesus. By what?

By serving her guests. Why?

Because she was anxious. Anxious about what?

Anxious about feeding everyone, and in all likelihood anxious about what everyone would think of her and her household if she didn't do it well.

But Martha didn't recognize her distraction until Jesus helped her see her heart. She thought she was doing the right thing by serving everyone. But Jesus pointed out to Martha that her values were disordered. She had shifted her attention from the greater importance to the lesser.

So, in our busyness, we must ask, what is the real distraction? What does our heart desire? Are we choosing ***“the good portion,”*** seeking the great ***“one thing”*** (Psam 27:4), or something less? . . .

. . . So, in confident faith we can approach his throne of grace with this prayer:

Whatever it takes, Lord, increase my resolve to pursue only what you call me to do, and deliver me from the fragmenting effect of fruitless distraction.

In Micah 6:8 listen to what the Lord desires of us. We are told, **“He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?”**

What is interesting to me is that in Deuteronomy 10:12-13 the Lord told them what He also required of them. This is what He said in Deuteronomy, **“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?”**

Now I realize that many of you are thinking, *“Wait a minute, that is not what the Lord said here in Micah 6:8. In Deuteronomy He is talking about loving the Lord and here in Micah it is about doing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with God. So how does this fit?”*

Now hear me out on this. There is no way you can do what is right, love mercy, walk humbly without the power of God’s Spirit working in you and God’s Spirit is not going to work in you unless you come to that saving faith in Him! And, as believers, we can quench the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives by doing our own thing, by not listening to Him! (I Thessalonians 5:19)

In other words, God works on the inside and it overflows in what we do, what we say, how we live out our faith!

So distractions will draw us away from God and as we are drawn away from God we will not do justly, we will not love mercy and we will not walk humbly with God. And the way to see how you are doing on the inside is to see how you are behaving on the outside!

Now here in I Timothy 1:19 we see that we need to have faith and a good conscience to wage the good warfare, to fight these battles!

Why is that?

Because they protect us against the spiritual attacks of the enemy that bring doubt and discouragement and condemnation into our lives!

There was a magazine editor by the name of H. L. Mencken and his definition of “*conscience*” is as follows, “*the inner voice which warns us that somebody may be looking.*”

That is a worldly look at what a conscience is all about.

You see, for us as Christians, if you have a good conscience then you will do the will of God in spite of who is watching you or what people may say of you!

Like Martin Luther, we will say, “*Here I stand; I can do no other, so help me God!*”

You see, having faith in God keeps us focused upon Him so we will not be moved.

Having a good conscience or doing what is right will not give the enemy a foothold in our lives to discourage us from the work, showing us that we are not worthy to do the work. We are not worthy but don’t give him the ammunition to attack you with!

Paul lists our spiritual armor in Ephesians chapter 6 that is also needed for we are all in the Lord’s army, we are soldiers waging the good warfare! Put on the whole armor of God!

In I Timothy 4:6 Paul wrote, “**If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.**”

In other words, Timothy – ***STAY FOCUSED!***

Yes, there will be those who want their ears tickled with fairy tales!

“But Timothy, don’t give into what they want, give them the Word of God!” And we will deal more with this as we move on in I Timothy and then in II Timothy as well. The importance of staying focused on the Word of God and applying it to our lives so that we can live it! So that we can be doers of the Word and not hearers only! (James 1:22)

We need to keep focused upon Jesus because distractions will take us away from Him and we can become discouraged, lost in doubt and even condemnation!

And just like in the physical world, spiritual distractions can be deadly. Let me show you how something very simple can become deadly. This took place back in 2015 in Colorado. We are told,

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has been investigating why a small Cessna 150K plane crashed last May into a wheat field near Watkins, Colo., killing the pilot and his passenger. Now, a recently released report has revealed that Amritpal Singh probably lost control of the plane while taking selfie pictures with his cellphone.

While much attention has been given to the use of cellphones while driving cars, this latest case demonstrates the risks of operating any machinery while texting, taking photographs, or posting photos to social media.

“Contributing to the accident was the pilot’s distraction due to his cellphone use while maneuvering at low altitude,” the NTSB stated in a report issued last week, according to Reuters.

After discovering an undamaged GoPro video camera close to the plane’s wreckage, investigators used its data card to learn more about what took place in the moments leading up to the crash.

Video footage from the camera showed that the pilot had taken several passengers on rides in his one-passenger plane over the course of the day, and one nighttime flight shortly before the accident.

While the video camera did not capture Mr. Singh's final flight, investigators say the footage from other flights provides clues to what happened that night.

During many of the flights, Singh took pictures of himself with his cellphone. Investigators say that the activation of the camera's flash is likely to have disoriented the pilot, making him lose control of the plane.

"During the climb-out portion of flight, the pilot uses his cellphone to take a self photograph. The camera's flash was activated and illuminated the cockpit area," the NTSB report states.

After the age of the selfie exploded in the early 2010s, so did the number of selfie-related accidents.

Last April, a woman died in a head-on collision on Interstate 85 in North Carolina just seconds after she updated her Facebook status with selfies she had taken while driving.

A police department spokesman *told* local WGHP-TV that the crash was a real-life public-service announcement "showing what happens when you text and drive."

- <https://bit.ly/3Yc5f2p>

Stay focused on the Lord so that you don't crash and burn in your faith. Have that good faith and good conscience – ***STAY FOCUSED!***

As we finish up our study this morning, we will be looking at – ***DON'T BE SWAYED!***

VERSES 19b-20

Notice what Paul is saying here. He is telling Timothy that if you don't go forward in your – ***CALL TO ACTION!*** If you don't – ***STAY FOCUSED!*** Then you are going to be shipwrecked in your faith!

And thus, the warning – ***DON'T BE SWAYED!***

You see, if you are not involved in the work of God but have all that free time on your hands, you are not going to be focused on the Lord and you will be easily swayed by those who are bringing in false teaching, you will be swayed by what the world is placing in front of you!

And Paul gives Timothy and the church there in Ephesus an example of two men whose faith was shipwrecked upon the rocks of false teaching, of worldliness and they are Hymenaeus and Alexander.

I think the believers in Ephesus knew these men and saw what happened to them. Now I don't think they were unbelievers or apostates, but they were not walking with the Lord like they should, and it affected their conduct.

How do I know that?

Because prior to Paul speaking of them, he was saying to Timothy that he “**. . . may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience.**” And from there he goes on to talk about these men and the things they did were not necessarily good!

The reason I say that they were believers is that they did not reject “***the faith***” but the way that this is structured in the Greek it seems to be saying that they rejected a good conscience and that then lead their faith to be shipwrecked!

I believe that Paul is speaking of their sanctification process or that their being transformed into the image of Christ was put on hold because of their actions.

If they were not believers, Paul would not have “**... delivered them to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.**” I Timothy 1:20. You see, unbelievers are not turned over to Satan because they already belong to him. But these two men were going to face the wiles of the Devil you might say so that they would see their error and return to the faith, to Christ! They would stop their immoral lifestyles!

That is very similar to what Paul told the Corinthian church about the young man who was sleeping with his stepmom and the church there in Corinth thought they were showing him the love of Christ by accepting what he was doing. That was not the case and Paul told them what needed to be done in I Corinthians 5:5, where he wrote, “**deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.**”

In other words, he could not run down to the church down the street because there were none. And thus, by removing him from the body of believers he was alone and the whole idea here is restoration when he comes to his senses, when he is tired of being beaten up by the Devil!

Think about what was going on in their life like this. When Paul speaks of them suffering shipwreck it carries with it the idea that the ship did not make it to the desired destination, and the point here is that desired destination is being more Christ-like!

Isn't that the desire of all of us?

I think it is or it should be!

What did John the Baptist say regarding his life?

In John 3:30 we are told that John said, “**He must increase, but I must decrease.**” In other words, Jesus must increase in our life and that flesh life must decrease so that people can see Jesus in me!

Remember what Paul wrote in I Thessalonians 4:1-8 regarding the will of God for our lives. He wrote, **“Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.”**

Paul tells them that they should **“abound more and more”** or their walk should keep growing!

If you are satisfied where you are at in your Christian walk, it shows that you are stagnant in your walk, you are backsliding, you are not growing.

Now you may not like that. In fact, you may feel that is a pretty harsh statement.

But it is true.

Think about this for a minute. On this side of heaven, we will or should be growing every day, moving forward, maturing in the faith.

That is what Paul is urging these believers and us to do. He wants us to super abound in our walk with the Lord.

Paul tells us here that God’s will for our lives is our sanctification, *HAGIASMOS*, (hag-ee-as-mos’) in the Greek and it means to be set apart.

We are to be set apart from sin and unto God.

And we see specifically here, Paul speaks of sexual purity, that we are to abstain or stay completely away from any thought or behavior that goes against God's Word in regard to sexual sin.

God has called us to be holy people and if we want to be more like Christ then we must surrender our will to His will and walk accordingly!

Paul tells Timothy in I Timothy 6:20-21, "**O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge - by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen.**"

The admonishing or cautioning of Timothy to hold on tightly to the truths of God found in the Word of God so that you don't get swept away by the world's influence, the world's immorality, like Hymenaeus and Alexander!

For these two men, Hymenaeus and Alexander, they rejected their walk towards being holy or holiness, their good conscience and they were defending their ungodly behavior, justifying what they were doing!

One writer put it like this. We are told,

People are good at making excuses to justify sin in their lives. Getting into a habit of sin is often hard to get out of. Sometimes the progression of sin seems like the easier road to follow. Often turning from our sinful ways leads to tremendous guilt, anxiety, and helplessness.

Even those strong in their faith still manage to stumble over and over again at some point in their life. It may seem like an overwhelming task to turn from our evil deeds and turn to God.

This world does not make it easy to repent. Constant nagging voices are telling you to love yourself and accept yourself for who you are.

What if your actions are wrong in God's eyes?

The voice of reason and morality has been replaced with don't judge me. When someone exposes Biblical truths to the world, they are often labeled as judgmental.

- <https://bit.ly/3DEVpwC>

Now that is the problem today. If we try to judge if something is right or wrong, we are called – ***JUDGMENTAL!***

Christians and unbelievers may even tell you that by your words you are not Christ-like!

But notice that Paul not only called out the sin but the sinners, he named them by name!

Now some may be offended by what Paul did.

“Paul named names – how rude! How un-Christlike!”

Then why did he do that?

He wanted to protect others from their heresy, their pull back into the world and to warn believers to stay away from them.

Paul tried to discipline these men and they rejected what Paul said so Paul kicked them out of the church, out of the protection of the church so Satan could buffet their flesh, as I have said.

And I understand that there are some pastors out there who refuse to name names, to call out false teachers with their false doctrine.

Paul was not afraid, and he did it and so must we.

Think about it. What if you were scheduled for surgery and I told you that there was a really bad surgeon in town and if you go to him, you will have many problems.

But then I say, ***“But I don’t want to tell you his name. I will let God handle that. Good luck!”***

That would be crazy. Of course I would mention his name and warn people who he is if I really cared for people. And that is what Paul did and that is what we should do as well.

But there is this problem. And you know what people say. They go to what Jesus said in Matthew 7:1, **“Judge not, that you be not judged.”**

“Hey brother, don’t judge lest you be judged also!”

First of all, many twist this Scripture so they can continue in their sin, with their heresy.

What are we not to judge?

We are not to judge a person’s heart, their motives or ministry but we are to judge a person’s conduct, their teaching!

How can I be so sure that is what Jesus meant?

Because Jesus went on to say in Matthew 7:15-20, **“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”**

You see, we are to be fruit inspectors; we are to judge what a person is teaching by the Word of God, judge their behavior by the Word of God!

How do you deal with false teachers with their false doctrine?

You destroy the false teaching with the truth of God found in the Word of God and if the person who is promoting the false teaching refuses to repent, you remove them from the church, or they will infect the church with their false teaching.

The same is true of a Christian who is involved in blatant sin and refuses to repent and get right with God, they too must be removed. And again, please understand that the whole idea of them being removed from the church is for their restoration, that they would get right with God and thus, be allowed back in the church!

Paul put it like this in Romans 16:17, **“Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.”** I think that is pretty clear.

Like I have said, Hymenaeus and Alexander seem to have been true believers in the church at Ephesus. But it was their lifestyle, their sin that was moving them away from God and causing them to be shipwrecked!

In other words, he was basically saying to them, *“You shouldn’t be here if you want to continue sleeping around or continue to get drunk and get high. If you want to live like the world, then go and live in the world.”*

Again, that may seem harsh but if you really love them, you will do what is best for them even though it may be difficult!

Let me share these words with you from Warren Wiersbe. He wrote,

It is important that our ministry be balanced. Some churches only preach the Gospel and seldom teach their converts the truths of the Christian life.

Other churches are only opposing false doctrine; they have no positive ministry.

We must be teachers of healthy doctrine (“sound doctrine,” 1 Tim 1:10) or the believers will not grow. We must preach the Gospel and keep winning the lost to Christ. And we must defend the faith against those who would corrupt the church with false doctrine and godless living. It is a constant battle, but it must be carried on.

Timothy must have been greatly helped and encouraged when he read this first section of Paul’s letter. God had called Timothy, equipped him, and put him into his place of ministry. Timothy’s job was not to run all over Ephesus, being involved in a multitude of tasks. His job was to care for the church by winning the lost, reaching the saved, and defending the faith.

Any task that did not relate to these ministries would have to be abandoned. One reason some local churches are having problems is that the pastors and spiritual leaders are involved in too many extracurricular activities and are not doing the tasks God has called them to do.

It might be a good idea for our churches to take a spiritual inventory!

- Warren Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT*, p. 751

Look at what we have seen in our study this morning.

We have seen – ***A CALL TO ACTION!***

How important it is to obey what the Lord is calling us to do.

We then looked at this important point – ***STAY FOCUSED!***

Isn't it easy to get distracted with all that is going on around us. We need to keep our eyes upon Jesus and be directed by Him, so we don't go down the wrong path.

And that is the last point – ***DON'T BE SWAYED!***

Paul gives us the names of two men who were swayed by the world, they got into a lifestyle that was not godly. And Paul took care of the situation by removing them from the church in Ephesus so that they might repent and return!

As I close our study this morning, let me leave you with these words from II Timothy 4:1-5 where Paul said, **“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”**

May we earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us and hold everything in the light of God's Word and you will not go wrong as you do so in love!

In other words – ***A LIFE OF FAITH!***