

# Characteristics Of A Man Of God

**Introduction.** The title "man of God" is simple, yet immeasurably rich (1 Timothy 6:11-14). It is a sacred privilege to be identified as God's personal possession, a privilege that carries with it a great responsibility. Although the phrase "man of God" is used in the Old Testament to denote various prophets of the Lord including Moses, it describes only Timothy in the New Testament. By calling him a "man of God," Paul places Timothy into that rich Old Testament tradition. He, like those before him, was called, ordained and responsible to preach.

Timothy faced a formidable task in Ephesus as he attempted to restore truth and order to a church that had turned away from God. Paul mentions the danger of false teachers three times in this epistle (1:3-7; 4:1-5; 6:3-10). The apostle follows each warning with a charge to Timothy to resist them in light of his call to the Lord's service (1:18-20; 4:14-16; 6:11-12). He was God's voice, His champion in the war between truth and error.

How is such a man to conduct himself? In this passage, Paul lists four characteristics that mark the loyal man of God. May we examine ourselves to see if we have these as well.

## I. ***A Man Of God Is Known By What He Flees From***

- A. Paul here sharply contrasts Timothy with the false teachers. They are men of money, he is a man of God; they are men of sin, he is a man of righteousness. The use of the interjection indicates the intensity of Paul's appeal.
- B. A man of God realizes there are sins to be avoided at all cost. God's man must flee from sexual sin (1 Corinthians 6:18), idolatry (1 Corinthians 10:14) and "youthful lusts" (2 Timothy 2:22). The present tense of the verb indicates a continual fleeing. But the direct antecedent of "these things" is the evils associated with loving money in vs. 9-10.
- C. One characteristic of false teachers is greed. From Balaam, who sold himself to the highest bidder, through the greedy false prophets of Israel, to Judas and Demas in the New Testament, greed captivated them all. Much truth can be compromised with money in the picture (Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5). Paul was careful to avoid any appearance of loving money (Acts 20:33-35; 1 Thessalonians 2:9).
- D. Those who covet and love money are an abomination before the Lord. Those who put a price on their service to the Lord devalue it in God's sight to zero. The man of God must avoid the vices and evil attributes mentioned earlier and aim at good and just virtues (Luke 12:15).

## II. ***A Man Of God Is Known By What He Follows After***

- A. As fast as the man of God runs from the corrupting love of money he runs toward spiritual virtue. If he stops, what is behind him, which is sin, will catch him and he will miss his goal of holiness.
- B. The first two are general virtues, one having to do with external behavior, the other having to do with internal attitude and motive.
  - 1. Righteousness simply means doing what is right, in relation to both God and man. The man of God is known for doing what is right (Romans 6:19-20).
  - 2. Godliness refers to reverence for God flowing out of a worshiping heart (Hebrews 12:28).
- C. Paul knew well the importance of a Christian's watch over himself (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 4:16; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27). John Flavel observed, "It is easier to declaim against a thousand sins of others, than to mortify one sin in ourselves."
- D. The apostle names two dominant internal virtues: faith and love.
  - 1. Faith is simply confident trust in God for everything (Hebrews 11:6). It involves loyalty to the Lord and unwavering confidence in His power, purpose, plan, provision and promise. A man of God trusts God to keep and fulfill His word.
  - 2. Love must encompass love for God, other Christians and non-Christians. The man of God understands the significance of the Lord's words in Matthew 22:37-39.
- E. Paul then mentions two external virtues: patience and meekness.
  - 1. Patience means "to remain under." It does not describe a passive, fatalistic resignation, but a victorious, triumphant, unswerving loyalty to the Lord in the midst of trials (James 1:2-4). Patience enables the man of God to stick with the task, no matter what the cost (Ephesians 6:18).
  - 2. Meekness means "kindness and gentleness." Although consumed with the greatest of causes, the man of God recognizes that in himself he makes no contribution to its success, and is marked by considerate humility (Galatians 6:1; Colossians 3:2; James 3:13).

## III. ***A Man Of God Is Known By What He Fights For***

- A. Being a spokesman for God calls a man into warfare. It is a constant battle against the flesh, the devil and the resistance of the fallen world that loves sin and error and hates truth and holiness. It is a struggle against lethargic Christians and apathetic churches.
- B. Sadly, some do not even realize they are in a battle. Others seek positions of ease and comfort, in effect going AWOL from the spiritual battle. Paul was under no such delusions (Acts 14:22; 2 Timothy 3:12). Our Lord even warned of this (Matthew 10:28).

- C. "Fight" is going to include concentration, discipline, conviction and effort (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). It refers to a spiritual conflict with Satan's kingdom in which the man of God must play his part.
- D. Paul admonished Timothy to get a grip on the reality of eternal life, so that he would live and work in the light of eternity (Colossians 3:2; Philippians 3:20). A man of God does not engage in the petty, meaningless battles of the world, but focuses on eternal matters. He lives above the trivial matters of the passing world. He is consumed with what will never pass away -- God's word and the souls of men.

#### IV. ***A Man Of God Is Known By What He Is Faithful To***

- A. This section comes to a head in vs. 14, where Paul commands Timothy to keep the commandment. The rest of vss. 13 and 14 explain that phrase. Verse 13 tells Timothy why he should keep the commandment, and the remainder of verse 14 tells him how he should keep it.
- B. This "commandment" should be understood in the broadest sense as the entire word of God, which Timothy is charged to preach (2 Timothy 4:2). Paul repeatedly encouraged Timothy to guard the truth that had been entrusted to him (1 Timothy 1:18-19; 4:6, 16; 6:20; 2 Timothy 1:13-14; 2:15-18).
- C. To encourage Timothy to persevere no matter what the cost, Paul calls on two sovereign, supreme persons who will hold him accountable.
  1. God, who gives life to all things, is the first. He is not to be a pleaser of men, but a pleaser of God (Galatians 1:8-10). The Lord will sustain him until he has finished his work.
  2. Second, there is Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate (Matthew 27:11). Our Lord boldly stood His ground, spoke the truth and entrusted His life to God. Timothy, or any man of God, can do no less.
- D. The apostle told Timothy in what manner a man of God is to keep the commandment.
  1. First, he was to do so without stain or reproach. No blemish or legitimate accusation is to mar his testimony (James 1:27).
  2. Second, he was also to be permanently faithful until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 3:13; 5:23). This return motives the man of God.

**Conclusion.** One of the most sobering examples of a man of God who failed is found in 1 Kings 13:1-26. The unnamed prophet had the privilege of being used by God to rebuke King Jeroboam. By violating God's word, however, he brought upon himself a terrible judgment. That is a warning every man of God should heed. Being a man of God is an elevated earthly privilege matched by an elevated heavenly accountability.