

1 TIMOTHY 4:6-16: TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF  
ENCOURAGEMENT

By Herman Dionson

**Introduction**

The gravity of the problem in the Ephesian church has led the Apostle Paul to neglect the conventional ancient letter-writing style. He wastes no time in directing Timothy to a course of action that must be followed in order to address this pressing problem in the congregation. Its seriousness has prompted Paul to use searing words to awaken the senses of those who read them. If the purpose of 1 Timothy 1:9-10 was to appeal to those who are spreading the false doctrines, then they are “lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for the sexual immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers.”<sup>1</sup> Paul’s deviation from conventional letter-writing brings an intensity to 1 Timothy 4:6-16 that at first may seem out of place. But in light of the seriousness of the situation, such deviation might well be an important aspect of Paul’s writing to Timothy, who at this particular moment likely needs more than just orders on how to navigate the church through the problem; he also needs a mentor’s comforting words. Thus, this exegesis paper will consider the above verses, the purpose of which is to provide encouragement and a personal challenge to Timothy.

The Pauline Epistles were not written in a vacuum but are curtailed with issues that erupted in the churches (or individuals, in the case of Philemon). And the element of encouragement, which is often overlooked, is perhaps best exemplified in this passage.

---

<sup>1</sup>Holy Bible, *New International Version*, Belfast: Biblical Europe, 2011.

## Background

### The Author and Authenticity

Dibelius and Conzelman turned the argument around when they stated that the burden of proof lies with those who hold to the Pauline authorship,<sup>2</sup> which had not been in question until Schleiermacher cast doubt on it.<sup>3</sup> Dibelius and Conzelman claim that the Pastoral Epistles were written “around the turn of the century, suggesting that the author aimed to revive Pauline teaching for his day or to compose a definitive and authoritative Pauline manual for denouncing heresy in the post-apostolic church.”<sup>4</sup> The arguments were that: (1) external evidence does not authenticate it, nor did the early fathers mention the letters; (2) the Pauline Epistles are not similar to the Pastoral Epistles; (3) the Book of Acts account displaces the Pastoral Epistles; (4) the church structure identified in the Pastoral Epistles was more suited to turn-of-the-century situations; (5) the middle-class audience is contrary to the early church assembly; and (6) the words used were foreign to other Pauline works.<sup>5</sup>

There are two other hypotheses regarding the question of authenticity. One suggests that a fragment of an authentic Pauline letter was used, especially in the personal statements; the other suggests the use of an amanuensis (i.e., a secretary) who was given the liberty to write, thus providing an answer to the differences mentioned above. This theory, though, still supports the contention that the Pastoral Letters are not what tradition says they are.<sup>6</sup>

On the contrary, Gordon Fee posits that external evidence is available that Irenaeus (about 180 A.D.) and Polycarp (135 A.D.) might have an idea of the material. The strongest clue, however, to the traditional view would be in the language and style of the letters.<sup>7</sup> Fee demonstrates that: (1) the purpose and occasion of the writing would require a “genius” to bring the loose ends in the setting, (2) the situation in the Ephesian church is similar to that of the later problems

---

<sup>2</sup>Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Fortress Press, 1972), 4.

<sup>3</sup>Raymond F. Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 1st ed. (Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 3.

<sup>4</sup>Philip H. Towner, “1-2 Timothy & Titus,” *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series 14* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 15.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>6</sup>Dibelius and Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 4–5.

<sup>7</sup>Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, ed. W. Ward Gasque (Hendrickson Publishers / Paternoster Press, 1995), 23–24.

mentioned above; and (3) this genius writer did not have to write three letters—thus, the traditional view of Pauline authorship still holds.<sup>8</sup>

Theories of pseudepigraphy, therefore, must reconstruct a historical situation in the time of the pseudepigrapher, in this case about A.D. 90-110, that accounts for the data of these letters as addressing the “author’s” situation while still making them plausible as belonging to the alleged historical situation of the letters themselves. Right here is where the difficulties arise.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, considering that the correspondence was with two closely related individuals, it can be argued that a different dynamic in writing can surface, as opposed to the other letters directed to the churches. Reading the Pastoral Letters should take this into account. Also, it would be incongruent to church ethics that, indeed, a material being passed on to them purporting to be Paul’s was, in fact, not his.<sup>10</sup>

### The Recipient

Timothy would first surface in Acts 16:1,2, being described as a young man from Lystra, where he was highly regarded. His relationship with Paul is defined in Acts as becoming Paul’s “itinerant apostolic delegate.”<sup>11</sup> He would also be prominently mentioned in most of the Pauline letters, even as a co-author. Paul considers him *γνησίῳ τέκνῳ ἐν πίστει* (1 Timothy 1:2), indicating that close relationship, since *γνησίῳ* “conveys both intimacy and authority.”<sup>12</sup> Such a close relationship is also evident as Paul writes, “You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endure” (2 Timothy 2:10-11). Paul has sent Timothy on great tasks, which indicates that Paul saw him as strong rather than weak.<sup>13</sup> Fee suggests that him being relatively young (about 30 years

---

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 25–26.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>10</sup>Walter L. Liefeld, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (Zondervan, 2008), 28.

<sup>11</sup>William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Lynn A. Losie, vol. 46, Word Biblical Commentary (Thomas Nelson, 2000), lviii.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 46:8.

<sup>13</sup>Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*.

old) and facing a grave church problem were factors in Paul's words of advice in 4:12.<sup>14</sup>

#### The Occasion and Purpose

It is not known where Paul was when he wrote his first letter to Timothy. It is clear, however, that he was not in prison. The mention of Macedonia and Ephesus (1:3) helps place the letter's recipient as being in Ephesus, with Paul indicating his plans on getting there (3:14, 4:13). This would put into question when he possibly wrote it and the occasion of its writing.

Although it has been suggested that Paul wrote 1 Timothy around the same time as his travels mentioned in the Book of Acts, that supposition would face problems, since the events in Acts would not coincide with the available data mentioned. For instance, in Acts 20:1, Paul's travel would be from Ephesus to Macedonia, with Timothy having already been sent ahead and left in Ephesus (*cf.* Acts 19:22, 1 Timothy 1:3). There are other possibilities from where in Acts this would appear, but such would be more illogical, thus supporting the conclusion that Paul must have been released from prison after what was recorded in Acts 28:30.<sup>15</sup> This will likewise be supported via the early works of Clement mentioning "limits in the West," the Muratorian Canon noting Paul going to Spain, and Eusebius suggesting Paul's second visit to Rome to face death under Nero.<sup>16</sup> With the evidence provided, 1 Timothy can be dated at about 62 A.D.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, it would be for that very purpose Paul wrote the letter, which is to issue to Timothy directives in handling the affairs of the church. Further discussion regarding the problem of that church is discussed in the following exegesis.

#### Exegesis of 1 Timothy 4:6-16

Several books that provided an outline of the whole of 1 Timothy show puzzlement about what header to ascribe to 1 Timothy 4:6-16. Towner ("More instructions to Timothy"),<sup>18</sup> Guthrie ("Methods of

---

<sup>14</sup>Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 2.

<sup>15</sup>George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles (New International Greek Testament Commentary)*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and W. Ward Gasque (William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 15.

<sup>16</sup>Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 46:lv.

<sup>17</sup>Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles (New International Greek Testament Commentary)*, 54.

<sup>18</sup>Towner, "1-2 Timothy & Titus," 36.

dealing with false teaching”),<sup>19</sup> and Liefeld (“Further specifics as to Timothy’s assignment”)<sup>20</sup> are examples that indicate there is no clear identification to this particular part of the letter. Guthrie points out that, as a character of the letter, some areas can be clearly outlined, whereas others are a combination of church advice and church doctrines.<sup>21</sup> Mounce presents a better alternative, arguing that, through the lens of their relationship, “Personal notes to Timothy” makes for a better reading.<sup>22</sup>

Paul pens direct messages to Timothy in the following verses—1:3, 18; 3:14; 4:6-16; 5:21-25; and 6:11-14, 20.<sup>23</sup> Fee, however, finds our pericope as the “thanksgiving” that is missing from the conventional ancient letter writing.<sup>24</sup> The gravity of the error in the church intensifies the need for a personal address of encouragement to Timothy.

#### Part 1 (verses 6-10)

##### *Unconditional encouragement (verse 6)*

The first words *Ταῦτα ὑποτιθέμενος* can also be translated by adding “if”—thus, “if you point out” or “if you instruct.” Yet that might not be the direction toward which Paul would want to encourage Timothy. With regard to the problem being faced by the Ephesian church, there is a requirement for Timothy to uphold the teachings (*Ταῦτα*, referring to the previous commands). It would mean that, by pointing these commands to the brothers, Timothy will have discharged the work of a good servant.<sup>25</sup> The phrase *τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς* indicates that the recipient of the instruction is the whole church. Timothy as a good servant is connected not to the conditions set but on his *ἐντρέφόμενος* (i.e., “being nourished” or “since you are nourished”<sup>26</sup>), glued both to faith and to good teaching. Although *παρηκολούθηκας* would be

---

<sup>19</sup>Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Inter-Varsity Press, 1990), 63.

<sup>20</sup>Liefeld, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 39.

<sup>21</sup>Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary*, 18.

<sup>22</sup>Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 46:cxxxv.

<sup>23</sup>Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles (New International Greek Testament Commentary)*, 4.

<sup>24</sup>Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 102.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Barth Campbell, “Rhetorical Design in 1 Timothy 4,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 154, no. 614 (1997): 197.

conveniently translated regarding Timothy's Christian family, it is rather conformity to the Gospel.<sup>27</sup>

*Maximum training (verses 7-9)*

In Acts 20:30, Paul prophesied that false teachers will be found among the members of the church in Ephesus. This might have come to fulfillment in the heretical problem that Timothy is facing. Paul earlier described these heresies as “myths and endless genealogies . . . [which] promote controversial speculations” (v. 1:4)—heresies that “involved spiritualizing the resurrection and promoting ascetic practices relating to Jewish elements. This ascetic syncretism led to the errorists' gross speculation, false knowledge, and immoral behavior.”<sup>28</sup>

As opposed to the myths characterized by the ascetic practices (4:3), Paul picks a tangible image, the *Γύμναζε*, to encourage Timothy toward *εὐσέβειαν*. It is with care not to put extra meaning to *Γύμναζε* as pertaining to the root of it; literally it means “exercise naked” or “train in athletic discipline;” for it can also be “of mental and spiritual training and discipline control oneself, exercise self-control.”<sup>29</sup> Judging from the context of verses 7-10 and 6:12, it definitely provides for the idea of the athletic discipline applied to the quest for godliness. In addition, verse 8 added *σωματικῇ το γυμνασία* enhancing the action, although it is of little value (*πρὸς ὀλίγον ἐστὶν ὠφέλιμος*). This emphasizes then on the *εὐσέβεια* to provide a benefit to the present as well as the future with a parallelism between “physical exercise” and “godliness,” the former of little benefit, with all benefits coming from the latter.<sup>30</sup>

Verse 9 intensifies the message with the expanded *Πιστὸς ὁ λόγος* formula, which appears three times in 1 Timothy. While a degree of uncertainty exists as to how this formula works, one suggestion is that it serves as a marker of sorts; but even so, it leaves no clue as to how it operates.<sup>31</sup> Mounce took pains in identifying that the literary device

<sup>27</sup>Towner, “1-2 Timothy & Titus,” 105–106.

<sup>28</sup>David A. Mappes, “The Heresy Paul Opposed in 1 Timothy,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 156, no. 624 (1999): 458.0

<sup>29</sup>Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, “Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament,” *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids Mich.: Baker Books, 2000), 102.

<sup>30</sup>Liefeld, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 158.

<sup>31</sup>R. Alistair Campbell, “Identifying the Faithful Sayings in the Pastoral Epistles,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 54 (1994): 77.

refers to verse 10.<sup>32</sup> But the whole idea of verses 7-9 (and even 10) is the encouragement of Timothy to *εὐσέβεια*, in which the quest requires toiling in the present, hoping in the future, and focusing on salvation.<sup>33</sup>

*Living God and Soteriology (verse 10)*

Again, the *Εἰς τοῦτο γάρ* refers back to verse 8, pointing to *εὐσέβεια* as the goal<sup>34</sup> that provides for the security of the believer with the present and eschatological life.<sup>35</sup> Then, *ὄνειδιζόμεθα*<sup>36</sup> points back to the athletic imagery in verse 7. With the *ἠλπίζομεν ἐπὶ θεῷ ζῶντι*, the hope is set on what is not just in the future; but because God is a living God, that hope is available.<sup>37</sup> Goodwin recognizes that Pauline element of *θεῷ ζῶντι* yet exercises logical gymnastics, pointing to a non-Pauline authorship, although he does provide an agreeable conclusion that “Paul toiled and strove because he was an apostle of the living God, sent by the living God as the instrument of divine salvation. Paul’s hope in the living God was a hope based on his personal experience of call and commission.”<sup>38</sup>

The soteriological significance of verse 10 needs to be recognized, especially in the atonement debate. Erickson finds the significance of this verse in relation to a universal atonement.<sup>39</sup> In 2:4-6, salvation is clearly stated as available to all but that its context should not be equated with what Paul is saying in verse 10, where he can ascribe a different meaning to the word.<sup>40</sup> Fee interprets this then as “Our hope rests in him, because, *he is the Savior of all men*, that is, he would save (give life to) all people, but his salvation is in fact effective *especially for those who believe* (emphasis in original).”<sup>41</sup>

<sup>32</sup>Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 46:246–248.

<sup>33</sup>Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 126–127.

<sup>34</sup>Dibelius and Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 68.

<sup>35</sup>Mark J. Goodwin, “The Pauline Background of the Living God as Interpretive Context for 1 Timothy 4.10,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 61 (1996): 69.

<sup>36</sup>For detailed discussion on the textual variant see Appendix 1.

<sup>37</sup>Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary*, 108; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 46:256.

<sup>38</sup>Goodwin, “The Pauline Background of the Living God as Interpretive Context for 1 Timothy 4.10,” 84–85.

<sup>39</sup>Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Baker Academic, 1998), 846.

<sup>40</sup>Steven M. Baugh, “‘Savior of All People’: 1 Tim 4:10 in Context,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 54, no. 2 (1992): 340.

<sup>41</sup>Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 106.

## Part 2 (verses 11-16)

*Drama in two verses (verses 11-12)*

A certain demand is asked of Timothy in *Παράγγελλε ταῦτα καὶ δίδασκε* (repeated again in 6:2b)—a call to command and teach these things to the elders of the church but contrasted with his youthfulness.<sup>42</sup> Liefeld says that “This contrast is not a passing phenomenon but expresses the heavy plot (if one can call it that way in a letter) of gleaming truth opposing dark error with a relatively young warrior leading the change, wielding a sword given to him by the aging apostle.”<sup>43</sup> Youth (*νεότητος*) may be someone about 30 years old<sup>44</sup> (perhaps even 40<sup>45</sup>). But despite the age difference relative to the elders to *καταφρονεῖτω*, the challenge is nonetheless for Timothy to excel in the outward (*λόγῳ* and *ἀναστροφῇ*) and inner life (*ἀγάπῃ, πίστει, ἀγνείᾳ* [Textus Receptus adds *ἐν πνεύματι*, but the shorter reading is best attested by various texts]<sup>46</sup>), which Guthrie believes youth lacks.<sup>47</sup> Perhaps greater weight can be placed on the notion that those same character qualities are lacking in the false teachers. Nevertheless, one with godly character can always be looked up to and emulated.<sup>48</sup> He becomes the *τύπος*, a model for the whole church.

*Focus on the Church (verses 13-14)*

As to the present problem, Timothy is persuaded to continue with the task pending Paul’s arrival, *Ἔως ἔρχομαι*. Verse 13 identifies three aspects of that task—*τῇ ἀναγνώσει, τῇ παρακλήσει, and τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ*, all accompanied by the definite article, which implies that the work is to be done as a unit. In fact, Mounce observes the order—i.e., “Timothy is to immerse himself in the biblical text, to encourage

---

<sup>42</sup>Dibelius and Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 70.

<sup>43</sup>Liefeld, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 165.

<sup>44</sup>Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 107.

<sup>45</sup>Walter Lock, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles (I & II Timothy and Titus)* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1924), 52.

<sup>46</sup>Bruce M. Metzger and United Bible Societies, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’s Greek New Testament, (4th Rev. Ed.)* (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 574.

<sup>47</sup>Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary*, 109.

<sup>48</sup>Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 107.



people to follow the text, and to teach its doctrine.”<sup>49</sup> He is still to continue the *τύπος* in verse 12.

The institutionalized ordination was not practiced around this time; in fact, the “laying of hands” might be done by colleagues rather than by superiors.<sup>50</sup> It was not viewed as a mystical practice of power being transferred through the hands,<sup>51</sup> but perhaps was likely more akin to the present day Pentecostal “laying on of hands.” The *χαρίσματος* were first received *διὰ προφητείας* accompanied then *μετὰ ἐπιθέσεως* by the body of elders. The crucial element (also in 2 Timothy 1:6-7) is the work of the Holy Spirit, who provides this *χαρίσματος*, not the human actions.<sup>52</sup> Timothy is encouraged further to practice them, putting to memory by not neglecting (*Μὴ ἀμέλει*) the *χαρίσματος* (a gift that is received graciously).<sup>53</sup>

#### *Great motivations (verses 15-16)*

“If you do not combine godliness with proper doctrine in your life, you will give the lie to your own claim to salvation and be a hindrance to others who seek to be saved.”<sup>54</sup> That is putting negatively what Paul stresses in the final two verses of this pericope. Four imperatives appear here that are directed towards Timothy’s own conduct, rather than towards the church or the false teachers. In verse 15, *Ταῦτα μελέτα* can be translated “meditate on” or “give careful thought on” these things. The NIV translates it as “be diligent in these things,” or it can also be translated “practice these things,” which refers back to the athletic imagery.<sup>55</sup> The phrase *ἐν τούτοις ἴσθι* also elicits different translations that try to capture its essence of “immerse yourself in them.”<sup>56</sup> The language Paul uses can be that of a coach prodding his protégé, with *ἵνα* providing a clause of result, i.e., that all will be able to observe of Timothy’s progress—*σου ἡ προκοπή φανερά ἢ ἐν πᾶσιν*, referencing again his being young (verse 12) and the fact that ministers are public figures.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>49</sup>Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 46:260.

<sup>50</sup>Liefeld, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 167–168.

<sup>51</sup>Dibelius and Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 70–71.

<sup>52</sup>Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 108.

<sup>53</sup>Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles (New International Greek Testament Commentary)*, 208.

<sup>54</sup>Liefeld, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 168–169.

<sup>55</sup>Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 108.

<sup>56</sup>Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 46:263.

<sup>57</sup>Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary*, 110–111.

Verse 16 amplifies the same call in verse 15. Timothy is to *Ἐπεχε* (i.e., “give attention to”<sup>58</sup> or “watch”), with *σεαυτῶ* referring to one’s own self, which is rendered then to “give attention to yourself (or life) and doctrine.” It is true that “the teacher and the teaching are intimately linked.”<sup>59</sup> Adding to that *Ἐπίμενε αὐτοῖς*, which means to “be persistent in them”<sup>60</sup> or “persevere.”<sup>61</sup> One then should “continually be evaluating his life so that both aspects—his life and teaching—might maintain a right course. Sound doctrine is essential for great preaching . . . Such a relentless examining of one’s theology is absolutely necessary if one’s preaching is to be effective.”<sup>62</sup>

The final charge closes with “rapid-fire exhortations,”<sup>63</sup> ending not with the negative motivation (above) but rather one that closes with salvation. What greater motivational tool than a reminder to his personal salvation and that of other people—*σεαυτὸν σώσεις καὶ τοῦς ἀκούοντάς σου*.

### Toward Encouragement

There are possible two levels of communication in the 1 Timothy 4:6-16 passage—one is from verses 6-11, the other from verses 12-16. The first level starts and ends with encouraging Timothy to fully teach the things that were given to him, to “point these things out” (v. 6) and to “command and teach these things” (v. 11), highlighting the teachings he has to follow, not fables but spiritual disciplines, appealing to the physical training. The second level, which is connected to the first, provides a detailed account of what to train for. Verse 12 deals with having the confidence and setting a high example; verse 13 outlines the pastoral duty; verse 14 is a reminder to exercise spiritual gifting; verse 15 encourages having the attitude of a learner; and verse 16 presents a recap, such that salvation is achieved for Timothy and the church.

As to the problem that Paul has dealt with head on in 1:3, the purpose of 4:6-16 is to encourage Timothy to focus not just on correct doctrine but also on correct life. The problem coming from within prompts Paul to encourage Timothy to build up strong character so that he sets himself apart from those who are “hypocritical liars” (4:2). Paul

<sup>58</sup>Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles (New International Greek Testament Commentary)*, 210.

<sup>59</sup>Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary*, 111.

<sup>60</sup>Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 46, Pastoral Epistles*, 265.

<sup>61</sup>Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles (New International Greek Testament Commentary)*, 210.

<sup>62</sup>S. J. Lawson, “The Passion of Biblical Preaching: An Expository Study of 1 Timothy 4:13-16,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 159, no. 633 (2002): 93.

<sup>63</sup>Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, 132.

uses the athletic metaphor (4:8) and keeps referring to it, implying that the journey will not be easy. One thing that can be deduced is that it is a shared (i.e., private) image (*σωματική γυμνασία* = “bodily training”), which both easily understand, not to mention a shared Ephesian culture, much like men today can talk about basketball and be fully aware of the shared imagery it can provide. In essence, Paul’s encouragement is to exercise in spiritual training with same amount of energy and discipline as in physical training. His words ring out to Timothy like an athletic coach.

The affinity between Paul and Timothy is better understood in this passage. As is common to the letters of Paul that address certain issues of the church, in this letter he provides Timothy with guidelines in his leadership to the issues that were at hand. Taken from the distance, this passage provides a breath of fresh air to those issues (or perhaps the whole of the issues of the New Testament church) as Paul brings into the conversation that affinity (i.e., strong Christian bond) that both have in their service for Christ and His church.

### **Applying 1 Timothy 4:6-16 to Today**

It is to this particular segment of the whole Scripture that many young people have found courage to face their calling in life. At camps, youth meetings, Bible studies, etc., the Joshua Generation has received a mandate to be strong. “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity” (v. 12). Words that outlined the life that young people ought to live provide the gist of the whole Christian life.

The call in the Philippines is not just for the Timothys, but also for the Pauls—those leaders who will assume the responsibility of helping develop lives at deeper levels. We need Filipino pastors who are committed in the ministry to raising up and entrusting Timothys in the ministry. We need:

- I. Pauls who are trainers of healthy Timothys unconditionally.  
(v. 6)
- II. Pauls who are coaches of trained Timothys to godliness  
(vv. 7-9)
- III. Pauls who are promoters of the godly life to the Timothys  
(v. 10)

- IV. Pauls who are inspirers of young Timothy's to be models (vv. 11-12)
- V. Pauls who are believers in the gifts of the Timothy's for ministry (vv. 13-14)
- VI. Pauls who are motivators of Timothy's toward evangelism (vv. 15-16)

Unfortunately, many of the mentors in the Philippines travel to America and other "greener pastures," leaving the Timothy's all alone and afraid to make calls in the churches. With the technology available, we can still help redeem and make the Pauls to rise up and write, chat, or visit to encourage the new generation of Philippine church workers, ensuring that the churches will not become hostile to the Gospel they have received.

The call of 1 Timothy 4:6-16 is for Timothy to rise to the occasion and to enrich his life so that, instead of leaders who are in error taking their positions, he provides a better example. Paul's reminders to him as a good and godly minister makes this passage stand out.

### **Conclusion**

The reading of 1 Timothy 4:6-16 is a direct effort of Paul to encourage Timothy to serve in faithfulness with his doctrine and the life that he lives. Paul's careful use of imagery both challenges and points to mutual affinity. We meet in this passage a Paul who knows a "true son in the faith," a Paul who is a coach that motivates, and a Paul who believes in and challenges a Timothy with the huge task that lies ahead.

## Appendix 1

Problem Text: 1 Timothy 4:10

εις τουτο γαρ κοπιωμεν και αγωνιζομεθα οτι ηλπικαμεν επι θεω ζωντι ος εστιν σωτηρ παντων ανθρωπων μαλιστα πιστων

Particular Problem:

Reading: αγωνιζομεθα

Variant: ονειδιζομεθα

UBS indicated that the textual problem is a contentious one. Variant text is supported by most minuscules, on the other hand, the text used has more readings and have an older text being a\*. The scholars chose αγωνιζομεθα, although only with hesitation, and reasoning that it has slightly better bearing and provides a better translation for the context.

*Αγωνιζομεθα* means “we contest” in contrast to *ονειδιζομεθα* means “we suffer” I think harder reading would be former.

In this consideration, I would go with *αγωνιζομεθα*.

(1) literally, of public games *engage in a contest, contend for a prize* (1C 9.25); figuratively, of any heroic effort *strive earnestly, make every effort, try very hard* (CO 1.29); (2) of fighting with weapons, literally *fight, struggle* (JN 18.36); figuratively, of great nonphysical effort and struggle *strive earnestly, do one’s very best* (CO 4.12)<sup>64</sup>

Translation of the text:

For in this we labor and we contest as we hoped on the Living God who is the Savior of all men, especially of trustful men.

---

<sup>64</sup>Friberg, Friberg, and Miller, “Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament,” 34.

**Appendix 2**  
**Translation**  
**1 Timothy 4:6-16**

- 6 In pointing these things to the church you will be a good servant of Jesus Christ, since you are nourished to the words of faith and the good teaching which you have followed.
- 7 Moreover, have nothing to do with the profane and old wives myths, but you exercise godliness.
- 8 For exercise is of little benefit, but godliness is very beneficial in the present and the future [life].
- 9 These words are true and worthy to be accepted.
- 10 For in this we labor and we strive to do our best having our hope in the Living God, the Savior of all people, especially those who are faithful.
- 11 Command and teach these things!
- 12 Let no one look down on your being young, but be a model of the faithful in words, behavior in love, in faith, and in purity.
- 13 Until I come, pay attention to the reading [of the Scriptures], the encouragement [of the church], and to teaching [of the doctrine].
- 14 Do not neglect the gift that is in you which was given to you through prophecies and laying on of hands by the elders.
- 15 Meditate on these, be fully immersed [in them], in order that your progress might be evident to all.
- 16 Persevere fully yourself in the teaching, remain in them, because in doing this you will save both yourself and the ones hearing you.

- 6 Ταῦτα ὑποτιθέμενος τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς καλὸς ἔση διάκονος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ἐντρέφόμενος τοῖς λόγοις τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς καλῆς διδασκαλίας ἧ̄ παρηκολούθηκας·
- 7 τοὺς δὲ βεβήλους καὶ γραώδεις μύθους παραιτοῦ. Γύμναζε δὲ σεαυτὸν πρὸς εὐσέβειαν·
- 8 ἡ γὰρ σωματικὴ γυμνασία πρὸς ὀλίγον ἐστὶν ὠφέλιμος, ἡ δὲ εὐσέβεια πρὸς πάντα ὠφέλιμός ἐστιν ἐπαγγελίαν ἔχουσα ζωῆς τῆς νῦν καὶ τῆς μελλούσης.
- 9 πιστὸς ὁ λόγος καὶ πάσης ἀποδοχῆς ἄξιος·
- 10 εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ κοπιῶμεν καὶ ἀγωνιζόμεθα, ὅτι ἠλπικάμεν ἐπὶ θεῷ ζῶντι, ὃς ἐστὶν σωτὴρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων μάλιστα πιστῶν.
- 11 Παράγγελλε ταῦτα καὶ δίδασκε.
- 12 Μηδεὶς σου τῆς νεότητος καταφρονεῖτω, ἀλλὰ τύπος γίνου τῶν πιστῶν ἐν λόγῳ, ἐν ἀναστροφῇ, ἐν ἀγάπῃ, ἐν πίστει, ἐν ἀγνεΐᾳ.
- 13 ἕως ἔρχομαι πρόσεχε τῇ ἀναγνώσει, τῇ παρακλήσει, τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ.
- 14 μὴ ἀμέλει τοῦ ἐν σοὶ χαρίσματος, ὃ ἐδόθη σοὶ διὰ προφητείας μετὰ ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου.
- 15 ταῦτα μελέτα, ἐν τούτοις ἴσθι, ἵνα σου ἡ προκοπὴ φανερὰ ᾖ πᾶσιν.
- 16 ἔπεχε σεαυτῷ καὶ τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ, ἐπίμενε αὐτοῖς· τοῦτο γὰρ ποιῶν καὶ σεαυτὸν σώσεις καὶ τοὺς ἀκούοντάς σου.

INTERNATIONAL - PENTECOSTAL - MISSIONAL



# APTS

[www.apts.edu](http://www.apts.edu)

ASIA PACIFIC THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



**Graduate Certificate in Ministerial and Theological Studies**

**Master of Arts in Ministry (M.A. Min.)**

**Master of Arts in Intercultural Studies (M.A.I.S)**

**Master of Arts in Theology (M.A. Theo.)**

**Master of Divinity (M. Div.)**

**Master of Theology in Pentecostal/Charismatic Studies (M. Th.)**

**Doctor of Ministry in Pentecostal/Charismatic Ministries (D. Min.)**



Phone: +63 74 442 2779

Fax: +63 74 442 6378

email: [info@apts.edu](mailto:info@apts.edu)

P.O. Box 377, 2600 Baguio City, Philippines

IMPACTING THE FUTURE OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC CHURCH