

A Good Minister of Jesus Christ

by Bryan Gibson

“If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a **good minister of Jesus Christ...**” (1 Timothy 4:6). Using the surrounding verses, specifically verses 1-16, let’s identify some characteristics of a good minister of Jesus Christ.

A good minister will NOT “depart from the faith” (4:1); he will not give heed to any teaching that is not according to Christ, including the things specifically mentioned in this text (4:1-3, 7).

And here’s why he will not depart from the faith. A good minister will be “entirely” or “wholly” dedicated to his studies (4:13, 15); he will be “nourished in the words of faith” (4:6); and he will “carefully” follow everything he has learned from the teaching of Christ (4:6).

A good minister will only teach “these things” (4:6, 11)—things he has learned from the “words of faith,” or the teachings of Christ. He says only those things which are “faithful...and worthy of all acceptance” (4:9).

A good minister will keep a tender conscience, not one that’s been “seared with a hot iron” (4:2). This tender conscience will keep him from ever “speaking lies in hypocrisy” (4:2), from ever teaching or practicing anything that would violate or trouble his conscience. If he has even the slightest doubt concerning what he’s about to teach, he won’t dare teach it, at least not until he determines for sure if it’s the truth or not.

A good minister will be careful, not just about his teaching, but also about his life.

“Exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (4:7-8).

“Be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (4:12).

“Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching...” (4:16, NAS).

A good minister doesn’t get lazy; he will continue to get better at everything he does, to the point that his “progress may be evident to all” (4:15).

A good minister has his “hope set on the living God” (ESV), and so he is willing to “both labor and suffer reproach” (4:10). He won’t ever change his message just to make things easier on himself.

A good minister is motivated by the hope of his own salvation and the salvation of others. “Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers” (4:16, ESV).

Note: All quotations from the New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.