

Paul H. Dixon: For my concluding message in this academic year, I would like for you to take your Bibles and turn to the book of 1 Timothy 5. I would entitle this message A Charge for the Summer of 1981. I am preaching from the epistle of a man who is in the habit of giving charges. It is interesting how frequently the Apostle Paul would introduce a section of scripture with I charge thee.

And it's interesting also that as we look at 1 Timothy, we are reminded of the great heart the apostle had for young people. Paul loved young people. He believed in young people. In fact, it disturbed Paul when other people somehow did not have that same vision for youth he had. In 1 Timothy 4:12 he says to this young disciple, Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth." Don't you let any other preacher, don't you let any other person in the community or the congregation, despise your youth. But be an example of the believers in word and conversation in love and spirit and faith and purity.

Here at Cedarville College, we believe in young people. That is why more than 150 of us are investing our lives in you. If we were to poll the administrators, the faculty, the staff. I am confident every single one of them would tell you, "We are not here for money." We are not here for any special recognition. We are here because we love you, and we believe in you and what God is going to do through you. We believe this is the best way to invest our lives.

God has always used young people. One of my fascinating studies has been the people who died and accomplished great things for God before they were 35. Some of the great saints. The David Brainards, the Robert Murray McChyenes, the Jim Elliots and many others. Their lives were over when they were in their twenties, but oh what they accomplished in their youth.

There's so much potential wrapped up in every single one of you. This summer, that potential will either be enhanced or devastated. Many of you will be involved in summer ministries on mission fields, but you are not immune to the attacks of the enemy. Some will be traveling on behalf of the college in travel teams, but you will face trial after trial. Some will be in summer school, but the same problems that the others will face will be yours in the way of temptation. Most will be returning to your homes. Oh, the vast scores of young people who have had their lives to be shipwrecked during the summer months after being at a Christian college like this.

Paul writes to Timothy and gives him some charges that I would like to give to you. He says in 1 Timothy 5:21, I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins. Keep thy self pure.

The first thing I want you to do this morning is look at the passages you must face. Keep thy self pure. Now in the context, it is quite obvious that Paul is saying to Timothy, "Timothy, there are those who are ordaining people who

should not be ordained." In the enthusiasm for reaching a world for Christ and getting people in the ministry, they are laying hands on some who are not ready for the ministry. Now don't you get involved in that kind of sin, in the sins that other men are involved in. Keep yourself pure from that involvement. That's the context. But the Greek word for pure is very closely related to the word holy. And so the application surely must be as Paul taught in other passages of scripture. Yes, keep yourself holy in this regard. But Timothy, keep yourself holy and pure in everything you do.

What more can I say? You will face temptations to compromise your morality. You young ladies and young men will be thrust into environments. You will be thrust into temptations where you cannot only blow the present but blow the future. And as we have reminded you throughout this year as we've considered the family. With all that is happening in our society, it becomes so easy to fall into sexual sin. Keep thyself pure this summer.

If you'll note chapter six, verse 14. He said in verse 13, I give thee charge in the sight of God who quickeneth all things. Another charge to Timothy. And before Jesus Christ who before Pontius Pilate witnessed to good confession. You notice how he gives Timothy a charge? And he always says, "I do this before the Lord Jesus Christ." In chapter five verse 21. And he did it also before the elect angels. And now he does it before Christ who witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate. That thou keep this commandment without spot. Unrebukable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He said in chapter five verse 22, "Keep thyself pure." Here he says, "Keep this commandment without spot." What's he talking about? I'm not sure. He may be referring back to the commandments in verse 11 and 12 where he says, "Flee these things." Follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith. Perhaps that's what he's talking about.

An interesting thought also is that how many times in the epistles, and especially Paul, talks about keeping a commandment. And you don't know what commandment he's talking about. Could it be that he is going back to that commandment? The two great commandments? To love the Lord thy God, and to love thy neighbor as thy self. At any rate, we know that we should keep God's commandments. And we should keep them without blemish, without spot, in their entirety.

And as you go through the summer months, as you're away from some of the influences of Cedarville College that God has used for good. I would challenge you that every day as you get up, pray, "Help me, oh God, to keep your commandments. To obey your word in everything I do."

I've been reading in 1 John. And there's a verse I'd memorized so many years ago and God had used in my life, but I had forgotten. Sad to say. That I would like to share with you just in passing this morning in 1 John 3:22. If you've never

underlined this in your Bible. John said, "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him because we keep his commandments." And that's what I'm talking about this morning. Keeping the commandments without spot.

But look at the last part of the verse. You have answers to prayer, you have power in prayer, because you keep God's commandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight, which obviously are not in the commandments. See, I know what many of you go through. You say, "Well, some of the things I do here at Cedarville College, those are the college's convictions and they aren't mine. And so when I get home I do what I want to." Because I know that. Well, I'd like to suggest to you, is that pleasing in the sight of the Lord? Now only you can answer that. I cannot answer that for you. But everything you do, everything you think, all that you say, your whole lifestyle. Evaluate it not only in the light of thus saith the Lord, but in the light of is this pleasing in the sight of my Lord? That was John's challenge in 1 John 3:22.

We must keep ourselves pure. We must keep the commandments and then 1 Timothy 6:20. Oh Timothy. Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called. One of the great problems Timothy faced were the heretics of the day. The false teachers of the day. And much of Paul's instruction to Timothy was to undergird him. To give him that underpinning so he could survive when others were throwing in the towel in the midst of temptation and persecution. He said, "Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust." It's interesting. This word keep is the Greek word for guard. It is only found four times in the New Testament. It is the one used in 5:22. Guard thyself. Keeping thyself pure. It is also found in 2 Timothy 1:12 and 2 Timothy 1:14.

Young people. Here at Cedarville College, our administrators, our trustees, our faculty, our staff. We are investing our lives because we love you, because we believe in you, but keep that we have committed to your trust. Guard that body of truth as a fundamentalist institution. As an institution that holds to the inerrancy of the word of God. What we have passed on to you in classroom, in chapel, in conference, in small sessions, whatever it is. You have a responsibility to keep it. Don't sacrifice it. Don't compromise it. We believe in discipleship. We believe that what we are teaching you, you will go out and teach that to others. Don't let us down. Don't let your God down most importantly. These are the passages you must face.

Then there are the pressures you must flee. I mentioned them briefly. What will be the things that will be brought to bear upon you to sacrifice your convictions? To fall morally? Well, old girlfriends and boyfriends. Some of you had those you dated and maybe were in love with back at home. Perhaps you've already cut that tie. But you will go back and you will be faced to spend more time with them, and the old fires may start to burn. And some of you know that those kids are unsaved. Some of you know you were dating unsaved. Maybe some of you right now are planning to go home and date an unsaved person.

Others of you know that you've been dating someone who's not strong spiritually, who does not share your convictions, who isn't moving on for the Lord. And if you're not careful, that old girlfriend or that old boyfriend will cause you not only to waste a summer but maybe to waste a life.

Old friends. If you can go back and be with friends and have an impact upon them for Christ, praise the Lord. But if you're going to go back and spend time with friends who are going to zap you and drain you spiritually, then you get a new set of friends. Some family members had a student here at the college. One of my first discipleship groups, back eight years ago I guess, was one with this young man. And he used to come to me. He never graduated. He still has not graduated. I still remember him coming to me and saying, "Brother Dixon, every time I go home. I love my brother, but my brother takes me down the tube spiritually. He challenges everything that I believe. He gets me involved in things. He's older than I am. I've always respected him. I hate to go home in the summertime because I know what's going to happen. I don't even like to go home for Christmas because I know what's going to happen."

Some of you have parents. And you need to undergird yourself so that you can face the temptations, and that's what will come from some family members.

Some of you will be working at places of employment where there will be employers and employees who will put the pressure upon you to sacrifice your conviction and your stand. We've received letters during the summer months from some of our young people who in their honesty have said, "I should not come back for the fall quarter because an employer caught me in a weak moment and caused me to fall morally. I'm heartsick, I'm heartbroken. I've dealt with it before God, but I don't believe I should come back as a student at Cedarville College in the fall quarter." I appreciate the honesty, but oh what a warning. What happened to those young people can happen to you. You are faced with the pressures of employers and employees.

Some of you will be in churches with other young people who are weak and are backsliding and who are compromising. And if you're not careful, you'll be swept into the same thing.

Now I'll be honest with you, what concerns me is that a vast majority of you young people are going home strong. Some of you are going home weak. I sit up here on the platform. I've watched. Even after we made some announcements about chapel behavior and not studying and not talking. And some of you've continued that. I also want you to know we know just about all of you, and we're giving serious consideration now as to whether you should come back in the fall. Some of you will not be invited to come back in the fall. You'll receive a letter this summer that will invite you to stay home. Because we're not convinced that you're making an impact upon this college for Christ, and evidently have no intention of a change of lifestyle or behavior.

Some of you who are weak already and have not taken advantage of all these chapel services and classrooms and conferences have had to offer you. You've made it miserable for your RAs and your PAs and you've gotten by with whatever thing you could get by with. You're going home weak and I fear for you. I would pray that somehow God would do a work of grace this summer in that home that he did not do here at this college that would bring you back fired up for God. With a new attitude and a new dedication for Christ as you return in the fall.

Some of you will go back to old lifestyle. I recall going back after my freshman year of college and having to get rid of a collection of 250 records because God gave me some convictions that those should not be in my life anymore. Some of you have decided, with some help here at this college, that you aren't going to listen to some music. I remember one student last year. I got up after all the students had left and he'd left a record on my lawn with a note pinned to it. He said, "I've always listened to rock music. I still listen to rock music. And I always will listen to rock music." That's really immature young people. A young person who has to make his case by putting a record in the president's lawn with some kind of a note like that. I don't know what he's trying to say. He's not doing anything to me. He's not doing anything to the college. But that attitude of that young person.

Some of you need to go back and deal with those things at home. You need to get rid of some of those things that have filled your life and been so much a part of your lifestyle when you were back there in your home. The pressures you must weigh and the paths you must follow.

What are some helps, some paths, to make you strong and to overcome the temptation and bring you back strong for God as we begin the fall? Your church and your pastor. Young person, when you get home you beat a path to that church and you be there. School is over on Friday. You be there Sunday morning for Sunday School and the morning service. As soon as that morning service is over, go up and say, "Pastor, I'm so glad to be back. What do you want me to do this summer? You want me to work in Vacation Bible School? You want me to work in AWANA? I want to be a part of visitation. Pastor, whatever it is. I want to work with the young people. I've studied evangelism at Cedarville College. If I can help you with the evangelism program. What do you want me to do, Pastor?" You get involved in that church and help that pastor.

And don't you dare go back and try to tell that pastor how to run the church. I know some of you been trying to help us run the college this year, and you've been a great help. But please leave the pastor alone. We understand you. They don't. I have you come in and sit down with me, and I patiently listen to you and I understand that. But please leave the pastor. He's been doing that very well since you've been here, and he can get by without you telling him how to do it. I know that you've had some courses here at the school now, and you're ready to go. But please. Your time will come. He has to answer to God. You just be

positive. Go in there. Don't criticize his ministry. Don't try to compare your church to the chapel service. Don't try to compare his exegesis with George Gardner's. Don't do that. Just go back and be a part of that and be faithful and be positive.

And then every day. Path to follow. To your church and also every day into this book. Don't you allow a day to go by this summer without your private devotion. You get up every morning and you spend time in the word of God, and time communing with the Lord, and allow God to build you up through his word.

And then you want another key, another path that'll bring you back stronger than when you leave? Make you to have the greatest year you've ever had in '81, '82? You spend your summer reaching the lost. You go back home and you try to find unsaved friends. And you go out and you knock on doors and you set up appointments and you take other Christian young people out for lunch or have them over for a hamburger fry. Whatever you can to get them involved in the work of the Lord and winning them for Jesus Christ. These are the paths to follow.

You say, "I can't do it." I know you can't. I know you can't. It's a great thing about scripture. Keep, keep, keep, keep. Those are the charges the apostle Paul gives, and then we go back to the word of God. It says, "Now unto him that is able to keep." Isn't that great? Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling. Able to keep me from falling. We have a responsibility. There are things we must do. But most of all, we cast ourselves upon him who must keep us and who must enable us.

The hour is late. I have to catch a plane and fly to Michigan. Have to be at the airport and the plane takes off in exactly one hour. But I'm not going to close this year without one more time. Don't you laugh now.

I had a girl send me a note the other day. She said, "Brother Dixon, I saw the flower beds out there." Hey, I didn't do that. I had nothing to do with that flower bed. Paul Weir got a raise because of it, but I didn't have anything to do with that flower bed. She said, "I was standing there and all of a sudden it hit me. The truth of that song. Christ is all I need." You keep that before you this summer.

Let's stand together, shall we? Sing it with me. (Singing).

God bless you. Have a great day and a great week of exams and summer.