

Session 3

LEADERS WHO MAKE LEADERS

2 Timothy 2:1-26

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




Leaders Who Make Leaders

THEOLOGICAL THEME: In the Christian life, it is important to have people you are pouring into as well as people who are pouring into you. Christ followers should take seriously the charge to develop fellow believers into mature leaders and to live as examples of Christ-centered leadership.

Most people have experience with playing the childhood game, “Follow the Leader.” Remember the fun of having a creative leader you were expected to follow to the tiniest detail to stay in the game? You may have enjoyed the game most when you were at the front thinking of different things to amuse and stretch your followers.

Whatever your favorite role in the game, one thing that is evident from that game and from watching the world around us, people follow leaders. In the age of social media, the idea of being a “follower” is common language. We also have those we follow without clicking any buttons on a screen by virtue of imitating what they do. Leaders have a powerful influence and play an important role in our society.

 As a kid, which role did you like better when playing “Follow the Leader” and why?



What characteristics do strong leaders usually have?

Session Summary

As a spiritual mentor to Timothy, Paul wrote to him about how to be a more effective and godly leader. These instructions to Timothy have practical application for all believers who recognize their need to develop as leaders. It is important to see that we all lead someone and should take the challenges and instructions from Paul seriously.

Leadership can be challenging and draining, so the need for strength is always present. Paul exhorted Timothy to find his strength in the grace of Jesus. Nothing else we look to for strength will give us the power we need to live godly lives. It is vital that we each take responsibility for our own actions and preparation for ministry. We are all called to train up others in the ways we have been trained spiritually so the gospel reaches more people.

1. Make Leaders (2 Timothy 2:1-2)

As a spiritual father and mentor to Timothy, Paul wrote words of encouragement and challenge to his younger friend that have application to us today. We all lead others. No matter where you are in life or what you do, others follow you. Paul's words to Timothy regarding leadership challenge us to also be godly leaders. Further, we follow people, whether intentionally or unintentionally, so these leadership lessons help us identify leaders we should or should not allow influence in our lives.

Knowing Timothy would face difficulties, challenges, and obstacles as he lived out God's call on his life, Paul began this passage with encouragement. If you have lived any amount of time as a Christ follower, you are aware of the need for strength and endurance to stand firm as a believer in this culture, especially as one leading. Paul reminded Timothy where to find strength. He wrote to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. People seek strength in many ways, but the most vital practice Christians can develop is to find strength in Jesus's grace. This is essential and gives us confidence and boldness we can't find anywhere else.


? How is being strengthened by the grace found in Jesus different than seeking strength in other things? Where do you gain strength to lead?

Paul brought the things he had already imparted to Timothy, this likely included lessons given both verbally and in written form. To continue his growth as a leader, Timothy needed to stay focused on the truth he had heard and learned so far. Regardless of your age or the length of time you have followed Jesus, you must remain teachable and strive to be a lifelong learner in matters of faith. Paul knew Timothy needed to be firmly grounded on doctrine so that he could stand firm on truth and not be swayed by the pervasive thoughts of the culture.

? What are three key practices through which you seek spiritual growth?


Paul made clear that the ministry God gave Timothy was not just about him. Timothy was to take what he already knew and entrust it to others. A vital part of living for Christ is pouring into others to continually multiply the number of people trained for ministry and leadership. What has been poured into you should also be poured into those God brings into your life.

Paul instructed Timothy to identify those who were faithful. These words can be applied to any believer who desires to be a godly leader. We should always be looking for those we can pour into and help grow in their own leadership capabilities. Paul instructed Timothy to find others he could train so they would find others to train and so on.

 Application: How can you be more intentional about passing on what you have learned of Christ to those you influence?

2. Stay Focused (2 Timothy 2:14-15)

In a world with many distractions vying for attention, Paul told Timothy to stay focused. Paul charged Timothy keep the main thing the main thing and to remind others to do the same. We can be tempted to get distracted from the point of the gospel, even as we work to promote the gospel.

 What are some things that can distract you from being focused on the gospel?

Many messages, programs, ideas, and agendas can steal our attention or focus. Not all of these are bad things if kept in proper perspective. In these and the surrounding verses, Paul warned against being distracted by endless debate and quarrels with words. While words certainly matter, Paul stressed the need to protect ourselves from getting caught up in debates of personal opinions and losing sight of being an example of Christ. Instead, Paul instructed Timothy to stay focused, work hard, and pay attention to the way he lived.

The work of living for Christ can be tough; it takes diligence and hard work and yet nothing deserves more effort and focus than the eternal work of the gospel. We look to the Lord for approval and not man. Seeking to be popular with people and being faithful to God aren't the same. At times, God's approval will set us in opposition to the approval of man. When faced with a decision between the two, Paul said to seek approval from the Lord. We are also to remember that we seek to minister as those already approved by God because of the work of Jesus and not as those seeking God's approval through our efforts.

? When has obedience to God put you in opposition to other people? How do we find the strength to trust God over the opinions of people, even our own opinions, in those moments?

We should work hard and strive for the approval of the Lord so that when our lives are examined, we have nothing to be embarrassed about. We can offer up our lives as evidence that we take God's Word seriously. When we focus on understanding the Word of God and living it, we follow Paul's instruction to rightly handle the Word of Truth. We must recognize there is a right and wrong way to handle God's Word. Many would teach that any way you interpret Scripture is fine as long as you believe it. But God's Word is to be understood through the Holy Spirit and the whole counsel of Scripture. We do not get to pick and choose what we like or what fits best with our choices. God's Word is true and should never be twisted to justify sin. While we will never get everything perfect, we should strive to know and follow His Word as faithfully as possible.

? **Application:** What needs to change in your life to help you stay focused? Who are you preparing/training to take your current spot in leadership?

3. Prepare Yourself (2 Timothy 2:22-26)

Later in the chapter, Paul got specific about living purely as one who has been equipped for ministry and leadership. He first warned Timothy to flee youthful passions. This can refer to sexual sin, illicit fleshly pleasures, or a desire for fame and fortune. Paul warned Timothy, and us, to not give these temptations any room to take root. He said flee them, refusing to even entertain the thought.

Instead of following these temptations, Paul told Timothy to pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace. Living faithfully is not just about avoiding or taking some things away, it is also about what we choose to pursue, invest in, and put into our lives.

? What is something you need to “put off” and something you need to “put on” for the purpose of godly living?

Lest we think these practices only impact us personally, we must not overlook relationships. We are to do everything we can to be in right relationships with others. Bad interpersonal relationships affect our spiritual walk and the witness we have to the world around us. In seeking to honor God with our lives, we should seek to honor Him in our relationships.

Part of pursuing godly relationships means staying away from endless disputes, arguments, and quarreling. Leaders are not called to pick fights and get into wars with words, but should be more focused on teaching, kindness, patience, and gentleness. When we get these right, we will see the difference it makes to live by God’s plan instead of the ways of the world.

? How have you seen your interpersonal relationships affect your spiritual walk? How does this remind you that following Jesus is meant to impact your entire life and influence?

Anyone who leads others knows it is often necessary to take and stand on truth and even confront another person’s wrong or sinful behavior. Paul said the key in those situations is to confront in humility. The purpose of this approach is to expose one another to the truth and give the opportunity for repentance. As Paul reminded the church in Ephesus, our war is not against our brothers and sisters in Christ, but against Satan who seeks to lead us away from Jesus (Ephesians 6:12). Jesus has already won the victory, and we have the privilege of leading others to live in that victory.

? Application: Where do you need to approach others in humility, kindness, and gentleness for the sake of honoring Jesus in your relationships? How can you use your godly influence to help others become more like Jesus and become leaders?

Conclusion

To reach the world with the gospel, the entire body of Christ must work and grow together. Paul knew this and challenged Timothy to be intentional about training up others who were faithful. We are to do the same thing. Every Christian should have people who are pouring into them as well as people they are pouring into. This is a healthy model of spiritual growth.

Paul challenged Timothy with specific things that apply to us too. To be effective, we need to stay focused and pay attention to our lives and ministry. With many options to distract us from the main thing, it can be easy to lose sight of our godly influence on others. We must be diligent and continually prepare ourselves for faithfulness to God and service in His kingdom.



What threatens to distract you or take your focus off being a godly influence in others' lives?



Who is God calling you to pour into more intentionally? Who do you need to ask to pour into you in intentional ways?

Here's How to Become a Christ-Follower:

Read the following verses and ask after each one: "What does this say to me?"

- **All have sinned:** Romans 3:23 & 1 John 1:8
- **The wages of sin:** Romans 6:23 & John 3:18
- **But while we were sinners, salvation was provided:** Romans 5:8
- **Become a Christ-follower:** Romans 10:9-10 Confess and Believe

Accepting Christ is Just the Beginning:

Next Steps:

- Publicly profess your faith by being baptized (Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 3:21; Romans 6:4).
- Join a church which follows the Bible, where you can grow in your faith through prayer, Bible study and fellowship with other Christians.
- Get involved in groups for encouragement and accountability.
- Begin a daily personal worship experience with God where you study the Bible and pray.
- Share with others what Jesus has done for you. Tell your story (Romans 10:14; Matthew 28:19-20).
- Begin to live for God (Romans 12:1-2, 9-18; James 1:19-27).



FOR NEXT WEEK

Do Your Job

Main Passages

- John 21:15-17,20-23; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7

Session Outline

1. You Are Gifted (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)
2. You Are Called (John 21:15-17)
3. Stay Focused (John 21:20-23)

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

Prayer

1. Who are you leading/influencing in your life? Pray for them by name and ask God to help you lead them well.
2. What is stealing your focus? Ask God to remove any distractions that pull you away from Him.