

Elder Training Series

Session 10 - Mandates Relating To Godliness And Empowering (NIV based)

(Repeating) NOTE: Again perhaps it would be prudent for you to mark or highlight the items in this document that you need to work on or improve in your life.

INTRODUCTION:

- The Books of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus are replete with numerous mandates that are specifically directed to pastors, elders, overseers, and other ministry leaders in a church or ministry, like they were directed to pastors Timothy and Titus who lived during that time. (1 Timothy 1:1-2; Titus 1:1,4)
 - These mandates come as "authoritative commands or instructions" from God, "obligatory directives" for those leadership persons to follow, implement, live by, and persevere in. (AHD - 'mandate')
 - Appropriate compliance with these mandates is necessary in order to perform well the functions and duties of being leadership in a church or ministry.
 - In this 'Elder Training Series', having completed in previous sessions the study of required qualifications, this next area of study will begin with the mandates that pertain to the need to be and stay functioning at a high level of personal godliness before God.
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READ: "...train yourself to be godly." (1 Timothy 4:7b)

SECTION POINT: Leaders of ministry are mandated by God to develop and consistently maintain the discipline of personally being "godly".

- God instructs that leaders in churches or ministries (such as elders, overseers, pastors, and ministry leaders) are to "be examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:3), which by implication necessitates establishing and consistently maintaining all of one's life in a manner that God finds pleasing and worthy to be displayed prominently as an example to the flock.
- This 'establishing and maintaining' will not necessarily come readily or naturally to these leaders, as evidenced by the reality that God has to state this as an imperative and a mandate of action for them - "train yourself to be godly", and "pursue... godliness". (1 Timothy 4:7; 6:11)
- "**Godliness**" can be defined as having sincere, devout, and "great reverence for God; the quality of being [personally] holy or sacred", and "piety" - "earnestly compliant in the observance of [the true Christian] religion; professing or exhibiting a [distinct and biblical] sense of virtue and morality". (AHD - 'godliness'; Strong's #2150 in 1 Timothy 4:7; AHD - 'pious')
- God furthermore provides an incentive - "godliness has value for all things" (v.4:8), which thereby certainly would include the producing of excellent functioning as an elder or leader in a church or ministry.
- And of course, the proper fulfilling of this mandate precludes any objection that would arise as to "How can you teach the congregation how to establish and maintain personal godliness if you are not doing that yourself?".
- So, the action that is mandated here is to "**train yourself**" - take distinct steps of action to educate yourself and to implement in your life all of the disciplines that are

necessary to accomplish this mandate from God for leaders (like Timothy and Titus) in churches or ministries.

-- One option of "train yourself" is to attend all of the sessions in this 'Elder Training Series' - taking notes, taking to heart, meditating upon, and incorporating into your life everything that is taught from the Scriptures within these training sessions.

Phrases in several relating verses expand this godliness mandate, such as:

-- **"...set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, ...in purity"** (1 Timothy 4:12), and in "**peace**" (2 Timothy 2:22), which therein this godliness mandate would apply to:

- - - being godly in everything the leader "**says**";
- - - being godly in his "**life**" and "conduct", both public and private; (Strong's #0391)
- - - being godly in how he extends "**love**" both to believers and to pagans;
- - - being godly in how he lives out or applies the "**faith**" in his life, fully trusting God and His Word;
- - - being godly in how he maintains personal "**purity**" or spiritual "cleanliness" before God; (Strong's #0047; see 1 John 1:9; cf. 1 Timothy 5:22b,c)
- - - being godly in actively promoting "**peace**", in various ways and situations.

-- **"But you, man of God, flee from all this [love of money], and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness"** (1 Timothy 6:11; cf. 2 Timothy 2:22), which therein the godliness mandate applies to:

- - - being godly in "**fleeing**" or steadfastly refusing to possess any kind of love of money, or engaging in or aligning with "the sins of others"; (1 Timothy 5:22)
- - - being godly in striving for "**righteousness**" or a more extensive and comprehensive personal conforming to God's standards; (Zodhiates, p.458, Strong's #1343)
- - - being godly in "**endurance and gentleness**", which is "patiently persevering, bearing up under, and enduring suffering in faith and duty, with a tranquil mind". (Zodhiates, p.1425, Strong's #5281)

-- **"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them..."** (1 Timothy 4:16), which therein the godliness mandate applies to:

- - - being godly in terms of to "**watch closely**" or "to hold upon, to detain, and by implication to retain, to pay attention to" (Strong's #1907) the condition and status of "**your**" own spiritual "**life**";
- - - being godly in terms of to "**persevere**" "**in them**" - "to persist in or remain constant to; to carry on despite hardships; to endure" in properly maintaining one's spiritual "life and doctrine"; (AHD - 'persevere')
- - - being godly in terms of not wandering astray from, not drifting away from, not too busy to, not too tired to persevere in maintaining one's spiritual "life and doctrine";
- - - being godly in terms of implementing practical steps, for examples such as:
 - continuously self-monitoring one's own thinking, beliefs, words, behaviors, and actions in order to ensure that they are within the guidelines that God approves of and is pleased with;
 - persisting in having personal devotional time daily, spent in meditating on God's Word, applying the biblical concepts into one's own life, and praying.

SECTION POINT: Leaders of ministry are also mandated to possess a higher-than-ordinary empowering by God, which He grants when a believer establishes cleansed yielded-ness with godliness.

- The godliness mandate, "...train yourself to be godly" (1 Timothy 4:7b), includes an accessible feature that quickly raises to a much higher level the personal godliness and the corresponding godly service in the life of a true believer.
- To introduce this feature, consider the mandate in 2 Timothy 2:1 - "**You then, my son** [Pastor Timothy], be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus".
- "**Be strong**" carries the meaning in the original Greek of "being empowered", and the phrase "**in the grace**" carries the meaning of in "the divine influence upon one's heart, and its reflection in one's life". ("be strong" - Strong's #1743; "grace" - Strong's #5485)
- The ability to receive this 'being empowered' by God has been made available by means of "**Christ Jesus**" to all who are true believers in Him for salvation from the eternal punishment for their own sins; (cf. Colossians 1:10-14, especially v.11 "being strengthened with all power" in its context of vv.10-14)
- Thereby, in this verse of 2 Timothy 2:1 is described an addition to the godliness mandate of 1 Timothy 4:7b, in that elders, overseers, ministry leaders and pastors (like Timothy) are mandated "be strong in the grace" or be empowered by God at a higher-than-ordinary degree in their own personal inner spiritual heart and in their life.
- This higher-than-ordinary personal inner empowering will then by God's design be conducive for achieving corresponding higher-than-ordinary God-empowered results in their ministry leadership job functioning.

The requirement conditions that God has for true believers (and leaders of ministry) to receive this higher-than-ordinary personal empowering are:

- 1. confess your sins, for current personal spiritual cleansing before God:
- As described in 1 John 1:9 - "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."
- When we true believers sin, God considers us to be spiritually unclean, therein we as a mere human and our sins are sitting on the throne of our own life and thereupon ruling our life as a divine deity god!
- In this state of spiritual uncleanness due to having sinned, even though we remain a born-again child of God, our sinful approach to follow the dictates of sin in conducting our life creates a hindrance and a deterrence to fully following the reign and rule in our life of the Lord God Almighty - the only true God that exists.
- This dynamic is distinctly described in Romans 6:11b, "...count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13a. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness.... 14a. For sin shall not be your master...".
- So, the necessity is to confess and list our sins in prayer to God, at minimum on a daily basis, for those sins that we have committed since the previous time that we confessed our sins to Him, and then asking Him to forgive us of our sins along with thanking Him, and then trusting Him to thereupon "**faithfully**" grant that cleansing forgiveness and placing us in a current state of being spiritually "cleansed" or "**purified**" - until the next time we sin (again). (1 John 1:9, "purify" - Strong's #2511)

-- The more that we sin and have un-confessed sin in our life, the farther away we move ourselves from being spiritually-cleansed and usable to God for higher-than-ordinary God-empowered righteous living and higher-than-ordinary God-empowered service and ministry functioning for Him.

-- Please note that the eternal salvation of us true believers is in no way affected by whether or not we engage in this activity of confessing of our sins for daily spiritual cleansing.

-- **2. yield control**, fully submitting our will and our-self to obedience, direction, and usage by God:

-- In this effort to acquire higher-than-ordinary empowering by God, upon being currently spiritually-cleansed, next we are instructed in Romans 6:13 and 12:1 to "...offer yourselves to God... and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness", "...as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God...".

-- So upon being currently spiritually-cleansed, this next necessity is to in prayer "**offer ourselves to God**", at minimum on a daily basis, as "**living sacrifices**" and "**as instruments of righteousness**".

-- This 'offering ourselves' is similar to the Old Testament animal sacrifice system, plopping ourselves up on the altar of sacrifice as a fragrant sacrifice to God.

-- And like the animals being without blemish, we are currently spiritually-cleansed by God by means of our immediately-prior confessing of our sins.

-- On this altar, we in that moment sacrifice or "**count ourselves dead to sin**" - putting to death the pursuing of our own will and our own desires to engage in sin. (Romans 6:11)

-- And in that moment, we instead offer ourselves as a "living sacrifice" that is "**alive to God in Christ Jesus**" - pursuing godliness to the extreme of eagerly and fully submitting our entire will to readily be, think, say, and do all that God has for us personally during that present time in that present day of our life. (Romans 12:1; 6:11)

-- In other words, we yield complete "control" of our life to God in that moment of that day, without holding anything in reserve. (Romans 8:6 in the NIV)

-- Holding something in reserve of course is a statement to God that we are putting a limit on how much of His control we are willing to submit to, and a limit on how much godliness we are willing to pursue.

-- The more godliness is actively pursued and successfully integrated in one's life, the more potent is the empowering from God when we establish cleansed yielded-ness with godliness and without anything being held in reserve.

-- Certainly, God is very "pleased" and really likes it when we properly offer ourselves personally as "an instrument of righteousness" in His hands for His usage, because now during this current state of cleansed yielded-ness, He can and will empower us beyond ordinary to accomplish all that He wants. (Romans 12:1; 6:13)

-- Be aware though, that without this higher-than-ordinary empowering from God, the results that are produced from our ministry activity efforts will likely at best be ordinary, or mediocre, or perhaps even very poor.

-- And in regard to this empowering, the producing of these mediocre poor ministry results is due to the interference and hindrance that are exerted by:

---- our own will to be the master of our own life;

- - - the limits we impose because of aspects of our life that we withhold from God in reserve;
- - - the influences of our own sin nature;
- - - and the characteristics and consequences of our own personal engaging in sins.

- 3. **each day, repeat** this prayerful 'confessing of sins and yielding control':
 - Typically, we sin every day in some manner. So in order to ensure and maximize our empowering by God for each day, the necessity is to develop the discipline to deliberately take a few moments in prayer each day to 'confess sins and yield control' to God.
 - When we commit a sin failure during the day, a wise and effective course of action is to immediately take a few moments in prayer to confess that sin failure to God, turn away from continuing or re-engaging in that sin, and renew yielding control to God.
 - Furthermore, repeating daily this prayerful 'confessing of sins and yielding control' sends a message to God that we are personally completely dependent upon God to supply this empowering for that day, and that in and of our-self, we cannot achieve anywhere near the various exceedingly good or even great results that God achieves when He empowers us in this higher-than-ordinary way.
- A direct and valuable benefit from maintaining this state of 'cleansed yielded-ness' is that God thereby automatically enhances our applying and experiencing in fullness "**the fruit of the Spirit**", which is cited in Galatians 5:22-23a as "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control".
- Another direct and incredible benefit from maintaining this state of 'cleansed yielded-ness' is that God will furthermore empower in a higher-than-ordinary way the 'spiritual gifts' He has given each of us personally to conduct the ministry functioning that He has for us to do. (NOTE: Detailed teaching on 'spiritual gifts' is contained in the next several sessions of this 'Elder Training Series'.)
- When true believers are operating under a genuine state of current 'cleansed yielded-ness', the experience of exercising or utilizing these 'fruit of the Spirit' and 'spiritual gifts' will be like "streams of living water flowing from within them" from the empowering by "the Spirit". (John 7:37-39)
- These 'fruit of the Spirit' and 'spiritual gifts' are crucial and invaluable for elders, overseers, pastors, and ministry leaders in order for higher-than-ordinary results to occur as outcome of their engaging in their ministry functioning. (As a review in connection to this, see near the bottom of the first section in the document "Session 05" in this 'Elder Training Series' for an example of benefiting from leadership and use of authority that are Holy Spirit-empowered.)
- For example, if these leaders put this maintaining of 'cleansed yielded-ness' into practice and they experience the benefits of doing it, then they can set an example and teach this spiritual discipline to the believers in their church or ministry - thereby opening the possibility that some of those believers will likewise take up this discipline, which then will likely result in those believers contributing in a higher-than-ordinary manner to the well-being and growth of their church or ministry.

APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS:

- Are you ready to "train yourself to be godly"? To a higher degree?

- Are you setting a godly example for believers? In everything?
 - Are you "fleeing" the ungodliness that God disapproves of, and pursuing instead the godliness that God approves of?
 - Are you "watching" and self-monitoring the godliness in your life closely? In everything? And "persevering" in maintaining godliness?
- Are you ready to implement the prescribed steps from Scriptures, to presently acquire empowering from God to assist you in godly living and in accomplishing ministry functioning that God approves of? If so, let's take some time right now to do that.
- In silent prayer right now, confess your sins to God, and list as many of your sins as you can think of - sins that you committed since the previous time you confessed your sins. [PAUSE, and give them time to do this.]
- Next, ask God to forgive you of all of your sins and take complete control of your life right now. Then, thank Him and end your prayer. [PAUSE, and give them time to do this.]
- If you have genuinely taken these 'confessing sins / yielding control' steps right now, then by faith you can trust that presently God is higher-than-ordinary empowering you to function according to His will.
- Understand that this condition will continue in the present until you take back control of your life from Him in some manner, for examples such as: you commit sin; or you refuse to obey what He wants you to do or say; or you no longer want Him to be in control of your life; and etcetera.
- Now, the challenge is: Are you willing and determined to implement and maintain this spiritual discipline daily? Or are you going to reject, or cease, or drift away from it?
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