

# Prepare for Leadership

**Key Verse:** *“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.”*  
—*I Timothy 4:16*

**Selected Scripture:**  
*I Timothy 4:6-16*

others, or by their own imperfect standards, but by the Lord's standard of perfect love. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Matt. 22:37-39) These admonitions point out how these attributes of character should be especially shown to the brethren. They can be reflected in brotherly-kindness, and tenderness of word and act, through sympathy for each others weaknesses, and an appreciation for the strengths of others. This requires them to have long-suffering, kindness, patient forbearance in love, and a sincere concern for each other's welfare, rights, and responsibilities. (I Cor. 13:4-8) “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”—Rom. 13:10

## **PAUL WROTE THESE**

words shortly after laying out the qualifications for those who would be leaders in the church. He wisely started the Key Verse with, ‘Take heed unto thyself.’ That is our first responsibility. All potential leaders should first examine their own hearts to see whether they are acceptable in God's sight. To do this effectively, they must not measure or judge themselves by

They should have a heart's desire to be pleasing to God in thought, word, and deed. We can see this type of a proper disposition, when we read, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer." (Ps. 19:14) What an appropriate prayer for all those who desire to serve the Lord. This attitude of total submission of heart and will is absolutely necessary to be a servant of God—one who is prepared to serve him by the giving of his all.

The Apostle writes in II Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." He is telling us that doctrinal soundness is very important, but that it is not enough; one must be 'in the faith,' in the sense of exercising faith in the Lord. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." (I Cor. 16:13) In turn, it involves a faith and trust in the Lord concerning all of the affairs that deal with the ecclesia arrangement as God has designed. We are told, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (I Thess. 5:21) This should help us to remember that the Lord's people should not receive what they hear without proper examination. They should use good judgment as to what is supported by the Scriptures. It is the duty of every child of God to judge what is right and what is wrong. Searching the Scriptures involves being "taught of God" (John 6:45; Isa. 54:13), and will help to establish the learner ever stronger in the word of Truth. We have been told, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."—II Tim. 2:15

The lesson for us all is that we should study to know what God would approve. We are to study the doctrine, study our course of conduct, study to shield ourselves from error, and a worldly spirit. What is true for all is especially true for those honored with a special role in the church—the elders. ■