

Are you a careful person or a careless person?

Careful people pay close attention to things-they're observant and detailed. Careless people like to rush into things and ignore warnings, they like to risk it for the biscuit.

Now, I know most of you are careful people. Most of you are careful with your finances, your words, careful to be organized in your job and in your manners. And that's a good thing. I'm glad you are careful, lest you fall down and break something.

And most of you that know me, youth, feel free to say so, I won't cry-am I a careful person? Be honest. Why no, I am not a careful person, I am more careless. In fact, I tend not to pay such close attention to details and I skim over things, maybe ignoring obvious things I should have paid attention to.

Last year when my wife and I were driving back from our wedding all the way from Kentucky, we had almost a 14 hour trip. And it was long but it was also good bonding time. And almost near the end of the trip, with just a few hours left, we saw some shiny object in the middle of the highway. Now, most people with common sense, or who are careful, would have paid attention to the warning in front of them. Every part of my wife's senses told her: "go AROUND the shiny metal thing!" She yelled at me a few times before, guess what, I carelessly and recklessly chose to drive not around the shiny thing but **through** it, cuz hey-it's just a thing in the road, we'll be ok. So as I drove through it, not around it, we heard a loud BU-BUMP! And we felt the thing under us as we drove right through it 70 MPH. So, that's all good, we drove through it, a little bump, maybe a scratch on the hood, but we're ok? Well, we were ok for 5 seconds, and lo and behold, we smell the beautiful smell of gasoline. Apparently the shiny metal thing tore through our gas tank or where ever the gas in the car is stored and it had been leaking out. That's not

good, if your car leaks gas, your car won't go very long, or it could catch on fire. Long story short, we had to stop by a gas station, we waited 2 hours before a tow truck came and got us from Moscow, Texas. And yes, I had to put in mucho moneys to fix my car, to get it towed 200 miles to Houston, and no, my wife was not very happy with me as a newlywed. Moral of the story? Eun Soo, be more careful next time!

Here's the point to it all: Even though personality wise I'm more careless, if I had paid closer attention to my wife, to the warning that was right in front of me, if I had chosen to be more careful, all of that could have been avoided.

For the rest of you, I think you are all too careful and smart not to make that mistake. But this leads us to our bigger question-as we talk today not about being careful to watch the road for shiny objects which might ruin our car, we talk about this question:

Are you careful in watching your life and doctrine?

Meaning, as you are careful to watch other aspects of your life, in managing a budget, in watching your children, in being diligent in your schooling, are you also careful to watch the things that matter much more than that? For me, my carelessness really could have led to a dangerous situation, maybe even injury or death. But for our spiritual life, do we also realize that by not watching our character and theology, in how we behave, as well as how we think about the Word, we are setting ourselves up for future dangers? Dangers not just for you alone, but dangers that could impact your family, as well as dangers for others who need to see Jesus.

Here's the main thing I want to get at today--

Main Point: Watch your life and doctrine so others can see Jesus

We're going to see how the principles found from Paul's exhortation to Timothy can apply for us today. Timothy as a young pastor was commanded to watch his life, his doctrine so that he would be effective in ministry. Also we as believers can be careful to watch how we behave and how we think so that we might grow and be effective in our witness to others.

We'll see what it means to 1.) watch your life, 2.) what it means to watch your doctrine, and 3.) what that means for us. Watch your life, watch your doctrine, and what application that has for us. Because we are to watch our life and doctrine so others can see Jesus.

11: review So let's review a little bit--we've been going through 1 Timothy, as we study what does a rightly ordered church look like? Not so we can boast in what a good Church we are, but so by having a Church that is ordered rightly in teaching and in practice, the rest of the world might see Christ through us. We pick up with verse 11-

11 Command and teach these things.

Last week Daniel covered how we are to grow in godliness, how we are to mature and be disciplined in our pursuit to be God's holy people. And when Paul says to Timothy to command and teach these things, he is referring to everything we've covered up to this point. So meaning, command his people to believe in the Word, practice studying and preaching the Word. By having good leaders who love God in the Church, by having Doctrine and convictions that are not from man but from the Bible. Timothy is to command others, to teach others what the rightly ordered Church looks like. It's a people that are founded on this Bible, which helps us grow in

holiness, which shapes our thinking and affections, which is to lead us as leaders and as servants. Let's pick up in verse 12 as we cover what it means to watch your life.

12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

So for Timothy, as a young pastor, perhaps there was some timidity. Wondering if older people would respect him, and for any of us younger people in leadership, it's easy to second guess ourselves. But Paul exhorts him to set an example in all these things. In speech, in conduct, in love, in faith in purity. In what he says, in what he does both in privately and publicly, in his affections, in his growth in Christ. He says to do these things so well, that older people can't bad mouth Timothy. Timothy is to not give others a reason to find fault with him. Even though he is young, if he is exemplary in his devotion to the Lord, what could people say? And even if people said something, he wouldn't have anything to prove to them knowing his conscience was clear with the Lord.

Just a side comment here--I think as a young person, we really like the first part of that verse, right? Hey, old people--you can't diss me cuz Bible says let no one despise you, so I can do whatever I want, and y'all gonna have to give me some cred. That's how we think, we read that first half of that verse and think it gives us a right to be however foolish we want, cuz people can't look down on us for being young. Right? Wrong! Don't forget to read the second half of the verse, young people, because usually we're foolish, make sure we set a good example to others in all these things--so if you're young like me, if you are wanting to not be looked down upon, ask yourself--are you setting an example to other believers in what you say in public, in social media, in how you treat your parents, your family, your spouse, your children, in your devotion to Christ and to others?

For our older members, if we do have young members who are setting an example of conduct in their lives, please don't look down on them. I know culturally the older you are, the more reverence you get. But for our Church, we have pastors and ministers, we have elders, we have deacons who are young, and if they set an example in their lives, well-they have no reason to be looked down upon, and it says here age is no excuse to take somebody less seriously. So let's also give our leaders and members who are younger grace and listen to them as we would anybody else.

So what does it mean to watch your life? It means that we keep a close watch in our character. In our conduct. Both privately and publicly. Not for the sake of being holier than thou or earning points with God. That's not it at all--it's so that as we keep a close watch on our life and our doctrine others can see Jesus. They can see Jesus through your character--

I have to admit, just a few weeks ago, I had an example where I was not a careful watch of my character. Well, I'm sure we all fail in this everyday, but I wished mine weren't so public. I went to the Post Office one day as I had to send some documents out. And if you know me, I'm not a very patient person. And I hate waiting. Man I hate waiting. It's the worst. And when my turn came up to send in my documents, the lady who was serving me said I was missing some documents, and that I had to go back home and come back. Man, I was irate. But I just gritted my teeth, mumbled something under my breath, went back home, got whatever I needed, and came back. And guess what? I was expecting her to serve me, and she went on her lunch break. I was mumbling some more words under my breath, and I sat down on a chair, my entitled self, cursing and cussing this post office and this lady out. I don't know if anybody could hear me, but man it wasn't pretty. And when the lady came back from her lunch break, she was trying to be friendly, and this was my face and posture. She tried to make some light

conversation, and I was like: “yeah, uh huh. Ok. Yeah. Alright. Yeah. Sure.” Hey, I think teenagers are rubbing off on me, that’s a pretty good impression of them. And here’s when she lowered the boom--she asked me, “oh you’re a youth pastor, huh? That’s cool.” I was like--Gah! You found me out! You probably think I’m supposed to be a good example and here I am, cussing and fussing and muttering and impatiently not waiting. As I was driving home, I was thinking--man, I wonder if I helped or hindered that lady’s impression of not just pastors, but of Christians. What if she is a Christian? What if she isn’t? And yeah, if that post office lady worker were here, I know I owed her an apology for my attitude. I did not watch my words or my life very carefully that day.

Are you watching your character closely? How about in what you watch...How much time you spend on social media...on your words...in your gossip...Integrity is what you are like when nobody else is around, do you do things you think you could get away with? Well, God sees it, but maybe you don’t care because it’s really not a big deal?

I think most of you are like me--we have good days and we have bad days. Days where we lean more on our flesh nature than in the Spirit. I wonder though, if we watched our life a bit closer, without compromising, without acting according to how we think life should be lived, what would happen--Don’t get me wrong, this isn’t a message about legalism, about how much you need to do so God would love you more. That’s not the Gospel. But, I do think where we err is in thinking that since Jesus has already saved us, we don’t need to work at anything anymore. Maybe you and I have gotten a bit numb to some sin areas, maybe let some things go where we should pay closer attention to. Because what happens when you do watch your life closely? Others can see Jesus. They can see Jesus’ sanctifying work in you. They can see you love and see Jesus’ love through you. Through your conduct they can see a Savior who is transforming a worldly, flawed, broken person. When you watch your life and doctrine, others can see Jesus.

When you don't, all they see is you. They see a person who is selfish, entitled, impatient. I think that post office lady saw not Jesus but more of Eun Soo that day. And I regret that. And I need to repent. What do you need to repent of right now?

Are you compromising anything today? In your relationships, are you ok crossing lines and with non believers you shouldn't be dating? And how does that affect your walk with the Lord? Are you compromising your purity? In how you think about the other gender, in how you view them, do you compromise your thought life? In your love...What do you love? Is it God, or is it more of what God can give you? In your faith, is it faith in a God who is in control, or is it faith that you hope your life will turn out as you want it to? In your conduct, what is the Spirit of God telling you to repent of? I can't answer that for you, that's between you and God.

But I do know this--often times our hearts wander, it is tempted, and it seeks not God but idols and such little things. Let me read from a favorite book of mine, it's called Awe by Paul Tripp--he says this is what's happened to many of us, who don't keep a close watch on our lives. Why is that? He gives us his insight:

Quote on awe:

Friends, let's not lose our awe of our Savior. It's all too easy to not care about keeping a careful watch on our lives because honestly, we don't think it matters all that much! And what that says of us is that we've lost our awe of how beautiful and gracious our Savior really is. If you need to ask God to enlarge your awe of Him, your wonder of His majesty and beauty, would you do so today? Because you don't want to compromise your conduct and be loose with your morals and your character, which in turn affects your witness to others and also your own passion to seek Him more. Watch your life and doctrine so that others will see Jesus.

Let's move on to watch your doctrine:

13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. 14 Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.

We can infer from this passage that Timothy had a gift of either teaching or preaching. He was commanded to these things, to study the Word, to be immersed in them and to practice preaching right doctrine. Doctrine is simply put, a set of beliefs. A core set of convictions. And for Timothy, for us, these were beliefs he had not from his own thought life but from the Word. The doctrine, the theology that shaped his ministry. He is to devote himself to the Word, teaching it, keep practicing in it, growing in it. Paul reminds Timothy that even the elders had affirmed Timothy, of this gift to further push and encourage his protege.

Doctrine is important. Why is it important? For Timothy--imagine what would have happened if his doctrine was loose. If how he thought about God was wishy washy, not founded on principles and teachings from the Bible. Imagine how much chaos his Church must have had. Could you imagine?

"Yo, Timothy, is it ok to keep sleeping with my five girlfriends even though I'm married?"

"Sure, man, God is good. So do what feels good."

"Hey, what up T-Dog, you mind if I run for elder? I'm not a Christian yet but I hear elders get bread and wine, and I'm all about that wine, you know what I'm saying homes?"

"Hey, there are no winners or losers in God's kingdom. You do that, I bless you."

“Hey Mr. Timothy, my dad told me that I can steal from the Church’s offertory, is that ok?”

“Hey kid, your dad is teaching you about generosity. God is generous, so why not?”

See how ridiculous this is? So forgive me, since I know this is all extreme, but then again, is it really? Do not the songs we sing affect how we think about God? Do not the books we read the movies we watch help shape how we view Him? Do not the relationships we have, the conversations we have with others shape our theology? Point being, if other things, feelings, thinkings, media and whatnot and just morals and principles is shaping how you view God, then maybe you should keep a more careful watch on yourself. If anything shapes your theology, your convictions, your doctrine, may it be between Genesis chapter 1 and Revelations 22. Anything in between that, is good. Anything outside of that, be very careful to not let that shape you more than the Bible. Watch your life and doctrine so that others may see Jesus. Wrong doctrine might mean they see not Jesus but something else. Or a wrong vision of Jesus.

We would be fooling ourselves if we didn’t mention some of the false but popular teaching that is out today. Prosperity Gospel which says God wants you to be healthy and rich? Or how some teachers say that there is no hell, that God wants all to be saved? Or that it’s all grace! You can basically after salvation, do whatever you want because he’ll forgive you anyway, so go be heathens! It’s funny because in all these things there is a small bit of the truth, but it’s a distorted truth. And believing in that can lead you not to worship a Savior King but worship yourself, a selfish and broken human, not a perfect and powerful God.

Some more examples of how wrong theology can affect you--if you believe that Church is more of a social club rather than a place to invite broken people to see Jesus’ grace, then you’re gonna go here to hang out. If you view the Bible as good suggestions rather than commands and truth, you’re not going to follow the Bible. If you don’t believe that God is sovereign, then

you're gonna try your whole life trying to be in control of a life you can't. How about grace? If you believe that it's more about what you do rather than what's been done for you in Jesus, you're gonna perform your whole life trying to earn something that can never be earned. What about God's goodness? If you question it all the time, wondering why he lets such bad things happen, you will never get to experience the goodness God has for you because you can't see Him for who He is, rather you'd make up a genie who grants wishes.

I think we all need to grow in our theology, in our doctrine. And yes, there are secondary issues but that's not what I mean, I mean we grow as we mature learning about the core convictions every Christian should have. It's ok if you're still learning them, because we all get it wrong at some point, that's ok, just don't remain there. Seek more truth out, study the Word, apply yourself by reading and journaling. Find a discipler to walk through the Word with you. Find a Community and a Small Group to help you strengthen your faith and devotion for the Lord. Join the Church, be a member so you can keep learning and growing in the doctrines that should be essential to every believer.

By watching our life and doctrine, others can see Jesus. Others can see that we don't compromise in our doctrine. They see while others are becoming more lax, you stay loving but uncompromised in your convictions about what the Bible says. You are clear that marriage is between one man one woman. Your doctrine influences you to love the widow, the orphan--and that in itself is a testimony to a world where it looks out for itself first. By staying true to your convictions of not having sex before marriage, that is showing to others that your future marriage is about Jesus, not about your pleasure. When you commit yourself to prayer and fasting, people will wonder in a world where discipline is only reserved for the gym and diets.

Let's be careful in our doctrine. Let's be sure that we know what we believe, and keep growing in the truth as shown in this Word. Not man made things, but Words that God has breathed out.

One of the people I respect is Jason Tarn. He didn't pay me to say that part. I respect pastor Jason is because he is uncompromised in his devotion to the Word. In our staff meetings, he always points out-the programs that we do, the teachings that we give, are they rooted in the Word or just in tradition or practicality? I've learned a lot from just observing how he thinks through every aspect of our Church not through a means of "is it convenient? Is it gonna save us money? Is it the most logical?" No, he helps a lot of our staff think through is what we are doing rooted in scriptures, and does it align with our theological beliefs? And honestly, I want to have that attitude. In youth ministry, it's easy to do things that are fun or will gain the most students, but I need an attitude of-hey, what are we basing these things off of? What Biblical principles? What will this say about God?

And maybe that's a bit rigid, you say-Hey man, lay off me, surely you don't mean in everything I do, I have to think through this theological lens? And maybe you're right, but then again--could it hurt? Because by watching your life and doctrine others will see Jesus. Is it merely about us feeling good doing whatever is easiest or is it for the purpose of knowing Christ and having others know Him as well? Let's keep a close watch on our doctrine, lest we hinder others in a wishy washy man made Gospel with no backbone.

And finally, what does this mean for us?

15 Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. 16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Timothy is commanded to keep practicing his gift, immersing himself in the Word...It's important we pay close attention to the following verses, read in 15--practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress.

Practice these things so that all may see that you are perfect. Practice these things so that people can say how you never make a mistake. Practice these things so that you are seen as already complete, a finished project. No! No! It says so that all may see your progress--

And that is so encouraging for us! If it was up to us to have a perfect example of life, to never mess up in our devotion or doctrine, could any of us make a difference in the kingdom? Could any of us have hope? All of us would be in despair. Every time we failed we would feel like we were hindering the Gospel. So praise God, that He calls us not to be perfect, but He does expect to see progress. Progress because He is the One, through His Spirit, working in us to become more and more godly, like His Son.

Friends, the Gospel says that Jesus has DONE for you what you could never DO. He lived the perfect life, he was the sacrifice, he is the perfect example of what we should be. And praise God we don't have to be perfect--He calls to to follow Him, in His grace, to be striving for a model example of life and a good witness of our doctrine, but in no way would we ever be perfect. If you see evidences of growth, even little, that is a testament of His working in your life. And if you are a believer, yes, you should see little bits of progress. Not like this---but more like

this up and down zig zag line of repenting and falling and getting up and seeing His face and oop oop oop...

By keeping a close watch on our life and doctrine others can see Jesus. The whole thing is about Jesus, it was never about us. He saved us, He loved us, He forgave us. Without Him we would not even have the power or the motivation to live a life of example or to keep a doctrine faithful to the Word. But because He gave Himself up for us, He showed us grace, we can strive, albeit imperfectly, we can see our progress as Christ does this wonderful work called sanctification--He loved you to take you as you are, and He's gonna keep working in you to become more like Jesus. Friends, if this is not you today, would you take some time to pray to submit your life to Jesus? We have people after the service who would be happy to talk to you more about the life and freedom found in Jesus.

And finally, As I've been repeating throughout, our last verse is the main thing we wanted to get out today. Keep a close watch on yourself and the teaching. Persist in this, by so doing, you will save yourself and the hearers.

So to clarify, we ourselves have no power to save. We are saved from sin and are God's vessels. But what Paul means in that last section is by keeping a close watch on ourselves, and on our doctrine, we are doing the good work of 1. Working out our salvation through becoming more and more like Jesus, but also 2. Saving ourselves from falsehood and traps that are so common.

While it's true we are saved, we are commanded to work that salvation out, by growing in our character depending on Christ, we are to grow in our convictions in learning and practicing the

doctrine. And by not watching these things more carefully, we endanger ourselves to false teaching, false thinking, and false life hood.

So let us focus both on good life and good doctrine. Because...

If you have good doctrine and your life stinks....Nobody wants to listen to you. You might have the right things to say, but if you can't back that up with your character, what good is it?

If you have a good life but your doctrine is soft...Then you will be wishy washy, going back and forth and never being firm in any stance. And that also hurts people as they don't know what to believe.

We need to watch our life and doctrine so others can see Jesus. Others can see the Jesus that has helped shaped your life, in your walk, your talk, in your love, faith, purity....Others can see Jesus in your doctrine, as you have convictions not from man but from the Word. So we work on both of these things as we hope to grow in our affection for Jesus through practicing our life and doctrine, as well as helping other believers and the lost see Jesus through conduct and conviction.

I want to conclude with a few application questions:

In your life--are you compromising any areas? If so, what do you need to do? Seek accountability? Seek correction? Seek repentance? We hope you actively act on it today.

In your doctrine--are you compromising any areas? Are you being influenced more by media and people rather than the Word? What areas of doctrine are you loose in and how can you grow in it? What or who can help you learn some of these things?

And consider that as you strive for these things, inevitably we fail, and so we also seek repentance and seek grace that Jesus offers to grow in it. As we seek progress, not perfection to show people Jesus through our life and doctrine. Maybe you can even be praying for some specific individuals you can impact with your life and doctrine today.

I want to close with a story--

Now, this is not a personal story, but this is your story. Imagination time, boys and girls! I want us to envision the life God has called us to--Imagine if, as we are being transformed by God's Word, can see the kind of people He has shaped us into being. I want you to see your story as men and women of God who do seek careful watch on their life and doctrine. In life, in your character, you keep a close watch--on what you say, on what you think and how you behave in public and private. In your doctrine--you are firm on the core convictions that matter. You strive to keep learning and growing in letting what God's Word says to shape you, not the world. And you do these things not perfectly, but by God's grace you see progress in these things. Imagine then, the influence you have...On your children...In your marriage, In your school, in your workplace...In the lives of the believers you commune with...In the lives of the people you might not like so much...In the lives of people you come in contact with. Can you see that vision? That's the vision God has for you in your life. More and more, as you repent and grow in life and doctrine, they begin to see not just you, but Jesus who is in you.

Let's pray.