

1 Timothy 5:22-25
Instructions to Timothy
Fight, Keep Fighting, Finish!

Use Discretion, Stay Pure, Take Care of Yourself!



Vs. 22 – “Don’t be hasty in the laying on of hands”.

There are instructions that remain to be given to this young pastor. These are brief, to the point - like Paul might be running out of room on his parchment and desires to save space. Parchment was expensive and the expense was limiting how many words he could include in his treatise. But the concise nature of these instruction have their advantages. What would preachers do if we didn’t have any blanks to fill in?! The first blank to fill in is for Timothy not to be hasty in the laying on of hands. What does THAT mean? Well, I think [4:14] may be able to give us a clue. After a prophecy was made about Him, Timothy received a gift of the Holy Spirit that he had not previously shown. Perhaps it was the gift to communicate effectively, to be bold - but we really only guess at it since it does not specify.



[Acts 8:14-17] – a “*receiving of the Holy Spirit*”. We don’t know in what form that “receiving” manifested itself because we are not told here. In Timothy’s case, he was given some specific gift, (talent, or ability, or attitude) of the Holy Spirit that would enable him to carry out his pastoral duties more powerfully/effectively! When the Holy Spirit gives a gift, I firmly believe that it is for greater effectiveness in achieving His purposes - the purposes of God! It is for the sake of effectiveness in communicating the gospel. The gift given will usually will takes us out of our comfort zone! It puts us in the middle of what God is doing – often something that makes our head spin, or that will frightens us! When **tongues** happened after Pentecost, it was a sensational miracle, and thousands of foreign Jews that were on pilgrimage in Jerusalem for the religious holiday, responded to the message of the Gospel given to them in their own language, by Christians that **did not know** their language! When **prophecy happens**, it was, and is, for the purpose of building credibility and authority with knowledge or insight which could not be previously known by the one making the prophecy, but which could only be given through the Spirit of God! When **healing** happens, as was true even when Jesus did it Himself, it is to prove that He still heals and His claims to be Son of God are valid! These gifts, when authentic, are impressive to an unbelieving world, and they add up to souls stepping over into belief in Jesus, which is God’s ultimate intention for these gifts! But you better be accurate with them!

*Last week, we had hunted in the morning, and went to lunch in Lola at the best little restaurant around – The Crystal Café. We were just finishing up a great lunch, when a couple of friendly older guys stopped by our table and were asking about how our hunt was going. None of us had seen a thing, we said. Then the wife of one of the men walked up and heard what we were talking about. *“If you want deer, I will pray for you, and you will each get at least one deer today”*. Before we knew what was happening, she laid hands on two of us and began praying right there in the middle of a crowded restaurant. It was quite a prayer, or, maybe a better word for it would be “performance” – and she prayed long and loud, her authoritative voice rising and falling, telling the Lord that He must give us each a deer! FINALLY, she finished! While we were slowly trying to extricate ourselves from her grip on our shoulders and back away, speech-less – tongue-tied because of strangeness, she hung on to us while quickly recounting the stories of people she had prayed for in this manner who then, immediately, went out and got their deer. She **guaranteed** that each of us would get at least one deer that afternoon, now that she had prayed for it. She said she had the gift and we could count on it! The only problem was, when the day was done, and we had all come back in from hunting that afternoon, none of us had shot a deer! I haven’t even **seen** a deer since the gun season started! Dan Miller got one a couple of days later, but that was it! Now, the truth of the matter is, that lady gave a false prophesy! If she had done that to four unbelievers, she would have done irreparable damage to the reputation of Jesus in whose name she made her “demands”! People should be VERY careful about making prophesy/ predictions. What God says always comes true. What we say **He** is saying only comes true when it is actually the Spirit speaking through us, or we make a lucky guess. Spiritual mediums and “channelers”, which are usually fakes, are right half the time also. We do not want to be anywhere near their category! If we don’t have the truth we are nothing! If we dabble in spiritual gifts for the sake of putting on a show and being the center of attention, then we are just another weirdo freak show on this earth like all the other freak shows out there! Jesus was not a freak show, and He directs no bizarre, freakish displays of the Spirit! You literally KNOW when it is Him, and can sense when it is at least questionable, much less obviously NOT Him. / So Paul instructs Timothy to use discretion and wisdom, even just common sense before putting his blessing on all claims, or even of making his own claims to know what God knows.



Then Paul tells Timothy to stay “**pure**”. He prefaces that by telling Timothy to avoid “**sharing in the sins of others**”. Some scholars think this is referring to reinstating leaders caught in sin. Others think it is a reference to hurriedly laying on of hands to ordain elders/church leaders before knowing them well enough to really know their true character and love of Christ. That second one seems more likely. But I’m not convinced these two sentences about the laying on of hands and remaining pure are related in any substantial way. They are just as likely to be two separate rapid-fire instructions. I have always thought that this is simply a wise tip to Timothy not to delve too deeply into the sins of others. It is hard to imagine some of the things that people have told me – sins that they have committed, or sins committed against them. People want to unburden their souls and they need to do it with someone they can trust not to betray a confidence. So they go to their pastor. Some pastors will seek to go deeper – into details – especially of sexual sin. This is not a good practice. From what I have seen, just listening to tales of sexual sin can weaken and ensnare certain men. They’ve told me about it! Paul, in my opinion, is telling Timothy to protect himself by not seeking to go deeper. There is a line that should not be crossed and not every man or woman knows where that line is. So it is best to quit before finding that line. Pastors are not therapists, and even therapists need to be careful. The depravity of man is sometimes so dark and ugly that, I’m afraid, in some instances, we should not ask anyone to go where we’ve been if it is a horrible place. What a pastor **can** do and **should** do is offer practical and biblical guidance for a path going forward. He can lay hands on and pray for deliverance from the trauma and darkness of our past. Christ is the great physician and he excels in healing our minds, ridding us of the garbage inside, and giving us peace! Peace is a central fruit of the Spirit. It is God’s gift to His people when we are willing to take our personal garbage to the cross AND LEAVE IT THERE! The cross is where our sins belong, not necessarily on the therapists couch! I’m not saying there is no value there in talking about it, but what we really want is to be free of our baggage of sin, and only God can empty our trunk of that baggage! I believe we need to talk about it, but to go into detail is something that should be saved for only the most appropriate moments – maybe in situations where law enforcement needs to be called in - where a crime has been committed! Then, by all means, answer every question truthfully and provide even what they do not ask for!



That instruction was for Timothy to take care to guard his heart and mind from giving Satan an inroad into his mind. But Christ is Lord of the whole person – of our bodies also! There is a physical aspect to good church leadership. How many men have I known who went into the ministry and stopped being physical. They unwisely thought they could neglect their bodies. Our bodies were made for physical labors. The pastoral responsibilities most often have nothing to do with physicality. It is usually an office job. Research, telephone calls, counseling in an office, texting, emails, meetings. A pastor has to proactively make sure his body is challenged on a daily, or at least a regular basis. It takes self-discipline to make yourself go for a run or a walk – to play some sports, especially when you are young, do some exercises or even pump a little iron – anything to use the lungs, heart, muscles, joints! You also have to eat right. **Put bad fuel in a car and it runs badly. Put bad food in the body and it begins to break down!* So we choose to put good, nutritious fuel in our bodies!



By the way, these basic rules of health don't just apply to pastors. It applies to every human being. I am constantly after my 96-year-old mother to walk the halls at her nursing facility. I tell her to walk every day until she is genuinely tired - to strengthen her legs, heart, lungs. It is very hard for her to do that now – *which makes it all the more important to do it!* If we don't have a physical regimen our bodies will react to inactivity, especially when it is combined with the stresses of life – work, responsibilities, financial issues, relational problems, difficulties in a marriage or with the children, with a terrible neighbor – why, it just comes from every direction it seems! And all kinds of bad things can happen to us physically because of it - from obesity, to hypertension, arthritis, high blood pressure, to just overall weakness and infirmity. and so much more! Paul tells Timothy to pay attention to his body, and even gives him the best medical advice of his era for stomach problems – drink a little wine. One time, maybe 25 years ago, I was having burning in my stomach and it had become quite a problem. So I took Paul's advice and bought some wine. I had actually never tasted wine before, being a complete life long tee-totaler. So I drank a small cup and waited for the relief to happen. After all, it was biblical, right?! Naw – not only did it taste terrible, it made the burning in my stomach much worse! That bottle sat on our pantry shelf, forgotten for probably 20 years, before the contents finally went down the drain. Timothy was most likely suffering from the stress of his pastoral responsibilities. Paul tells him to pay attention to his symptoms and to take them seriously. Our bodies sustain our life force. Neglect the body and it fails, and then we have nowhere to live! Take care of it and we can serve Christ in these bodies of ours for years to come!

[4:8] - It is all good advice from the apostle. It's usefulness stretches beyond pastoral leadership. It applies to every one of us. Use caution in who you approve and be especially careful when speaking for God. Stay pure and take measures to ensure it. Finally, listen to your body - take its complaints seriously, and do what you can to remedy it and stay healthy so that you can complete what God has for you to do for Him on this earth!

