



## LGC Daily Devotion Guide 2011

Week 2

January 10—January 16, 2011

### I. Adoration

#### (1) Invocation Prayer

“Almighty God, by whose mercy my life has continued for another year, I pray that, as my years increase, my sins may not increase. As age advances, let me become more open, more faithful and more trusting in Thee. Let me not be distracted by lesser things from what is truly important. And if I become infirm as I grow old, may I not be overwhelmed by self-pity or bitterness. Continue and increase Thy loving kindness towards me, so that, when Thou dost finally call me to Thyself, I may enter into eternal happiness with Thee, through Jesus Christ my Lord.” Amen. (Samuel Johnson, 1709-84)

#### (2) Adoration through Psalm 54

(We'll use this Psalm, not for today's Bible reading, but for the sake of focusing our thoughts on God)

- Read slowly this passage at least three times and each day gather one thought about this psalm that points to God's character and translate it into a prayer of adoration.

### II. Confession

Pause now and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you your sins and ask for forgiveness.

### III. Thanksgiving

List, one by one, things for which you should give thanks.

### IV. Scriptural Reflection:

As we begin a new year, we shall be focusing on the theme, “Being Remade in God's Image”, and continue our study of I Timothy. Read slowly and reflectively the assigned passage twice at least and consider the questions below each day:

#### January 10

#### I Timothy 4: 1-8

- (1) When Paul bid his farewell to the elders of the church of Ephesus in Acts 20, he already predicted the rise of false teachers in their midst (Acts 20:29-30), and his prophecy had surely come to pass. Why did Paul describe these false teachers as hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron? With such a charge, do you think they actually knew what the truth was and purposely twisted it? Or did they actually believe in what they preached?
- (2) Paul highlighted two aspects of their false teachings: the forbidding of marriage and the abstinence from certain foods. Do these false teachings appear to be rather harmless? Why would Paul vehemently oppose them and attribute them as things taught by demons and deceiving spirits?
- (3) Paul pointed out that everything God created is consecrated by the Word of God and prayer. What does it mean? Is saying “grace” before a meal a mere ritual of Christians, or should it reflect faith and thanksgiving based on the Word of God? Why?
- (4) Carefully reflect on vv.6-7, which contrasts two kinds of nurture and two kinds of training:
  - a. What are the two kinds of nurture? How different are they?
  - b. What are the two kinds of training? How different are they?
  - c. What does it take to train oneself physically?
  - d. In what way training in godliness is similar?
- (5) What is the main message to you today?

#### January 11

#### I Timothy 4: 9-16

This is the continuation of Paul's exhorting Timothy to be a good minister of Christ Jesus which represents the true spiritual qualifications of a leader in the church of God. We have touched

on the first in vv.6-7 which is the nurture of oneself in good teaching: not just learning, but following and training. Let's consider the rest, one by one:

- (1) Vv. 9-10: Where should we put our hope and why?
- (2) V. 11: Not only teach, but command : here lies our authority?
- (3) V.12: Sure, Timothy might be young and was looked down upon. But what is our most effective way of leadership? What is the significance of being an example in: speech, in love, in faith, and in purity as a leader?
- (4) V. 13: What is meant by (to) "devote yourself"? And why did Paul emphasize these three areas?
- (5) V.14: How was Timothy's gift given? What is your gift that is publically recognized by people around you? What would constitute the neglecting of such a gift?
- (6) V.15: Paul concluded with telling Timothy to be diligent and give himself wholly to the above. How does a life that reflects such diligence and total devotion look like? In telling Timothy that he should let everyone see his progress, what was Paul implying?
- (7) V.16a: Which is more important as a leader: watching one's life or watching one's doctrine? Why?
- (8) V.16b: The final exhortation appears to spell out the bottom line of ministry. What might it be? How would it be accomplished?
- (9) What is the main message to you today?

### **January 12 I Timothy 5: 1-8**

Paul now turns to give advice to Timothy on some very practical "people ministries":

- (1) When is rebuke necessary?
- (2) Why rebuking an older man should be different from rebuking a younger man? Do you agree? Why?
- (3) List the various "categories" of rebuke in vv. 1-2:
  - a. What is the common denominator?
  - b. What is the unique advice in each?

- (4) In vv. 3-8, Paul is dealing with widows, and in the original, Paul asks Timothy to honor those who are "really" widows:
  - a. Who are "really" widows? In such cases, what would these widows do? What should the church do?
  - b. What should those widows who still have (grown-up) children and/or grandchildren do? Why?
  - c. How should we then apply such a principle (in v.8) e.g. concerning our responsibility towards aging parents who are in need?
- (5) In the OT, the prophets were full of assurance to the widows and the fatherless that God is their God, because under most circumstances, in OT times, widows and orphans were totally helpless and had little means to survive. In Paul's times, they were no better. Given that, does Paul sound too harsh on widows who (as Lenski translates) are "luxuriating"? Why or why not?
- (6) What is the main message to you today?

### **January 13**

### **I Timothy 5: 9-16**

Presumably, as the first church began, they followed the temple/synagogue traditions of caring for the widows among them (see Acts 6:1). By the time of Timothy, such a ministry to the widows among them was rather structured and the support appeared to be quite substantial:

- (1) List the qualifications of a widow who could receive help from the church in vv.9-10. What is the principle behind these qualifications? Why does Paul think these qualifications are necessary? (see v.16)
- (2) Use the same list to examine yourself (even if you are a Christian man). Do you measure up to these qualifications? How is such a life helpful to the sharing of the gospel?
- (3) Remember that Paul is dealing with some rather urgent and disturbing matters that threaten to bring chaos to the church in Ephesus. Given how Paul cautions the younger widows, can you paint a picture of how some of these younger widows were harming the church?
- (4) How are such behaviors harmful to the testimony of the church?
- (5) If you are a widow or widower, how do Paul's instructions

serve to remind you of your responsibility to yourself and to the church?

- (6) As a Christian with widow(s) in the family, how should you treat them? What about the church, how should we treat those who are really needy in our midst, including widows?
- (7) What is the main message to you today?

### January 14

### I Timothy 5: 17-25

The problems in the Ephesian church appeared to include elders or how the people treated them as well. As mentioned previously, some Apostles/preachers, like John and Peter also assumed the office of elders in the local church. These days, we do have elders who teach and preach, but the equivalent today would be pastors in most cases.

- (1) Back in chapter 3, Paul reminds them that the desire to be an elder or overseer is indeed noble. Here, he adds that those who excel in this role deserve double honor. Why does Paul have to admonish the people to honor the elders? How do people in the church treat or take elders and pastors these days—mostly positive or negative? Why?
- (2) Given what Paul has to mention in v.18, how were preachers/teachers being treated in Ephesus? How then should we treat preachers/teachers today?
- (3) Why should charges against elder not even be “entertained” without two or three witnesses?
- (4) Once proven, how should the wrongs or sins be dealt with? Why do they need to be dealt with publicly? Is this the case these days? Why?
- (5) Reflect on these words of Paul in v.21 concerning our dealings with allegations against the elders. What are Paul’s emphases, and why?
- (6) How does v.22 relate to v.21?
- (7) What advice does Paul give about passing judgment on a person in vv.24-25?
- (8) What is the main message to you today?

### January 15

### I Timothy 6: 1-10

- (1) When a slave became a Christian, how should he look at his

life from then onward? How should he look at his relationship with his master?

- (2) Although we are not slaves, but if you are working for someone, how does Paul’s advice in vv.1-2 speak to you:
  - a. In terms of your attitude at work, and
  - b. Today’s labor relations?
- (3) Paul addresses the relationship between slaves and masters often, but he has never advocated the abolition of the slavery system, what might be the reason in your opinion?
- (4) In vv.3-10, Paul returns to his attack on false teachers:
  - a. What are the visible marks of false teachers? Try to list them out one by one.
  - b. What should be the ultimate test of false teachers?
- (5) How can “godliness” be a means to financial gains? Can you think of any modern day’s examples?
- (6) “Godliness with contentment is great gain” is Paul’s famous saying. Try to define contentment.
- (7) Here is how two Christians define contentment with their action (true stories):
  - a. I know of a Christian who said to her boss who announced her pay raise in the new year, “I am quite satisfied with my pay, you do not need to give me a pay raise.” (The company is a very successful and extremely profitable company and this Christian is by no means rich.)
  - b. I also know of a businessman, who used to make quite a lot of money through flipping real estate and now has changed to the business of procuring affordable housing where he is satisfied with making a fair margin.How can **you** practice contentment?
- (8) What then is the basis of contentment for Christians?
- (9) What is the main message to you today?

### January 16

### I Timothy 6: 11-21

- (1) Instead of pursuing financial gain, what does Paul urge us to pursue?
- (2) Why does Paul not simply urge us to pursue loving God, but instead listing these specific things for us to pursue?
- (3) What is meant by to pursue? What might be the marks or signs of pursuing?

- (4) As a conclusion to the letter, Paul gives two commands to Timothy in v.11
  - a. To fight the good fight of faith: why does he have to use the analogy of fighting in this case?
  - b. To take hold of eternal life: what does it mean to take hold?
- (5) In giving this charge, Paul invokes the presence of God and Christ Jesus, how does he refer to God and Christ Jesus, and why?
- (6) Here, Paul again explodes into doxology as he mentions the return of Christ:
  - a. To reveal in His own time
  - b. The Only Ruler
  - c. The King of the ones reigning (i.e. kings)
  - d. The Lord of the ones ruling (i.e. lords)
  - e. Alone is immortal
  - f. Lives in light unapproachable (by men)
    - How does this doxology help direct your focus in the new year?
    - How does this doxology warn those false teachers and trouble-makers in the church in Ephesus?
- (7) Read v. 12 and v.19 together, and define what “true life” is and why?
- (8) What is Paul’s last advice to Timothy? Does it sound strange to you?
- (9) What is the main message to you today?

## V. Meditative Reflection

This week we shall continue to reflect on the ‘Nine Marks of a Healthy Church’, beginning with its Preface and Introduction.

### January 10

Please refer to the Preface on page 18, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph to the end of the Preface.)

### January 11

Please refer to the Introduction on page 21, to the first 2 lines of page 22.

### January 12

Please refer to the Introduction on page 22, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph to the first 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph on page 23.

### January 13

Please refer to the Introduction on page 23, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, to the first section of page 24.

### January 14

Please refer to the Introduction on page 24, the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph to the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph of page 25.

### January 15

Please refer to the Introduction on page 25, the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph to the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph on page 26.

### January 16

Please refer to the Introduction starting with “POPULAR MODELS OF THE CHURCH” to the end for the first section on page 27.

**VI. A Time for Silence**

You have mediated much today with your intellectual faculty today. Now have a moment of silence (the length is up to you, 5 or even 30 minutes), and ask God quietly, “Lord, is there any important message from you today that I might have missed? Show me, your servant is listening?”

**VII. Supplication**

Use the following chart to cover people and ministries that you want to remember before the Lord:

	Your family	Other people	Church Ministries	Other Ministries	City & World	Others
Sunday						
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wed						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						

**VII. Benediction**

“Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord; keep watch, take heart.” In Jesus name. Amen. (The Taize Community)