

## 2 Timothy

### I. Introduction

- A. **2 Timothy 2:1-7** . . . You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. [2] The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. [3] Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. [4] No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. [5] Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. [6] The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops. [7] Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.
- B. Last Sunday we looked at several essential truths related to God being the source of our empowerment and help for growth in godliness, spiritual maturity, Christian ministry, and evangelism.
- C. Today, we are going to look at the importance of helping others learn and grow by passing on what we have learned and know. For practical application purposes, we will apply this exhortation to two distinct groups of teachers and two distinct groups of students.
- D. Prayer

### II. The two groups vital to passing on truth about God and His word

- A. [2] The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful (*trustworthy*) men who will be able to teach others also.
  - 1. This exhortation establishes a teacher/student relationship that is intended to pass on the knowledge and understanding of God and His word in a way that preserves the integrity of what God has revealed about Himself, what He tells us in His word, and how we are to apply these truths to the Christian life. And for the sake of making this exhortation practical, we are going to apply it to two different groups of teachers and two different groups of students.
  - 2. **Identity of the first group of teachers/students:**
    - a. It is vital for the ongoing integrity of the gospel and spiritual health of the church that this first group of **teachers** is made up of those who know God, who are living a godly life according to

what they know, who have a reasonable comprehension of the ways of God, who have a thoughtful and practical understanding of the word of God, and who are able to teach others what they know.

- b. It is equally vital that this first group of **students** is made up of would be or already active pastors, elders, Bible Study leaders, Sunday School teachers, youth group workers, chaplains and the like, who can be trusted to live accordingly and maintain the integrity of the message as they carry on this process by teaching others also.
3. **Identity of the second group of teachers/students:**
- a. In this second group, the **teachers** are the more ordinary believers like us – parents, grand-parents, aunts and uncles, friends, co-workers and the like who have enough influence over those who are younger or less knowledgeable in the ways and word of God to teach them what we know about God, God’s word, and living a godly life.
  - b. The **students** in this second group are our children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, interested young people, and new or newer Christians. These are the ones who need to be taught these things for the sake of their mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being.

B. **First group of teachers/students:** As already stated, this first group of students is made up of pastors, elders, Bible Study leaders, Sunday School teachers, youth group workers, chaplains and the like, who can be trusted to live accordingly and teach others what they know and how to live the Christian life. This is an important group because they are the present and future protectors of the faith, the guardians of the truth, those bearing the greatest responsibility for the ongoing spiritual health of the church, and the ones responsible for explaining the truths and ways of God to the current and next generation of believers.

1. However, properly preparing this group of students for the work set before them requires two things that are difficult to meet.
  - a. The **first requirement** is Godly teachers who **know** the word of God, who **understand** it well enough to apply it to everyday life in meaningful and practical ways, who **live** according to what they know, and who are able to **teach** others in ways they can understand, put into practice, and then take their turn at teaching others also.



- it's power to change them and enable them to live a godly life (**2 Timothy 3:5**).
- a. Paul also warned that the day is coming when church attendees will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to be entertained, they will attend churches and listen to teachers who entertain them rather than teach them the truth they need for knowing God and living a godly life (**2 Timothy 4:3-4**).
  - b. I think we see both these problems plaguing the church today.
4. However, this should not deter us from doing what we can during our life-time to support the process of godly people passing on their knowledge, experience, and spirituality to believers who can be trusted to learn, grow, live accordingly, and one day teach others also. **But what can we do?**
- a. We can acknowledge the problem and care enough about the spiritual well-being of future generations to pray for God to raise up godly teachers and hungry students who will guard the truth and protect the integrity of the message.
  - b. We can identify godly teachers and encourage our young people and newer believers who are committed to taking their faith seriously to seek out these godly teachers, learn from them, and use what they learn to help others.
  - c. And if we get involved in an organized system of religious education – be it in a church or college setting, we can do our part to prevent or at least slow the downward spiral into spiritual mediocrity or outright worldliness.
5. If you need further reasons, keep in mind that the failure to protect the integrity of the message for future generations leaves the church vulnerable to ungodly leadership, imbalanced theology, misapplied doctrines, and misleading or even false teaching.
6. When a church is vulnerable in this way, it often results in naive Christians following leaders who ought not to be leading, listening to teachers who ought not to be teaching, and living a form of Christianity that isn't very Christian.

C. **Second group of teachers/students:** In this second group, the **teachers** are made up of ordinary Christians – like you and me – who have influence in our homes, within our extended family, among our friends, in our neighborhood, work place, and church. Our motivation for passing on what we know about God, His word, and godly living is our **students'** mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being.

1. The Christian life is intended to progress from beginning faith, knowledge, understanding, and godly living **TO** mature faith, advanced knowledge, intimacy with God, and whole-life, whole-hearted godliness.
  - a. This process takes time because there is a lot of information to take in and a lot to learn about applying that information in realistic, practical ways.
  - b. Therefore, those of us who are older and most likely wiser, have a responsibility to pass on what we have learned, experienced, and understand about God, His word, and godly living to those who need to be taught or are still learning.
2. In contrast to the intended progression of the Christian life is the common progression of Christianity as passed down from godly parents to their children, and so on.
  - a. This common progression begins with godly parents who pass on what they believe and know to their children.
  - b. Commonly, their children become serious minded about living a responsible, productive, moral, and religious life – which they pass on to their children (the grand-children).
  - c. Commonly, when the grand-children move into adulthood, many become irregular church attendees or abandon church life altogether. At best, they maintain a glimmer of Christian beliefs and values. And generally, they live a self-serving, self-pleasing life – which is quite a distance from how their grand-parents believed and lived.
3. An historical example of this downward progression can be seen in David, his son Solomon, and Solomon's son, Rehoboam. We also see this downward spiral repeated over and over in the book of Judges.
4. It is probable that God, knowing our propensity to slowly move toward selfishness and sin, exhorted the Israelites to purposefully pass on spiritual truth from one generation to another.
  - a. **Deuteronomy 6:4-7**, “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! [5] You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. [6] These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. [7] You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.”
  - b. However, making this purposeful of an effort does not guarantee the next generation will believe in God and live accordingly. The

reality is, each individual, regardless of what he or she is taught, must want to come to terms with God, must want to see their sinfulness for what it is, must see their need of a savior and their need for direction and help in living a godly life, and must want to put in the effort required to live accordingly.

5. However, those of us who are older Christians, either make it easier or harder for our children to come to faith in God and to want to live a godly life.
  - a. The reality is, we make it easier or harder by how we live, how we deal with the daily affairs of life, how we deal with our children, and what we teach them – through our words and through our behavior.
  - b. Without question, words can be powerful, but so is modeled behavior. If our modeled behavior contradicts our words about God, God’s word, and living a godly life, our children will see us as hypocrites, and that in itself will push them away from wanting to trust in God and live a godly life.
  - c. If our modeled behavior supports our words, they may still rebel and choose the ways of the world over the way of God, but they will see our sincerity and the validation of our words – which in time may call them back to God and godly living.
6. Our efforts as parents is not that of teaching our children theology or giving them the equivalent of a Bible school education.
  - a. Rather, our efforts should focus on exposing them to the truths about God, instilling God’s truths in their mind, and showing them the value of God and importance of godliness for daily life.
  - b. Regardless of the outcome – for that is in their hands and something for which they are responsible – *regardless of the outcome* from teaching them what we know about God and godly living and supporting it by how we live, we will have made a worthy contribution to their mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being – which is for their good and hopefully for the good of those they influence by their words and deeds.

### III. Conclusion

- A. My hope is that both the first group of teachers and students and the second group will be important enough to us to do what we can to ensure they work as intended with the hope of bringing about the intended results – for God’s sake, the sake of the church, the sake of the message, and the sake of our children and grand-children.