

## INTRODUCTION

It has been said, “A picture’s worth a thousand words.” As we look at 2 Timothy 2, the apostle Paul gives us eight portraits of a faithful and effective teacher. Let me immediately say that I realize this is a pastoral epistle (letter). I understand Paul wrote three pastoral letters: 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus. So I realize the initial purpose and intent of these letters is geared toward the pastor.

However, there is no indication that these pastoral letters are meant to be exclusively for the pastor. How would the church even know the biblical qualifications of the pastor and deacon, apart from the Pastoral Epistles? They are filled with doctrine for the whole church and address many aspects of church life. Paul addresses the need to beware of false doctrine and the need to hold fast to sound doctrine. How many times have we heard:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16)

Or:

I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day. (2 Tim. 1:12b)

How about:

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Tim. 1:7).

How many times have we heard these words and yet they continue to motivate us to keep on keeping on:

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Timothy 4:7, 8).

The point is this: the Pastoral Epistles are for every believer. Each of us has received instruction and encouragement from them. And when it comes to the teacher, each of us should always have someone in our lives we can mentor and teach, whether in a formal or informal setting. Christian parents are admonished to diligently teach their children (Deut. 6:4-9) and to bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). According to Titus 2:1-8 the older and more mature Christian women are to teach the younger women, and the older and more mature Christian men are to teach the younger men. Each of us can share with others what we have learned and experienced in our walk with Christ. Truth is each of these portraits should characterize every believer.

So Paul gives Timothy, his “son in the faith,” one final briefing. This is Paul’s final letter which was written around A.D. 66/67 from a prison cell in Rome. In just a short time, under Nero’s orders, Paul would be facing martyrdom. So Paul, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, writes to encourage Timothy to remain strong and steadfast in the faith even in the face of hardship, adversity, resistance, and difficult times. If there ever was a time we needed to be encouraged and rally together as God’s people, it’s now.

Just as Paul prepared and encouraged Timothy to carry on for the sake of Christ and His church, so we must intentionally and adequately prepare and encourage those who come behind us: young converts; young families; our children and grandchildren. That is our God-given privilege, and that is our God-given responsibility, which actually brings us to Paul’s first portrait.

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### **THE STEWARD (2:1-2)** (Although this term isn’t used, it certainly is implied)

- Is entrusted with the possessions of another.
- Wisely manages and invests them according to the will of the owner (Matt. 25:14-30).
- Is close to his Master and is entrusted with the most important matters.

Examples:

- Eliakim. He was steward over the entire household of King Hezekiah. Because of his office, Eliakim controlled access to the king and guarded the king’s treasures. Only Eliakim possessed the keys to the king’s treasure vault. He controlled all access to the king’s vast wealth.
- Eleazar. According to Genesis 24, he ruled over all that Abraham had. Abraham even entrusted him finding a bride for his son, Isaac. “All his master’s goods were in his hand” (Gen. 24:10b).

Truth is all that we are and all that we have belongs to the Lord. Everything! It not only belongs to Him as our Creator, but it also belongs to Him as our Savior. It belongs to Him twice! We are not our own; we have been bought at a price (1 Cor. 6:20).

But let’s focus on just two things we are to be stewards of:

- Stewards of the Scriptures (Jude 3)

God has deposited into our trust the Scriptures. Jude admonishes every believer “to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” “The faith” refers to Christianity itself and its doctrines, the whole body of Christian doctrine.

The phrase “earnestly contend” was used of athletes contending in an athletic contest. It suggests a vigorous and intense determined struggle to defeat the opposition. Our word “agony” comes from the same word. The Greek athletes exerted themselves to the point of agony in an effort to win the contest. As Christians, we should defend the doctrines of Christianity with such an intense effort by teaching God’s Word, unashamedly sharing God’s Word, constantly living God’s Word, and regularly standing on the absolute truth of the Word of God as we oppose all error, false doctrine, and the relativism of our day.

“Once for all” indicates that no other Christian doctrine will be given. There needs to be no other! It is not subject to change! The Word of God is alive, powerful, and authoritative. Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, God’s Word is able to pierce and penetrate beyond the physical part of man, reach into the very heart of his life, and analyze his very thoughts and motives (Heb. 4:12). The Bible isn’t just any book; it’s The Book! There is power, transforming power in the Word of God!

As teachers, it’s important that we use good and biblically accurate materials to do further and deeper study on a passage or subject. I encourage that. But just remember, they are no substitute for the Word of God. That’s why it’s important for the teacher to encourage their students to bring their Bibles and to use them in class. That’s why it’s important for the teacher to teach directly from the Word of God, and not simply from the quarterly. The bottom line is this: the Word of God is the authority. We are not commissioned to simply teach a message *from* the Bible; we are commissioned to teach the message *of* the Bible. Our children need to hear and know that, and our adults need to hear and know that. I hold in my hand the inspired, infallible, inerrant, indestructible, and imperishable Word of God which lives and abides forever. That in-and-of itself should not only draw me to it, but *into* it! And in-turn, draw *from* it!

➤ Stewards of Souls

Each believer is called to stand in the gap in behalf of lost souls. Think of the eternal souls God has entrusted us with: as Sunday School teachers, N2Y Kidz teachers, Wednesday evening Student and Youth teachers, or VBS teachers. Mom and Dad are entrusted with the eternal souls of their children. God has placed them into their care to teach them and to live God’s Word in front of them. They are on “loan” to you as parents, so that you may point them to Christ and the way to heaven. Consider the friends and family members God has placed in your path, so that you may point them to Christ. These are divine appointments providentially granted to us by God!

## CONCLUSION

Paul wrote:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. (Rom. 1:16)

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Cor. 1:18)

That’s where it begins with each of us. We must first of all know Jesus Christ personally as Savior and Lord. Paul referred to Timothy as his “son” in the faith (2 Tim. 2:1). Through the teaching and godly example of his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, and through the preaching of the apostle Paul, Timothy came to personally know Christ as Savior and Lord. And secondly, Paul instructed Timothy to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 2:1). First, we must truly know Him. Secondly, we are to be growing in Him. As I mentioned just a few weeks ago, it’s impossible to effectively share with others what we have never experienced ourselves.

However, what a gracious privilege it is to share the greatest story and the best Good News that the world could ever know, and to do so with confidence. It is a message *for* the world and *to* the world. And that world is as close as across the road or down the street. That world can be as close as a little boy or girl in VBS, or a young married couple in Sunday School. That world could be as close as your own son or daughter.