

Theme: The Lord's servant 1) rests fully in the goodness of God, 2) trains for godliness, and 3) strives to fulfill God's calling in his or her life.

Background and Introduction: There is a big difference between preparation and participation. Timothy's training is now taking place "in the trenches."

I. Know the Enemy

A. Heed the Spirit's warning

1. We are in the "later" times - Timothy was, and so are we
2. Know that some will depart from the faith (1 John 2:19) - They were never really of the faith
3. False teachers are already on the loose in Ephesus - The better you know the truth, the easier they are to spot
4. The teaching is the work of the devil - Warning the church of error and falsehood is vital

B. Flee the lie of asceticism

1. A distorted view of true spiritual life
2. A poor response to the culture
 - a. One that is sexually charged and self-indulgent
 - b. We can enjoy God's gifts, not abuse them
3. A poor response to God
 - a. Exercising self-control is beneficial
 - b. Demanding abstinence from God's gifts is wicked - Creates a false division between flesh and spirit

C. Hold on to God's goodness

1. We must deny self as the center for life
2. We focus on the goodness of God – not on our own sacrifices
3. We delight in His gifts as well as His grace

II. Train for Godliness

A. In what you teach

1. Hold the truth you know (what you have been taught) - Stay clear of the works of the false teachers (1:4)
2. Trained in faith and sound doctrine

B. In how you live

1. Training for life and godliness
2. Continuing in that training - A trustworthy saying

C. With eternity in view

1. To receive the crown of life
 - a. Not simply the laurels of the world
 - b. Do you want to "look good" or finish well?
2. With hope in the living God

NOTE: "Especially" those who believe? An important clarification: salvation reaches people from all walks of life and parts of the earth, but is granted only to those who believe.

III. Use Your Authority

A. Instruct - "Command these things"

1. The goodness of God
2. The goal of our "training" - Godliness!

B. Exhibit - A life of faith

1. That you may speak with spiritual authority

2. Using the gifts God gives you
- C. Persist in this
 1. In doctrine and life
 - a. To know the truth
 - b. To live in the truth (as an example)
 - c. Training for godliness
 2. So that all may see!
 3. A matter of life and death

IV. The Fruit He Seeks

- A. Praying for your pastors
- B. Thankfulness
- C. Training for godliness
- D. Using your gifts