

# Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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## What Does Growth Look Like?

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“Then he went on to Derbe and Lystra, where there was a disciple named Timothy... <sup>2</sup> The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke highly of him. <sup>3</sup> Paul wanted Timothy to go with him...”

Acts 16:1-3

“But have nothing to do with worldly and silly narratives. On the other hand, discipline (exercise, train) yourself toward healthy-devotion; <sup>8</sup> for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but healthy-devotion is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. <sup>9</sup> It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. <sup>10</sup> It is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of believers. <sup>11</sup> Prescribe and teach these things. <sup>12</sup> Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather become an example of those who believe in speech, habitual-conduct, love, faith and purity. <sup>13</sup> Until I come, give attention to the reading of Scripture, to coming-alongside (to encourage, comfort or exhort), and to the teaching. <sup>14</sup> Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the elders. <sup>15</sup> Cultivate these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all. <sup>16</sup> Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you are doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you.”

1 Timothy 4:7-16

“But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound (healthy) teaching. <sup>2</sup> Older men are to be clear-headed, respectable, sensible, sound (healthy) in faith, in love, in perseverance. <sup>3</sup> Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, <sup>4</sup> that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, <sup>5</sup> to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, yielding to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be spoken-against. <sup>6</sup> Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; <sup>7</sup> in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with integrity and dignity in your teaching, <sup>8</sup> sound (healthy) in speech which is beyond reproach, in order that the one being opposed may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.”

Titus 2:1-8

**When Paul began his second missionary journey, it would have been about 49 A.D.** He took the overland route from Antioch of Syria, through the mountainous country of what is now Turkey. He revisited the churches that he and Barnabas had pioneered just a couple of years earlier. While he was there, **he heard about a young man named Timothy.** The believers spoke very highly of him. His mother, Eunice, was Jewish, although she had become a believer in Jesus as her Messiah some time before, through the influence of her own mother, Lois (1 Tim. 1:5). Since both of these women had been raised in Judaism, they already had an appreciation for the scriptures. **From the time Timothy was an infant, he had been exposed to and had been instructed in the sacred writings** (2 Tim. 3:15). He had come to faith early, and **already as a young man was demonstrating his zeal for God and his skill in the scriptures.** What had impressed Paul so much was that he was hearing glowing reports from the men of *two* cities, Lystra and Iconium, ...and these two cities were twenty-five miles apart! **This was no average young man! Timothy was getting solid reviews from believers from two different towns that were about a day's journey apart.** He not only knew his stuff, and was an excellent teacher, but he also had the motivation and vision to walk that twenty-five miles each way on a regular basis. **He was a zealous follower of Jesus, one who was willing to make a sacrifice to do ministry work.**

**Timothy became a key player in Paul's ministry.** Just a few months after recruiting him, Paul left him behind to disciple the new believers in Thessalonica, when he had to flee the persecution of the Jews (Acts 17:5). He joined him again in Corinth, where Paul had been making tents, and establishing some important relationships. When Timothy and Silas arrived, Paul devoted himself fully to preaching the gospel, and, as a team, they were able to quickly establish a church meeting in the house right next door to the synagogue! The leading synagogue official and his household believed in Jesus, as did many others. **There was clearly a surge of ministry activity that Paul initiated when Timothy came, ...and as a teaching discipler, he soon had plenty to do.** Later on, Timothy and Erastus (who had been city treasurer of Corinth – Rom. 16:23) became part of Paul's team of gospel workers at Ephesus (Acts 19:22; Rom. 16:21). He was among those chosen to accompany the collection for the poor in Jerusalem from the churches of Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 20:4). Timothy was also sent as his representative to the churches at Corinth and Philippi (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10; Phil. 2:19). **In the first letter to Timothy (ca. 64), we find that he had been stationed in Ephesus to oversee the ministry there,** and to address some of the problems that had developed (1 Tim. 1:2,3).

**Titus was another co-worker of Paul's over a span of many years.** He first appears in Galatians 2, when Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem to bring a gift to help with the famine of that time (ca. 45-47 A.D.; cf. Acts 11:20-30). **Titus was a Greek convert who accompanied them from the church in Antioch in Syria.** In Titus 1:4, Paul referred to him as “my true child according to a shared faith”. **Paul had evidently led him to Christ.** He was a key emissary between Paul and the Corinthian church, when there was conflict and strained relationship between the apostle and some of those in Corinth (2 Cor. 2:13; 7:6,13-14; 8:6,16). **Paul referred to him as a partner and co-worker**

(2 Cor. 8:23). **The apostle Paul later sent him to Crete to “set things in order” (Tit. 1:5).** He was to establish leaders, deal with some of the erroneous teaching, and promote what was healthy. We don’t know as much about him as we do about Timothy, but we can see that he grew in his faith to become another key part of Paul’s team.

This is enough background to give us some context about these men and their role in the body of Christ. The letters to them from Paul are written 15-20 years after they had first met him. They both had become leaders who were given the responsibility of oversight over a group of believers. **From what Paul wrote to them, we can glean some significant insight both as to what Paul’s advice to them was, as well as what was the outcome he was looking for among the disciples of Christ.**

**There is a notable emphasis in both of these letters on sound or healthy teaching.** He told Timothy to **avoid worldly narratives.** These are stories or claims made by some that are focused on any variety of things that would draw our attention away from Christ. **The word for “worldly” here is “unhallowed, common, irreligious, or having to do with natural human affairs”.** *The word is the exact opposite of “holy”, ...what is sanctified and dedicated to God.* Ask yourself, **“Does this place my focus on God? Does it draw me deeper in my relationship to Him? Or, does this narrative draw my attention to matters of *this* life, apart from God?”**

We are to avoid things that distract us from our “holy calling”, ...our purpose and focus of living for Christ and His kingdom. **Instead, we are to discipline, train or exercise our mind and focus on devotion to God.** The word, “godliness” here is a compound word. It is comprised of the prefix which means “good” or “healthy” and the root word, which means “devotion, reverence and piety”. Thus, **the word, “godliness” means a good or healthy devotion, reverence and piety toward God.** It is more about the focus of the heart and mind than outward behavior or external concerns. **We are to discipline or train ourselves to be devoted to God in a good and healthy way.** Again, remember that this is Paul writing to Timothy after about 15 years of working together! His admonition: Timothy, train yourself, ...exercise your mind and heart..., to be focused and devoted to God. Fix your hope and your heart to focus on the living God, the Savior of all people. **This is what we are to be prescribing and teaching!**

Then, **focus on being an example.** In your speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, **show people what it means to believe in Jesus!** Read the scriptures, come alongside others to help and encourage, continue to teach the truth, and continue to strengthen, utilize and expand the spiritual capabilities God has given to you. Be focused on *these things!* ...not worldly things! **Put forth effort and care into developing your spiritual abilities and effectiveness, so that everyone will see your growth.**

**Don’t let anyone count you out or despise you.** Whether it is because you are young, or are a woman, or of a lower social class, or don’t have specific credentials, ...don’t let anyone despise your background. **It’s not about your background. It is about your walk!** Focus on being an example. **If you walk the walk, ...those who are truly interested in God will come to recognize that, and will listen to what you have to say.** In any case, don’t get caught up by people’s rejection. Continue to focus on doing what *God* has called you to do. **Focus on the training of your heart and the outworking of your faith.** That is the surest road for yourself, and for those who listen to you.

**In Titus 2, Paul again emphasized the importance of healthy teaching.** As Paul breaks down what he wants Titus to be looking for in his efforts, he describes people who are sensible (‘sound-minded’), respectable, healthy in faith, love and consistency. The apostle describes characteristics for different groups, depending on age and gender. **Those two words would describe each grouping: sound-minded and respectable.** Older women are not to be caught up in slander or excessive drinking. Instead, they are to be teaching what is good. They are to instruct the younger women to love their husbands and children, and, again, to be “sound-minded”, pure, homemakers, good, choosing to yield to their husbands, so that the word of God would not be dishonored. **Good hearts, good character, good relations so that people would see something good and positive in the lives of those who are following Jesus!** The young men are to likewise be “sound-minded”, in everything showing themselves to be an example of good actions and deeds. They are to be uncorrupted in their teaching, respectable, healthy in speech which cannot be criticized. **This is so that those who are contrary or opposed to them would have nothing bad to say about them!**

**What does healthy growth look like, when it comes to followers of Jesus Christ? If we can get believers to train their minds and hearts to become more focused on devotion to Christ, learning to love and honor Him and making Him the center of our thoughts and concerns, then we will see the life and power of God released into our lives. He is the Source.** He is the Head. He is the Vine, and we are the branches. **That is the core principle of what it means to follow Jesus: FOLLOW JESUS!!** We are so easily distracted by matters of this life. This life is *broken*, and it *cannot be fixed!* We are not called to build heaven on earth. It will never happen. **We are called to reveal heaven to people through the example of transformed lives. For that, we need Jesus.** So, growth comes as we train our minds and hearts in devotion to Christ, so that we can receive transforming life and direction from HIM, and then live exemplary lives that are sound, healthy, full of life, love and joy. **Jesus in, Jesus out, ...follow Jesus!**