

High school graduates and their families are reflecting on the milestone achieved. These individuals join everyone else in being enrolled in the School of Lifelong Learning. While some will continue on to a university for higher learning, they might not recognize that the etymology of the word university derives from “uni” meaning one, and “veritas” meaning truth.

Universities originated from the concept that the diversity of study concentrations are part of one reality. What is true in one discipline remains true in another. The Apostle Paul instructed Timothy that the ultimate source of truth, God, required us to be diligent students, devoting time to study and reflect to properly execute our ministries. Our performance in ministries are under evaluation by others and God. To assure we are approved workers and not ashamed workers, we must embrace and develop:

**Competence.** Paul reminded Timothy that he was entrusted by God as a steward with the spiritual treasure of the truths of scripture, to endure hardship as a soldier of Christ, to obey rules to receive earned rewards, and to be diligent as a workman anticipating inspection. God expects us to work for excellence in all we do, and study leads to competence.

**Confidence.** Timothy was timid by nature, but he was reminded by Paul that God gave us not a spirit of fear, but of love and a sound mind. He was to express confidence in his competence in leading the local ministry, because confidence is inspiring, leading to the powerful execution of the purpose God has given him.

**Conviction.** God has given each of us the gifts necessary to work as members of His universal body of believers. We are part of a ministry body, characterized by diversity of gifts, abilities and functions but united in a common purpose to glorify God. The strength of that conviction drives the desire to become better stewards of those gifts by increasing confidence and competence through consistent, ongoing development through study.