



# THE EXHORTER

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***“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40***

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. ([prchurchofchrist.org](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

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## JUMP START # 281

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***1 Tim. 6:20,21- “O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoid worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called knowledge—which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you.”***

The words of our verse today are the last sentences Paul wrote in **1 Timothy**. Timothy was much younger than Paul. He was a preacher, and at the time of this letter, he was in the city of Ephesus, preaching there. Ephesus had been a hot bed of issues. Paul said that he “fought the wild beasts at Ephesus,” referring not to animals, but the Jewish opposition and trouble that others were giving him.

Throughout this letter to Timothy, Paul encourages the young preacher to hang in there and fight for what is right. Loneliness, discouragement and the enormous uphill battle of trying to change attitudes to be pleasing to Christ are what young preachers face. It’s hard on them. The toll can be devastating. They just want to preach and teach Jesus. They want to convert the lost. They want to build and strengthen the church. So often, they run into stubborn hearts that will not listen, change or be reasoned with. Pushing against a brick wall that will not budge wears a person out. Paul knew these things.

He wants Timothy to guard what has been entrusted to him. Most likely, his role of preaching the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ, but included in this is his faith. He mentions that some would go astray from the faith. In doing this, Timothy is to avoid worldly and empty chatter and the arguments of false knowledge, simply what I call junk. Avoid the junk! Where are those things coming from? First, the opponents of the Gospel, but, also from some of the brethren.

There is a great thought here. We are responsible for guarding our faith. We need to take ownership of our faith. Our faith is fragile. It can be easily discouraged and it can easily be led to believe things that are not so. We can be influenced by so many things. Responsible for your faith. That is a thought we don’t talk about much today.

We hear reports all the time about being responsible for the environment. Recycle, reuse and so forth. Good ideas. We are told to be responsible for our health. Eat well and exercise often is what our doctors tell us. We control much of what happens to our health.

But what about our faith? Are we responsible for it? Are we careful what we are feeding it? This was Paul’s concern to Timothy. Avoid the junk. There are a lot of books that are not worth reading. Why? They don’t help you, and more than that, they mess with your thinking. They plant ideas and suggest things that simply aren’t so. Do you remember how the serpent got to Eve? He didn’t just hand her some fruit and tell her to take a bite. No, he first engaged in a conversation with her, messing with her

mind, changing the way she saw God, and twisting things around so she would be confused, doubting and uncertain. Now all this happened after just one conversation. Do you see that? Guard your faith. Unsound books can mess with your faith. Certain college professors can do the same. Their hatred of Biblical things and their prejudice comes out so strongly, that a young faith can be led astray. And, if Eve got confused after one conversation, think what can happen after one semester with someone whose agenda is to destroy faith.

So guard your faith. How? First, be careful what you allow into your mind and heart. You can't stop all the junk on the outside, but you determine what comes on the inside. Don't be afraid to be a bit weird. Second, build your faith. That comes with spending time with the word of God. In Romans we find, "Faith comes by hearing the word of God." Thirdly, fight off the things that will chip away at your faith. Fourth, surround yourself with faith building tools and people. Guard, strengthen and protect.....it's up to you!

Your faith is what will get you through the storms, if you have taken care of it. Your faith is what will give you assurance and confidence, if it remains strong. Your faith will motivate you, challenge you and keep you going when you don't feel like it. Your faith will allow you to see God some day. So protect it. Watch it. Feed it. Guard it. Use it.

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