



# First Timothy

# Take Care

**Watch Your Life and Beliefs**

**I Timothy 4:15, 16**

**Lesson Nineteen**

*Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum*



# First Timothy

## A Study of the First Letter of the Apostle Paul to His Son in the Faith

### Take Care

The Scripture lesson today begins with the words “be diligent.” If you go back to the word that Paul used in Greek, it has the idea of carefulness. Did your Mom or someone else ever tell you to “take care?” What she meant was keep your eyes open, look right and left, if you are doing something, be very careful to do it right. That is Paul’s idea here. Read I Timothy 4:15, 16.

Timothy was working in Ephesus, with the Ephesian Christians, to help them to be all that God wanted them to be. He was trying to keep them from developing bad habits and from listening to bad teaching. It was a big responsibility. There was a lot to do. As we have seen in our study of this letter, if Timothy did all the things that Paul had told him up to now, he was going to be very busy and have many duties.

Paul said, be diligent in these matters. He was saying be sure to pay attention. Many times, we sort of do our job, or maybe our homework if we are in school, without thinking. It just becomes a habit. When we finish the day, we have accomplished a lot, but may not even remember doing some of it. We probably did alright, but maybe didn’t do it as well as we could have if we had been giving it our full attention all the time.

That seems to be what Paul is talking about here. It looks like he thought that Timothy was up to the task, but he wanted Timothy to pay close attention to what he was doing.

He said, “give yourself wholly to them.” We might think of a runner in a relay race. That runner would only have one part of the race, but if she didn’t run the best she could, it made the other runners fall behind. Paul said, you have got to give it all you have got! Everything you do, has to be done to the best of your ability. He was not questioning Timothy’s ability to do it, he was just saying that Timothy couldn’t get sidetracked at all.

These people in Ephesus were facing all kinds of difficulties. Not only was their belief being tested by false teachers, they were victims of persecution and trying to live the Christian life in a community that was not Christian. With the people living in those conditions, it was most important for Timothy to lead them in the right way, and to encourage them to treat one another well.

One of the things that would happen if Timothy did a good job was that people would see his progress. Remember that in verse twelve, Paul had warned Timothy that people could look down on him because he was young. Something that would prove Timothy as a leader would be for people to see that he was leading well. He would be making progress as a leader, and the people would respect him all the more.

Some Christian leaders never make any progress. They are pretty much content to live like they are living and expect others to look up to them as leaders. However, Paul thought that leaders should earn the respect of their followers by growing and becoming more and more like Jesus.

And, we can see that this also applies to what happens because of the work of the Christian

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leader. The progress also is about what happens in the church. The leader is to help the church to progress. So when people looked at the progress of Timothy, they saw that he was a better leader and also that the church was growing because of his leadership.

Then Paul said, “Watch your life and doctrine closely.” He has already said that Timothy should be diligent (take care or pay attention). Now, he is saying keep your eyes open, especially on your life. The good Christian leader will not only pay attention to what he or she does with the church, but also with their own personal life.

The best kind of teaching comes from the life of the teacher. If the teacher is not living right, then that teacher’s students are following a bad example. When a teacher is communicating, “Do as say, not as I do,” the student will not be convinced that what the teacher says is all that important.

Also, the teacher must be very careful what they teach. The doctrine that Paul is talking about is what Timothy believes. Timothy is to keep a sharp eye on what he believes. Paul had been his primary teacher. Paul had tried to teach Timothy the truth about God and Jesus. In this very letter, he has given him additional information about what Timothy should believe. What we believe is very, very important. Paul told Timothy early in this letter that he was to command certain people not to teach false doctrine. Timothy needed to have his own beliefs right so that he would recognize false doctrine when he heard it.

And, finally, Paul told Timothy that he was to persevere in a good life and right beliefs, because if he did, he would save himself and save those to whom Timothy preached. Now, does that mean that Timothy had the power to save himself (that is make himself right with God)? No! Did that mean that Timothy had the power to save others. No, again.

We know that salvation comes only from God. We know that only God, through the death of Jesus, can save us from our sins and make us right with Him.

So what does this mean. Well, it means that by behaving like he is supposed to behave, Timothy is following through with God’s salvation, just as we are taught in Philippians 2:12, 13. Also, by Timothy’s testimony and his right teaching, others will be led to God’s salvation.

The other way to look at this is that if Timothy continues to live as he should live and teach as he should teach, he and others will be saved from the false teaching that was going on at Ephesus.

\*Underlined words and phrases are to be used in completing the Student Worksheet.

**Lesson Goal:** To help students see how Christian leaders should do their work.

**Scripture Memory:** “Set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.” I Timothy 4:12b

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## Student Worksheet—Following Through

### Take Care

>Timothy was working in \_\_\_\_\_, with the Ephesian Christians, to help them to be all that \_\_\_\_\_ wanted them to be. He was trying to keep them from developing \_\_\_\_\_ and from listening to \_\_\_\_\_ teaching.

>What kind of difficulties were the people in Ephesus facing?

>Something that would prove Timothy as a \_\_\_\_\_ would be for people to see that he was leading well. He would be making \_\_\_\_\_ as a leader, and the people would respect him all the \_\_\_\_\_.

>How did Paul think that leaders should earn the respect of their followers?

>What happens when a teacher is communicating, “Do as say, not as I do”?

>Timothy needed to have his own \_\_\_\_\_ right so that he would recognize \_\_\_\_\_ doctrine when he heard it.

### How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that the God of the Bible is the true God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God’s Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus’ name. Jesus’ death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.