



Teaching God's Word to Train Disciples

Fellowship BIBLE CHURCH

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Raise your hand if you remember a craft that changed your life? Crafts can be fun but rarely are they life changing.

Raise your hand if you remember a television program or a movie that changed your life?

Raise your hand if you recall a special trip that transformed you into a different person.

Raise your hand if your most-life changing experience came through some other person. It could have been a teacher or a pastor or a friend.

faith. One pastor entitled his sermon on this passage as "Timely Tips for Troublesome Times from a Transformed Tentmaker to Timid Tim." As we study this book, we want to listen closely to what Paul is telling Timothy so that we can use those things in our lives. We want to read this letter as if it were written directly to us.

1. DON'T BE AFRAID

2 Timothy 1:7, "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline."

When God created the human race, he didn't create it to be fearful. God created people to have power, love and a sound mind. Fear is an intruder that came about because of sin.

2. DON'T BE ASHAMED

It's safe to say that we all have embarrassing moments that we'd like to forget.

A woman told of a time when she was in high school and musical car horns were popular. Her mother's deluxe car horn model played the first line of 48 different songs. But when it was extremely cold, the horn sometimes developed a short and played on its own. She had urged her mother to take the horn out of the car, but her mother had refused to get rid of it. Then on a fateful cold winter afternoon the family was attending a graveside funeral service for an elderly aunt. As they were pulling out of the cemetery, the horn blared the first stanza of "We're In The Money." The horn was never heard again.

Embarrassing things will happen to us. The point of the Scripture is that we should never be embarrassed to stand strong for the Lord. We live in a world of unbelievers where people have all kinds of crazy ideas about what Christians are and about what they do. The media tries to make Bible believing Christians look foolish. Movies often make fun of Chris-

The Last Words of the Apostle Paul

2 Timothy

Part 3: Instructions to Timothy

As we think about the defining moments of our life most often they center on a person. Ask me my story and I will tell you about a man who took a special interest in me after I was saved and taught me much about how to live the Christian life. Ask me, and I will tell you my story of listening to hundreds of sermons by a well-known bible teacher.

Much of who we are is the result of the investment of others, and that is what the book of 2 Timothy is all about. The book of 2 Timothy records for us the last words of the Apostle Paul to his young disciple, Timothy. When Paul wrote the book, he had been dumped into a foul dungeon in Rome called Mamertine prison and was due to be executed at any time. Things could not be going much worse, but that did not stop him from serving god. In his last days, he was passing on insights to his son in the

tians, and people in general often think of believers as judgmental people who are against everything and who never do the really fun things. Paul says to Timothy words we need to hear.

2 Timothy 1:8a, "So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner."

Paul is saying, "Don't be ashamed to let people know you are a Christian. Spread the word about what you believe and don't be embarrassed to identify with other believers who are faithfully serving God. Boldness is defined as "unashamed freedom of speech," and that's what God wants us to have—"unashamed freedom of speech."

The psalm writer said, "I will speak of your statutes before kings and will not be put to shame" (Ps. 119:46).

How about you? Do you freely speak to unbelievers about your faith in God? When sitting in a group, are you willing to bring God into the conversation?

3. BE WILLING TO SUFFER

2 Timothy 2:8b, "But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God,"

When Paul talked to Timothy about suffering for the gospel, he was talking about something that was very serious. Nero, the fifth Roman emperor was a brutal and ruthless person. He killed his own mother, his chief advisers Seneca and Burrus, and many of the nobility to seize their fortunes. For fun, he would enjoy combat between gladiators, and the gory spectacle of prisoners thrown to wild beasts. In a.d. 64, fire destroyed a large part of Rome. Suspected of ordering the fire himself (to make room for a new palace), Nero deflected blame by accusing the Christians. That is when a terrible persecution broke out against the church, with torture, executions, and Coliseum entertainment.

That makes the suffering we sometimes go through look very small. When is the last time you saw someone tortured for being a Christian? Being persecuted in any form is not easy, but things that are truly meaningful are usually not easy. Victor Frankle: "Life only has meaning if there is a task, and the more difficult the task, the more meaningful the life."

Jean-Paul Sartre: "You will never find peace and happiness until you are ready to commit yourself to something worth dying for." How willing you are to suffer for Christ reveals the level of your faith.

During the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1900), extreme nationalist Chinese started a campaign of terror against officials of foreign governments, Christian missionaries, and even Chinese Christians. After they surrounded a certain mission station, they sealed all exits except one. They placed a cross in the dirt in front of the opened gate and told the missionaries and students that anyone who walked out and trampled the cross would be spared. According to reports, the first seven students who departed trampled the cross and were sent on their way. The eighth student, a young girl, approached the cross, knelt down, prayed for strength, carefully walked around the cross, and was immediately shot to death. The remaining 92 students, strengthened by that girl's courageous example, also walked around the cross to their deaths. That is real faith.

4. REMEMBER YOU ARE A PART OF AN ETERNAL PLAN

Whether we know it or not, we are all looking for something that has eternity attached to it. That is because nothing done purely for this life will ever give permanent satisfaction. When the song came out years ago, "I can't get no satisfaction," it only stated the heart cry of the whole world apart from God. Lasting satisfaction in life does not come because of riches or power or pleasure. Lasting satisfaction in life comes as you understand that you are part of something that is greater than your own life.

Barbara Walters had an interview with Ted Turner. In the interview she asked him, how does it feel to be so rich?" Turner responded, "It is like holding a paper bag. Everybody sees the bag. Everybody wants the bag. But once you get the bag, you discover that it is empty."

There is a relatively new book out called "the gospel according to the Beatles" that describes the spiritual journey of the Beatles. It is written by a former writer of "Rolling Stone" magazine who has become

a Christian. The book describes all that the Beatles went through to try to find enlightenment and the truth and happiness. For example, as early as 1966, Ringo Starr said, “we have almost anything money can buy, but when you do that, the things that money can buy mean nothing after a time. And you look for something else, a new experience.” A few years later he said, “I still have not found the answer to the question “what is life all about?” John Lennon said, at first, the freedom was great. Then I found out that I wasn’t free. It wasn’t fun anymore.”

We will never really know god and understand Christian living until we understand that we are a part of an eternal plan.

a) God chose us

2 Timothy 2:9b, “who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,”

Ephesians 1:3-4, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.”

When verse four says that god chose us, that truth is what theologians call the doctrine of election, and it means exactly what it says. It means that god chose us. Did we choose god? Yes, but his choice of us precedes our choice of him. The bible tells us that god chose us before the creation of the world. There is a lot of controversy that surrounds this issue, and it is not my intention to go into the controversy now. What I do want to emphasize is the fact that god loves you enough to choose you to be his very own.

When we think about god choosing us, it is easy to get the idea of a “grab bag” kind of thing. A grab bag it’s filled with various items, most of which you cannot see. Usually in that bag, there is something that is worth having mixed in with a lot of other things that you don’t care about having. You buy the bag for the one good thing that is in it. It is easy for us to see ourselves as being a part of a divine “grab bag.” That is, god chose me along with a lot of other people. In the group that I was a part of, there were some really good people that god wanted as his own. God took me as his own simply because I was a part of the bag. Nothing could be any farther away from the truth. The bible tells us that in eternity

past, before anything was created, god existed, and that in his total knowledge of all things that were to come, he saw you as you would one day be, loved you and chose you to be his own.

b) God adopted us

Ephesians 1:4-5, “4For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—

In Roman society, being adopted was a very interesting thing. When someone was adopted, three things happened. First, all records of your prior life were physically obliterated. It was like you had never been born. Adoption in roman society was also permanent. Once you had been adopted, your new family could never unadopt you. Your new family also had to make you an equal heir of the family of riches. They could not distinguish between the biological children and the adopted children. That is what Paul’s readers were thinking when they heard this.

When you are saved, God gives you a new identity. Your prior history is gone which means all sin is removed. You could have been the worst criminal the world had ever seen, yet when you are saved, in God’s eyes, that’s all gone. Next, it means god will never let you go. Have you ever felt a little concerned that God may get so tired of your failures that He might just back off and let you spiritually float away? That will never happen. Once you are in the family, you are in for good. Last, being adopted means that you are on equal ground with any other Christian who has ever lived. There are not different degrees of acceptance in the Christian life by god. The same payment that has been made for the sins of others equally applies to your life. God is your loving father.

5. GLORIFY GOD BY LIVING A HOLY LIFE

2 Timothy 1:9, “9who has saved us and called us to a holy life...”

When you hear the word “holy,” you may have all kinds of pictures running through your mind. You may see a monk in some cathedral scrubbing the floor on his hands and knees. On the other hand you may think of a long list of do’s and don’ts. Many

times our picture of holiness is distorted. The truth is that holiness is conformity to the character of god, and it is something that we are all called to.

One reason for our lack of holiness is the fact that we have been conditioned to take sin too lightly. According to the Bible, there is nothing light about sin. God is grieved by our sin. When god spoke against the various sins in Israel, he said in

Zechariah 8:17, "These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts; 17 do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this," declares the LORD.

Every time we sin, we're doing something that god hates. On the other hand, when you live a holy life, you are showing the world what god looks like. When you go to the office, people ought to see god showing up. When you interact with your family at home, people ought to see godly character. Holiness is an essential part of Christian living. It is that which separates god's people from the people who do not know him. When you live a holy life, you become an object lesson for the world as to what god is like.

6. DEPEND ON GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

There is a little book titled Children's Letters to God. In that book, there is a letter by a fourth or fifth grader. He writes: "Dear God, Our pastor says that you are everywhere, but I don't see you anywhere. How come? Your friend, Harold." That is the way that it is in our lives sometimes. We believe god is everywhere, but we don't seem to see him anywhere. It is at those times that we rest on his faithfulness.

2 Timothy 1:11-12, "And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. 12That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day."

There is a scene in the movie Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, in which Indy's quest is to find the Holy Grail, the original chalice used by Christ at the Last Supper. But in order to prove himself pure in heart, Indy must face life-threatening challenges. In the final challenge, he finds himself teetering on

the brink of a deep, vast chasm. The way across, according to the legends, lies right before him. But he cannot see it. He must step out in faith and trust what his eyes cannot see. So, he steps out and discovers himself standing on a bridge of rock, solid and firm beneath his feet but invisible to the eye.

I've stood on that rock, haven't you? Anyone who's ever turned a loved one over to God, anyone who's ever staked his life on seeking God's will, anyone who's ever sat in a doctor's room and said, "Lord, I'm scared. But I'm turning this over to you knows what it is to step out on that unseen bridge. It comes to us all sooner or later, and it is there that we discover whether or not we really believe in God. Paul had faith in God. That is why he could write, "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."

7. NEVER LET THE WONDER FADE

One of the refreshing things about new Christians is the excitement that they bring to the table concerning the Christian life. It is like the wonder a little child experiences as he goes about discovering the world for the first time. Take a little child to the zoo, and you have just taken him to wonderland. He'll be talking about those animals for days. Take an older person to the zoo, and he will probably be more interested in having a hot dog than seeing the animals. He has lost the wonder, and the same thing can happen to us as believers. We lose the wonder of it all and settle in for a long spiritual nap.

When Paul tells Timothy to fan into flame in the gift of god that is within him, he is saying, "Timothy," don't lose the wonder!

Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is not something that you accidentally fall into. It is something that must be done on purpose, and you have to make the decision to do so every day of your life.