

1 Timothy 4:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.

Analysis

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance (πιστὸς ὁ λόγος καὶ πάσης ἀποδοχῆς ἄξιος, pistos ho logos kai pasēs apodochēs axios)—'this saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance.' Pistos means faithful, reliable, trustworthy. Apodochē means acceptance, approval. This formula appears five times in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy 1:15, 3:1, 4:9, 2 Timothy 2:11, Titus 3:8), highlighting especially important truths.

The 'saying' likely refers to verse 8: 'godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of present and future life.' This truth deserves full confidence and universal acceptance—invest in godliness, which benefits both this life and eternity. The formula emphasizes the supreme importance of this principle.

Paul uses this literary device to mark key truths for emphasis and memorization. These 'faithful sayings' were likely early Christian slogans or teaching summaries—pithy statements encapsulating essential doctrines worth remembering and repeating.

Historical Context

In oral teaching cultures, memorable sayings helped preserve and transmit important truths. The 'faithful saying' formula signals: 'Pay special attention—this is core teaching worth memorizing.' These may have been early Christian confessional statements or hymnic lines that churches recited. The formula served both to honor established tradition and to highlight Paul's most crucial points.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Why does Paul use the 'faithful saying' formula—what purpose does it serve?
2. What makes this truth about godliness 'worthy of all acceptance'—why emphasize it?
3. How can we identify and emphasize core truths that deserve special attention today?

Interlinear Text

πιστὸς	ό	λόγος	καὶ	πάσης	ἀποδοχῆς	ἄξιος·
This is a faithful	G3588	saying	and	of all	acceptation	worthy
G4103		G3056	G2532	G3956	G594	G514

Additional Cross-References

1 Timothy 1:15 (Faith): This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.