

A Noble Servant's Foundation for Ministry

1 Timothy 4:6-10

**Five expressions of godly faithfulness in a noble
servant's ministry both to God and to God's people**

I. **Teach the Truth** (1 Tim. 4:6a)

Content of sound teaching:

*“In pointing out **these things**”* refers to both 1 Timothy 4:1-5 and most likely the entire content of the letter, as compared with 1 Timothy 3:14, *“I am writing **these things**...”*

Paul connects this pure **content** of God’s Word with its **work** in our hearts, so that we live **out** what God is working **in** us through the good, clean truth of Scripture **rooted** in our souls.

Paul shows us that the goal of instructing God’s people in *“these things”* is that your hearts would be **pure**, your consciences **good**, and your faith **sincere**.

I. **Teach the Truth** (1 Tim. 4:6a)

Recipients of sound teaching:

“...to the **brothers**” = believers, spiritual people who understand and obey the truth of God (1 Cor. 2:14).

The **context** of this letter is that of setting in order the structure and priorities of the church as God’s family, a spiritually-gathered, worshiping community.

*“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘**And they shall all be taught of God.**’ Everyone who has **heard** and **learned** from the Father, **comes to Me.**”* (John 6:44-45)

II. **Feed on the Truth** (1 Tim. 4:6b)

How **often** are we to nourish ourselves?

II. **Feed on the Truth** (1 Tim. 4:6b)

On what are we to nourish ourselves?

A good servant will be continually (in an ongoing manner) taking in “*the **words** of the faith and of the **sound doctrine**....*” We feed ourselves on words, God’s Words; we feed on truth.

*“If anyone advocates a different doctrine, and doesn’t agree with **sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ**, and with the **doctrine conforming to godliness**, he is conceited and understands nothing.”* (1 Tim. 6:3-4)

*“Retain the standard of **sound words** which you have **heard from me**...”* (2 Tim. 1:13). Sound words refer to those teachings of Jesus Christ ministered through Paul and the apostles.

Paul’s teaching/doctrine is **God’s content** for conforming us to Jesus (godliness).

III. **Reject Untruth** (1 Tim. 4:7a)

What does a good servant reject or avoid?

“But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women.”

Worldly fables are man’s myths that are untrue and unhistorical. They have no basis in fact or reality.

*“The devil is not against doctrine; he is against **true** doctrine.” (John Kitchen)*

IV. Pursue the Truth (1 Tim. 4:7b)

Discipline and Determination

The idea here is the **pursuit** of godliness.

Discipline (NASB), or **train** (LSB) = *gumnadzo* = to exercise vigorously

IV. Pursue the Truth (1 Tim. 4:7b)

What is the **purpose** of your disciplined pursuit?

- **Godliness.** A disciplined pursuit of doing what is right in God's eyes is a lifestyle of being **Godlike**. This is godliness.
- Godliness means, "that conduct of life which is according to the standard of the word of God." (*Homer Kent*)

IV. Pursue the Truth (1 Tim. 4:7b)

“In contrast to ‘godless myths’, Scripture is the most godly book that has ever been written. It is a book by God about God. It might even be termed the autobiography of God, since in it He talks to us about Himself. Consequently, we cannot become familiar with this godly book without becoming godly ourselves. Nothing evokes the worship of God like the Word of God.” *(John Stott)*

V. Labor in the Truth (1 Tim. 4:10)

To what **extent** should good servants labor in the truth?

- To the point of **weariness** and **exhaustion**.

Labor (*kopiaō*) = to labor to the point of **weariness**; to **exhaust** oneself in toil. Sustained, disciplined effort. This is how we grow spiritually.

- To the point of **suffering** and **agonizing**.

Striving (*agonizomai*) = to engage in a struggle. Source of our English word, **agony**.

V. **Labor in the Truth** (1 Tim. 4:10)

Why do we labor and strive in this manner?

- We labor and strive because we desire to **live godly** in Christ Jesus. We desire to live godly in Christ Jesus *“because we have **fixed our hope** on the living God.”*

V. **Labor in the Truth** (1 Tim. 4:10)

But in what way is this salvation true of **unbelievers**?

- God is a Savior to all people in the sense that they experience God's **temporal** salvation in **this** life. Even in their disbelief and rejection of God, God is at work **preserving and blessing His creation**, and each person is a work of God's creative power.
- However, God is *especially* the Savior of **believers**, and this is a salvation that Jesus Christ purchased for believers with His blood. It involves both God's **temporal** care in this life, as well as His **eternal** care in the life to come. It is **special** in that way.

*“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable,
always abounding in the work of the Lord,
knowing that **your toil is not in vain in the Lord.**”*

(1 Cor. 15:58)

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