

Thought of Week – Don't Neglect Your Gift

(Week: 20180319) -- By Jim Fannin

1 Timothy 4:14 - **Do not neglect your gift**, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

Paul reminds us that we should not forget why we were called to the ministry. It is easy to become so involved in the activities surrounding our job or for lay worship leaders, our commitments, that we lose focus on the purpose of our calling. I know this from personal experience.

It happened to my wife and me. We became so involved in our church when we moved to San Antonio years ago, that we were there literally every time the door was open. We sang in the choir, taught Sunday School, headed or participated in all mission activities, all church sports, and our children in all youth activities. Of course, most of these were intended to be outreach or dual-purpose fun and outreach ministries.

My wife and I had demanding and stressful jobs. We were exhausted all the time. Looking back, I'm not sure how we did it.

However, after several years of this, my wife and I realized, we had far more responsibilities than was reasonable for anyone, and as a result, we were at church all the time, ostensibly doing the Lord's work!

But we also realized we were no longer worshipping when we were at church! In fact, we were so busy we had begun to neglect our own spiritual development, our own quiet times, and our focus on praying for the Lord's leadership in our lives. In spite of this, did God use us to accomplish work and advancement his kingdom? Absolutely!

So, is that to say all activities are bad? Should we avoid being involved in all activities at church. No. But we had to start making smart choices, and learning to say no.

We had to realize that **God** is **all powerful** and He could accomplish His purpose in some areas **without** the benefit of our "**helping**" Him! Imagine that! There are some things God can do without our help!

The same is true in our leadership positions. We need to pay close attention or we can let the activities and business of being leaders distract us from the purpose for which God called us.

In **1 Timothy 4: 15-16**, Paul goes on to explain and emphasize the importance of not neglecting our call. Paul explains in relation to the call he mentions in verse 14,

*"15 **Take pains** with these things; **be absorbed** in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. 16 **Pay close attention to yourself** and to **your teaching**; **persevere** in these things, for as you do this you will **ensure salvation** both for yourself and **for those who hear you.**"*

Paul makes several points regarding our calling, and our spiritual development.

1. **Take pains with your calling.** - It is not to be taken lightly. Just as we heard Solomon, Peter, and Paul tell us to pay close attention to our flock in last week's Thought for the Week, so we must pay close attention to our own spiritual growth.
2. **Be "absorbed" in your calling.** - In Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament, the Greek phrase and verb for "**be absorbed**" means "Give thyself wholly to them." The verb is the present tense **imperative**. Christ commands us to be immersed, which modern day learning theory confirms, is one of the best ways to become proficient in a subject.
3. **Persevere in these things.** In **Hebrews 12:1** we are reminded, "... let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ...". It is a lifetime journey.
4. **Your spiritual health directly affects your ability to minister to and reach out to those around you.** - If you aren't truly focused on Jesus, and in right relation with him, it will be difficult for you to lead others to a knowledge of, or deeper spiritual life.

Let us take time this week to immerse ourselves in Jesus, so that we can