

## 2 Timothy 2:1-6 “Dedication, discipline and diligence”

### I. Introduction

### II. Vs. 1-2 Three ways to pass the baton

### II. Vs. 3-6 Threefold winning attitudes

#### I. Introduction

The Christian life was never designed to be a self-centered life, one characterized by self-indulgence. The business of the Christians of every age is to guard the truth which has been entrusted to them. That is what Paul told Timothy in chapter 1 verse 14. In chapter 2 the word “Therefore” in the first verse 2 ought to have an arrow attached to it pointing up to what Paul had just spoke of with regards to *“letting lose the lion of the word of God”*. There will be some “marketing believers” that will say, *“If you do that you will never grow a large megachurch”*. But quantity must never have on the altar of sacrifice quality! Jesus set the goal in Matthew 7:13-14 when He said, *“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”*

#### II. Vs. 1-2 Three ways to pass the baton

Vs. 1-2 Paul gives three keys to be effective in passing on what was entrusted to us:

1. Vs.1a **“You therefore, my son, be strong..”**: The point Paul is making is that you cannot pass on what you don’t possess! The great truth about God’s truth is that it isn’t intellectual truth or head knowledge, it is truth that must be personally

- applied. If we want to strengthen others we must first strengthen ourselves, Paul tells Timothy.
2. Vs.1b **"In the grace that is in Christ Jesus"**: One of the peculiar truths about **grace** is that it **is never available to strong people!** That's why it is difficult for us to appropriate the grace that is in Jesus, we must come to the realization that we are weak in order for Him to be strong. The best way that I know of to come to the realization that you are weak is read the bible, when you do you will be driven to the grace that is in Jesus. This isn't about making up one's mind it is about true confession of our weakness and appropriating His strength. Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission once said, *"The easiest positions He must give me grace, and in the most difficult positions, His grace is sufficient."*
  3. Vs. 2 *"the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, **commit these to faithful men** who will be able to teach others also."*: Truth is CAUGHT not TAUGHT and people need to see it as well as hear it. Timothy had traveled extensively with Paul and he not only heard Paul speak the word of God he saw Paul live out the word of God. He saw the lives transformed by the truths and he had also witnessed the horrible way those who rejected God's word treated Paul and others and how Paul continued to pray and love those who rejected the truth. But what do faithful people look like? Ray Stedman described 4 traits of a faithful person:
    - a. **Searching mind**: This describes a mind that wants to learn, a person with a searching mind loves to learn, they haven't tuned out turned on; they aren't

looking to be entertained. No they are constantly looking to feed their mind, they love to dig into truth.

- b. **Humble heart**: A person who knows that they don't know! People who are faithful have set aside their egos as they know that knowledge isn't given to us so that others will be impressed with what we know. A faithful person wants truth more than they want a reputation.
- c. **Evident gifting**: Paul didn't want *intellectual hoarders*, who wanted to keep secret the mysteries so that folks would be impressed with them. He cultivated people who couldn't wait to give away what had been entrusted to them.
- d. **Faithful spirit**: The fourth characteristic is a person who has a track record of the above three qualities. These are the kind of people that aren't looking to climb the ladder, looking for something better, neither are those who are only interested when it is convenient to them.

The best way to pass the torch on to the next generation is to make sure that those of us who have the torch now are running with it, so we can pass it on. **The Christian life isn't just to BELIEVED it is to be LIVED!** In 1950 China kicked out the missionaries and folks felt that the church would disappear under the reign of Communist rule and they were amazed to find that the church had grown 7 fold during the 30 years that there was no window into China.

## **II. Vs. 3-6 Threefold wining attitudes**

Vs. 3-6 Paul uses three metaphors to describe the commitment of the Christian that will hold fast the pattern of sound words. These **three metaphors** tell us that it will take the,

**DEDICATION OF A SOLDIER, the DISCIPLINE OF AN ATHLETE and the DILIGENCE OF A FARMER:**

a. **DEDICATION OF A SOLDIER:** Vs. 3-4 “*As a good soldier of Jesus Christ*”: **Paul describes two things that makes a “good soldier of Jesus Christ”:**

1. ***Endure hardship***: As soldiers of Jesus Christ we are not on parade we are in a battle. We have a realistic attitude with our duty that understands that to advance we must endure hardship, forgo the pleasures that this life says we deserve. The author of Hebrews describes a host of those who have gone before us enduring hardship as he write specifically of Moses in verse 25 that Moses, “*choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked forward to the reward.*” We are called to enjoy life in CHRIST, but that doesn’t mean that life in this world will always be enjoyable!
2. ***Untangled with this life***: A soldier also understands that they can no longer afford becoming entangled with civilian pursuits as their aim is to please the One who enlisted them to service. Interviews with surviving soldiers of the Omaha Beach invasion at Normandy revealed a powerful truth as to why those hero’s facing almost certain death on the beach and as they climbed the cliffs, still nonetheless continued forward. They listed two reasons for the selfless actions that day: Respect and appreciation of their commanding officer and love of their fellow soldiers! ***The Christian life is not a way of doing special things; it’s a special way of doing everything.*** Whatever we are doing we do for His honor and glory,

as we seek to please Him. Far too many in the church have confused this and have sought at all cost to make this temporary home our permanent residence.

- b. **DISCIPLINE OF AN ATHLETE**: Vs. 5 “*In athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules*”: With an athlete we have a different type of motivation which is “biblical ambition”. Every athlete learns to deny themselves certain things they want or even crave because they want to win more than indulge their temporary pleasures. In the Greek games the judges were stickler in enforcing the rules: Each competitor had to be a citizen of his nation, with a good reputation. In their preparations for their event, they had to follow specific standards, if the athlete was found defective in any manner they were disqualified from competing. If after they competed and won but were found to have broken some rule they were stripped of their crown. Paul knew that there was a crown that awaited him, he had finished his race and was waiting to hear the words of THE JUDGE that would say, “*Well done, good and faithful servant enter in!*”

- c. **DILIGENCE OF A FARMER**: Vs. 6 “*The hardworking farmer, must be first to partake of the crops*”: There are three practical truths about the farmer:

- **The farmer has to work**: If you leave a field to its self all it will produce is weeds.
- **The farmer needs to exercise patience**: The harvest is not at the end of the service or even at the end of the year, it is at the end of the age and we may very well not see the fruit of our labor until we see our Master face to face.
- **The farmer has earned the right to share in the crop**: The laborer is worthy of his reward, just like a farmer so to the servant of Christ. Of even greater value is that the person who shares the word is always the first to be blessed by it.

Far too many Christians have quit serving because they were doing so to get

“BLESSED” instead of realizing they had already been blessed. Then when they

aren’t “BLESSED” according to their expectations and timing they quit and decide to

just sit on the sidelines and watch others. Being a Christian take long hours and hard work. Like the farmer we rise before the sun and aren't home until after it sets and our expectation of a harvest for the most part isn't in this season it is in the one to come.

Having looked at these metaphors that Paul used to speak to Timothy about staying the course of the faith may cause a few of us to want to rethink what we signed up for. Many churches in America have "soft peddled" the faith and now offer "Christian LIGHT" where their moto isn't "*It's all about HIM*" instead it is "*All about ME!*" I'm blessed to be a part of a fellowship that isn't like that as you continue to demonstrate a faith that has the **DEDICATION OF A SOLDIER, the DISCIPLINE OF AN ATHLETE and the DILIGENCE OF A FARMER.**