

THE LAWS OF LEADERSHIP

1 Timothy 4:6-16

LAW #10 Leadership Involves Being a Good Servant

Chuck Swindoll's book *Laugh Again* has a little section on the whole business of being servants. And he starts his statement with the fact that:

Someone who is truly unselfish is generous with his or her time and possessions, energy and money. As that works its way out, it is demonstrated in various ways.

In our selfish, grab-all-you-can-get society, the concept of cultivating an unselfish, servant-hearted attitude is almost a joke to the majority.

We're talking about that a leader, to be a leader, must learn first to be a servant.

You know, when you think in terms of servanthood in the Scriptures, you realize that the men who are closest to Jesus never learned that simple lesson.

In Matthew 20, James and John pull a power play to try to get the seats on the right and on the left in the kingdom. And their mother who is an aunt to Jesus is the one who joins them in the request.

And the other 10 guys really get their nose out of joint over that power play. And Jesus said this in response to that request in Matthew 20:26-28

“It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

You skip over three chapters later in Matthew 23:11 and you read these words:

“But the greatest among you shall be your servant.”

You know, when you look at something like that you realize that the Lord really focused on the fact that the thing that is the most important in our lives is not what we are getting but what we are giving.

**Have we learned the basic principle of leadership?
And that of sacrificial servanthood?**

Now the disciples learned that the basic principle of leadership is not to be served but to serve. And that the basic principle of sacrificial servanthood is to love one another as we love ourselves.

Peter, James, Jude and John all refer to themselves as servants. Moses was called a servant of the Lord.

Joshua was called the servant of the Lord and many in the Scriptures take on that title.

Law #10: Leadership Involves Being a Good Servant (4:6-16).

Let's go to our first verse and our key verse. Verse 6

“By continually making known these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourishing yourself on the words of faith and the good teaching which you have closely followed.”

Now Paul is turning to Timothy in view of the words that he's had to say last week about “apostasy.” And the fact that Satan is so much involved in false teaching.

Now how's Timothy supposed to relate to this?

He's supposed to relate to it *“By continually making known these things.”* The fact that Satan has a program of falsehood and people are running around with cauterized a conscious who have no feelings inside. And who are walking the pathway of error

“by continually making known these things to the brethren.”

Warn them of the danger that’s coming and then your key phrase to law #10.

“You will be a good servant of Christ Jesus.”

It was Richard Foster who said:

...when we choose to be a servant we give up the right to be in charge. There is a great freedom in this. If we voluntarily choose to be taken advantage of, then we cannot be manipulated. When we choose to be a servant we surrender the right to decide who and when we will serve. We become available and [also] vulnerable.

(From Celebration of Discipline by Richard J. Foster. p. 132)

In 2 Corinthians 4:5, Paul says of himself:

“For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake.”

Principle, Law #10: A leader is going to learn to be a good servant.

Now notice the rest of the verse. V. 6 “By continually making known these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus. Nourishing yourself on the words of faith and the good teaching which you have closely followed.”

Now, in your diet of the servant, there are two things you have to do. You have to nourish yourself in two ways: (1) *the words of faith*; and (2) *the good teaching*.

You put those together and they provide a healthy diet for a good servant. First of all, have a healthy appetite for the Word.

1 Peter 2:2-3: “as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby.”

Jesus said the same thing: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word” (Matt. 4:4).—Quoting from Deut.

Jeremiah 15:16: “Thy words were found and I did eat them; thy word was the joy and rejoicing of my heart.”

So, you want to be a good servant?

Start feeding on *the words of faith*.

Second, start following the teaching. Feeding and following.

“The good teaching which you have closely followed.”

Now, put it this way:

I am feeding on His word and I am obeying His word.

I have a desire not only to eat it but to do it. And that’s what he’s telling Timothy he needs to do to be a good servant.

What Paul is going to do in the rest of the passage, is give Timothy a further opportunity to follow some basic scriptural principles that reflect a good servant with 10 quick commands.

Let’s look at verse 7.

“Be shunning unhallowed and old womanish tales. Be training (exercising) yourself toward godliness;

Command #1: “Be shunning unhallowed and old womanish tales.”

All Paul is saying is, we are what we eat. You eat junk food, you’re going to have junky health. Garbage in garbage out! It’s the same principle here.

Instead of listening to *old womanish fables and tales*, stick to the book. Eat the book. Don't feed on trash. Forget these worldly, old wives tales. They have nothing of nourishment in them for the spiritual man.

Paul says to Timothy: “*Be shunning.*”

That's in the present tense. That means every day.

When you get tempted to go off on some fascinating side-track, don't do it.

What are *old womanish wives tales*?

For example whenever you felt sick you took castor oil, then you would feel better.

“*Be shunning unhallowed and old womanish tales.*”

Command #2: v. 7b “*Be training (exercising) yourself toward godliness.*”

The doctrine should be implemented and followed by practice.

Take what you know and do it! Express an obedient heart because God blesses it. “*Be training (exercising) yourself toward godliness.*”

May I tell you something? Godliness just isn't going to happen. The only way you are going to reflect a godly life is to put your nose to the grindstone and make some decisions that are hard to make but live by them and your life will begin to reflect the person of Christ and it won't happen any other way!

And it starts, first, by the first thing you're going to do in the morning. Exercise yourself spiritually. That's #1.

Verse 8. "for physical training (bodily exercise) is profitable for a little, but [on the other hand] godliness is profitable with respect to all things, holding promise for the present life and of that about to come."

There are two things that you have to face every day to be a Christian that's hitting on all cylinders.

Physical fitness and spiritual fitness.

Paul is saying if you get up some morning and you can't get them both done, what comes first? The spiritual fitness because that's valuable for now and for later. And that's all Paul's saying is be sure that you're living the balanced life.

**Richard Semaan wrote a little tract called
“*12 Exercises for Spiritual Fitness*” and they are very simple.**

Know the Lord.

Love the Lord.

Obey the Lord.

Trust in the Lord.

Wait for the Lord.

Rest in the Lord.

Pray to the Lord.

Hope in the Lord.

Serve the Lord.

Thank the Lord.

Grow in the Lord.

and Share the Lord.

12 good principles for spiritual exercise.

(American Tract Society, Garland, TX. Copyright, 1988)

Verse 9, “*Reliable is the word and worthy of wholehearted acceptance.*”

Now all he's doing in verse 9 is telling you that what he had to say in verse 8 was very reliable. That points backwards. He's just saying, *"What I've had to say is reliable and what I've had to say is worthy of your total and complete acceptance."*

Reason: verse 10 *"For this purpose we are toiling and struggling (wrestling), because we fixed our hope upon the living God, who is the savior of all men, especially of believers."*

Those 2 words, *"toiling"* and *"struggling."* Everybody that's done any physical exercise knows those two words have athletic overtones. And they really do. V. 10a *"For this purpose,"* Paul says, in our ministry *"we are toiling"* to the point of exhaustion. And we are *"struggling (or wrestling),"* with issues like wrestling an opponent, *"because we fixed our hope upon the living God, who is the savior of all men, especially of believers."*

Now when you look at that immediately the word *"toiling"* speaks to you of fatigue.

The next word “*wrestling*” means agony.

It’s the agony of it all. The pain.

So, you want to be a specialist in spirituality?

I can tell you something, it’s going to come by *toiling* and *struggling*. If you’re going to be a follower of Christ you’re going to have to take up your cross. It’s going to cost you something on a regular basis “*because we fixed our hope upon the living God, who is the Savior of all men and especially of believers.*”

Verse 11 “*These things be commanding and teaching.*”

Command #3 of the 10 commands.

These very things I’ve just shared with you.

The key verse to the whole book, the heart of all of it is the next verse, verse 12.

v. 12 “*Let no one look down on you (or think little of you) because you are young; but keep on becoming an example of the believers in word, in behavior, in love, in faith, and in purity.*”

Command #4: Don’t let anybody look down on you because you’re young.

Timothy is probably near thirty-five here as we look at this writing. Paul, in his witness to him says,

“Just don’t let anybody look down on you because you’re young. Don’t let age be a factor of somebody excusing themselves from your example and your witness because of your age.”

Paul says, “Timmy just because you’re young doesn’t mean that people have to look down on you.” He says,

“I want you to be an example in five areas: in your communication, in your conduct, in your compassion, in your confession, and in your chastity.”

First of all in your communication. “Keep on becoming an example of the believers in the words that you speak.” You know, words speak louder, sometimes than actions really. We always say actions speak louder than words but words coming forth from the mouth sometimes can do the other. Paul says to Timothy, “Be an example in words.”

Secondly, be an example in your behavior, in your conduct. Be a person who’s manifesting by your life, qualities of a Christian.

**Third, In your compassion, be an example in your love.
This is agape love which is produced by the Spirit of God.**

**Fourth, In your confession keep on being an example of the
believers in your faith. Your statement of the fact that you
are trusting God no matter what the circumstances are.**

**And finally, be an example in your chastity.
Keep on becoming an example in your purity.**

Let's look at verse 13

***“Until I am coming, give yourself to the reading, the
exhortation (or the preaching), and the teaching.”***

**Command #5 You have 3 main tasks as a minister. “Until I
am coming, give yourself to do three things:**

your “reading,”

your “exhortation (preaching),”

and your “teaching.”

**Verse 14 “Do not neglect the gift which is in you,
which was given you through prophecy with the
laying on of hands of the elders.”**

That's Command #6

Timothy may have been just a little timid. And Paul may be giving him a gentle rebuke. You could say, this is a negative present imperative. You could translate it

“stop neglecting the gift which is in you.” There may have been opportunities that Timothy didn’t step through like Paul would have wanted him to. Now Paul was a goal directed individual and it’s tough to keep up with a guy like that. And I imagine Timothy was kind of melancholy, and a little too laid back. And so Paul’s telling him again, *“Don’t be neglecting the spiritual gift which you have but serve the Lord faithfully.”*

Paul’s telling him to keep on keeping’ on.

Verse 15 *“Be practicing these things, be living (or throwing yourself into) in them in order that your progress may be evident to everyone.”*

We have command 7 and 8 here in verse 15.

First, *“Be practicing these things.”* Just keep on doing it. Be faithful every day to turn out for practice and then what’s going to happen?

Command #8: *“Be throwing yourself into them or in other words, give yourself wholly to them and as you do that, people are going to notice the progress in your life.”*

**People are going to see you changing and growing.
What an exciting thing.**

Verse 16 *“Keep on paying careful attention to yourself and the teaching;”* That’s command #9.

And after you do that, command #10 *“keep on continuing in them”* (sticking to it), *“for in doing this you will save yourself and those who are hearing you.”*

In Leviticus 26:19 the Lord says, *“I will break down your stubborn pride and I’ll make the sky above you like iron and the ground beneath you like bronze.”* Then in verse 21 He says, *“If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, I will multiply your afflictions seven times over, as your sins deserve.”*

You see, the thing that really stops us from being good servants for Jesus’ sake is our own selfishness and our own pride.

There are 10 lessons that come out of this study.

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

#1: “Leadership Involves Being a Good Servant.”

#2: A good servant must be “nourishing himself on words of faith and good teaching.”

#3: Diet and exercise are critical concerns in the pursuit of godliness.

#4: Physical exercise is good for the here and now, but spiritual exercise goes on into eternity.

#5: “Toiling and struggling” are a part of Christian servanthood.

#6: The servant leader is challenged to be an example in: communication, conduct, compassion, confession, and chastity.

#7: The 3 main tasks of the servant leader are: the reading, exhortation, and the teaching of the scriptures.

#8: A servant leader must not neglect the gift which is given him.

#9: A servant leader is characterized by: practicing, persevering, and pressing on in these things.

#10: The servant leader must be concerned about his private and public life.

STUDIES IN THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

PART II - 1 TIMOTHY 4-6

"The Laws of Leadership"

Key verse 4:12: *"Let no one look down on you (think little of) because you are young; but keep on becoming an example of the believers in word, in behavior, in love, in faith, in purity."*

LAW NUMBER TEN - Leadership Involves Being a Good Servant

1 Timothy 4:6-16

Key verse 4:6

Notes

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v. 13 Until I am coming, give yourself to the reading, the exhortation (preaching), the teaching.

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v. 15 Be practicing these things, be living (throwing yourself into) in them in order that your progress may be evident to everyone.

v. 16 Keep on paying careful attention to yourself and to the teaching; keep on continuing in them (sticking to it), for in doing this you will save yourself and those who are hearing you.

QUESTIONS

- 1. Read 1 Timothy 4:6-16 and summarize in your own words what Paul is saying in this section.**
- 2. What will Timothy be if he keeps on faithfully teaching, according to verse 6?**
- 3. What two things will he be "nourishing" himself on, according to verse 6?**
- 4. What is he to be "shunning," according to verse 7?**
- 5. What is the difference between physical and spiritual "training," according to verse 8?**
- 6. Why are they "toiling and struggling," according to verse 10?**
- 7. In what five ways is Timothy to be an "example of the believers," according to verse 12?**
- 8. What does Paul tell Timothy not to "neglect," according to verse 14?**
- 9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?**
- 10. What lesson have you learned from this study?**