

1 TIMOTHY 4:16

False teaching had distracted the local church in Ephesus from its mission of preaching the gospel and making disciples.

So Paul writes to Timothy and the big message of his letter is: "Sort out the church for the sake of the gospel!"

One of the key ways of doing this Paul says to Timothy in chapters 3 and 4, is by sorting out the leadership of the church.

Question: "What does it mean to be a group of faithful elders?"

Faithful elders teach the truth! (4:1-6)

Faithful elders pursue and value godliness (4:7-10)

Faithful elders recognise the importance of example, the Word and growth.

In verse 16 we also see that faithful elders watch their lives and doctrine.

In this verse Jesus addresses us very personally.

"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 Timothy 4:16)

A. Watch Your Life

"Keep a close watch on yourself."

1. The elders must provide a godly example, not a perfect one, but an authentic one.

We must keep a close watch on our lives to see what kind of example we are providing.

2. How do we do this?

By keeping our lives open to others.

By protecting ourselves against the appearance of evil.

By spending a healthy amount of time with our family.

By paying close attention to our thought life.

By making sure we set aside time for rest and recreation.

B. Watch Your Doctrine

"Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching."

1. We must watch our doctrine because right thinking should lead to right living.

Our minds need to be renewed for us to live in a way that pleases the Lord (cf. Romans 12:2)

2. How do we do this?

Spend time in the Scriptures.

Read good books from trusted writers.

Be careful of the latest fads.

Spend time talking with and listening to wise Christians.

Read the church's statement of faith regularly.

C. Why is it important that we watch our life and doctrine?

"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. It will lead to us persevering in the faith.

We will live lives that prove that we are followers of Jesus.

2. It will lead to others preserving in the faith.

The members of this local church will have healthy examples to follow.

The members of this local church will be taught true things from God's Word.