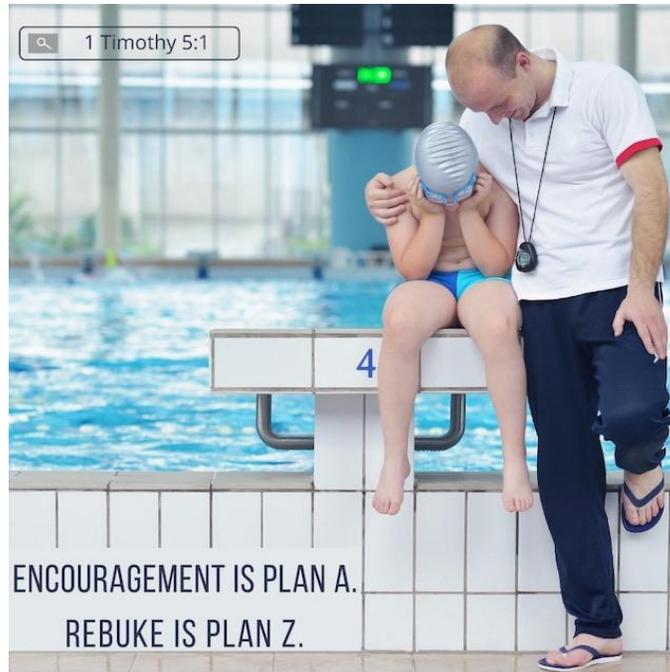


FOUR SKILLS IN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

1 TIMOTHY 5:1-2



The majority of ministry resignations are not caused by theological error, preaching incompetence, administrative neglect, or falling into immorality. The majority of ministry resignations are caused by a lack of social skill, a lack of relational maturity.

Maybe, you're not a minister, but you are still involved in personal ministry. You may think you need better theology, better communication skills, better techniques, better example. You may do, but as Paul teaches Timothy in chapter 5:1-2, above all we need better personal relationships. We learn two truths in these verses:

- **PERSONAL MINISTRY DEPENDS ON PERSONAL GODLINESS**
- **PERSONAL MINISTRY DEPENDS ON RELATIONAL SKILL**

LEARNING

PERSONAL MINISTRY DEPENDS ON PERSONAL GODLINESS

In the previous chapter, Paul emphasized the importance of personal godliness for Timothy's ministry. He called Timothy to be **an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity (4:12)**.

He starts with personal godliness and then concludes with, **Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers (4:16)**. He moves from personal godliness to personal relationships, those he ministers to personally.

**IF YOU WANT FRUITFULNESS
START WITH GODLINESS**

"I get that, Paul. I will prioritize my relationship with God. But can you give me practical help so that I can get a good start in these personal relationships?" Yes, here are four relational skills to work on.

PERSONAL MINISTRY DEPENDS ON RELATIONAL SKILL

Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity (5:1-2). From these verses we get Paul's four simple relational skills for effective personal ministry.

Be adaptable: Paul's four categories here of **older men, younger men, older women, and younger women (1-2)**, require us to adapt to whoever we are speaking to. We do so by asking two questions: Is this person older or younger than me? Is this person male or female? We're to relate to people differently depending on their sex and age.

Be familial: Treat **older men as fathers, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters (1-2)**. Don't treat the church as a company or as a kingdom, but as a family. And use healthy family relationships as a model in church family relationships.

Be an encourager: Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father (1). This carries over to the other relationships too. Whatever else Paul is doing here, he's putting encouragement at the top of our list and rebuke way down the list.

Be holy: When Paul comes to encouraging younger women in personal ministry, he adds **in all purity (2)**. He's aware of the moral danger in ministering to young women and therefore adds this additional requirement when interacting with them.

ENCOURAGEMENT IS PLAN A.
REBUKE IS PLAN Z.

LOVING

We see the love of God in these instructions as he organizes his church through Paul to be a holy, loving, encouraging family. He wants his people to be in loving personal relationships with each other. He wants these relationships to reflect his own relationship with his children: adaptable, familial, encouraging, and holy.

In the Gospels we see Christ's personal relationships flowing out of his personal godliness. He modeled these verses in his relationships with the old and the young, with men and women. He was so adaptable, familial, encouraging, and holy. We love him for his relational skills then with them and now with us.

LIVING

To be effective in Christ-like personal ministry, let's be adaptable, familial, holy encouragers in personal relationships.
