

FAITHFUL MEN  
February 22, 2022

1. Opening Prayer Time
2. Housekeeping/Review
  - A. Expectations Reminder
    - o Make attendance a PRIORITY
    - o Do ALL the homework
    - o Serve the Body
    - o Pray for each other (especially the other men in your group)
    - o 1 Cor 15:58
  - B. Faithful Men Resource Page ([bridgebible.church/connect/faithful-men](http://bridgebible.church/connect/faithful-men))
  - C. New/Smaller Group List
  - D. Optional Book Donations (\$35)
3. Pastor Paul's Challenge
4. Small Group time #1
  - A. What things did you learn, or were reminded of, regarding...
    - a. The character of Job
    - b. The role of Israel's elders
  - B. Discuss two or three items from question 12 (page 28) for which you desire and recognize you need to grow in maturity.
5. Break: 10 minutes
6. Video: "Personal Life and Growth: Part 1" – A challenge from Alexander Strauch
7. Small Group Time #2
  - A. What impacted you from Alexander Strauch's short message?
  - B. What is most hindering you from pressing forward in your Christian maturity and growth in Christ?
  - C. Pray for each other concerning the things learned and discussed tonight
8. Go Home ☺

Homework due March 22<sup>nd</sup>:

- BE Book: read pages 35-50; 125-133; 291-295
- BE Workbook: Answer questions from Lesson 2
- Watch video: "Personal Life and Growth: Part 2" (link to video will be on the FM resource page)
- Fill out your weekly activity worksheet for one week

## Faithful Men – 02/22/22

**The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (2 Timothy 2:2 – NASB95)**

### FAITHFUL MEN:

**F – Follower**

**A – Available; Accountable**

**I – Integrity**

**T – Teachable**

**H – Humble; Hospitable**

**F – Fruitful**

**U – Unwavering (“full of faith”)**

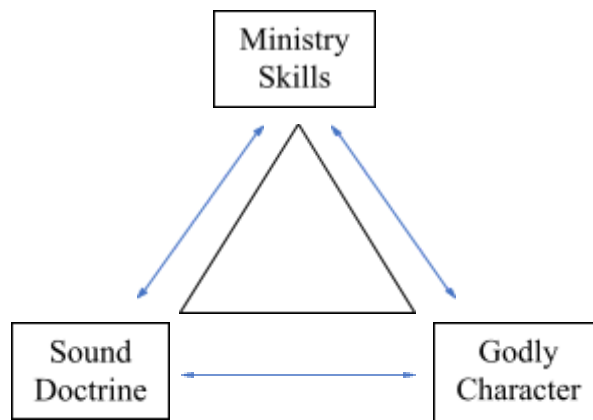
**L – Loving**

**M – Motivational**

**E – Evangelistic; Exemplary**

**N – Near to God**

### How do we get there? Spiritual Maturity Triangle:



**Colossians 1:28-29 (NASB95) –**<sup>28</sup> We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. <sup>29</sup> For this purpose also **I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.**

**2 Timothy 2:1-8 (NASB95) –**<sup>1</sup> You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. <sup>3</sup> Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good **soldier** of Christ Jesus. <sup>4</sup> No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. <sup>5</sup> Also if anyone competes as an **athlete**, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. <sup>6</sup> The hard-working **farmer** ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops. <sup>7</sup> Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. <sup>8</sup> **Remember Jesus Christ**, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel,

- **Soldier – “Are you entangled?”**
- **Athlete – “Are you competing for the right prize?”**
- **Farmer – “Are you waiting patiently?”**
- **Remember Jesus Christ – “Are you fixing your eyes upon Jesus?”**

# Personal Life and Growth

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## *Detailed Outline* *Part 1 of 3*

Potential elders often ask, “What do I do as an elder? What’s my first duty? Where do I start?”

The answer is Acts 20:28: **Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.**

### **I. Guard Yourselves.**

You cannot care for souls of others if you cannot care for your own soul.

Paul says the same thing to Timothy in 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.**

Both of the above passages are in the context of false teachers, the agents of Satan. Paul is talking about spiritual warfare. He is talking about being on the front line of battle. The first thing you have to do as a Christian soldier, as a shepherd of the souls of God’s people, is to guard your own spiritual life and doctrine.

Richard Baxter:

*“Take heed, then, for the enemy has a special eye on you. You are sure to have his most subtle insinuations, incessant solicitations and violent assaults. Take heed to yourselves, lest he outwit you. The devil is a greater scholar than you are, and a more nimble disputant. . . . And whenever he prevails against you, he will make you the instrument of your own ruin.” (The Reformed Pastor [repr. Grand Rapids: Sovereign Grace, 1971], 7)*

### **How do you care for your soul?**

#### **1. Guard what you read.**

Whatever you read will inevitably change your thinking and attitude. So be careful what you are reading, whether it is secular material or spiritual material.

#### **2. Guard whom you listen to.**

Carefully guard who you listen to as teachers, whether they are political pundits or Bible expositors. Remember, we become like those who teach us.

#### **3. Guard your prayer life.**

Carefully guard your prayer life, because that is always the first thing to go when we are hyper-busy.

#### **4. Guard against unconfessed sin.**

Carefully guard against unconfessed sin that will cause your heart to become cold and resistant to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Deal with sin right away.

#### **5. Guard your life from weights that will impede the Christian race.**

Hebrews 12:1: **Lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.**

A weight is not always sin. It is something that impedes the Christian race or bogs down your advancement in the lifelong race before you.

#### **6. Guard your sexual life, your marriage, and your children.**

If you are an elder, you put your marriage at risk and your children at risk, because you are a very busy person. Satan is winning many, many victories in this area of the sexual life. Guard your sexual life.

#### **7. Guard your love for God.**

Guard your love relationship with God, your affections for God.

Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to love God with all your being, and then to love your neighbors as yourself. They are inseparable commands. So you must guard your love relationship with the Lord.

#### **8. Guard your growth in Christ: always be growing, learning, maturing.**

The key issue is this: you are either growing in Christ or you are stagnating. You cannot be neutral. God will not allow it.

If you're stagnant spiritually, the church will be stagnant spiritually. If you're coasting spiritually, the church will coast. If you're living off the past, the church will not move into the future. If you are not excited about your Bible, world vision, your ministry of shepherding people, not excited about the church and where it is going, the church will also be neutralized and stagnant spiritually. A local church gets very little beyond what its leaders are like.

One way to guard your soul and make your personal ministry to people more effective is to see that you're constantly growing and maturing, pressing forward in the Christian life.

Let's look at what the Scripture says about our personal growth and maturity in Christ.

## II. The Biblical Mandate to Grow in Christ

### 1. 1 Timothy 4:7-8

**Rather train [exercise or discipline] yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds the promise for the present life and also for the life to come.**

The apostle Paul likes the image of the athlete. We are spiritual athletes. The idea is this: keep on exercising and continue to exercise yourself to godliness.

When we think of this metaphor of exercise or training, we should be thinking of what an athlete goes through: strenuous effort, self-discipline, self-denial, sacrifice, concentration, a scheduled program, knowledge of how to improve, plan for improvement.

Philip Towner gives a good definition of godliness:

*“Authentic Christian existence . . . the interplay between the knowledge of God . . . and its observable outworking of behavior that is appropriate to that knowledge.” (The Letters to Timothy and Titus, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006], 174.)*

Godliness is authentic Christian behavior, attitude, speech, lifestyle that is in accord with gospel truths.

D. A. Carson warns that athletes do not drift into excellence, and neither do Christians drift into godliness:

*“People do not drift towards holiness. Apart from grace-driven effort, people do not gravitate towards godliness, prayer, and obedience to Scripture, faith, and delighting the Lord. Instead, we drift towards compromise and call it tolerance; we drift towards disobedience and call it freedom; we drift towards superstition and call it faith. We cherish the indiscipline of loss self-control and call it relaxation; we slouch toward prayerlessness and delude ourselves into thinking we have escaped legalism; we slide toward godlessness and convince ourselves we have been liberated.” (For the Love of God, Volume 2: A Daily Companion for Discovering the Riches of God’s Word [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006], 23)*

We are to exert effort into exercising and continuing to exercise ourselves to godliness. Don’t stop exercising; don’t stop training and disciplining yourself to godliness. Be a growing Christian. Exercise your spiritual muscles.

### 2. 1 Timothy 4:15

**Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress.**

Paul wants *everyone* in the church to see Timothy’s spiritual progress and growth.

Does your family see you progressing spiritually? Does the church see you progressing spiritually? Are you going forward for the Lord? Let everyone **see your progress**.

Douglas Smith:

*“When leaders are learning and growing, everything about them communicates the same opportunity to other people. They’re excited; they do things differently. One of the most profound—and unusual—experiences people can have on the job is to see their leaders grow.”* (John Carver, *Boards that Make a Difference: A New Design for Leadership in Nonprofit and Public Organizations* [San Francisco, CA: Wiley and Sons, 2006], 212.)

Let me assure you people want to see you pressing forward—reading, learning, getting fresh vision. It will excite the church. The church will follow you! People want good leadership.

Dr. J. Robert “Bobby” Clinton has investigated every Biblical character in the New Testament. He says only one fourth end well. Here is his conclusion:

*“We have observed that most people cease learning by the age of forty. By that we mean they no longer actively pursue knowledge, understanding, and experience that will enhance their capacity to grow and contribute to others. Most simply rest on what they already know. But those who finish well maintain a positive learning attitude all their lives.”* (Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton, *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life* [Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1992], 222.)

If you want to be a Christian who is growing and going forward, you have to have a positive learning attitude all of your life.

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