

The Measure of a Man

#4 “Prudent” and “Of Good Behavior”

1 Timothy 3:1 KJV This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

1 Timothy 3:2 KJV A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant [temperate], sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

1 Timothy 3:3 KJV Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

Introduction

We are men and want to be men of God. It sounds almost boastful – especially when we factor in our many faults and failings. Still we must not have a false sense of humility. We are supposed to be men of God.

Timothy was left by Paul in Ephesus to establish the church. Titus was left on Crete to do the same. Both of them were charged with the responsibility of recognizing men who could be leaders in their churches. These men had to have certain characteristics, certain qualities. They had to be measured by a certain standard.

Two paragraphs in Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus give you the measure of a man. They are First Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-10.

When you first read the lists of spiritual qualifications you see that they are for men who desire positions of leadership in the church. That’s true; but whether a man desires to serve as a leader or not, these are qualities of maturity **all** men should aspire to. They are the measure of a man, the description of a man of God.

Some men will possess these qualities and desire to be leaders. *All* men should possess these qualities. They are goals for every Christian man.

“Sober” is translated from two words which mean *safe* or *sound in mind*. The best English word to translate this would be *prudent*. It describes a man who uses practical wisdom, exercises good judgment and common sense. This would be sanctified common

sense – wisdom from above, not your own. *Sensible* is another way of defining this term.

“Of good behavior” is from the Greek root word *kosmos*; it means *orderly*. It is the opposite of chaos! It is sometimes translated *respectable*.

These two qualities go together. Good, practical wisdom and common sense tells you how to properly order your life and its activities. A properly ordered life is evidence of a sound mind and sanctified common sense.

We’ll look at these qualities separately but remembering that they are interconnected.

#1 Reaching Prudence

More than any other of the characteristics of spiritual maturity, Paul the apostle related prudence to all the members in the body of Christ. In Titus 2:2-6, in a short span of only five verses, he used this word of “older men,” “older women,” “younger women,” and “younger men.”

Titus 2:11-12 gives you a clue at how prudence is reached:

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,
Titus 2:12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly [our word prudent], righteously, and godly in the present age,

In order to have this safe, sound mind, you must first be willing to “deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.” Christ’s own power, through the work of His indwelling Holy Spirit, not only warns us about but enables us to resist and renounce sin. “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts,” Paul admonishes, “and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace” (Romans 6:12-14).

To deny carries the idea of a conscious, purposeful action of the will. It means to say no. It is to confess and consciously turn away from that which is sinful and destructive and to move toward that which is good and godly. It includes the commitment a believer makes when he first acknowledges his sin and receives Christ as Savior and Lord as well as the countless other decisions he makes *to deny* and forsake the *ungodliness and worldly lusts* that continue to find their way back into my life.

“Ungodliness” refers to a lack of proper reverence for God. It is a lack of the fear of God. “Worldly lusts” refers to sins that we may not have committed but we desire to!

The *prudent* man of God is in command of his mind. He has control of the things he thinks about and does. He does not allow circumstances or the immorality or foolishness of others to distract him and gain his attention and interest. He not only does not become involved in things that are outright immoral and unspiritual but also avoids things that are trivial, foolish, and unproductive. He knows his priorities and is devoted to them.

#2 Recognizing Good Behavior

A respectable, orderly life follows from a prudent, sensible mind. Of the many uses of the word, one of the most powerful is in Titus where Paul urges slaves to “be subject to their masters in everything (2:9). They were to be “well-pleasing, not argumentative,” and they were not to steal from their masters” (2:9). Rather than be argumentative or steal, they were to “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect” (2:10). The word “adorn” is our word for *good behavior*.

By the way, our English word *cosmetics* derives from it, too. Cosmetics bring order to the face! They arrange it in proper order and symmetry. Actually, that is the idea: Just as cosmetics when properly used make someone look and even smell better to be more attractive, so we should adorn our lives to adorn the Gospel and make it more attractive to others.

So how do you “look” to others? Are they attracted to Jesus because of you... Or distracted from Him? I’m not talking about cheap shots that people take at you because the Gospel is convicting them.

Do I order my life in such a way that it portrays the grace of God?

The best way (I think) to answer that question is to let God’s Word analyze my life. I’ll read a series of verses that we can each apply to see how we “measure” in our adorning the doctrine of our God and Savior.

In our business life:

1 Thessalonians 4:11 that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you,

1 Thessalonians 4:12 that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and *that* you may lack nothing.

Colossians 3:23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,

Colossians 3:24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

1 Timothy 6:2 And those who have believing masters, let them not despise *them* because they are brethren, but rather serve *them* because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.

In our social life:

1 Corinthians 10:31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:32 Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God,

1 Corinthians 10:33 just as I also please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking my own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.

Colossians 4:5 Walk in wisdom toward those *who are* outside, redeeming the time.

Colossians 4:6 *Let* your speech always *be* with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

1 Peter 2:12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

1 Peter 2:13 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme,

1 Peter 2:14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and *for the* praise of those who do good.

1 Peter 2:15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men

In your church life:

Romans 14:19 Therefore let us pursue the things *which make* for peace and the things by which one may edify another.

Philippians 1:27 Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,

Titus 2:1 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:

Philippians 2:3 *Let nothing be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

Philippians 2:4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Conclusion

Always remember that we are not presenting the Christian life as a burden to be borne without any help from God.

We are presenting the portrait of the man of God. As you look at him, and see yourself, the life-giving Word of God is able to transform you from within – conforming you more-and-more each day into the man of God.

Your part is to get into the Word so it can get into you and perform its work! You're doing that right now. Trust God to work within you, "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

Remember: Jesus said His yoke was easy and His burden light. You simply "take" His yoke upon you by submitting to the Word and the work of the indwelling Spirit of God.