

## How to Be a Better Man

- "Good fight", that's the name of our Summer Real Men Bible Study. We'll be going verse by verse through 1 Timothy, you and me, up here in the mountains, real informal, casual. 12 weeks looking at an older man named Paul, building up and investing in a younger man named Timothy, teaching him how to be a man of God and fight a good fight. And I'll tell you in a day when the world is lost its mind and everything's going to hell, a few men need to learn how to fight. I'll see you guys online this summer as we study 1 Timothy, the good fight. All right guys, welcome back to our Summer Real Men Bible Study. Just a little time between us girls, little conversational chat through the book of 1 Timothy. Good Fight is the theme for our time together. And if you're a man of God, you gotta learn how to fight the world of flesh and the devil as well as heretics, apostates, and evil doers if you want to walk in integrity and be rewarded at the finish line by your father. And so we're looking at the book of 1 Timothy and it's a letter written by Paul, like a spiritual father to Timothy, like a spiritual son. And this week we hit command number five, which is cultivate character. And it's a section in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. And it's really about leadership, integrity and cultivating character. The context is it's a letter written to a church in Ephesus. And so the immediate context is if you wanna lead in a church, here's kind of how we evaluate character and qualification. But principally I want to broaden it and say, these are great principles for every male to aspire to and every young man to intentionally and vigorously pursue. These are character traits of someone who is word and spirit, A word meaning they love the word of God and they submit to it and study it. And spirit, they're filled with the Holy Spirit and they are subject to and living by the power of demonstrating the fruit of the Holy Spirit. And so these are Bible guys and Holy Spirit guys, and here's what he says, "The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer", we'll talk about that, "he desires a noble task". What he's talking about here is, as a man, it's good to aspire to leadership. Now this can be ungodly, this can be prideful, this can be trying to lord it over others, which the Bible forbids. This can be thinking of oneself too highly, which the Bible forbids. There's a guy, I think his name is, Diotrephes, if my memory's correct in 1 John, his name is only mentioned once and here's what it says, "He always liked to be first", meaning he just always had to be the boss and had to be in charge. That's not a good thing. That's what Satan was trying to do in heaven, that's not godly. So a, you know, desiring to lead, wanting to lead can be used of the enemy or the flesh to cause you to be an ungodly man. It can also conversely be used by the Holy Spirit to motivate you to be active and not passive. To say, well, if I've got a family, I wanna lead it. If I've got a company, I wanna lead it. If I've got kids, I want to lovingly, humbly lead them. If I'm gonna be involved in my church, I wanna make a difference. I want to add value, I want to help. And so the heart of this is not ruling over others, but it's serving however God has called and gifted you. And what we need is more men who want to take responsibility, who want to be active at home, at work, at church, in the community. And we need more men of God with character, leading and making decisions. Because if good men don't lead and make decisions bad men do and you ask, oh, what a horrible concept, what would the world look like if the wrong men were making decisions? Well, exactly like the world that we have. And so we need men filled with the spirit to be the leaders. Therefore, an overseer that's a leader is overseeing people and resources in a family, a business, church, ministry. And here's the qualifications and they're 17 and we'll deal with them. And if you're a man who really

wants to aspire to character, cultivate and grow in character, maybe prepare yourself one day to be a husband, a father, a leader in business, or in ministry, or in politics. You might even want to go to 1 Timothy 3 and just put it on your mirror. When you brush your teeth every morning, give it a read. You may want to just list out the 17 as a checklist and just continually evaluate your own character. It goes on to say, "Must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, gentle, controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household while with all dignity, keeping his children submissive. For someone does not know how to manage their own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert or he'll become puffed up with conceit and fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders so that he may not fall into disgrace and into the snare of the devil." So what he's talking about here are overseers, and I'll give you a word that you may not have heard much of, governance, and leadership are the qualities and attributes of an individual. And governance encompasses a whole system. What an overseer literally means is somebody who is leading, but is also governing. In the Bible, there are some people who are godly and they're literally governors like Nehemiah. Governing is overseeing, it's stewarding resources, people, doctrines, ideas so that there is good stewardship people and things that matter are well cared for, and that they're not diverted into something that is a waste of time and energy. And they are not overtaken by evil doers. And so an overseer is one who takes responsibility for the people and things that they oversee. So if you're a husband, you oversee your family. If you're a CFO, CEO, Senior Pastor, you oversee your business or ministry. Yeah, if you're a head coach, you oversee your team. If you're at a university and you're the president, you oversee your university. That's governing is overseeing. And so there are four categories of cultivating character to be a leader in an overseer. Number one, your relationship with God. Number two, your relationship with yourself. Number three, your relationship with your family. And number four, your relationship with others. I'm gonna look at these in that order, you and God, okay, how are you and God? And then how do you treat your wife? If you're a man, how do you treat your kids? Then how do you treat others at work and in church and in the community? And so it's like rings of priority, first priority, relationship with God. Next priority, relationship with wife. Next priority, relationship with individually each of your kids. Next priority, your work life, your church life, your other relationships. Most of us men are stronger in some areas and weaker in others. So we all have areas where we need to pay attention and grow in cultivating character. In relationship to God, literally, you follow God that you're not at the head of the line of your life. God is, and you're not the leader, you're the follower. The best way to lead anybody is to follow the Lord and then they can follow you. Paul says this elsewhere, "Follow me as I follow Christ." That's a leader, a leader is we're all following Jesus. We're just in a line. But ultimately I'm not the head of the line. Jesus is the head of the line. Goes on to say number one a man. So what we're looking for is masculine dudes who lead, not dudes who are cowardly, not guys who are passive like Ahab, not guys that are gender confused and soft and woke and progressive, dudes. Paul's a dude, he's shipwrecked, beaten, homeless, left for dead, adrift on the open sea and does some of his best Bible writing from prison. He's a dude. When he pulled into Ephesus, the city he's writing to, he started a riot. He's a dude, make no mistake, God uses men to get things done. And God uses men with tough skin

and tender hearts to do significant things, a dude. Number two, above reproach. This is a general junk drawer category for without any disqualifying character or moral defect. In our day, critics, the pajamahadeen on the internet, the discernment bloggers who have no discernment and yell about accountability and they're only accountable to the demon that empowers them, will talk a lot about someone's faults or flaws. Every human being and every leader has faults and flaws. Every imperfect person makes some bad decisions. We're not talking about someone who is perfect versus imperfect, but someone who has a disqualifying moral characteristic versus someone who's a normal person learning by living and tripping occasionally over their own feet. This would be a general thing, like if a pastor commits adultery on their spouse, that is, you're on the no-fly list, sorry. You know, if let's say you're teaching and preaching and you're a leader and then you just become a total woke apostate heretic and start officiating same sex marriages, boom, you're on the no fly list, you're now a heretic and a false teacher. So what he's talking about is not nitpicking over little things, but really not overlooking the big things. Above reproach, number three, in the context of a church leader, he says, "Able to teach". And I would say every man should aspire to be able to teach in whatever realm or level of leadership that God has called them. If you've got a wife, you should be able to do a Bible study with her and learn together and answer her questions and help quote unquote washer in the work. If you have kids, you are the pastor of your own little flock. The Bible says in Ephesians that fathers are responsible to train up their children. So at the very least you read the Bible, pray, study, teach your own kids. I mean my kids call it Pastor Dad, that's what they call, I was their dad and their pastor. But the truth is, every dad is a pastor. And then let's say you get to lead a Bible study or a Sunday school or a class at church, or maybe you're a pastor, maybe you lead a men's Bible study during the week, or you've got a discipleship accountability group of Christian coworkers. Wherever you have leadership influence, you wanna be able to bring the word of God faithfully and accurately. And it goes on to say, not a new convert, but a mature Christian. What it says is, if we rush people into leadership, they fall into the same trap that the devil did. And that is arrogance and pride. When we hear of the devil in the Bible, in places like Isaiah and Ezekiel, he keeps saying this really awful word, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, it was all about him. It wasn't about the Lord. And so a true leader says it's about the Lord and what the Lord wants, and then someone who falls into the same demonic, prideful trap as the devil. It's what they want. They're not God-centered in God first. So if we take a new Christian, and sometimes we do so because they're gifted or there's a need, especially in ministry, we rush them. And I've done this, I mean, I probably got rushed or I probably rushed myself. I was a senior pastor at 26 and I was a brand new Christian and new husband and didn't even have children. So I mean, I think I was maybe even 25 when I was senior pastor. So I should have waited, I should have done what Paul and Timothy are doing, found a godly older man and just learned from him and submitted to him and treated him like a father and acted like an obedient son and it would've helped me. And so I fell into some of this trap myself as a young man because as a young man, part of my failure was I got the Lord's will, but I didn't get the Lord's timing. So I knew what the Lord had for me, but I got ahead of his timing. And that's being ambitious or young or aggressive. And if you're a young man, it's good to be aggressive, it's good to be assertive, it's good to be moving, but you don't want to get ahead of God's timing. And so what it's talking about here is if you're a newer Christian or an immature Christian or a prodigal coming back, if you're gonna err, err on the side

of being a little more patient and cautious and waiting until a spiritual father says you're ready. And I'm gonna walk into this leadership with you, that's relationship to God. Relationship to self, sober-minded. This is mentally and emotionally stable. We have record levels of depression, mental health, suicidal ideation, covid, and the elections, and social media is just really causing a lot of mental health. And what it's saying is, if you are not sober-minded, if you're not a mentally and emotionally stable person, it's best for you not to lead, at least right now for two reasons. One, it puts too much pressure on you and Satan and demons are going to really use and abuse you and they're gonna beat you up. It's gonna be hard. Number two, if you're not mentally and emotionally stable and you're dealing with people that are having emotional and mental struggles, if you're not doing well and they're not doing well, it's not going to end well. You need to be healthy if you want to help people who are unhealthy, you need to be strong to help people who are weak. And if you're not yet in that season, it may mean counseling, inner healing, deliverance, a season of just sort of rehabilitating your soul if you've been through some trauma and hardship to get to a point where there's the better version of you to help bring out the better version of others. Self-controlled is number six. This is a discipline life of sound decision making. You're not pushed by other people. You're not just making whimsical, sort of sudden decisions emotionally and impetuously. You're not like a butterfly that moves every time the breeze changes, you're self controlled. There's a steadiness and a steadfastness about you. Young guys will go from one job to another and one girl to another and one church to another. And they're not self controlled, they're not stable, they don't stay there lane and press forward they're unstable. And if you're in that position, you're not ready to lead 'cause you're not yet leading yourself. Until you can lead yourself, you're not ready to lead others. All right guys, pastor Mark here letting you know about the latest book, "New Days, Old Demons". It's a prophetic word against pathetic wokeness. You guys understand exactly what I'm talking about. Hopefully it is on sale, if not, it's coming out very, very soon. Would appreciate your prayers as we punch a lot of people and things in the mouth. And if it's a help, get a copy. Number seven, not a drunkard. That means without addictions. This could be you're not an alcoholic, you're not a drug addict, prescription or you know, recreational, you don't have other addictions, you're not a compulsive gambler, you're not a person who is a glutton and literally just feasting yourself, you know, into a heart attack. You have a measure of self-control and the fruit of the spirit is self-control. And if you don't have self-control, you're not living by the power of the Holy Spirit. And so until you get to the point where you are, you know, not a drunkard, not addicted, not driven by, you know, some sort of dopamine hit or pleasure center or fear, but you're driven by the spirit of God, you're not ready to make a, you're not ready to be a leader and leaders get way more pressure. And so if you are response is, I eat, I drink, I smoke, I look at porn, I gamble, whatever it is, you're not ready for leadership 'cause that pressure is going to press you to make some self-destructive decisions that aren't good for you or others. And until you are a person that is free of addiction, you're not in a good position to be a leader. And then number eight, not a lover of money. This is financially content and upright and a good steward. Some will say that money is the root of all evil. That's not what the Bible says. The Bible says that, "the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil." Money is neutral. You can do, I mean you can use money to be a human smuggler bringing people over the southern border or you can use money to fund a children's hospital. Money is neutral, the heart of the person is not. And so

what money does, it reveals our heart. If we love the Lord and want to do good, then we use the money to love the Lord and do good. If we're evil and we like to do evil, then we use and abuse the money to disobey God and do evil. The key is this guarding your heart and asking, am I driven by money? Am I motivated by money? Am I willing to sin to get more profit? Am I willing to disobey God to have more things, more pleasure, more comfort, more possessions? Am I willing to minimize or forsake my relationship with God so that I can have or do something that I enjoy? And the test of our finances is not how much you make, but how much you give. And the person who does not love money, you can tell 'cause when they get it, they give it, they give it to the Lord first and foremost, and then they share it generously with others. How's your giving? He's gonna get into this later in the book, but not, you know, somebody is not a lover of money when they give money and they don't keep it, they give it away to the Lord and others. That's the best way to guard your heart against being a lover of money. Category three, relationship to family. Husband of one wife. In the ancient day they did have polygamy and some nations still practice polygamy and some outlier cults, like extreme fundamental latter day saints, Mormons, they will have polygamy. So it meant that if you had multiple wives, you probably weren't ready to lead in ministry because it was very hard for you and your family to minister to others and to teach them how to do faithful marriage. In addition, if you got a lot of wives and kids, you're probably just very busy and don't have a lot of free time to volunteer at the church. In addition though, the literal Greek here is a one woman man, and it's a man who is fully devoted to his wife. Job says something similar Holy Spirit brings to mind. And Job 31:1, he says, "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look upon a woman lustfully". What he's saying is, my eyes only look, you know, romantically at my wife, that's it. And so one woman man, he not only sleeps with one woman, he only goes on dates with one woman. He only meets one-on-one for coffee or dinner or whatever with one woman. He only you know, is texting and calling and emailing and DM-ing one woman. And he'll have healthy relationships with other women, Paul calls them like sisters, that his wife is aware of and it's all above reproach. But he doesn't have any secrecy or privacy that is inappropriate with other women. And he's the guy when he walks on the road and he's not flirting with other women, he's not wandering away from his wife to go check on whoever the other women in the room are. He's not getting a lot of their attention. He's not drawing them toward himself. A one woman man is literally like, no, that dude loves his wife and he's fully committed to her. And we can check that box. There's nothing to worry about there. But this does not require, for example, that all leaders need to be married. There are godly leaders like Paul who writes this. He's single, no wife, he's writing to Timothy who's single, no wife. They're serving Jesus who was single, no wife. And let's say you're a guy whose wife dies and you're widowed, you're not disqualified from leadership. But it does seem that the best leaders generally speaking in the local church are those who have healthy marriages and families because so much of pastoral ministry is helping people with their wives and their kids. In addition, number 10, he's a good dad, he's a successful father, not a perfect father other than God the father, there is no perfect father. And the older your kids get, the more you see the mistakes that you've made and you apologize. But what he's talking about here is the Father loves the Lord and is the spiritual leader in the home. And that ministry starts at home. If your wife, if your kids are not cared for and loved and taught and pastored, then you don't need to go to the church and be taking care of everybody else's family. You need to go home and take care

of your family. This is a historic and catastrophic problem in ministry. Too many guys will sacrifice their wife and kids on the altar of ministry, which is idolatry. And there was a whole generation that was told wrongly, if you take care of the church, God will take care of your family, that's garbage. God shows you, as the man and head of household, to take care of your family. Once, and it says it right here, if you don't take care of your family, you have no right to go take care of God's family, the church, you have no right to teach other men on how to be husbands and fathers unless you're a good husband and father. And so you know, it's not perfection, but it is exemplary. It's like, well that guy's a good husband, good father. And this doesn't mean that your kids are perfect. They never stray, they never struggle. You don't have any prodigals that we don't wanna be legalistic about this. Every child has their own path to God and sometimes they've got church hurt or they've had trauma or they're in a difficult season or something happened or you got a blended family and they're adopted. There's all these complex variables. So we wanna put a lot of grace on 'em. But the main thing is, does he pastor his family? And if not, he's not ready to go pastor anybody else for two reasons. Number one, he's not qualified to teach others how to do something he's not doing. Number two, his wife and kids need his time and energy. He doesn't have time and energy for anything else. And so, I mean, honestly, if my wife and kids didn't love the Lord, I would just walk away from public ministry. And I go home and I do private ministry. God was gracious, my wife and kids love the Lord, serve the Lord, we all serve together. And so we do ministry as a family. But if it wasn't that way, I would hope that I would keep my priorities as God's priorities. And then manages his own family. Well he meaning he provides, he generates revenue. He doesn't push all his burdens on his wife. He doesn't overlook and neglect his kids. He leads and takes spiritual responsibility to have the Bible open and to be praying and participating in church, organizes his family and provides for them not just physically and financially, but emotionally and spiritually and relationally. Is he a giver or a taker? Is he a burden giver or a burden lifter with his family? And then lastly, relationship to others. Respectable, that means people are like, I respect that guy. We all know, we all know those guys in our life that we enjoy them, but we don't respect them. They're funny, life of the party, they're a good time. You know, you'd be happy to go drink a beer and watch a game with 'em, but you would never let them babysit your kids. You would never let them do your taxes. And the truth is, you'd never leave them alone with your wife. That's not respectable. Respectable is a guy, you're like, he has character and integrity and whether someone is watching or not, he's the same human being. Dale Moody once said, "Character is what a man is in the dark", right when nobody's looking, but God are you the same guy? And respectable is really half the battle. Most men walk into a church and within the first minute they decide whether or not they're gonna listen to the pastor. And it's like, do I respect him? Is he a dude? Does he have courage? Is he a good husband, good father? Does he know the Bible or is he another woke apostate coward victim? And so you know, you gotta find guys you respect. Hospitable is the next one, that's welcoming strangers, especially non-Christians. Fellowship is the Bible's word for getting together with believers. Hospitality is welcoming strangers. So hospitality is, they're not cliquy, they're not closed. If they're in a room, they're gonna meet and greet the new people. If they're at church, they're gonna welcome the people they don't know anybody. At work, they're not just with their coworkers, they're friendly toward all. The key in the Bible is this, be friendly toward all and friends with a few. Be friendly toward all friends with a

few. Hospitable is you're friendly toward all and you're friends with a few. You have people over, you're warm, you're relational, you're approachable. Not violent, even tempered. Some guys are like a grenade with a pin pulled. Man, you say or do anything, they go off like a bottle rocket at zero to 60. Those do not make good leaders. If you wanna know what that looks like, two words, North Korea, that's what it looks like. Just a guy who's just emotional, like a petulant child, could go off, you know, unannounced at any time, volatile. That is not a good leader because you never know what version of them you're going to get. Not violent, even tempered. Gentle means they're kind and gracious and loving. Like the Lord, they are slow to anger, they have a very long wick and it burns, you know, very, very slowly. The Lord does get angry, but he doesn't start there. You gotta get 'em there. The Bible says he's slow to anger. A good son of that father is like their father. They're slow to anger, they're gentle, not quarrelsome. This means they're peaceable, not divisive, factious, or contentious. Guys who are quarrelsome, they're always arguing, they're always fighting, they're always the contrarian, they're always the devil's advocate. They're always going to hold you accountable. They always want to poke out the one thing you said or did that they didn't like. They just have this disposition of a critic and a critical spirit. And sometimes they have a hottiness and a pride where they just want to win arguments, not people. And everything with them is just exhausting. Quarrelsome, we've all met these guys. And then well thought of by outsiders is the last one. And it's interesting that Paul says this because he's a dude who gets arrested a lot and starts riots. So the church he's writing to was founded in Acts 19 when he went into the city of Ephesus, planted a church and then there was a riot and he had to run for his life. So whatever a good reputation is, apparently it's big enough category that you can go to jail and start a riot and still have a good reputation. Paul didn't have a great reputation with those who hated the gospel. In fact, they hated him. But he had a good reputation with those who loved the gospel. They loved him. And so the key is not, are there people that don't like you? The question is, which people don't like you. If people are for God, they should be for you. If people are anti-God, they should be anti you if you are for God. And so we live in a day of people pleasing and fear of man and hold me. You know, men are told just you should just always be nice and no one should ever get upset. That's not Jesus, that's not the prophets, that's not the apostles, that's not Paul. A good reputation is not that no one has a problem with you, but God doesn't and godly people don't. That you walk in integrity and humility according to the word of God. Well, as we wrap it up, I've got a buddy of mine, I dunno if I've said this before, this is the verbal process while I'm away in the woods. And he said that, "The problem is with religious people, they'll use the Bible as binoculars to look at your sin rather than a mirror to see their own." I don't know if you've heard that before, but that would be my point in 1 Timothy 3. If you're a guy who's reading this and then saying, oh, my dad's not like that, my pastor's not like that, my boss is not like that. My older brother is not like that, you know? And you're just immediately weaponizing the word of God to put the binoculars on and judge everybody. Don't, put the binoculars down, pull the mirror up and then evaluate your own life and ask yourself, okay, by the grace of God, where am I doing pretty good? By the grace of God, where do I need to make some significant improvements 'cause I'm not doing very good. It'll give you the categories again. And again, 1 Timothy 3:1-7. How's your relationship with God, right? How's that going? A, B, C, or D, or F? Your relationship to yourself, self-control, self-management, A, B, C, D, or F? Relationship to your family, your wife and your kids, both of

them, those are two categories, A, B, C, D, or F? Relationship with others, coworkers, family, friends, church members, leaders who are over you, coworkers alongside of you, extended family, A, B, C, D, or F? And where is the area that you're doing pretty good and where's the area or areas that you really need to to make some improvements so you can cultivate character. I don't want this to beat you down, I want this to build you up. I started sharing these things with my sons when they were little boys and what I said was, if God has a list of what a good man is in the Bible, then that's what all men should shoot for. And that's my hope and prayer for you. See you next week as we continue our little Bible study. Thanks for jumping in and if you've got any questions or specific stuff that maybe I can help with, just hit me up at [hello@realfaith.com](mailto:hello@realfaith.com) and I'll pray for you. Father, thanks for the chance to get together with the guys, open the word of God and to just sort of examine ourselves. How are we doing with you, with ourself, with our wife, with our kid, and with others. And Lord, we've all got areas where we're strong and areas where we're weak, areas where we're mature, areas where we're more immature. And so Holy Spirit, would you please help each of us as men cultivate character? And Lord, we live in a day when there's a lot of leaders, but there's not a lot of leaders with character. Where there's a lot of people who are overseeing and governing, but they're not filled with the spirit and they're not obeying the Lord Jesus. God would you raise us up as men to be leaders and overseers and what area that you have called us to lead and God, even if we're a young guy and it just is ourself, we don't have a wife yet, we don't have a kid yet. We don't have a ministry yet. We don't have a church yet, but we need to lead ourselves. We need to govern ourselves. We need to oversee ourselves. God would ministry start with us in our hearts and our minds and our lives? And then would you entrust us others to care for? In Jesus' name, amen. Thanks for tuning in guys. Pastor Mark here saying thank you for giving me the honor of helping you to learn God's word. In a world filled with bad news. you need some good news in a world filled with lies, you need some truth. And so as I like to say, it's all about Jesus. We open the Bible and we help people learn about Jesus Christ. And I just want to say, if you would help me get the word of God out, it would mean the world to me. You can go to [realfaith.com](http://realfaith.com), mountain of Bible teaching. I mean we're coming up on three decades of Bible teaching and or if you just go to 99383 and text the word, "Unfiltered". Again, that's 99383 "Unfiltered", we'll send you a link that'll open up literally thousands and thousands and thousands of pieces of free Bible teaching.