

Series	Gamma 17 – Study 8 (The Servant of Jesus)
Reference	1 Tim 4: 6-16
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Welcome back to Gamma. We have been continuing our studies on the Pastoral Epistles where Paul is writing to Timothy in the first letter of Paul to Timothy, chapter four verses 6 to 16.

We are protecting the gospel and preparing the church and we have gone through all of this, looking at the conduct of the gospel and gospel leadership. Today we are looking at guarding the gospel and guarding the gospel has two perspectives. One, understanding heresy and what to do about it, which is the last study in study 7. Today, we are looking at Paul's advice to Timothy to stand strong and continue the spiritual battle that he is undertaking.

1 Tim 4: 6 If you put **these things** before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus,

What are these things?

Well, Paul's recapping all the things that he has spoken about that:

- That this is the gospel of Grace not of the Law.
- Timothy to hold faith and good conscience.
- One God and One Mediator
- Gospel Behaviour.
- Godly Church leadership
- Mystery of Godliness which is basically responding to the death and the life and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now the goal, the goal is that Timothy will be a good servant, verse 7 have nothing to do with irreverent or silly myths rather train yourself for godliness. Now godliness is a very important theme in the pastoral epistles. The word godliness at us Eusebia and this has been used 15 times in the New Testament and of this 15 times 13 of them is actually in the pastoral epistles and 9 of them are in 1-Timothy itself. So it's a very-very important concept of the pastoral epistles.

It either means in the secular literature reverence and in New Testament it means reverence for God driven by fear and love. Now if we look at where we are as Christians, as Christians we move from a self-centered life into a God-centered life, and what drives us towards this direction, what Paul is going to be telling us about godliness, it drives us is basically fear and love. Now, this is Moses after he saves the people of Israel and they March into the Desert of Sinai and then into the Mountain of Sinai. He speaks to the nation, this very-very important verse, chapter 10 of Deuteronomy verse 12.

Deuteronomy 10: 12 And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to **fear the LORD** your God, to walk in all his ways, to **love him**, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, **13** and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?

And you notice how this verse is constructed. It is constructed where he is actually commanding the people of God because he has saved them to fear God and also to love him. Why? Because then they will walk in his ways, they will be enabled to walk in his ways, then they will be able to serve him with all their heart and soul, no just on the outside. It is a different thing to fear someone and serve him just

because you fear him but the fear him and to love him causes you to serve him with all your heart and your soul, I mean your heart and soul really be in it as well as to obey his commandments. This is godliness and this will result in your good.

Let me give you an example there. If you go up north there, the tale of two Kings. The one was King Bhumibol who actually died recently after serving for I think more than 70 years. Much feared and reviewed, but the people who fear Bhumibol actually look up to him. He was an ethical person who lived a righteous life or a kind, well loved by every single Thai citizen. He was actually replaced or succeeded by his son, very different kind of king, King Maha Vajiralongkorn and instead the population feared his son as well, but in different kind of son, because he took upon himself emergency constitutional powers. He took upon himself control of 43 billion US dollars from the crown property bureau, which is money meant for the people. He took for himself the direct command of military units reporting to him and in a whole harem of mistresses. King Maha is feared, King Bhumibol is feared but the fear has different dimensions. One is out of love and respect for who he is. The other is because of the brute power and force that is there. And that is why today there are a lot of protests in Thailand. They never protested against King Bhumibol but the only protest against his son.

The picture of fear and love is the picture of who God is. It is like being in this lighthouse and that is where you are and you are astounded as you look out and you can see the power in devastation of the storm causing the waves to splash against the bulwark of the lighthouse and on the other hand there is comfort and strength of God's love that protects this person. So when we actually talk about fear and love, there is fear because of God's tremendous power and yet that power provides confidence and strength, because that is basically your God, your father.

The fear of God and the love of God drives us to repent from a self-centered life into a God-centered life, which is dominated by God's power enthroned. That is how we should live. Why? In the end Deuteronomy ends,

Deuteronomy 10: 13b ...which I am commanding you today for your good?

Because we are made in the image of God and God knows that we can be motivated. We can be driven to become the image only when we look to God and we have fear and love. Well, you may say I don't feel it. I don't feel the fear and love. How do I develop fear? Fear and love doesn't come out automatically. You have actually got to develop it. It says you have to be trained in the words of faith and of good doctrine. So this is the content of the things which you have to be trained in, which is the gospel, the word of faith, and basically doctrinal teaching. These are the cornerstones of what the young minister, Timothy got to be doing and the process. What is a process?

1 Timothy 4:6-7 (ESV) If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. 7 Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness;

1 Tim 4: 8 for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come

The word train is gymnazoo, same word that is used for your gym. That's why do you think you got this gyms all over place because it comes from a Greek background, gymnazoo, which means you have something that you actually practice at and continue to train. We train ourselves to change our perspective. Either we often look at life from 1 to 80. We don't usually look into eternity. Physical training is of use only in this dimension, 1 to 80. All right. And beyond that training in godliness, Paul

says has usefulness in this life as well as the life in the next dimension, which is basically eternity.

COVID survivor, I was listening to him last week in our breakout room, Vincent Yee, basically went through a difficult time and the difficult time in a COVID ward in Sungai Buloh he was only strengthened by one thing, the word of God which continually spoke, he read and he clung on to when he was in that ward full of 40 people all got COVID, coughing like hell and sputum everywhere. He was basically terrified and all he could do was hold on for his dear life to the word of God. So it is basically changing our perspective. Godliness is of use in this life, which gave comfort to Vincent and also in the next life.

Now training. Some people are averse to the word training because they say this is the gospel of grace. It should be natural and spontaneous, and if you were talking about training, it is like discipline and works. How is this consistent? Well, here we actually have, if you go back in chapter 3,

1 Timothy 3:16 (ESV) Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness:

What is the mystery of godliness?

He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

This is the life, death and resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ. This is the gospel. So, the mystery of Godliness is responding, not doing but responding and all of us are wired to respond to the beauty of God. So whether we look at a beautiful sunset or the billions of galaxies around us on a Hubble telescope, it is all designed to show us who God is, and the most important thing it shows us the mystery of godliness that really triggers our hearts is the death of his son on the cross, and if we don't train ourselves to see that you won't experience it. So basically godly training in godliness is basically training ourselves to see the beauty of Christ and what God has given us in his son in the gospel in our lives.

There are two ways in which you can train in godliness. One, you can be like President Trump, hold the Bible upside down or you could actually open the Bible and have this actually translate into how you live, breathe and believe.

I was listening to a podcast the other day and there was an online discussion from people talking about being unequally yoked to non-Christians marrying them and of course the conversation started off with this.

2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

It starts off very well, but at the end the conclusion was well is an area of freedom we could decide to remarry to non-Christian as long as he doesn't mind that we do this or that. You see there is a dichotomy between what we read in the Bible and actually what we practice in real life and in order for those two things to align; what we read in the Bible and how we actually practice in our lives, for that to align we need to train. We need to be convicted of the truth of God's word.

Just like go to the gym we have got goals, to reach proper technique, we persist, we commit, we endure suffering and the slow progress and we practice again and again and again. The word of God and our life and our conviction of the truth of God's word has to align, so it doesn't become merely intellectual.

We can always go to Gamma and say this is what the word of God is, but if we are not convinced, if we are not convicted we won't obey. So therefore it takes time for these goals and techniques and commitment to come in when the word of God and our desires merge into one and that is called the training into godliness, and it's difficult thing for verse 10 says,

1 Timothy 4:10 For to this end we toil and strive,

It doesn't come easily. You can't just say, I'm a Christian, so therefore loving God will come naturally. It doesn't, it takes training where we actually discipline our bodies, our minds to actually read God's word. It's like, if you look at the Olympic runners. The trouble with Olympic sports is that you only give medals to three; Gold, silver and bronze and the one that falls down doesn't really get anything.

Sanya Richards Ross was basically a 400 meters sprinter who was basically top athlete in the world for 10 years and she actually says,

*"Failure, I can live with...
not trying is what I can't handle"*

So in the race of life is actually Paul,

2 Timothy 4:6-7 (ESV) For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Winning is finishing. Winning is not first, second and third. In the Christian walk winning is actually finishing because

1 Timothy 4:9-10 (ESV) The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. 10 For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

So the reason why all we have to do is basically finish the race is that our hope is on the living God, our hope is not on how strong we are or how fast we run. Our hope is on the living God who was save all especially those who believe. Now, the next thing to talk about is basically not only training in godliness is a character of the servant.

1 Timothy 4:11-12 (ESV) 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.

So the conduct for Timothy as a servant, and us as disciples of Jesus Christ, not depending on how old we are, but basically on the character of lives. You see effectiveness and authority of a leader will depend on either who we are or what we say and what we do. Look at two leaders in Myanmar today. One is a military leader. He is there because he has got all the power and all the guns, but he doesn't have any legitimacy. That's why there are protests against him every single day and the other one is Aung San Suu Kyi who doesn't have the power but has the legitimacy and what Paul is saying to Timothy, you are installed, God has given you this position as his apostolic delegate but you must have legitimacy. You must live and work out what the gospel does in people's lives.

1 Timothy 4:13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.

Paul wants Timothy to be totally devoted, same word which he uses for the false teachers, Timothy 1:4

1 Timothy 1:4 nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations

With the same kind of devotion false teachers enamored with false teachings, devote themselves to, Paul wants Timothy to be enamored and totally committed to the public reading of scripture, to exhortation and to teaching. So Prosechoo means pay close attention to, give oneself to, it is like being addicted to wine, being addicted to God's word, to hold the mind towards, to be cautious or apply oneself to be. So the important word in this passage is basically very unique passage where he is talking about the reading of the word of God. In Greek there is an article. The article is called 'The'. Whenever you put a 'The' in front it is a separate thing and it's very-very important.

If you look in the construction of the passage here,

Until I come, devote yourself to the public,
the reading of scripture,
the exhortation and
the teaching.

This is basically telling Timothy, in their worship meetings on a Sunday there are three things that you have to make sure that is front and center to be totally devoted to and not be distracted from, it is absolutely vital. The reading of scripture, the exhortation and the teaching. If you read the English Standard Version or New Living Translation, you don't get three 'the' because it doesn't look good in English, but in the Greek, there are three articles and the three are separate and they are three facets of the ministry of word of God which is absolutely important.

Let me take you back to Nehemiah when exiles go back to Israel to the land of Judea and Nehemiah these people,

Nehemiah 8:3 And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday,

Wow! The word of God is read not five minutes. From early morning until midday, we are looking at six hours,

in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.

You read the Bible six hours, our friends will be sleeping here in church right. But in those days, people so eager for word of God, they understood it.

The next section is exhortation.

Look at Nehemiah 8:7-8

Nehemiah 8:7-8 Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiiah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law,

That means they stood next to the people and they helped them as the law is being read out, they explained the law to them,

while the people remained in their places. 8 They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

Which means they actually expounded the passage. They gave them the meaning behind the passage showed that they actually understood the reading. This is how important and look at the results of public reading and the actual preaching and exhortation.

Nehemiah 8:9 And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law.

They reading of the word of God and explaining and exhortation and preaching in such a way that there was an emotional response, people wept because the word of God convicted their hearts. This is how important the ministry of the word of God teaching, exhortation and public reading is to us in our churches. The word of God is the cornerstone of public worship? Because it is no point having all the emotion to worship just based on emotion itself. The word of God is as John Piper puts it. It's like logs which are used to burn and have flames and they are burning in flames is basically the emotion, exhortation and joy of worship, but that joy must be based on something that gives you occasion for the joy. Isn't it? You can't just say joy for the sake of joy. It's actually the word of God properly read, preached and taught. It is a cornerstone of what a church does. Otherwise, it will be like a fake fire and all you have is emotion but not based on anything.

1 Timothy 4:14-16 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, 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.

So in all these things; reading of the word of God, preaching, teaching, using God's gifts given to him by prophecy or laying our hands, immerse, practice yourself in these things. Otherwise, you will be distracted. All too often, modern church is distracted by politics of whom they support, distracted by disunity, quibbling over small and unimportant thing, the saps the attention and the power of the church away, distracted by the fact that the church is all about healing and nothing else, distracted by personalities, great preachers, great leaders and people are following the person rather than God's word, or distracted by the blessing that the Bible or this church is all about personal blessing and benefits.

These are the distractions that face the modern church. What about the distraction of music? When all it's about is about worship, but worship must be actually in the flames that arise from understanding God's word, but if worship occurs alone and it is just about the music then it's basically a distraction or a distraction if the church is all about the fellowship that we are so cozy with each other, we meet each other needs and that we don't need anything else. We actually forget that the beauty of God is to be shared with the rest of the world.

Let me end with a testimony about Car Lenz who is basically a famous pastor of the Hillsong Church who brought Justin Bieber to Christ and that actually propelled him into the world of basically stardom. He is a brilliant preacher and basically lots of people came to hear him. He then was introduced to NBA stars, Hollywood stars because of Justin Bieber and a problem is his focus in life started to shift away from the reading of God's word, from preaching God's word, from teaching God's word, he shifts to mixing and ministering and being with stars, being taken up by them, so much so that in the end he was found guilty of having a mistress whom he met walking the dog and not only one mistress, several mistresses and basically being sacked from his position he went into a life of luxury where his actual

apartment in New York costs 18,000 US dollars a month. In the end, it all came crumbling down, a young minister, not very much different from Timothy, who didn't immerse himself in exercising gift, preaching of God's word, teaching of God's word and the reading of God's word. Timothy was warned by Paul, keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. They are not doing two things that are very important,

1 Timothy 4: 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.

Because if he falls whole bunch of people like Carl Lenz will fall together with him. May the reading of God's word and the exhortation of God's word bring blessing to all of us this evening as we train in godliness because this has value for this life and the next.