

The Measure of a Man

#3 "Temperate"

1 Timothy 3:1 This *is* a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.

1 Timothy 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, **temperate**...

Introduction

"Temperate" has the connotation to us of a person who is moderate in his habits. We take it to mean "not extreme or excessive; moderate in the indulging of appetites."

This **is** a quality of spiritual maturity and we will encounter it later in our list. The word translated "temperate" here in verse two has a slightly different meaning - a broader meaning. The KJV translates it "vigilant" and means *observant, attentive, watching out for danger*. To be vigilant is to be aware of what is going on around him, attentive to trends.

Gene Getz defines it this way:

"A man... who has a correct perspective on life in this world. He knows where history is going. He knows God is in control of the universe as well as the affairs of mankind. But a temperate man also knows he is responsible to do all he can to carry out God's purposes in the world... [at home, at work, in the church]... His consistent goal is to be a dynamic Christian witness wherever he is, by the way he lives and by what he says."

Vigilance is a very contemporary need in our lives. Our society is crumbling - falling apart morally, economically, and (to a certain extent) politically. We should be concerned and involved; but we should also realize that God is in control.

It's not easy to be vigilant; too often we become *vigilantes* in some area. Something really activates us and we sense the need to get more involved - to throw ourselves into it wholeheartedly. Then we get discouraged when other believers don't share our zeal.

God may, in fact, give you a specific burden. If He does, remember two things:

1. He may not give it to others, but give them their own burden for something.
2. Numbers are not always necessary to accomplish God's purposes or to make a difference.

More to our point is this: How do you develop temperance/vigilance? You do it in two ways: You Develop A Worldview and then You Discipline Your Walk According To Your Worldview.

"Worldview" is a word you hear a lot, and not just among believers. What do we mean by "worldview?" A worldview is a set of beliefs we hold about the basic makeup of the world. It is our own explanation and interpretation of reality and application of this to life.

Everyone has a worldview and it guides how we live our lives. Ours should be biblical. A biblical worldview is a set of beliefs that integrates all of life into a meaningful, God-honoring whole. It grounds life in Biblical truth and gives life a framework for value, conduct, decision-making, and success.

Our biblical worldview contains at least the following:

1. The universe and everything in it was created by a sovereign, omnipotent Creator who presently maintains His creation.
2. Human beings were created in the image of the Creator, and thus possess intellect, emotions and will.
3. With respect to will, humans were imbued with free will - that is, the freedom to make moral choices independently of any external control.
4. The Creator has revealed His character and nature in His creation, in the Holy Scriptures and through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and He allows Himself to be known by individuals who seek Him.
5. Meaning and purpose in life for people are to be found only through a relationship with the Creator made possible by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Some issues are easier than others in developing your worldview. For example, it's impossible (really) for an evangelical Christian to be anything other than pro-life in the abortion debate.

I often mention psychology in my messages. It is a worldview that we tend to reject because we believe that God had given us all things that pertain to life and godliness without the help of men who consulted demons for their philosophy of human behavior.

Other issues can be debated. Much of it depends on your basic approach to the Bible – your presuppositions and how you interpret it.

We are not going to discuss every issue and our worldview. What you need to know is this: God's "opinion" is the primary, deciding word on all matters of doctrine and duty. You and I may have a perspective; it doesn't matter! Only God's perspective, discovered in Scripture, is solid and sure. Scripture declares in one point, "Let God be true and every man a liar" (Romans 3:4).

As to your *Disciplining Your Walk According to Your Worldview*, there is a passage in First Thessalonians that can offer some insight.

Paul used the root word for "temperate" in First Thessalonians 5:6-8.

1 Thessalonians 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober.

1 Thessalonians 5:7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

1 Thessalonians 5:8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

The word "sober" in verses six and eight is the root from which the word in Timothy is derived.

Paul pictures our walk as a military occupation in enemy territory. It's a reminder that there is always a contrary worldview – that of the devil! He is the god of this world. The word for "world" in the Bible often means *the world system* in opposition to God. We read in Scripture about the "doctrine of demons." They have an agenda they are promoting that is offensive to our biblical worldview.

The theory of evolution is the single most obvious example of a doctrine of demons that presents a worldview offensive to and antagonistic to God's.

A soldier on guard doesn't "sleep" or "get drunk" even if it is the wee hours of the "night" when everything seems calm. He is the picture of vigilance as he maintains his post with the proper alertness.

We hear "sober" and think of intoxicating liquor. In our context it is a warning that the world is filled with many intoxicating stimulants; alcohol and drugs are among them, but that does not exhaust the list. Some are intoxicated by intellectual pursuits; they begin to embrace the contrary worldview of "experts" in various fields who are not believers. There are all kinds of stimulants; stay sober.

"Sleep" reminds me of the attitude that everything is going forward just as it always has; that there is no urgency to get myself disciplined. The Bible says Jesus could return at any moment; I cannot afford to go to sleep spiritually.

Paul mentions "faith, hope, and love" as part of our defense. He used these same words in chapter one of this letter. There he called them,

1 Thessalonians 1:3 KJV ... your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

You discipline your walk according to your worldview through your "work of faith." This means the work of serving God and ministering to others that genuine faith inspires. Get involved!

You discipline your walk according to your worldview through your "labor of love." This refers to toilsome, laborious activity that is prompted by love when it gets difficult. The stress is on "labor" – its cost, exertion, fatigue, and exhaustion. "Work" may be pleasant, but "labor" is strenuous. "Love" is God's love which has in mind the good of the other person.

You discipline your walk according to your worldview through your "patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." This is steadfast endurance prompted by true hope – the certain hope of the future that includes the Lord's imminent return for you and for His church. You courageously face the world and the opposing worldview and hold to your own, developed from the Bible.

Faith rests on the past; love works in the present; hope looks to the future. Faith looks back to a crucified Savior; love looks up to a crowned Savior; hope looks forward to a coming Savior.

“Our Lord Jesus Christ” is the source and sufficiency for all these. We must keep our thoughts, our minds, upon Him.

All of this is “in the sight of God and our Father.” It’s a reminder of the sovereign control of God over His universe.

Conclusion

Be vigilant. If you have a specific burden – politics, pro-life, etc., - be vigilant without becoming a vigilante. Trust God to empower you; numbers are not necessary, and there are other issues just as critical.

Picture yourself a soldier standing watch. You’ve no time for intoxicants of any kind; you’ve no business sleeping.

“Let God be true and every man a liar” as you survey the issues of life.