

I think it is clear through all of these examples that Paul is concerned about Timothy being sober-minded. He doesn't want distractions, sin, foolishness, unnecessary guilt and the wickedness and worries of the world to come in and throw Timothy off course. Rather, Timothy needs to remain steady, clear-minded, unhindered, self-controlled and encouraged by God's grace. We will see next week what this sober-mindedness will help us to accomplish, but for now let's consider these questions:

What in your life is distracting you?

What is causing you to be unsteady in your walk with Christ?

If you would examine your life closely, your thoughts and actions, what would be quickly visible as sinful and destructive?

We are challenged here to *always* be sober-minded. We need to be aware of what we think and do. We need to be living lives that are surrendered to Christ at all times. This isn't just on Sundays or when others are watching. If we are true Christians, we have been given life in Jesus. He has granted us a free gift of His grace. We can do nothing to earn our salvation.

The idea of being watchful and alert is not to gain something new, rather it is the means to protect what we already have. The world, our flesh and Satan will try whatever, whenever and however necessary to throw us off course. If we stay alert, we can stay away from sinful thoughts and behaviors. We can discern and dismantle the foolish and ignorant doctrine or beliefs that we come across. In short, if we are sober we can Fight the Fight.

Come back next week and learn more about what this looks like.

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*Week One*

*As for you, always be sober-minded,  
endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist,  
fulfill your ministry. 2 Timothy 4:5*

At the end of this last letter to his young student Timothy, Paul gives a great statement that summarizes the main themes he has been teaching. This statement (4:5) brings a clear focus for Timothy to understand, something that challenges every part of life. This was a blessing to Timothy and it is for us as well.

We will look at this in three parts: always be sober-minded, endure suffering and do the work of an evangelist. All three together achieve the last line of the verse: fulfill your ministry. This week we will look at part one.

### *Always Be Sober-Minded:*

The word used here for *sober-minded* literally means to “be steady” or “clear-headed”. When we think of someone who is drunk from the misuse of alcohol, we think of someone who can’t stand up well or walk in a straight line. Someone who is drunk usually isn’t clear headed or capable of self-control in words or actions. Their judgement is impaired and can be a danger (especially in driving) to themselves and to others.

To be sober is to be the opposite of all of that. Someone who is sober has self-control, they can think straight, they are aware of their surroundings and of themselves. A sober person can help if not even protect the people around him from harm (perhaps from drunk people).

So, is Paul asking Timothy here to stay away from drinking alcohol? No. The New Testament writers often use this kind of imagery to communicate the idea of being watchful and alert. We can see this in 1 Thes. 5:6, 1 Peter 4:7 and 1 Peter 5:8. We can see another helpful parallel in a passage from the first letter to Timothy:

*Watch your life and doctrine closely. 1 Timothy 4:16*

Paul is challenging Timothy to be alert, to be watchful, to be aware of what is going on in his mind, what he is thinking and believing.

This is a dominant theme in the whole book of 2 Timothy. Read through these passages and make a note about how they relate to being *sober-minded*:

1:3

1:7

2:4

2:5

2:14

2:16

2:22-23

3:1-5

4:1-4