

In this day and age we're always looking for the behind-the-scenes story; the secret to someone's success; the persons of influence. This quarter we'll look at Paul's mentoring of Timothy, a young man left in Ephesus by Paul to carry on the ministry that Paul started.

We learn what Paul expects of the young minister. We learn what he is expected to teach the congregation. We'll see the importance of being grounded in the word of God.

There will be lots of familiar verses, probably several our readers memorized if they attended Sunday School as children. These verses are still worth putting to memory.

One lesson that I hope stirs us up is John Carr's lesson on elders and deacons. Several people who had heard his approach to this text at Christian Workers Seminar suggested that I ask him to write this lesson. I was glad to, as I have known John's service as an elder when I was a pastor at the same church.

Here's something fun to look for. Our two siblings among the writers both used the same old phrase in their respective lessons. Must be a Minnesota thing.

Greg Demmitt

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relationship with Jesus, not just to win an argument. In all situations we are to keep our heads and do what we are called to do.

What do you feel as you reflect back on your life? Have you been engaged in the good fight? Have you used your life for meaningful things – even life changing things? Are you satisfied with the priorities you have established? Do you look forward to the coming judgment, confident a crown of righteousness awaits you? It is good for all of us, young or old, to periodically stop for an honest look at our lives. Are there things we can and should change? We do not want to have many regrets at the end of our lives about what we could have or should have done. We can and ought to take positive steps to live our lives in a way that honors and glorifies God.

It is good to reflect on the people we have interacted with in our lives. If there are those we have misjudged or mistreated, we would do well to apologize and seek to patch things up if possible. If there are people we love and appreciate, we would do well to tell them so. Perhaps there are letters we could write, people we could call, visits we could make, or texts or tweets or emails we could send to let individuals know we appreciate them.

If Jesus does not return first, we will all face death. Many think death will be a long way off, but every day the obituaries are full of names of people who did not expect to die that day. This ought not to make us morbid or sad; it is just a reality of life. But it ought to motivate us to live our lives so that when that time comes we will not have a lot of regrets. I hope when that time comes I am at peace with myself, at peace with others, and at peace with God.

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. If you were told you had one month to live, what are three things you would like to do before you die?
2. As you stand before the judgment seat of Christ, what account can you give of your life?
3. How can the church effectively “preach the word” today? How can we best communicate the message of God for today’s world?
4. How can we correct or even rebuke someone without offending that person?
5. How can we keep from getting discouraged in our Christian service?
6. As you reflect upon your life, about what things do you feel best?
7. How can a person best reconcile with someone after having differences?
8. What should our attitude be to those who oppose us and God’s work?
9. Who is there that you need to thank? to give an apology? to encourage?
10. What one thing do you take from this lesson that will impact your life this coming week?