

Passing On God's Truth To The Next Generation

2 Timothy 2:1-7

Introduction: ✳Early January 2009 a study was released with the title “Christianity is no longer American’s default faith” (Barna Report, 1-12-09). Observations made from the report:

- The Christian faith is less of a life perspective that challenges the supremacy of individualism as it is a faith being defined through individualism. Americans are increasingly comfortable picking and choosing what they deem to be helpful and accurate theological views and have become comfortable discarding the rest of the teachings in the Bible.
- Growing numbers of people now serve as their own “theologian-in-residence”. Americans are embracing an unpredictable and contradictory body of beliefs. Millions of people who consider themselves to be Christian now believe that the Bible is totally accurate in all of the lessons it teaches and at the same time they believe Jesus Christ sinned. Millions also contend that they will experience eternal salvation because they confessed their sins and accepted Christ as their Savior, but they also believe that a person can do enough good works to earn eternal salvation.
- There is now an abundance of unique worldviews based on personal combinations of theology drawn from a smattering of world religions such as Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, and Islam as well as secularism.
- Faith, of whatever variety, is increasingly viral rather than pedagogical. With people spending less time reading the Bible, and becoming less engaged in activities that deepen their biblical literacy, faith views are more often adopted on the basis of dialogue, self-reflection, and observation than teaching. Feelings and emotions now

play a significant role in the development of people's faith views – in many cases, much more significant than information-based exercises such as listening to preaching and participating in Bible study.

- Mark Driscoll is edgy but correct: The mainstream church has transformed the biblical Jesus into “ a Richard Simmons, hippie queer Christ, a neutered and limp-wristed popular sky fairy of pop culture that... would never talk about sin or send anyone to hell.” (*N.Y. Times*, “Who Would Jesus Smack Down,” 1-6-09).
- The point is this: “we are losing the truth. We are not passing on God's truth.” So, what will we do about it?
- Paul, writing from prison, in the last days of his life had the same concern. He challenges Timothy and he challenges us with 4 bold images and 4 striking commands, giving us a strategy for our churches and for our families as to how we can pass on God's truth to the next generation. Bottom line: there are hardships & hard work in passing on the truth, but the investment pays rich spiritual dividends.

I. Have the Dedication of a Teacher. 2:1-2

- * You is emphatic.
- * Therefore: in light of the positive example of 1:16 (Onesiphorous) and the negative examples of 1:15 (Phygellus and Hermogenes).
- * My son – tender affection. Possibly indicates Paul led him to Christ.
- * Paul provides a positive word of encouragement for Timothy to endure, persevere, stay with it. Don't give up in doing the right thing. It is never too late to do the right thing and it is always right to do the right thing.

1) Know where to stand. 2:1

- ✳ Be strong (pre. imp.) – timid Timmy needed to be challenged to be a man; to play the man!
- ✳ In the grace that is in Christ (in the sphere or world of grace).
- ✳ Saved by grace/serve by grace that is in Christ. Grace gets us going and keeps us going. Here is our strength which we draw on (cf. Phil 4:13).
- ✳ Paul says, “don’t just do something, stand there!” Stay rooted and connected to Jesus! There is an awesome supply of grace.

2) Know what to share. 2:2

- ✳ Commit – to place in another’s trust or care for safe keeping.
- ✳ You cannot tell others what you do not know yourself.
- ✳ “The things” of v. 2 refer to “the pattern of sound words” in 1:13 and “the good thing of 1:14” (Read 1:13-14).
- ✳ Stephen Olford: “Educating comes thru learning and living the scripture. There are no shortcuts to this.”
- ✳ Paul says guard the deposit of biblical truth, make it your own, and then pass it on.

3) Know who to send. 2:2

- ✳ Teachers are responsible to reproduce themselves. Our goal in life is to be a teacher of teachers of teachers of teachers!
- ✳ You will know if you have been successful by what you leave behind. We fail in life if we do not reproduce.
- ✳ We have a spiritual, divine mandate to pass on the spiritual baton.

- * Note the “spiritual chain” of 4 generations: Paul→Timothy→Faithful men→others. Praise God that “living chain of truth” has extended thru the centuries to you and me. It is now our responsibility to pass it on.
- * What will be your legacy?

II. Have the Devotion of a Soldier. 2:3-4

- * Paul was fond of military metaphors and images (2 Cor 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-17; Phil 2:25; 1 Tim 1:18; Philemon 2).
- * Here is the call to faithful endurance even when you suffer.
- * Here is the call to know your true enemies.

Eph 2:1-3 identifies the world, Satan and the flesh (sin nature)

1 John 2:16 speaks of the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride

1 & 2 Timothy highlight false teachers who deny the gospel and

Jude 3 those who reject the faith once and for all delivered to the saints.

1) You are commissioned to participate in a conflict. 2:3

- * Endure (pre. imp.) – “join with us in suffering” is a better translation (cf 1:8)
- * Teaching the truth is a battle. It is a war. There will be conflict, opposition and suffering. Paul will remind us in 3:12, “all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”
- * The Christian life is no place for sissy’s, whinny’s or wimps!

2) You are called to please Christ. 2:4

- * Paul calls us to be heavenly minded (Col. 3:1-2) and single-minded.
- * The issue is one of priorities (cf Col. 1:18). We cannot get wrapped up with the affairs of this life to such an extent that we lose sight of our command-in-chief.

- ✧ Distraction is one of the devils favorite devices.
- ✧ All that matters in life is that you please Jesus. (Gal. 1:10)
- ✧ In your service as a soldier of the cross, a soldier of Christ, are you loyal, faithful, single-minded, devoted to one general?
- ✧ Köstenberger: “the battle for human souls demands undivided attention; a half hearted effort will not do (*EBC*, vol. 12, 574).
- ✧ Kent Hughes: “Such a life is not safe, but it is glorious” (p. 197).

III. **Have the Discipline of an Athlete. 2:5**

- ✧ The Bible is also fond of athletic images
 - Boxing (1 Cor 9:26; 2 Cor 4:9; 2 Tim 4:7)
 - Wrestling (Eph 6:12)
 - Running (Heb 12:1)
- ✧ Here the idea of rigorous training in full discipline is in view. Spiritual “two-a-days” captures something of the idea Paul has in mind.

1) **Get into the contest.**

- ✧ And also make a connection to vs. 3-4.
- ✧ No place for sideline spectators.
- ✧ Get off the bench and get into the game.
- ✧ No one in the Christian life is called to sit and watch. No one!
- ✧ Do you play spiritual chess/checkers or football/rugby?!

2) **Go for the gold.**

- ✧ We play to win. We fight for victory! Actually, we fight from victory!!!
- ✧ Crown is *stephanos* not *diadema*.

3) **Play by the rules.**

- ✳ It is not enough to start well. It is imperative that we finish well. Spiritual compromise, spiritual cheating, will cause you to quit. It may even get you disqualified.
- ✳ 1 Cor 9:27 says, “But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”
- ✳ The great NFL coach of the Green Bay Packers, Vince Lombardi said, “fatigue makes cowards of us all!”
- ✳ Spiritual training may be routine, trying, and tedious, but it will reap a reward.

IV. **Have the Diligence of a Farmer.** 2:6-7

- ✳ Ill. My granddaddy Gallaway as a famer and the hard work it involved.
- ✳ Unlike the gifted teacher, decorated soldier or victorious athlete, the life of a farmer does not involve much glamour, prestige or recognition. It involves early and long hours that go unnoticed, constant toil, regular disappointments, patience and even boredom. His reward is simply a share of the harvest. But, if that harvest happens to be your children and grandchildren, sons and daughters in ministry and on the mission field it will be more than enough.

1) **Accept the requirement of hard work.** 2:6

- ✳ Spiritual laziness is a deadly disease when it comes to passing on the truth.
- ✳ We must come to grips with the fact that living and growing as a Christian is just plain hard work. It takes energy, investment and time like your marriage and your family; like anything of real value in life.

2) **Anticipate the reward of heavenly wisdom.** 2:7

- * Consider (pre. imp.) Think this over.
- * 1) Find teachable students, 2) endure hardship and suffering for the Captain of your salvation (Heb. 2:10), 3) exercise and compete with the goal in mind and 4) work hard day in and day out. God will give you insight into the wisdom of pursuing such a life for His glory and the good of others.

Conclusion:

- * *Paraphrase.* So then, as others have failed me, I turn to you to whom I have a right to appeal, such as I had not to Onesiphorus, as you are my own child in the faith—and I bid you to realize constantly the strength which is yours in virtue of the grace given you through your union with Christ Jesus. In that strength, Come to me and, before you come, hand over the truths which you heard from me, in the presence of many witnesses, to men on whom you can rely as being of ability enough to train other in their turn. Then come and take your share of suffering as a true soldier in the army of Christ Jesus: now every soldier hopes to please his general and, therefore, while on active service does not tie himself up with business affairs: so, too, an athlete hopes to win the prize, but he cannot win it unless he observes to the end the rules of the contest: in the same way a farmer hopes to take his share first of the fruits of the ground, but he must work hard for it. Think over the way in which this applies to you: for the Lord is ready to give you discernment in all things.
- * Charles Spurgeon: “If you do not wish to be full of regrets when you are forced to lie still, work while you can. If you desire to make a sickbed as soft as it can be, do not stuff it with mournful reflections that you wasted time when you were in health and strength.”

- * New Testament scholar C. K. Barrett: “Beyond warfare is victory, beyond athletic effort a prize, beyond agricultural labor a crop.”
- * Galatians 6:9 is a wonderful reminder to keep close at hand, “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season, we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”