

Session 2

HOW: APPRENTICE

2 Timothy 2:2

Memory Verse

What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

– 2 TIMOTHY 2:2, CSB



How: Apprentice

THEOLOGICAL THEME: Those who receive the gospel are tasked with passing the gospel on to others who will pass the gospel on to others.

For many in Tennessee, the University of Alabama is a great object of scorn, and Nick Saban is something like the “name that shall not be named.” But when we think of multiplying disciples and raising up new leaders, Nick Saban turns out to be a good example.

In addition to the multitude of winning seasons Saban has amassed at Alabama, he’s also managed to create one of the greatest coaching trees in the history of any sport. In recent years, Alabama has become a landing place for disgraced coaches to rebuild their reputation. Alabama has also become a factory, churning out college football head coaches. In 14 years, Alabama has had 8 assistants become head coaches.¹

In other words, Nick Saban appears to understand something about investing in leaders and sending them out to invest in others. You don’t have to like Alabama or Nick Saban, but we would all do well to pay attention to anyone who churns out high-capacity leaders at the rate of Nick Saban.

As we focus on DxD groups within our church, much of the success of this ministry will depend on our ability to identify, train, and deploy new small group leaders who will invest in others.



Who is the greatest “personal discipler” you have ever known?

? What steps would you take to identify a potential apprentice for a DxD group?

? If you aren't already leading a DxD group, what needs to change in your life so that you can begin investing in others intentionally?

Session Summary

Second Timothy is the last letter of Paul that we have in the Bible. It represents a sort of benediction to his ministry. This letter is also gut-wrenchingly honest. He warned Timothy of hard days ahead and even told Timothy of his own struggles after being abandoned by others who claimed to be followers of Jesus.

The focus of this lesson is on investing in other disciples who can then invest in other disciples. But Paul's encouragement to Timothy to pass on the faith was given in the midst of a letter of reassurance. Timothy would face some hard times, but the greatest hope for the spread of the gospel was not found in Timothy alone. Timothy would need co-laborers, just as Paul did, to share the love of Christ.

1. Dig in as a Disciple (2 Tim. 2:2a)

Paul encouraged Timothy to invest in others. He encouraged Timothy to teach “what you have heard from me.” Before Timothy could adequately invest in and train other leaders for the church of Jesus at this early juncture, Timothy needed to know what to teach. A teacher who doesn't know their subject matter cannot be very effective—even if they are committed to the idea and philosophy of teaching. Unless they know the subject, they cannot raise up disciples.

The number one requirement for investing in others as a disciple-maker is that you be a committed disciple. Followers of Jesus must resist the temptation to substitute busyness for

intimacy with Christ. Peter was tasked with being the “rock” upon which the church of Jesus would be built. (See Matt. 16:18.) He would preach the greatest sermon in the history of the church on Pentecost and, according to tradition, he was martyred for his faith by being crucified upside down.

But before Peter became a great preacher and church leader, he was a disciple who denied Jesus. At Jesus’ greatest moment of need, Peter was a faithless coward.

When Jesus re-commissioned Peter to “feed the sheep” of Christ, Jesus had only one question. Jesus didn’t ask Peter how well he could speak, how much money he could give, or how many people he could recruit to a small group meeting.

In John 21, we see the primary requirement of serving Jesus is love for Jesus. If you want to be a disciple who makes disciples, focus first on being a faithful follower of Jesus. Dig in as a disciple. Spend time in God’s Word and in prayer. Worship regularly and be a committed member of your small group. In your commitment to Christ, you will find your greatest training to raise up other leaders in the church.

? How does “busyness” for the gospel compete with intimacy with Christ in your life?

? Read John 21:15-19. How did Peter feel when Jesus asked, “Do you love me?” Why was this question important before Jesus gave Peter the directive to serve?

? Application: How can you affirm other leaders by giving away ministry as Jesus gave ministry to Peter?

2. Invest in a Few (2 Tim. 2:2b)

Timothy was told to take Paul's teaching and commit it to faithful men who would be able to teach others also. In this passage of Scripture, the word we translate as "commit" means to "deposit, to entrust, commit to one's charge."² Timothy wasn't just to throw Paul's teaching at others in a notebook. If Paul were writing in the 21st Century, he wouldn't have encouraged Timothy to text out some podcasts or some YouTube videos.

Timothy was first to select some faithful people. Then, he was to deposit the sacred teaching into their lives and entrust that this deposit of the gospel would yield a fruitful return as these other leaders imitated Paul's and Timothy's lifestyle and teaching.


As we seek to grow our DxD groups, you too will be tasked with finding faithful people and committing the sacred gospel to them for their care and propagation. Believe it or not, one of the greatest challenges may be finding those people.

We encourage and coach our co-leader/apprentice to begin investing in faithful people. A helpful memory device for discernment comes from the Disciplemaker's Handbook. The authors describe the people we're after with the acronym AFTeR: Available, Faithful, Teachable, and Reliable. They are available to us in terms of schedule and life-business; they are faithful to the kingdom of God and the commission to make disciples; they are teachable in that they listen, understand, and attempt our training; they are reliable in that they can be counted upon to show up and invest in the efforts of discipling.³ With good discernment, those faithful people will be able to disciple others.

When you have found those people, it is then your privilege and responsibility to invest in them. You invest in them the same way Paul invested in others. Paul encouraged the Corinthians to grow as disciples by imitating his example (1 Cor. 11:1), and Peter wrote that Jesus taught by example (1 Pet. 2:21). The best way for you to raise up other leaders and commit the gospel to them will be by modeling a Christ-like life before them and inviting them to follow after you.

 Who are your greatest mentors? Why?

 Why can discipleship through mentoring be intimidating?

 Application: What needs to change about your life before you invite others to imitate you?

3. Multiply Your Impact (2 Tim. 2:2b)

Fireworks are not an American invention, but they are certainly an American tradition. Kids, of course, seem to love all kinds of fireworks: throwing poppers, snakes, sparklers, and roman candles. Kids enjoy little fire crackers and m-80s. But the greatest fireworks are those that start small and explode into clouds of fiery excitement.


From cardboard tubes, fuses protrude. With just one small spark, the explosions begin, but it isn't the one explosion that is amazing. The most beautiful and amazing fireworks erupt into the night sky and divide dozens and hundreds of times into smaller explosions of light and color. When that small spark multiplies into thousands of fiery colors, there is joy and excitement.

As a disciple of Jesus, there is no greater joy than in multiplying your impact. But you only multiply your ministry when you are willing to give it away. Timothy was to find "faithful men who will be able to teach others also." Timothy was not commanded to teach everyone. Timothy couldn't teach everyone. But, Timothy could teach a few, who would teach a few, who would then continue the spread of the gospel by teaching a few more.

Peter is the fuse that Jesus lit. At Pentecost, that small spark began to spread like wildfire: an explosion of light penetrating and driving back the darkness of sin. Paul urged Timothy to continue to fan the flame of the gospel. Paul went on to warn Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:1: “Hard times will come.” Paul wasn’t sugarcoating the task ahead. Instead, he gave Timothy the only strategy that would effectively spread the gospel.

 How have you seen the impact of the gospel spreading in your own life and relationships?

 What about in our church?

 Application: How might you begin praying today for God to use you and those close to you to spread the spark of the gospel in your community?

Conclusion

The purpose of this lesson is to cast a vision for disciple-making multiplication in our church. Most of our discipleship to this point has been focused on larger groups of 20-30. But, those groups can become unwieldy. Consider the following scenario:

You have a group of thirty people that you teach the Bible to weekly. You invite one or two individuals from that group to learn how to live godly lives in addition to teaching and leading others to do the same. You and these two new individuals invite along five other individuals so that you have a group of eight. With this new group of eight, you meet regularly to grow, care, and equip BUT

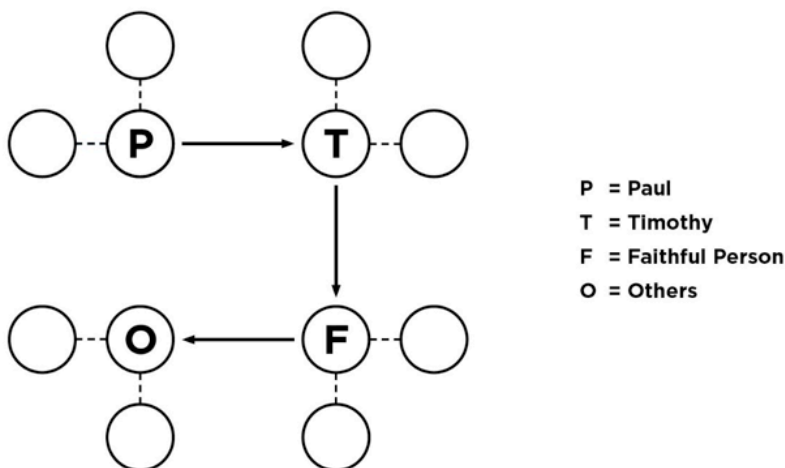
you also debrief/train your apprentice, you serve with this group in the local community, you all volunteer to help preschool ministry at your campus, and you plan for someone to go on a global mission journey or pool money to support a missionary. You each hold each other accountable to put Scripture into practice and to be praying for and having Gospel Conversations regularly. This kind of accountability would be rare, if not impossible, in your thirty-person group.


Paul's encouragement to Timothy was to select a few men he could invest in. We want you to select a few people can invest in. We want you to invest by mentoring and discipling. But then, and this is often the hardest part, we want you to "give away" ministry by sending those disciples out to do the same thing with other people.


These are not easy tasks. After all, Paul wrote to Timothy and encouraged him to essentially entrust the gospel in the hands of other men. We are asking you to identify other potential leaders, invest in those leaders, and then entrust the discipleship care of others to these leaders.


This may seem like a lot of work, and it can be, but the potential is exponential growth. We call it the Timothy Principle and it is best explained in the following diagram:


DXD Timothy Principle



 How can your commitment to Jesus as a disciple trickle down to others?

 What safeguards should you set up in your life to make sure that as you disciple others, you do not neglect your own spiritual health?

 Investing in small groups can create the potential for the development of “cliques” or “favorites.” How can you avoid this perception?

 In what ways can constant group multiplication be uncomfortable? Why is it necessary even if it is uncomfortable?

CHRIST CONNECTION: Jesus founded the church by investing in a few key leaders who would disciple others and spread the gospel through preaching, evangelism, and relationships.

MISSIONAL APPLICATION: The Great Commission will be largely fulfilled one-on-one and in small groups. Most people who come to Christ come as a result of an interaction with a friend, relative, associate, or neighbor.



FOR NEXT WEEK

How: Going

Main Passages

- Mathew 4:18-22; Acts 1:8

Session Outline

1. Go with Power (Acts 1:8a)
2. Go with Direction (Acts 1:8b)
3. Go and Preach the Gospel (Matt. 4:18-22)

Memorize

What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

- 2 Timothy 2:2, CSB

Daily Readings

- Monday - 2 Timothy 2:2
- Tuesday - Mark 1:17
- Wednesday - Matthew 28:19-20
- Thursday - Romans 12:2
- Friday - 1 Corinthians 9:20
- Saturday - 1 Corinthians 11:1

References

¹Tom Layberger, “Steve Sarkisian Was The Eighth Assistant Under Nick Saban At Alabama To Leave For A Head-Coaching Job,” Forbes (Forbes Magazine, January 15, 2021), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tomlayberger/2021/01/15/steve-sarkisian-was-the-eighth-assistant-under-nick-saban-at-alabama-to-leave-for-a-head-coaching-job/?sh=375d9a4d29fa>.

²“G3908 - Paratithēmi - Strong’s Greek Lexicon (KJV),” Blue Letter Bible, accessed April 16, 2021, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G3908&t=KJV>.

³Bobby Harrington and Josh Patrick, *The Disciple-Maker’s Handbook: 7 Elements of a Discipleship Lifestyle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017).