

PASTORAL GLEANINGS ON GUARDING OUR HEARTS

IV. Axiomatic Truths For Edifying Living

(1 Timothy 1:15-16; 3:1; 4:8-9; 2 Timothy 2:11-13; Titus 3:8)

I. Introduction

- A. Certain truths for Christian life and service are axiomatic, meaning they are obvious, timeless, and invaluable.
- B. Paul mentioned five axiomatic sayings in the Pastoral Epistles, with each axiom containing the phrase, “This (or It) is a faithful saying . . . ,” and we view them for our insight, application, and edification:

II. Axiomatic Truths For Edifying Living, 1 Timothy 1:15-16; 3:1; 4:8-9; 2 Timothy 2:11-13; Titus 3:8 NIV.

- A. Axiomatic Truth One – Encouragement After Sinful Failure, 1 Timothy 1:15-17:
 1. Paul asserted that it was a faithful saying that deserved full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom Paul himself was the worst, 1 Timothy 1:15.
 2. However, Christ showed “immense patience” in showing mercy to Paul as an encouraging example to all others who would believe in Christ that He was willing to work with them just as patiently as He had worked with Paul regardless of their sinful past, 1 Timothy 1:16.
 3. Thus, following sinful failure, God wants us to be encouraged that He is always willing to work with us!
- B. Axiomatic Truth Two – The Good Ministry Of An Elder, 1 Timothy 3:1:
 1. Paul announced that if a man seeks the office of an elder, he desires a good work, a good ministry.
 2. Thus, it is a noble goal in God’s estimation for a believing man to seek to be a local church elder.
- C. Axiomatic Truth Three – Manifold Blessings For Godliness, 1 Timothy 4:8-9:
 1. In 1 Timothy 4:8, Paul claimed that though physical training is of some value, *eusebeia*, meaning “piety, reverence, loyalty, fear of God” in terms of man’s duty to the Lord, what we term “godliness” (Arndt & Gingrich, *A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T.*, 1967, p. 326), is valuable for all things, holding promise for both this present earthly life and for the life that is to come.
 2. In other words, if a believer gives himself to reverence, loyalty, and respect for the Lord in how he conducts his life and ministry, God will bless him in many ways in this life and reward him in eternity.
- D. Axiomatic Truth Four – Spiritual Securities, 2 Timothy 2:11-13:
 1. After introducing the axiomatic saying with his formula, “It is a faithful saying . . . ” in verse 11a, Paul presented four truths of practical security for the believer in his life and service.
 2. We present those four truths in 2 Timothy 2:11b-13 (as follows):
 - a. If we believers experientially die to sin, we will live with Christ in newness of life, v. 11b; Rom. 6:2-23.
 - b. If we believers endure suffering for righteousness’ sake, we will reign with influence with Christ, v. 12a.
 - c. Only if we are unsaved and disown Christ will He disown us, v. 12b; *Bible Know. Com., N. T.*, p. 754.
 - d. If we as true believers in Christ yet prove to be unfaithful to Him, since Christ cannot disown Himself, He will not deny us, for we enjoy unconditional salvation security in our Lord, 2 Timothy 2:13; *Ibid.*
- E. Axiomatic Truth Five – Our Lifelong Calling, Titus 3:8:
 1. In Titus 3:8, Paul urged Titus to stress the truths mentioned in Titus 3:1-7 about the believer’s need to perform good works as the product of the gracious salvation of Christ that God had wrought in his behalf.
 2. Thus, a believer must realize that in God’s estimation, the infinite grace that God expressed in the believer’s behalf to save his soul obligates him to live in constant devotion to performing spiritually productive, good works for the Lord throughout his earthly life, cf. Titus 3:14.
 3. Such works for believers on Crete included being subject to rulers and authorities (Titus 3:1), not slandering, being peaceable, considerate, and gentle toward everyone (Titus 3:2) and providing for the material needs of itinerant missionaries like Zenas and Apollos (Titus 3:13-14).

Lesson: *The axiomatic truths of the Pastoral Epistles include (1) being encouraged that God is patient enough to work with us regardless of our past sins, (2) that seeking the office of elder is a good ministry, (3) that God gives multiple blessings in this life and in eternity for godliness, (4) that a believer enjoys the securities of (a) living in newness of life with Christ if he dies to sin in his walk, (b) of reigning with Christ if he endures suffering for Him, (c) of being disowned by Christ for disowning Him only if he is unsaved and (d) enjoying unconditional salvation security in spite of sinful weakness, and (5) that a believer has the lifelong calling of performing good works.*

Application: *May we rely on the Holy Spirit to heed the directives of Paul’s axiomatic sayings that we might enjoy God’s blessings in this life and be found to be pleasing to Him at Christ’s return.*