

Note: Paul knows he is about to die and he wants Timothy to be prepared to lead the church after he is gone, sort of like final instructions.

I. Be strong in the grace provided by Jesus. (1-7) *Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.* This letter is considered a Pastoral epistle so Paul is saying Timothy rely on grace to provide your strength. Grace allows you to come to the throne of grace through prayer. It provides the inner strength to renew the inner man daily no matter what the outward circumstances are and it provides the strength to keep serving. Sometimes I complain to God that he has me teaching 4 Bible studies each week, has me preach at addiction recovery centers, each Sunday two messages and some three; not to mention weddings, funerals, and hospital visits. Then he directs me to read about John Wesley. *John Wesley provides a good example. He travelled the roads of England on horseback for fifty years as a messenger of the heavenly King. He would preach five or six times on each day's journey, was in danger from highwaymen, was attacked by angry mobs, was always poor, and had the pulpits of the established church closed against him.*¹ **Peter Williams, *Opening up 2 Timothy*, Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2007), 38.**

II. Timothy is instructed to train someone to continue the work. *And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.* Paul says to Timothy make sure to train folks in the Word so they will be able to train others. That is how the good news will survive. A little while ago I told people I was praying for my replacement. Some folks were happy because they thought I was retiring. God knows who is going to replace me and he will let me know when they are here. I would like to mentor them. In the meantime I am sharing and teaching everything God shows me to you.

III. Paul uses metaphors to describe the servants in the church.

1. We are to be like soldiers. *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.* Enduring hardness can be suffering for the cause of Christ. Most people who I have talked to you fought in wars described it as horrible. You see things you wish you did not see. As a pastor you are called to experience pain with people who you love. People come to you to solve life problems and they are looking to you as their last hope. Of course we direct them to Jesus but being the human mechanism God uses to reach them doesn't mean you don't agonize with them. Remember Paul gave a long list of things he had suffered in the ministries and he included the daily ministration of the church along with being beaten with a whip. Guess what folks, Pastors who love their flock are hurt constantly by constant complaining and criticism. We take it personal because it is personal. Paul tells Timothy and us that is part of being a soldier. Endure the hardness if it is persecution or gossip or even the many trials suffered by Paul. A soldier is focused and devoted to whom he is fighting for. Notice it says the soldier is not to get entangled with the affairs of this life. **Hebrews 12:1 (KJV 1900)** *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,* Let us lay aside the weight which distracts us from being a soldier.

2. We are to be as disciplined athletes. *And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.* This is the picture of the athlete who practices hard and plays by the rules. **Dr. McGee writes:** He spoke of the Christian life as being a racecourse, and he said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14). Paul also said that he wanted to keep his body under control (see 1 Cor. 9:24-27). Paul's goal was to run the Christian race in such a way that the One who is at the end of the race—the Lord Jesus—would be able to reward him and be able to say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant"

3. The Christian is like the farmer. *The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.* *Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.* There are two thoughts to consider:

1. The farmer labors to produce fruit in the field. Part of our responsibility is to share the Bible with folks to plant seed and to take care of the seed entrusted to us. I am reminded of the parable of the sower. **Matthew 13:8-9;23** But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear....But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. How are we to be partakers of the word and how are we to consider what we have learned?

A. Hear the Word (Romans 10:17) So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Hearing the truth from godly pastors and teachers helps us to learn the truth about Gods Word and stimulates our minds to want more.

B. Read the Word (Revelation 1:3) Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand Reading gives us an overall picture of how Gods plan is unfolding in this world. It is both an instruction manual on how to live and a love letter from one who loves us deeply.

C. Study the Word (Acts 17:11) These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so This a verse about the Berean Christians. They were eager to learn and after they heard the word they checked it out. This is where you really start to grow. God begins to reveal more and more truth to you. Your study often will lead you to truths you were not looking for. This is a heart which says to God I don't have enough of you. I want more. Sunday school and Wednesday night bible study is designed to encourage study. So are these notes you've been getting on Sunday.

D. Memorize the Word (Psalm 119:11) Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. This is particularly helpful in spiritual warfare. You remember when Jesus was tempted by Satan he quoted scripture. Memorize passages concerning things you have problems with. The Word in our hearts will come to our minds and keep out of a lot of trouble if we listen.

E. Meditate on the Word (Psalm 1:2-3) But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. ³ And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither ; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. This is where you think about it. Try to find ways to apply it to your lives. If you do those five things you are going to good soil ready to receive the word and be used by God. But I have one more.

F. You must be a doer of the Word (James 1:22) But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own self. When you live out what God teaches you through His word then your life will produce fruit for the kingdom.

2. The farmer receives a great blessing for sowing the seed. There is such a joy when God reveals the truth to you. The other day one of the members of my prayer warriors Bible study says this is great stuff where did you get all this. I was able to say from God. What a blessing it is to be a vessel that God chooses to use to share his word. **2 Corinthians 4:5-10** For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. God use human vessels to shine light in a world of darkness. He makes us see His power, His glory as He still is in the business of changing the hearts of folks through the power of the cross and the glory of the resurrection.