

The Challenge through Discipleship

2 Timothy 1: 12-14

As we consider discipleship, and our responsibility to follow Christ while investing in others, the Lord Himself stands as the great example. He was fully surrendered to the Father's will and spent much of His time investing in the twelve. With the exception of Christ, none model discipleship better than the apostle Paul. He lived his life in complete surrender to the Lord and committed the majority of his time investing in others. Timothy benefited greatly by being discipled in the faith by Paul. As a young pastor, the insight and instruction of Paul were invaluable to him.

Our text today reveals the essence of discipleship, that one on one instruction and guidance by a mature saint, investing in the life of a younger believer. Paul wrote this letter to instruct and encourage Timothy in his ministry efforts. As we strive to become genuine disciples of Christ, while seeking to disciple others, the words of Paul are of great benefit to us as well. Although written thousands of years ago, the truth they reveal has not changed. Let's examine the [instruction](#) of Paul to young Timothy as we consider: [The Challenge through Discipleship](#).

I. The Authority behind Us (12) – [For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.](#) This is a favorite verse of mine because it reveals the power of Christ that supports us throughout life. Paul well understood the authority that backed him and all who follow the Lord. Consider:

A. The Surrender (12a) – [For the which cause I also suffer these things.](#) What exactly is Paul speaking of here? Which things motivated him to endure suffering? He speaks of his glorious salvation by the grace of God, the plan of God to use him as a preacher of the Gospel, and the eternal life guaranteed in Christ. When he considered all he had received, he gladly surrendered his life to Christ. He wanted Timothy to consider these provisions as well.

- While we are not apostles, and all are not preachers, every believer has been saved by grace, called to a life of service, and guaranteed eternal life. If that doesn't motivate a life of surrender, in the face of difficulty, nothing likely will. We are blessed to have the privilege to serve Christ. This is not a burden, but a glorious blessing! What an honor to serve the King!

B. The Stability (12b) – [nevertheless I am not ashamed.](#) While some viewed Paul's sufferings as a means of reproach, he declared that he was not ashamed of the life he lived or the difficulties he endured for Christ. His commitment to Christ would not change due to sufferings. Others may

have considered his struggles less than appealing, but he had given his life to the cause of Christ and he remained steadfast in the faith. [Rom.1:16 – For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.](#)

[Rom.5:5 – And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.](#)

- The world views the cross and the Gospel as a reproach to modern society. If you are committed to standing for the Lord and following Him, you might as well expect ridicule. We simply don't fit the world's mold. That is okay with me. Genuine disciples, those who are committed to Christ and impacting the lives of others, are not ashamed of the Lord or His Gospel. He endured unimaginable shame on our behalf as He hung naked on the cross, the sinless Savior bearing the judgment and wrath of God for sin. How could I possibly be ashamed of Him?

C. The Sovereignty (12c) – [for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.](#) Paul encouraged Timothy to consider the Lord they served. They were not serving a “has been” or one who attained popularity and influence only to fail miserably. They were not serving the ideals or philosophy of a dead man. They served the risen Christ, conqueror of sin and death, giver of eternal life, the sovereign of the universe, and coming King. Resting in the sovereignty of Christ offered great assurance.

- Cultures continually change. Morals and accepted practices are influenced by the dictates of society. We continue to live in a world that refuses to embrace the Gospel and submit to Christ. While it may appear that we are outnumbered, we have the sovereign Lord working on our behalf. He ascended back to the Father, where He is now seated making intercession for us. There is an appointed time that He will come again for the church. Our world continues its moral decline, but we can rest in whom we have believed.

D. The Security (12c) – [for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.](#) Paul did not rest in his strength or wisdom. He was not depending on human ability to provide in his current ministry or eternal destiny. He had believed in Christ, the risen, living Lord, and he had no doubt that the Lord was more than able to offer current provision and grant eternal life. He was secure in Christ.

- This is key to discipleship and the entirety of our Christian experience. We must reach the place where we rest solely in Christ. Apart from Him I have no ability; I have no message to share. I have no hope for the future. But in Him, I have strength, wisdom, provision, and security. I know whom I have believed, and I am confident that His Word is sure. He guides us here and He is now preparing a place for our eternity. Hallelujah!

II. The Aspiration before Us (13) – **Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.** Here Paul instructs Timothy of remaining motivated and pressing forward in ministry. Consider:

A. The Charge (13a) – **Hold fast the form of sound words...** He charges Timothy to remain committed to the Word of God, the sound word he had received. As a minister of the Gospel, the Word was to be his guide. His life and ministry must be formed and molded by the Word or he would have no spiritual significance.

- As we consider discipleship, this truth must be considered and heeded. One cannot disciple another apart from developing a lasting and trusting relationship, but developing a relationship is not enough. If we never share the Word and study the Scriptures together, in an effort to mature spiritually, we have done nothing more than develop a friendship. Friendships are great, but discipleship is the goal. Discipleship must involve studying the Scriptures together.

B. The Context (13b) – **Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me.** The Holy Spirit had given Paul an in depth knowledge of the Gospel. Paul urged Timothy to hold fast to the truths of the Gospel. I don't think Paul is in any way minimizing other portions of Scripture, but seeking to ensure Timothy remained faithful to the Word and instilled the Gospel within those he ministered. He would never be an effective preacher if he failed to exalt the Gospel of Christ.

- As disciples seeking to disciple others, we must focus on the priority: the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There are many curriculums one can chose; and many of them are great, but we cannot overlook or minimize the Gospel. Effective discipleship will be centered on the Word of God and the Gospel in particular. It is the Gospel that transforms at salvation and sanctifies as we grow. If we aren't exalting Christ and challenging others to become more like Him, we are not effective disciples.

C. The Caution (13c) – **Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.** Paul would never urge compromise on biblical doctrine, but he cautioned Timothy to approach every ministry opportunity in the faith and love of Christ Jesus. He would be dealing with those who were raised in pagan practices. Many of them would continue to struggle with their past. Some would have difficulty grasping the truths of the Gospel, maturing slower than others. While being firm in his stand, he must also be patient and compassionate.

- Our discipleship efforts must be rooted and grounded in sound, biblical doctrine, but we too must operate in the faith and love of Christ. That is the purpose of discipleship, bringing an

immature believer to a better understanding of the faith. This will require much patience, love, and prayer. Those you chose to mentor may not grasp the truths of God's Word as quickly as others. They may continue to struggle with sin in their life. These issues are certainly no reason to abandon your efforts. In fact, they confirm the need for continued discipleship. None of us reached the level of spiritual maturity we currently possess overnight, and we can't expect that of others.

III. The Ability within Us (14) – [That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.](#) Finally Paul shares the ability every believer possesses in regard to being an effective disciple while discipling others. Consider:

A. The Gift (14a) – Paul refers to that good thing that was committed to Timothy. He was a recipient of salvation. He had heard and received the Gospel. He possessed this marvelous gift of grace within. We know we can't share what we don't have, but every believer possesses the truth of the Gospel. We have the privilege and responsibility to share that which we have received with those who have yet to receive it. We also must seek to share what we have learned following salvation with those who are yet immature in the faith. We were given in order to share!

B. The Guidance (14b) – [That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.](#) Timothy was charged to guard his faith and invest in others. This is impossible through mere human ability. Thankfully we are not alone. The Spirit dwells within and He will guide us in all truth. He will provide the courage to stand, the wisdom to share, and the compassion to invest in others. Our efforts to serve the Lord must rely on the guidance and provision of the Spirit.

- He abides within every believer, but often our lives are not lived in such a way that allows Him to lead. Effective disciples must strive to live pure lives to avoid grieving the Spirit. We must depend upon Him to guide our thoughts and work in the hearts of those we are trying to disciple. Discipleship will produce little, if any fruit, apart from the Spirit.

Conclusion: Paul offered a great example of discipleship. He provided valuable insight in this passage. We must maintain a proper perspective while seeking to serve the Lord and invest in others. I am convinced the Lord desires each of us to become a genuine disciple who will make other disciples. Are you committed to serving the Lord and investing in others? Are there needs or concerns in your life? One cannot follow the Lord apart from salvation. If you are unsaved, come to Christ, repent of sin, receive Him by faith, and begin a new and wonderful journey in Christ.