



I. INTRO

- A. If you're new to KHC or a guest this a great time to be a part of KHC...
- B. The elders and myself have asked for a lot of feedback regarding your preferences for the permanent pastor. I would like to balance that with what the Bible has to say about what to look for...
- C. Today we will be in one of the Pastoral Letters...
 - 1. Paul's first letter to Timothy – probably written about 63AD.
 - 2. Timothy is a young pastor – probably about 30 years old and Paul is now in his early to mid-60's.
 - 3. Timothy had traveled quite a bit with Paul – and Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to lead the church/es there.
 - 4. And now Paul is giving some essential pastoral advice to Timothy.
- D. I would like to begin with some statistics about pastors...
 - 1. In 2015 LifeWay Research surveyed 1,500 pastors of evangelical and historically black churches and found an estimated 13% of lead pastors in 2005 had left the pastorate 10 years later for reasons other than death or retirement. [I don't know how this compares with other industries...]
 - 2. Here is what pastors said:
 - a. 84% say they're on call 24 hours a day
 - b. 80% dread conflict in their church
 - c. 54% find the role of pastor frequently overwhelming
 - d. 53% are often concerned about their family's financial security
 - e. 48% often feel the demands of ministry are more than they can handle
 - f. 21% say their church has unrealistic expectations of them
 - 3. A VP at LifeWay said, "Churches ought to be concerned, and they ought to be doing what they can."

4. Having said that, I don't think we should feel sorry for pastors. I have spoken to CEO's, school administrators, and successful business owners here at KHC and they all face similar stress and challenges. But when a pastor goes sideways it generally affects more people.
- E. I would, however, suggest seven reasons that are the greatest struggles to perseverance in the ministry for pastors:
1. **Burnout:** The number one reason pastors give for why they left the ministry. The hours can be long, the seemingly never-ending concern for others can be unyielding.
 2. **Church Conflict:** By now we know that conflict is inevitable. Conflict can actually be beneficial in organizations and in relationships IF it's handled in a humble and biblical way. There are hateful, petty, arrogant, rude, and discontent people in the congregations. Unfortunately, the unchurched people don't tend to cause the majority of conflict; it is the church people who often launch the harshest criticisms.
 3. **Discouragement:** Can drain passion and zeal and the very life out of ministry. Pastors may labor for years and see very little fruit. Here's what Paul said to the Corinthians: *"I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able."* --1 Corinthians 3:2
 4. **Suffering:** This is real and not to be dismissed. We all know that suffering is part of the Christian's life (Matthew 10:38; 16:24) and it is often the case that pastors experience this in great measure. This can come in forms as various as persecution, financial hardship, and family trials related to ministry. [Our HR Dept works hard to develop competitive salary packages.]
 5. **Cares of the World:** Business, family, money, position, prestige, and ease can be like the Sirens in Greek Mythology. Their cry can be loud and enticing. And when entertained, they can devour.
 6. **Loneliness:** The pastorate can be a very lonely place. Everyone in the church knows you (for some pastors, everyone in the community knows you), yet few people really "know" you.
 7. **Moral Failure:** This is too often the cause for pastors leaving the ministry. One CT survey indicated that 23% pastors admitted to

sexually inappropriate behavior with someone other than their wives while in the ministry.

- F. What does this mean? Perseverance in the ministry will always be a challenge. And it should be. Having said that, each year we lose a lot of good people due to one (or more) of the reasons above.
- G. The vast majority of pastors are Jesus loving, wife and kids loving, hard working people. Pastoring is a difficult job and we all need to pray for our spiritual servant-leaders.
- H. Shifting gears, as we move toward our passage for today, here is an outline of 1 Timothy – GTB (Gospel Transformation Bible)
- I. Greeting (1:1–2)
 - II. Confronting the False Teaching (1:3–20) [Ephesus had become a storm center of false teaching (a sad fulfillment of the prediction Paul had made to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:29-30)]
 - III. Descriptions of Gospel-Shaped Living (2:1–3:13)
 - IV. Purpose of Writing: Behavior in the Church (3:14–16)
 - V. Identifying the False Teaching (4:1–5)
 - VI. **How Timothy Should Be Shaped by the Gospel (4:6–16)**
 - VII. How Specific Groups in the Church Should Be Shaped by the Gospel (5:1–6:2)
 - VIII. Confronting the False Teaching Again (6:3–21)
- I. I will read our passage (1 Timothy 4:6-16), pray, and then unpack as much as we can: *“In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following. ⁷ But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;⁸ for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. ⁹ It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. ¹⁰ For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers [see 1 Tim 2:4].*
- ¹¹ Prescribe and teach these things. ¹² Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe. ¹³ Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. ¹⁴ Do not*

neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. ¹⁵ Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. ¹⁶ Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.” --1 Timothy 4:6-16 [This is God’s word. Pray with me...]

II. BODY

- A. What Paul is saying to Timothy is “This is how you will know if you are fulfilling your calling...” [And these competencies are in addition to the qualification of an elder listed in 3:1-7]
- B. I identified eight overlapping competences listed and one final exhortation:
1. **V. 6: Take the time to be constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of sound doctrine.**
 - a. *“Constantly nourished”*: Gk -- To be brought up, reared, trained over time – like good wine, cheese, and marinara sauce]¹ This is the reason Paul says earlier in the chapter that an elder should not be a recent convert (3:6)
 - b. LOGOS:
 - 1) Logos: Communication of who God is and what God is like – often a reference to the Bible.
 - 2) The Greeks used the word to describe THE divine, rational, impersonal force that holds the structure of the cosmos together.
 - 3) John blew their minds when he wrote in John 1:14: *“And the Word [LOGOS] became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth”* --John 1:14
 - c. *“Sound doctrine”*:
 - 1) The act, or occupation of teaching. Here’s what one Gk scholar offered: “To manifest one’s [commitment to study] in

¹ The Greek word is only used one time in the NT.

the sense of an entire educational regimen."² It would be similar to completing a degree program in our contemporary western culture.

- 2) (In our current survey 84% stated that they either "strongly agree" or "mostly agree" that the permanent pastor have a graduate degree from an accredited Christian college or seminary.)

2. **V. 7: Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.**

- a. Discipline: From the same word we get our word "gymnasium" from (gumnazo); the literal translation is to exercise naked. In this context it means to train oneself for the purpose of godliness.
- b. Such exercise involves study of the Scriptures, reflection, perseverance in suffering, and willingness to experience deprivation because of loyalty to God and – be vulnerable along the way.³
- c. Sorting out truth from error is one of the exercises that pastors have to engage continuously.

3. **V. 10: A hope fixed on the living God.**

- a. The New Testament idea of hope is very different from our contemporary view of hope.
 - 1) We might say to someone: Will the Dodgers win the World Series? And they may say: "I don't know; I *hope* so." In other words, hope, as we typically think about it, is A desire for some future thing, which we are *uncertain* of attaining.
 - 2) That is not the way the NT writers think about hope. The reality of Christ's resurrection and the future hope of heaven are a matter of complete confidence for all the writers in the NT.
 - 3) So the exhortation to Timothy to have his hope fixed on the living God means to Be intensely desirous and fully confident that Jesus Christ has provided free access to the Father in

² Brett M. Rogers. University of Puget Sound, Article: *Why Didaskalia?*

³ Adapted from Dr. Larry Perkins, Professor of Biblical Studies and President Emeritus, Northwest Baptist Seminary (Canada).

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heaven, will build His Church, and will again to consummate His kingdom.

- b. *I'm glad from the inside out, ecstatic; I've pitched my tent in the land of hope.* -- Acts 2:26 (MSG) [Luke quoting Peter who is quoting David]
- c. Future hope is more valuable than present relief.⁴

4. **V. 11: Prescribe and teach these things.**

- a. Prescribe: (Gk.) to declare, announce, or charge. It's a military term meaning to charge, give a command that is *fully authorized* because it has gone through all the *proper* (and necessary) channels.
- b. Teach: (Gk.) to provide instruction in a formal or informal setting; to teach with the expectation of appropriating what has been learned.

5. **V. 12: Let no one look down on your youthfulness.**

- a. How old was Timothy? Probably about 30. In Acts 16:1 we see Paul invite Timothy to join his second missionary journey. Paul is writing about fourteen years later. If Timothy was 16 years old, when Paul first worked with him, he would be at least thirty at this point. [Notice that's not too young to be an elder.]
- b. According to the early church father Irenaeus, "Thirty is the first stage of a young man's age, and extends to forty, as all will admit." --Irenaeus (130-202)⁵

6. **V. 12: Be an example in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity.**

- a. The mark of a blow, the impression of a seal, the stamp of a coin, a print mark of any kind.⁶
- b. One commentator says it this way: Christ is the one who makes the impression, while the word of God is the stamp, which makes the impression on the heart.

⁴ Larry Crabb. *Finding God*, Zondervan 1995: 61.

⁵ Cited in John Stott's *The Message of 1 Timothy & Titus (The Bible Speaks Today)* InterVarsity 1996: 35.

⁶ Adapted from Liddell & Scott.

- c. So what Paul is saying to Timothy is: If he allows his heart to be soft and open to the impression of God's ways and God's Word, the result will be a imprint, a replication of what a Christian can be, which is an example in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity.⁷
7. **V. 13: Give attention to the public reading of Scripture, exhortation, and teaching.**
- a. This verse seems to make it clear what Paul wants done in the public Worship services of the church:
 - b. He wants the Scripture to be read, the preacher to exhort (to call near – like a cheerleader), and for the Word to be taught.
8. **V. 14: Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you bestowed through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.** [Practices that were normative in the early church.]
- a. 80% of the survey respondents (so far) are either "mostly" or "strongly" continuationist [vs. cessationist].
 - b. Spiritual Gifts: Supernatural graces that express God's power through individual Christians to fulfill the mission of the church.
 - c. Prophecy: *"But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort."* --1 Corinthians 14:3
 - d. Laying on of hands: When one or more people place their hands upon another person for some definite spiritual purpose. Normally this act is accompanied either by prayer, a prophetic utterance, or both.
 - e. Presbytery: A body of elders (from one of three Greek words for elder)

III. CONCLUSION

A. The final two verses...

- 1. V. 15: *"Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress [advancement] will be evident to all."* [Not perfection – I can't do anything "right." I can do a few things well.]

⁷ Adapted from Paul K. Williams. Guardian of Truth XL: No. 15, Aug 1996: 9.

2. V. 16: *"Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you."*
- a. This verse contains three commands and two promises for the young pastor...
 - 1) The first command is that he take heed to himself.
 - 2) The second command is that he take heed to his teaching.
 - 3) The third command is that he *keep on* taking heed to himself and *keep on* taking heed to his teaching -- and never think that the days for personal vigilance are over or that the days for doctrinal growth are past.
 - 4) The first promise is that in doing this he will save himself.
 - 5) The second promise is that in doing this he will save his hearers.
 - b. This is not a contradiction of being saved by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9). It is more along the lines of Philippians 2:12: *"work out your salvation with fear and trembling."*
 - c. A pastor's persistent moral vigilance over his life and his unwavering theological diligence over his doctrine are the means of grace appointed by God for his own sanctification and the sanctification of his people.

B. Quotes from some church fathers:

1. Calvin: "And just as the unfaithfulness or negligence of a pastor is fatal to the Church, so it is right for its salvation to be ascribed to his faithfulness and diligence. It is indeed true that it is God alone who saves and not even the smallest part of His glory can rightly be transferred to men. But God's glory is in no way diminished by His using the labour of men in bestowing salvation."
2. Spurgeon: "Years ago Hamburg was nearly half of it burned down, and among the incidents that happened, there was this one. A large house had connected with it a yard in which there was a great black dog, and this black dog in the middle of the night barked and howled most furiously. It was only by his barking that the family were awakened just in time to escape from the flames, and their lives were spared; but the

poor dog was chained to his kennel, and though he barked and thus saved the lives of others, he was burned himself. Oh! Do not you who work for God in this church perish in that fashion. Do not permit your sins to enchain you, so that while you warn others you become lost yourselves.

3. Richard Baxter, the great Puritan writer put it this way: "When your minds are in a holy, heavenly frame, your people are likely to partake of the fruit of it. Your prayers and praises and doctrine will be sweet to them. They will likely feel when you have been much with God, that which is most in your heart is like to be most on their ears."
 4. Jonathan Edwards: When he was just 19 he made the following resolution that every pastor should make: "Resolved, to study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly and frequently, so that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same." This is the pastoral resolve to obey 2 Peter 3:18, "*Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*"
 5. Augustine, in a sermon around 400AD: "Disturbers are to be rebuked, the low spirited to be encouraged, the infirmed to be supported, objectors confuted, the treacherous guarded against, the unskilled taught, the lazy aroused, the contentious restrained, the haughty repressed, litigants pacified, the poor relieved, the oppressed liberated, the good approved, the evil borne with, and all are to be loved."
- C. A summary statement of vs. 6-16: **The greatest message Timothy ever will preach is the one he preaches with his life.** This is the kind of person we need to be praying for to become the servant-leader who will partner with our elders, staff, and you – the congregation to take KHC into her next season of ministry fruitfulness.
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P.A.S.S. Questions For KHC Life Group Leaders and/or Personal Study

P.A.S.S. is an acronym for a way to generate questions for dialogue in the KHC Life Groups. Optimally there should be between 4-8 questions asked in a typical LG gathering. Pick and/or adapt the questions that seem most pertinent to your group.

P = Participation, an opening question that is general enough for everyone to get involved in the dialogue.

A = Application, begin to make it personal.

S = Scripture, thinking biblically (or theologically) is a learned behavior.

S = Sharing, which moves the LG toward honest reflection, authenticity, transparency, and specific application in a safe atmosphere. (The leader needs to model this.)

Notice that you may have verbal processors who will tend to dominate during times of sharing⁸ and introverts who will tend not to engage unless asked. Also, you may have an EGR (i.e., Extra Grace Required) person in your group. These are usually wounded people that tend to shift every opportunity to share to themselves, their needs, their problems. This well need to be lovingly addressed in private.⁹

Be patient, be kind, be firm. Start on time and end on time.

P - Participation (get everyone involved in the dialog)

1. Share one quality that you think may be THE most import quality for a lead pastor to have...

A - Application (makes it personal)

2. Timothy was most likely between 30-35. Do you think Paul was setting the bar too high for him? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever heard a sermon on what to look for in a lead pastor before? If yes, what was different about this one?

S - Scripture (thinking biblically is a learned behavior! :-)

4. Of the eight qualities / competencies do you have one or two that you think are most relevant for KHC? Why?
5. Is there a take-away from 1 Timothy 4:6-16 that you could apply to your life?

S – Sharing (or facilitating a time of honest reflection with authenticity and transparency in a safe atmosphere modeled by the leader).

⁸ If this becomes an ongoing issue you may need to speak to them in private about making room for others to share.

⁹ If we let wounded people dominate, we will end up with a room full of wounded people. Refer wounded people to the counseling options at KHC.

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6. Perhaps it would be appropriate to close your time together by spending some time praying for the search process – in addition to other needs within the group and church.