

## **"Be Diligent In These Things ..."**

"... give thyself wholly to them; that thy progress may be manifest unto all. Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee." In this chapter Paul has laid stress up "these things." In verse 6 he urged Timothy to put "brethren in mind of these things;" in verse 11, Timothy was to command teach these things: in the verses of our text, Timothy is commanded to "give diligence to these things;" to "continue in these things." The "things" Timothy was to put brethren in mind of; to command, to teach; to be diligent and continue wholly in would be all the instructions found in this chapter; particularly the instructions immediately preceding them, verses 12-13. In truth, what words of exhortations is found in the entirety of the epistle (for reference to "these things" is not exclusively in this chapter; but found elsewhere), Timothy was to give attention to.

Paul is fond of the word "diligence" for it frequently appears in his letters, see Rom. 12:8; 2 Cor. 8:7, 22; 2 Tim. 1:17; 4:9, 21; Tit. 3:12, 13; Heb. 6:12. However, the Greek word in each of these cited passages is NOT the same as the one translated "diligent" in 1 Timothy 4:15 (ASV). Other translations have the word as "attention" or "meditate" and those translations are to be preferred over the American Standard, one of the few instances of such. Timothy was to give "attention to" or "meditate upon" things Paul had written him; he was to give himself wholly, completely to seeing they were incorporated into his life. There is to be nothing "slipshod" or "half-hearted" about tending to our "Father's business" (Lk. 2:49).

"That thy progress may be manifest unto all." God's servants are not to be as those in grievous times in the last days who were "ever learning; and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3:7). Nor again, as some Athenians who spent their time in seeking to learn some new thing (Acts 17:21). Still, God's servants must be constant in the study of His Word, and when they are; growth and progress will occur. We must ever learn (for did not Peter so command to "grow in the grace and knowledge ..." (2 Pet. 3:18) but that learning should lead to studied, settled convictions. God's people must grow, and as such we realize that perfect knowledge in all things is never fully realized. Still, it is thrilling to see the development of God's people, God's ministers. When God's ministers are growing in knowledge, in character and stability, that progress will be apparent to all! And, in the reverse, it may be noted, that when God's ministers quit studying, their stymied growth also will be apparent!

*"Take heed to thyself and to thy teaching."* Paul applied this advice to himself. *"I buffet my body and bring it into subjection ..."* (1 Cor. 9:27). *"Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on ..."* (Phil. 3:13). "Facing self" was the subject of our Lord when He said, *"Cast out first the beam that is thine own eye; then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye"* (Mt. 7:5). James wrote that if *"any man is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror"* (James 1:23). We must "face" self; we must take heed to selves. David wrote, *"I said, I will take heed to my words that I sin not with my tongue"* (Ps. 39:1). We must take heed to our words, hearts, and bodies.

Equally, God's servants must take heed to our teaching. We must make certain that our use of any passage is the proper application of it. We should never use a passage to teach something it does not teach. Isaiah wrote: *"To the law and to the testimony. If they speak not according to these words, it is because there is no life in them"* (Isa. 89:2). Peter wrote, *"if any man speak, speaking as it were oracles of God"* (1 Pet. 4:11). The nobility of Bereans still is nobleness today: searching the scriptures to try and prove all things (Acts 17:11).

When God's minister makes a studied effort to present the best "role model" he can give in life, and is careful that his teaching is sound and faithful to the Lord who gave it; then, only then, can he save both himself and those who hear him!

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