Series: Legacy

Series Text: 1st Timothy

August 18, 2019

Message 3:

**Expand your Influence**

1st Timothy 3:1-15

**Intro:** Do you want to be a person of influence? Do you want to impact other people for good?

Sociologists have said that the greatest thing that can happen is when you lay your pillow on your head at night knowing you have made a difference.

We help people discover their purpose through our Next Steps - and Step 3 is about Influence - God has given each of us gifts - His intent is for us to be fulfilled by using those gifts to serve others.

When you look through the Bible, we find God didn’t find the most naturally talented people - He used people who needed Him -

Don’t measure yourself how you see you - measure yourself how God sees you. Don’t measure yourself against Paul or Timothy - but take what Paul is saying to Timothy and apply it to your life - your situation.

Paul is an experienced minister, writing a letter to a young man he considers a son - he wants to pour himself as a leader into the Next Generation - so that his own ministry will live beyond him and this young man’s life and ministry will be successful and bring honor to God.

By the way - Paul was successful - his goal of influencing the next generation so that the next generation could carry on the ministry was reached! This is how we will all Grow Young - this is how our ministries and impact will live beyond us!

In the opening section of this letter we saw Paul telling Timothy that one generation can give to another -

> Right Teaching

> Warm Relationships

> Truth with Love

> Openness in Humility

> God’s Mercy

In the second section of the letter - we learned to -

* Cling to faith in Jesus
* Keep our conscience clear
* Pray for everyone -

In this next section Paul writes to Timothy about qualities for specific leadership positions in the church - but look at what Paul says as he begins -

1st Timothy 3:1 - This is a trustworthy saying: “If someone aspires to be a church leader, he desires an honorable position.”

Can I restate it this way?

**Big Idea: Do you want to be a positive influence on other people’s lives?**

Sometimes we think, “I’m not going to hold that position, and I don’t really want to hold that position - I don’t want to go to the meetings - I don’t want to look at the financial reports …”

Well - that’s far from what it’s all about - but forget about the position - forget about the titles -

Do you want to be a positive influence on other people’s lives in the church?

If you do - these are characteristics you should strive for -

Let’s not read this as a pass/fail list - let’s read this as goals to live by - if we can shoot for these lifestyle goals, we will have a positive influence on others and our influence will carry on beyond us!

In the words of this translation Paul addresses “church leader” - “deacons” - & “wives” - but all of these characteristics are for all of us to strive for - So - I’m just going to take them all together -

Let’s read the entire passage - then list out these characteristics -

1st Timothy 3:2-15 -

 So a church leader must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife.

 He must exercise self-control,

 live wisely,

 and have a good reputation.

 He must enjoy having guests in his home,

 and he must be able to teach.

 He must not be a heavy drinker

 or be violent.

 He must be gentle,

 not quarrelsome,

 and not love money.

 He must manage his own family well,

 having children who respect and obey him.

 For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God’s church?

 A church leader must not be a new believer,

 because he might become proud,

 and the devil would cause him to fall.

 Also, people outside the church must speak well of him

 so that he will not be disgraced and fall into the devil’s trap.

In the same way, deacons must be well respected and have integrity. They must not be heavy drinkers or dishonest with money.

 They must be committed to the mystery of the faith now revealed and must live with a clear conscience. Before they are appointed as deacons, let them be closely examined. If they pass the test, then let them serve as deacons.

In the same way, their wives must be respected and

 must not slander others.

They must exercise self-control and be faithful in everything they do.

 A deacon must be faithful to his wife, and he must manage his children and household well. Those who do well as deacons will be rewarded with respect from others and will have increased confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus.

 I am writing these things to you now, even though I hope to be with you soon, so that if I am delayed, you will know how people must conduct themselves in the household of God. This is the church of the living God, which is the pillar and foundation of the truth.

T.S.: 18 characteristics that will expand your influence!

(Don’t have blanks on the notes on the back of the handout this week - just the list) -

If you want to expand your influence - what are the top 3 for you to work on?

1. **Above reproach**

This means if we are going to influence people we are going to live our lives in such a way that people won’t be able to attack our character. We must maintain a good reputation in our moral life. People both in the church and not in the church should be able to look at us and have to squint to find a criticism - and even then, they shouldn’t be able to see it.

This is not perfection - this is modeling godly, Biblical character.

If any of us are going to influence others for good - then sin cannot be a pattern in our lives -

2. **Faithful to the Biblical sexual ethic**

The words here could be translated, “a one woman man” - goes for both genders -

The Biblical sexual ethic is that sexual relations are reserved for the marriage covenant between one man and one woman.

This is because God designed marriage to be a picture of Jesus as the Husband and the Church as the Bride. There is only one Jesus - and there is only One Church - and those two can’t come together in intimate relationship apart from the Covenant Jesus made on the cross -

So - if we take our sexuality outside of that picture, we miss the message that God designed to vividly show everyone the kind of relationship He wants to have with us - BOOK …

**3. Self Control**

If you judged me on this every day - I wouldn’t qualify for the position I hold -

Fruit of the Spirit … I have to let the Holy Spirit control my life …

**4. Live wisely**

The word that is used here actually specifically relates to not overusing wine. We are to live our lives soberly - and that can also be applied figuratively - If we are going to have a positive influence on others - we’ve got to be clear-headed people.

**5. Good reputation**

The meaning of the word here has to do with living a life in good order - modest - not a brash person -

Again - the Fruit of the Spirit is the personality of Jesus - and when the Holy Spirit controls our lives He will produce this kind of fruit in us.

There are areas of our lives where we have to allow the personality of Jesus to overshadow our personality - this will lead us to having a good reputation - which will undoubtedly cause us to have a positive influence on others simply in the way we live.

**6. Hospitality**

In the early church, when fellow believers and teachers came traveling through, there was no Courtyard Suites hotel for them to stay in. The church leaders hosted them in their homes. The influence they made in their homes would then expand when their guests returned home.

There is a gift of hospitality - but we don’t have to be limited to serving others only in the areas of our gifts. Our gifts should be the primary way in which we serve others, but that doesn’t mean we can’t expand.

If we want to influence others for good - and we are not naturally prone to hospitality - we need to get ourselves out of our comfort zones - We need to put ourselves out there in relationships.

The most powerful way you will influence someone is through relationship - Don’t complain that no one calls you or invites you to lunch, if you’re not calling anyone or inviting them to lunch.

**7. Able to teach**

Again - maybe not the gift - maybe not teaching a class - but the person who wants to have an influence on others can learn how to share and teach the principles of Scripture to others.

You may not be a teacher - but you can be a Small Group leader - you can show a video and lead a discussion. You can learn how to answer basic questions - or you can say, “I don’t know - let me look into that for you.” Then ask someone else!

We’re talking about expanding our influence - in our generation and for the generations to come. If we want to influence - we will stretch ourselves!

**8. Not be a heavy drinker**

This is kind of repeated from earlier - the word above for living wisely and soberly had to do with not overusing wine - It’s not hard to see how that would harm your influence -

Be careful with this … Glen Campbell … got free … drank a little wine … slipped back in … face plastered all over the news … people thought he fell back away from God -

It was a fall - but not a fall away - it was a slip - a misjudgment - that went too far - and it ended up hurting his influence - therein lies the danger.

**9. Not be violent**

“Not a brawler - not a pugnacious, quarrelsome person.”

JND Kelly - Hendrickson commentary: “Paul in hinting at the rough treatment the impatient overseer might be tempted to administer to irresponsible or recalcitrant members of his flock.”

In other words - the pastor is not allowed to beat up the people in the church that are causing him problems!

The same would be true - if you want to influence someone for good - you can’t beat them up just because they disagree with you! You can’t beat the truth into people!

**10. Be Gentle**

Magnanimously Patient - moderate - fair -

We are challenged to influence people who are vastly different from us - people who live lives different than us - have different political views than us - and who reject the influence and help we try to give.

We are not to be impatient and angry with them - we are to be gentle with them.

Gentleness will win the day - not anger!

**11. Not quarrelsome**

Don’t look for the argument - look for how you can speak truth in love without engaging in argumentative discussion - radiate a spirit of peace.

Let Jesus be your example.

**12. Not love money**

 Later under deacons - not dishonest with money -

The one who betrayed Jesus was the one who kept the finances - and he loved the money. Ultimately, he loved the 30 pieces of silver more than he loved Jesus.

If money acquires a place of affection in your heart - it will eventually displace Jesus.

When you think of what has brought the most stain on the church - what has been the most common dangers to men of God - inappropriate sexual relationships - and inappropriate handling of finances.

The love of money is the root of all evil - and if money has too high a place in your life, it will hinder your influence.

God wants to bless us - but He wants to bless us so we can use it for His kingdom. If keeping finances is the priority, then we won’t risk those finances by giving them away for the sake of influence.

**13. Manage family well**

The home is the first place of influence. We are not called to influence others if we are not influencing our family in the right direction.

Jimmy Rollins: “Nothing matters more than the people that bear my last name.”

Place a priority on your home - place a priority on your family life -

**14. Not a new believer**

 Specifically for leadership - but how would this apply to everyone for influence? Seek to grow in your faith!

I saw it in Lori Johnson (Wood) …

**15. Well regarded by unbelievers**

How can you influence someone who doesn’t know Jesus if they think poorly of you.

We must seek to develop great relationships beyond the church - without compromise. Paul wrote about this often.

Colossians 4:5 - Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity.

To the Thessalonians he wrote that people who are not believers should respect the way we live.

This will give us opportunities for influence.

**16. Committed to the mystery of the faith**

What is he talking about? This:

1st Timothy 3:16 - Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith:

Christ was revealed in a human body

and vindicated by the Spirit.

He was seen by angels

and announced to the nations.

He was believed in throughout the world

and taken to heaven in glory.

* more on this next week -

But you will never have the powerful influence you are capable of if you compromise or water down your belief in the basic Gospel - the basic message of Jesus - who He was - why He came - how He overcame …

Divine & Human - died and lived - now with the Father in the seat of honor - sender of the powerful Holy Spirit - enabler of each of us to do more than we ever thought possible or could ever do without Him.

Able to live free from sin - because of who Jesus is and what He did!

**17. Live with a clear conscience**

This is speaking of our souls being Pure and clean - like a vine cleansed by pruning and so fitted to bear fruit -

Pruning is hard - but it’s the only way to have the maximum influence - to bear the maximum fruit -

Rose bush …

Sometimes that has to happen - we have to let the Holy Spirit pull everything out of our souls that hinders our influence - sometimes that’s a painful process - but in the end - we will have the influence God desires, and it will be more than we ever dreamed!

**18. Don’t slander others -**

 Don’t gossip

“diabolos” -

Ultimately, this is the characteristic of Satan himself. The Bible calls him the accuser of the brethren.

We should be very careful when we listen to accusations - when we entertain accusations - when we pass along accusations - Even if we like to say we don’t really believe this, we just heard about it -

The result is the passing along of an accusation, and the very Greek word puts us in the camp with Satan.

This won’t hinder your influence - it will kill it dead.

**Concl: Do you want to be a positive influence on other people’s lives?**

God wants you to have a positive influence - that’s why this is written - for all generations -

We are Empowering all Generations to Reach the Next Generation

Take this list home - Homework - look at this list - pray - ask God, “What are the top three characteristics on this list that I need to work on to expand my influence?”

**Invitation -**

**Blessing -**