

MAINTAINING A HEART FOR KNOWING GOD

I Timothy 4:16 - *"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."* "...That I may know him..." Philippians 3:10

INTRODUCTION:

Lousy leaders are a dime a dozen. The call today is for one to be a good servant of Jesus Christ (I Timothy 4:6) and as Paul exhorts Timothy here, to be a successful youth worker, I must first pay close attention to myself. Anyone who seeks to influence young people must first have a godly life and then a biblical message. We cannot separate one from the other. There are many youth leaders who have had godly messages without godly lifestyles. A heart for knowing God and living a godly life must be the foundation for a biblical message with which I will seek to teach and influence the teens.

As a youth worker, realize your message is first seen and then heard. Your message is visual as well as verbal. To talk about godly things and live an ungodly life is hypocrisy. To live a godly life and compromise a biblical message leads to heresy and youth work has no room for hypocrites or heretics. As a youth worker for the Lancaster Baptist Church, let me first urge you to maintain a heart for knowing God.

I. Constantly nourish yourself with the Word of God (I Tim. 4:6)

Your personal walk with God must be the foremost priority of your life. If you fail to nourish yourself with the Word of God, as a youth worker, you will become ineffective. In order to know God I must know His Word.

II. Relentlessly avoid error (I Tim. 4:7a)

"Keep thy heart with all diligence: for out of it are the issues of life." Proverbs 4:23

As a youth worker realize, first of all, that you are embroiled in a battle for your life, spiritually. The most dangerous words a Christian can say are, "I can handle it" because as soon as Satan brings me to the place where I think I can handle it, that means I have stopped fighting it and thus will lose the battle.

Youth worker, please realize that you are to, first and foremost, be a spiritual leader. To do this you must relentlessly and constantly be in a battle to avoid error. Realize that, whether it's through television, music, books, friends or other influences, Satan will try everything he can to get you to swallow error. Everything that goes into your mind will influence your life, your attitudes and your choices for years and even decades to come. One who is interested in knowing God will not risk the possibility of polluting his mind with error. Please guard yourself.

III. Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness (I Tim. 4:7b-9)

As a youth worker, please keep personal purity as a priority in your life. Please guard against little compromises that can ruin your spiritual influence in the lives of our teens. The track record of both full-time ministry and lay workers in most churches is painfully pathetic. So often we are quick to sell out our personal purity and ruin our effectiveness in the ministry.

Please realize, youth worker, that when you forfeit your godly, pure life, you shatter your intimacy with Christ (Psalm 66:18). If God is to use us as strong spiritual influences in the lives of these teens, we must be pure and holy vessels fit for His use. As a youth worker, we must realize that before we can depend on communicative skill, vision, enthusiasm, organizational abilities, personality, gifts or raw guts, we must, first and foremost, be useful to the Master through personal purity.

How can we exert a godly influence if we are not godly? We can't! How can we set a godly example if we are not godly? We can't! How can we communicate a godly message if we are not godly? We can't!

You may be one who feels very insecure with your skills and ability to work in the ministry or you may be one who feels very confident with your gifts and skills to work with people. Whatever the case, please be, first and foremost, a person with a heart-felt desire to know God, to stay pure and to be a spiritual example. Remember this: The teenagers we influence will grow spiritually in proportion to our spiritual lives. They will never develop a heart for God if we ourselves do not first have a heart for God.
