

An Example of the Believers

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In 1 Timothy 4:12, Paul tells Timothy to "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers..." It seems that Timothy had the same problem many of our young people have today. People had a tendency not to pay attention to Timothy because of his age. Young people, then as now, apparently were disregarded because of youth, inexperience, etc. Timothy lived in a society that held age in high regard for its wisdom and experience. That was a good societal trait then, and it would be good for this generation to do likewise. However, Timothy had been left at Ephesus with the charge to teach and direct the church in that location. He had to overcome the prejudice against his age. How was he to teach those older than himself? How could he instruct those who ordinarily had more wisdom than he? How could he correct them if they were in error? Paul gave him the answer in our reading. "Be thou an example of the believers..." What did this mean to Timothy? How did it set him apart as one to be heeded

when he spoke? Furthermore, what does it mean to our young people today? In the first part of chapter 4, Paul warned Timothy of those who would depart from the faith because of seducing spirits, doctrines of devils, and lies in hypocrisy that would become common in society and the church. Paul stated that people would become so evil that their conscience would not be affected by the sin they committed.

Then in verse 6, Paul tells Timothy, "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ..." Timothy was to speak out against the evil and dangers of Satan influencing the church and society. We need young people with the courage to call the transgression of God's law exactly what it is... SIN!! If the young people of the church today will do this, they will be highly regarded. They must seek to be "nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine." In verse 7, Paul warned Timothy to "refuse profane and old wives' fables." In 2 Tim. 2:23, Timothy was urged to avoid foolish and unlearned questions. This is the second thing that Timothy was to do. He was to "refuse" the lies and endless ideologies of society. That is to say, "I will not discuss these. I will not give any credence to these things whatsoever." Today, our young people are bombarded with foolish myths, legends, modern philosophies, rationales, excuses, ideologies. All of these are examples of plain old worldliness in opposition to godliness. Paul said to "refuse" these things. He did not say to tolerate them, or co-exist with them, or discuss them logically. He told Timothy to "refuse these things." Our young people today need to refuse to be drawn into the profane discussions of worldly thinking.