**1 Timothy 4 – Age Ain’t Nothin’ but a Number ☺**

It’s What You Do—Not When You Do It

* *Ted Williams, at age 42, slammed a home run in his last official time at bat.*
* *Mickey Mantle, age 20, hit 23 home runs his first full year in the major leagues.*
* *Golda Meir was 71 when she became Prime Minister of Israel.*
* *William Pitt II was 24 when he became Prime minister of Great Britain.*
* *George Bernard Shaw was 94 when one of his plays was first produced.*
* *Mozart was just seven when his first composition was published.*
* *Now how about this? Benjamin Franklin was a newspaper columnist at 16 and a framer of the United States Constitution when he was 81. You’re never too young or too old if you’ve got talent.*

*Let’s recognize that age has little to do with ability. [God can use anyone!]*

* Charles Swindoll

Effective Leadership

*“… Will Houghton, a preacher who became the president of Moody Bible Institute during the 1940s, played a large role in the conversion of an agnostic who was contemplating suicide. The skeptic was desperate, but he decided that if he could find a minister who lived his faith he would listen to him. So he hired a private detective to watch Houghton. When the investigator’s report came back, it revealed that this preacher’s life was above reproach; he was for real. The agnostic went to Houghton’s church, accepted Christ, and later sent his daughter to Moody Bible Institute.”*

* Our Daily Bread, September 29

***This week we will learn more about what it takes (and doesn’t take) to be an effective servant of God.***

**Read 1 Timothy 4**

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What does Paul say will happen in later times? What essentially is Paul describing?

* Ref. vs. 1-3
* **Legalism** that has abandoned the faith (faith in the grace offered by God through Jesus, the forgiveness of our sins through Christ blood through no work of our own). These acts may look religious and holy on the surface, but they are “demonic” and “deceiving” because they reject the foundational justification by faith alone in Christ alone. As the Gospel message continues to be spread (and time passes further and further away from when Jesus actually walked the earth) things will get distorted and people will allow inaccurate teachings to slip in.
* Legalism is in direct contradiction to God as the savior of people. Either God saves us or our works save us, but both cannot be true. Legalism is a works-based faith that deep down essentially believes that salvation comes from works we do and not God’s grace alone. It’s important to fight against legalism because it undermines the heart of the Gospel.

1. In what ways does Paul encourage Timothy to be a good minister/servant of Jesus? (vv. 6-8) Why does he say this is important (for both him and others)?

* By pointing out the things Paul has said to the brothers and sisters in the church; by nourishing himself with words of the faith and by following good teaching; by rejecting myths fit for godless and gullible and training himself in godliness
* Important for him because godliness is valuable in every way and holds promise for the current live and life in eternity
* Important for others because God wants to save all people, but can only save those who choose to believe. And God is where we place our hope and will be the salvation for the church (even though it may look unruly at the moment).
* Don’t allow the wording of v.16 to confuse anyone. “God is the Savior of all in the sense that He has provided a salvation that is available to all. He is the Savior of believers in a special sense since they are those who have accepted His provision of salvation. Salvation is sufficient for all but efficient only for those who believe.” (bible.org)

1. In verses 11-16, what does Paul encourage Timothy to do and how is Timothy to accomplish this?

He is to set an example for the believers in speech, conduct, love, faithfulness, and purity.Many young people take this verse as a sort of prideful battle-cry against older people who challenge them or doubt their competency. But Paul doesn’t tell Timothy to simply fight against those who may look down upon him, he tells him to conduct himself in such a way that will not give them room to criticize him. As a young people, we should all strive to live well so that *all* people can attack is our age (not, say, our behavior or spiritual maturity) because we strive to honor God in all areas.

He is to also give attention to public reading of scripture, exhortation, and teaching.

Give attention to public reading of scripture, exhortation, and teaching.

Exercise spiritual gift God has given him. We are not sure what this gift is although most commentaries suggest a gift for ministry as a preacher/teacher of the word. The laying on of hands is common in Jewish religious circles in the commissioning of people and also in praying for people as well as in what we’d today identify as supernatural activity. The point is that the gifts of the spirit are intended to be used to build up the body, so the recipient should use them.

These things are done so that everyone will see the progress Timothy makes as he earnestly follows God. Essentially, he will not only save himself (from sin and spiritual death), but also those around him as he sets an example for how to live and leads them as he follows God.

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1. How might Paul’s instructions play out in our own lives? How are we to conduct ourselves and why must we conduct ourselves in these ways?

Avoid legalistic behavior and thinking.

Set an example in our behavior for those around us. Be conscientious and intentional in our speech, conduct, love, faithfulness, and purity

1. In what ways is 1 Timothy 4 relevant for our church community today?

Be sensitive to the gifts God has given us and exercise them in service of the church. One good to mention may be that we often find out spiritual gifting as we serve in various capacities (try out different ministry teams). We are often gifted in ways we don’t know if we don’t try.