

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: November 26, 2017

Sermon Title: The Pastor’s Prime Directive

Sermon Series: First Timothy

Text: 1 Tim. 4:6-16

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

Date: November 26, 2017

Title: The Pastor's Prime Directive

Text: 1 Tim. 4:6-16

Theme: Knowing the Pastor's Prime Directive shapes their life both in the church and outside the church.

Introduction:

What is a prime directive? "A chief objective, goal, or requirement; a guiding principle (in later use popularized especially by the U.S. science fiction television series *Star Trek* as a law prohibiting interference with less developed planets and cultures)."¹

"Within the *Star Trek* universe, the Prime Directive is a crucial regulation that is binding on Starfleet personnel. The Prime Directive (officially Starfleet Order 1) is a prohibition on interference with the other cultures and civilizations representatives of Starfleet encounter in their exploration of the universe. In particular, the Prime Directive is aimed at preventing interference with the internal development of civilizations that are less technologically advanced."²

This prime directive is the one driving force, guiding principle, and ultimate goal. It defines everything and dismisses all that would distract from this one thing.

It is perhaps similar to the Hippocratic Oath, "Do no harm."

The origin of the phrase is uncertain. The Hippocratic Oath includes the promise "to abstain from doing harm" (Greek: ἐπι δηλήσει δὲ καὶ ἀδικίῃ εἶρξεν) but does not include the precise phrase. Perhaps the closest approximation in the Hippocratic Corpus is in *Epidemics*: "The physician must ... have two special objects in view with regard to disease, namely, to do good or to do no harm" (book I, sect. 11, trans. Adams, Greek: ἀσκέειν, περὶ τὰ νοσήματα, δὸν, ὠφελέειν, ἢ μὴ βλάπτειν).³

Ernest Shackleton was a British explorer who led three expeditions to Antarctica. On his third expedition disaster struck when his ship, the *Endurance*, became trapped in pack ice. The ice crushed the *Endurance* and Shackleton's crew had to drag their lifeboats for two months to open water. After five harrowing days at sea, Shackleton landed his lifeboats at Elephant Island. That tiny island provided fresh water but not enough food to sustain the entire crew. Shackleton decided to send one lifeboat to a whaling station on Georgia Island which was 720 nautical miles away. Shackleton and five crew members boarded a 20' lifeboat called the *James Caird* and sailed away. They used a sextant at night to navigate by stars and fifteen harrowing days later they arrived safely. He organized a rescue party - which took four tries - but four and a half months later, his crew was rescued without the loss of a single life! Ernest Shackleton was knighted upon his safe return, the *James Caird* can still be seen in South London, he wrote a book about that adventure titled *South -- and to this day he is considered one of Britain's greatest heroes and explorer's*. In 1922 Shackleton returned to Antarctica. He placed the following ad in

London's newspapers: Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages ... bitter cold ... long months of complete darkness ... constant danger ... safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in case of success. (Be Faithful, Warren W. Wiersbe, Victor Books, 1981, page 13) Over 10,000 applicants responded! Why? It was signed, Ernest Shackleton.

"If Paul had placed an ad in the Jerusalem Gazette, it might have read something like this: 'Men and women wanted for the difficult task of [preaching Christ crucified for the building His church.] You will be misunderstood – especially by those working with you! You will face the daily attack from the invisible enemy who rules this world. You may not see the results of your labor during your lifetime, and the full reward of your labor will not come until after your work is completed. Your association with me may cost you your savings, your livelihood, your home – even your very life.'

In spite of the long odds, at least 120 disciples met in an Upper Room to pray. And when it was time for Paul to venture into the unknown world, several volunteered and followed. Two of those who followed were Timothy and Titus."⁴

In this text, Paul encourages personal discipline not for the gaining of grace in the vertical but for the protection and proclamation of the gospel on the horizontal.

In light of strange teaching and its relentless assault against the gospel, those who lead churches are to give themselves completely to its protection and proclamation.

In the absence of this determined vigilance, the gospel suffers and a freed people are enslaved. Paul's prime directive is the one driving force, guiding principle, and ultimate goal that shaped his life. It defined everything and dismissed all that would distract him from this one thing.

THE BIG PICTURE:

Outline:

"Both paragraphs in this section (vv. 6-10 and 11-16) open with a call for Timothy to speak certain truths to the congregation. The focus is on how Timothy, by his teaching and lifestyle, can help the church persevere in the face of the false teaching."⁵

Why the exhortation, to what end did Paul call Timothy? To the purity and proclamation of the gospel through a disciplined conduct and confession. This text outlines for us that idea. Paul's charge to Timothy is two-fold.

I. Keep people under the gospel (vv. 6-10)

A. The call (v. 6)

- ⁶In pointing out [**Pres. Ptc.**] these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus,
 - constantly nourished [**Pres. Ptc.** {hypox legomenon}] on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following [**Perf. Indic.**].

There is spiritual health for his audience and himself.

“This verse gives a theme statement for what follows in the chapter about Timothy’s ministry. The situation in Ephesus requires him to be a good servant of Christ, and he will do that by sound teaching [resulting in gospel fruit].”⁶

Hupotithemi, “To place underneath.” Used twice in the New Testament. This is an awkward term/word. It is used only twice in the New Testament.

- “Who have for my life **laid down** their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles” (Rom. 16:4).
- “If thou put the brethren in **remembrance** of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained” (1 Tim. 4:6).

Notice the content he is placing his audience under.

B. The content

THESE THINGS - What things?

- “These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly” (1 Tim. 3:14).
- “If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained” (1 Tim. 4:6).
- “These things command and teach” (1 Tim. 4:11).
- “Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all” (1 Tim. 4:15).
- “And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless” (1 Tim. 5:7).
- “I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality” (1 Tim. 5:21).
- “And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort” (1 Tim. 6:2).
- “But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness” (1 Tim. 6:11)

The gospel forms the Sun of this solar system that all other planets [i.e. instruction] orbit around. All other planets find their life in their relationship to the Sun.

C. The contrast (vv. 7, 8)

We wince at Paul's words, but . . .

- ⁷“But have nothing to do with [**refuse Pres. Act. Imperative**] worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself [**Pres. Act. Imperative**] for the purpose of godliness”

“*Those myths* refer to legendary tales characteristic of the false teachers in Ephesus and Crete. See parallels in 1 Tim 1:4; 2 Tim 4:4; and Titus 1:14.”⁷

D. The challenge

What are these disciplines? In his work, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, written in 1997, Donald S. Whitney proposed the following explanation. “Drawn from a rich heritage, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* will guide you through a carefully selected array of disciplines including:

- Scripture reading
- prayer
- worship
- Scripture meditation
- evangelism
- serving
- stewardship of time and money
- Scripture application
- fasting
- silence and solitude
- journaling
- learning

By illustrating why the disciplines are important, showing how each one will help you grow in godliness, and offering practical suggestions for cultivating them, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* will provide you with a refreshing opportunity to become more like and grow in character and maturity.⁸

Perhaps the book explains how all of this is a result of the JESUS SEED, but for me, most of the preaching and teaching I have heard on spiritual disciplines is very much man centered and very little gospel centered. The “burden” for progress or growth appears to rest on you and me and not on God.

We are to “exercise” ourselves for the sake of the gospel. Godliness is gospel-centered. The exercising is the refusal of anything other than the gospel. How unfortunate that the disciplines themselves have become additions to the gospel. By adding to the gospel we are denigrating the gospel.

I am supportive of all those listed by Mr. Whitney, but none of them are steps or keys to growth. Only the Gospel and the Holy Spirit grows us. He is the “step” and “key.”

I believe life is holistic. I believe we should be disciplined in shadow, but the “worshiping of our bodies” is not the gospel and can replace the gospel if we are not careful, through both abstinence and indulgence. But it is the gospel that is profitable for everyone. In fact, how often do we assign godliness or holiness by someone’s appearance either positively or negatively? We are out of balance on these things, but let us not confuse the horizontal with the vertical.

- ⁸“for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.”

Paul’s word for discipline is our English word gymnastics.

Gumnazo – exercise; 4 times in NT.

- “But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and **exercise** thyself rather unto godliness” (1 Tim. 4:7).
- “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses **exercised** to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14).
- “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are **exercised** thereby” (Heb. 12:11).
- “Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have **exercised** with covetous practices; cursed children” (2 Pet. 2:14).

The Christian life is not simply one of turning from fables, but turning to Jesus. The two turnings are inseparable.

E. The cause (vv. 9, 10)

- ⁹“It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. 10 For it is for this we **labor** and **strive**, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.”

Why do we discipline ourselves? We discipline ourselves for the purpose of the gospel. “Paul reminds the church that godliness is crucial to the spread of the gospel.”⁹

The provision of Christ is intrinsically infinite, but it is narrow in application for those who believe.

II. Exercise yourself in the gospel (vv. 11-16)

Our next paragraph explain how a pastor stays in gospel shape. Here is how hard it is to keep people under the gospel (vv. 6-10). There are nine imperatives/descriptives. This is what the discipline, the exercise looks like. Here is the program. Here is how you “eat right and exercise.”

We all want a “magic pill or formula” to get in shape and feel better. There is really two governing ideas. Eat right and less and exercise at least ½ - 1 hour a day. We do not like the simple formula and why is this? Because it takes discipline. It requires us to change our habits.

- A. Prescribe
- B. Teach
- C. Example
- D. Attention
- E. Neglect
- F. Take Pains
- G. Be absorbed in
- H. Pay close attention to
- I. Persevere in

I considered breaking each of these things down, but all of it is keeping the main thing, the main thing. This is the prime directive and the means of making sure it is carried out. This is what keeps us from falling away. It is so easy to slide away from the expositing of Scripture. We want to be attractive in our expositing of Scripture. Preachers / pastors want people to like them. We want you to think we are good at our trade. We want to have “successful” churches that are often defined by the world’s standards of bigness. We want your approval and this comes through your presence. We do not desire or wish to be “boring” or rejected or dismissed. However, this takes work. There is a natural digression away from preaching Christ crucified.

- Expositing Scripture / working through books of the bible
 - Use the text then tell a story / bible used as a spring board / become topical or thematically
 - Tell a story with a moral application.
 - Talk about current events.

Harvard University is a private Ivy League research university in Cambridge, Massachusetts, established in 1636, whose history, influence, and wealth have made it one of the world's most prestigious universities. Established originally by the Massachusetts legislature and soon thereafter named for John Harvard (its first benefactor), Harvard is the United States' oldest institution of higher learning, and the Harvard Corporation (formally, the *President and Fellows of Harvard College*) is its first chartered corporation. Although never formally affiliated with any denomination, the early College primarily trained Congregational and Unitarian clergy. Its curriculum and student body were gradually secularized during the 18th century, and by the 19th century, Harvard had emerged as the central cultural establishment among Boston elites.

Yale University is an American private Ivy League research university in New Haven, Connecticut. Founded in 1701, it is the third-oldest institution of higher education in the United States and one of the nine Colonial Colleges chartered before the American Revolution.^[6] Chartered by Connecticut Colony, the "Collegiate School" was established by clergy in Saybrook Colony to educate Congregational ministers.

Think with me of Paul's words to the Corinthian church.

- ¹⁷ "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void. ¹⁸ For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written, 'I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE.' ²⁰ Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. ²² For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; ²³ **but we preach Christ crucified**, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor. 1:17-25).
- ¹ "And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. ² **For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.** ³ I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, ⁴ and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

Why did Paul write this? He wrote this because others were calling Paul a liar. He wrote this because others were calling into question the sufficiency of Jesus. They were religious leaders who led lives of either opulence/licentiousness and/or austerity/abstinence. They were looked upon as pious folk. They might even have agreed with Paul that Jesus was necessary, but they did not agree that He was enough.

For Paul to stay his course and preach the gospel took all the discipline he could muster. He exercised himself in this matter. Paul calls Timothy to do exactly what he did.

- A. Prescribe
- B. Teach
- C. Example
- D. Attention
- E. Neglect
- F. Take Pains
- G. Be absorbed in
- H. Pay close attention to
- I. Persevere in

Just as those who followed the false teachers would defect from the faith, so also those who followed Paul would stay the course and finish the race. Remember, what you attract them with is what you attract them to. Paul says to Timothy, people will note your progress in this matter. People will know whether or not you have remained faithful to the gospel. If not, you are making shipwreck of the church.

Notice verse 16. By exercising ourselves in these things we are protecting ourselves and others from spiritual shipwreck and proclaiming a pure gospel thus "saving ourselves."

- NLT ¹¹ “Teach these things and insist that everyone learn them. ¹² Don’t let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. ¹³ Until I get there, focus on reading the Scriptures to the church, encouraging the believers, and teaching them. ¹⁴ Do not neglect the spiritual gift you received through the prophecy spoken over you when the elders of the church laid their hands on you. ¹⁵ Give your complete attention to these matters. Throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone will see your progress. ¹⁶ Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right for the sake of your own salvation and the salvation of those who hear you” (1 Tim. 4:11-16, NLT).
- ESV ¹¹ “Command and teach these things. ¹² Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. ¹³ Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. ¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. ¹⁵ Practice these things, immerse yourself in them,^[c] so that all may see your progress. ¹⁶ Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Tim. 4:11-16, ESV).
- The Message ¹¹⁻¹⁴ “Get the word out. Teach all these things. And don’t let anyone put you down because you’re young. Teach believers with your life: by word, by demeanor, by love, by faith, by integrity. Stay at your post reading Scripture, giving counsel, teaching. And that special gift of ministry you were given when the leaders of the church laid hands on you and prayed—keep that dusted off and in use. ¹⁵⁻¹⁶ Cultivate these things. Immerse yourself in them. The people will all see you mature right before their eyes! Keep a firm grasp on both your character and your teaching. Don’t be diverted. Just keep at it. Both you and those who hear you will experience salvation” (1 Tim. 4:11-16, The Message).

¹¹ Prescribe [**Pres. Act. Imperative**] and teach [**Pres. Act. Imperative**] these things.

¹² Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example [**Pres. Mid. Imperative**] of those who believe.

“From an analysis of other uses of this word (Gk. **Neotes**) and the chronology of Timothy’s life to this point (starting in Acts 16:1), commentators estimate Timothy’s age to be somewhere from his late 20s to mid-30s, with most favoring the mid-30s.”¹⁰

PRESCRIBE / COMMAND

- “As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest **charge** some that they teach no other doctrine” (1 Tim. 1:3).
- “These things **command** and teach” (1 Tim. 4:11).
- “And these things give in **charge**, that they may be blameless” (1 Tim. 5:7).
- “I give thee **charge** in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession” (1 Tim. 6:13). {confession: or, profession}
- “**Charge** them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy” (1 Tim. 6:17). {uncertain...: Gr. uncertainty of riches}

¹³ Until I come, give attention [**Pres. Act. Imperative**] to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.

“The public reading of scripture refers to reading the scripture out loud in the church services. In a context where many were illiterate and few could afford private copies of scripture, such public reading was especially important.”¹¹

¹⁴ Do not neglect [**Pres. Act. Imperative**] the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.

¹⁵ Take pains [**Pres. Act. Imperative**] with these things; be absorbed in them [**Pres. Act. Imperative**], so that your progress will be evident to all.

¹⁶ Pay close attention [**Pres. Act. Imperative**] to yourself and to your teaching; persevere [**Pres. Act. Imperative**] in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

“Timothy’s perseverance in sound doctrine and practice will save him, i.e., It will lead him to persevere in the faith, confirming his salvation. This type of ministry will be effective in preserving his hearers as well.”¹² This language and idea seem to parallel the similar thought and difficulty found in 2:15.

Shepherding the Sheep: (What is the NEXT STEP?)

Where does this leave us?

Friends, this message is primarily for pastors/elders. We must be faithful in protecting the simplicity and purity of the gospel.

However, there is a secondary application to you the congregant. You need to insist we keep the main thing the main thing. Your presence and participation is a constant encouragement to us as pastors and elders to continue preaching Christ crucified. This work is more than just me. This work is about us. Let us heed this word to Christ’s church and keep the prime directive for our sake and the sake of others.

¹ https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/prime_directive

² <https://www.forbes.com/sites/janetstemwedel/2015/08/20/the-philosophy-of-star-trek-is-the-prime-directive-ethical/#45c89c9e2177>

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primum_non_nocere

⁴ <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/1-timothy-be-faithful-tony-thomas-sermon-on-224495?ref=SermonSerps>

⁵ ESV Study Bible, p. 2331 on 1 Timothy 4:6-16.

⁶ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/1+Timothy+4:4>

⁷ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/1+Timothy+4:4>

⁸ <https://www.amazon.com/Spiritual-Disciplines-Christian-Donald-Whitney/dp/1576830276>

⁹ The Gospel Transformation Bible on 1 Tim. 4:6-10, p. 1634.

¹⁰ ESV Study Bible, p. 2331 on 1 Timothy 4:12.

¹¹ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/1+Timothy+4:4>

¹² ESV Study Bible, p. 2331 on 1 Timothy 4:16.