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# Honor One Another

## **Passing the Baton**

**2 Timothy 4:1-8**

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**5/19/2019**

**Main Idea: Prepare the next generation for work in the Gospel ministry.**

**Lesson Objective: Pray and seek out the one in whom God wants you to invest your life.**

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## Introduction

*As your class time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.*

There's a story about a young man who was getting ready to graduate from college. For many months he had admired a beautiful sports car, and knowing his father could afford it, he told his dad on several occasions that it was all he wanted. Finally, on the morning of his graduation, the young man's father called him into his private study. His father told him how proud he was to have such a fine son, and how much he loved him. He handed his son a beautifully wrapped gift box.

Curious, but disappointed, the young man opened the box and found a lovely, leather-bound Bible, with the young man's name embossed in gold.

Angrily, he raised his voice to his father and said, "With all your money you give me a Bible?" He then stormed out of the house, leaving the Bible behind.

Many years passed and the young man was very successful in business. He had a beautiful home and wonderful family, but realized his father was getting quite old and thought perhaps he should go to him. He hadn't seen his father since that graduation day. But before he could make arrangements, the young man received a telegram telling him his father had passed away, and that he needed to come home immediately to take care of things.

When he arrived at his father's house, sudden sadness and regret filled his heart. He began to search through his father's important papers and saw the still new Bible, just as he had left it years ago. With tears, he opened the Bible and began to turn the pages, when a car key dropped from the back of the

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Bible. It had a tag with the dealer's name, and on the tag was the date of his graduation along with the words, "Paid In Full."

We tend to spend our lives pursuing the wrong things. What if we took time and poured our lives into the next generation so that they could learn from our mistakes as they prepare for their future...not by instruction alone, but by living life together in the gospel of Jesus Christ. What if instead of placing the majority of our efforts on building a retirement we spent it on building the next generation of God's Kingdom Builders?

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## The Charge

### 2 Timothy 4:1-4

*<sup>1</sup>I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: <sup>2</sup>preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. <sup>3</sup>For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, <sup>4</sup>and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#).*

In writing this letter to young Timothy, Paul realized that his life would soon be over, and the role of carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth would soon be in the hands of the next generation. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He changed all of His followers to be on mission by making disciples of all nations. The essence of making those disciples would be to teach others how to live for Christ in all areas of their lives and to carry good news to those in need of God's saving grace. Paul wanted Timothy to know that even though he may feel alone at times, God would never leave or forsake him. He proclaimed that the presence of God and of Christ Jesus was a profound reality that would have implications on how he lived. Everyday, every action, every word and every thought would be done in the presence of the living God. There was no "getting away" from His presence. Paul did not want this to cause his young apprentice to act out of fear, but to do what he could through the power of the Holy Spirit. One day everyone will stand before the throne of God and give an account of everything done in this life. There will be no excuse because God has seen

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everything, even the innermost parts of the heart. We all should be reminded of this fact and this should cause us to act- not out of fear but out of love. The only thing that we will be able to give to the One who gave us everything is a life lived out of love for Him to be laid at His feet.

There are five verbs that detail what Paul wanted Timothy to do. The first is **preach the word**, which is the basis of the other four actions. Timothy's central function as a disciple of Christ was to preach the gospel. The word not only included the truth of Scriptures but also the "good news" of how Jesus Christ has completed the righteous demands laid out in those same Scriptures. This not only applies to the preachers, nor does this mean that the proclamation of the "good news" must be done from a pulpit. The word "preach" is more than standing before people "preaching" sermons at them. It is allowing God to speak through the individual to others about the good news of God's salvation by word and deed. This could be done in a large gathering or in a personal one on one situation. We must remember that the good news is not only for the unbelievers, but also for the fellowship of believers as they seek to live their lives for the glory of God in a fallen world. We can share God's good news with one another in order to help avoid being misled into false teachings by persistently finding ways to declare God's truth.

The next verb calls for Timothy to be ready. This command implies that each Christian leader must always be on duty and take advantage of every opportunity for service. Paul urged Timothy to stand by his message. The reference is probably to all of the varied tasks of ministry and not merely to the work of preaching. The phrase "**in season and out of season**" emphasized that Timothy should "**be ready**" for the task, whether or not he felt like it, and continue to teach God's Word, whether or not his hearers felt it a convenient

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time to listen. Perhaps from Paul's words in vv. 3–4, the latter reference is probably what Paul intended. The next three imperatives refer respectively to intellect, conscience and will. Timothy was to correct error by the use of reasoned argument. He was to rebuke a straying conscience whenever the need appeared. He was to give hope to the fainthearted by providing tender encouragement in the face of discouraging opposition. The ESV Study Bible notes that "reprove, rebuke, and exhort means the communicating of all that Scripture includes—doctrine, instruction, correction, and encouragement."

The itch to hear something new is not a modern phenomenon. Paul anticipated a time when people would not be receptive to God's message. Rather than listening to sound doctrine, they would find teachers who would say what they wanted to hear. Such an audience would have itching ears. In other words, they would desire teaching merely to satisfy their curiosity rather than to strengthen their faith.

Paul did not sugarcoat his instructions to Timothy. Life as a disciple of Jesus would be difficult. Timothy needed to keep his head in all situations. He had to be prepared to face hardship. Paul described Timothy as an evangelist, meaning that he proclaimed the good news about Jesus. Every Christian has the responsibility to share the good news of the gospel. As believers, we need to speak up for the truth of God not only when the situation seems convenient or when we are 'on duty,' but also when it is inconvenient. We must live the faith and be available as witnesses to the truth all the time.

**Is this command for pastors only? Why or why not?**

**What types of things keep Christians from boldly proclaiming the message of the gospel?**

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## Just Do It

### 2 Timothy 4:5

*<sup>5</sup> As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.* [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#)

After Paul gave some instruction about the false teachers, he returned to his final “charge” with four more imperatives. First, Timothy must “**always be sober-minded**” or in other words he must “keep [his] head in all situations”. Being sober is a phrase used in the NT only figuratively in the sense of being free from every form of mental and spiritual “drunkenness,” and thus it comes to mean “be well-balanced, self-controlled” (BAGD). The present tense signifies that this would be an on-going attitude. The word “always” relates to “on all occasions and under all circumstances”.

The second imperative repeats Paul’s appeal to Timothy to “**endure suffering**”, even as Paul himself has suffered. So many times we are tempted to get out of the situation if it is hard. We want things to be easy and comfortable. God does not call us into comfortability but into obedience. We must be faithful with our calling in spite of how the world around us may respond.

The third command is “**do the work of an evangelist**”. In Eph. 4:11 “evangelists” are mentioned between apostles and prophets on the one hand and pastors and teachers on the other hand in a list of gifts that Christ gives to the church. In Acts 21:8 “evangelist” is the designation of Philip, whose work in this capacity is presented in Acts 8 with “evangelizing” or “announcing the gospel” (vv. 4, 12, 35, 40) with the intent that the hearers believe in Jesus (vv. 5,

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12, 35, 36). This description of Philip’s work together with the title shows what the evangelist’s task was. Paul wants Timothy to continue to evangelize even though he is working in a more settled situation and is not in a new and unevangelized territory as Philip was. This use of evangelist may indicate that Timothy must continue doing the work of sharing the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We must not shy away from sharing the gospel with others, especially if we are not an “evangelist.” God will always give us divine opportunities to share His love with others; we just need to be obedient. Think of it as God has already started the conversation with them, and your role is to jump in and tell them what He has done for you.

The final command functions as a summary. It ties everything together and calls for Timothy to “**fulfill your ministry**”. The word for ministry is the same word from where we get the term “deacon.” It means to be a servant. Paul called on Timothy to proclaim and apply God’s word with much patience and careful instruction, to be clearheaded in every situation, to bear whatever difficulties such a ministry may involve him in, to evangelize, and to do whatever is necessary to accomplish the ministry to which Christ has called him.<sup>1</sup>

**What’s the relationship between exercising self-control and enduring hardship?**

**What role does doing the work of an evangelist have in this process?**

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<sup>1</sup> George W. Knight, [\*The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text\*](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 456–458.

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## Finish Strong

### 2 Timothy 4:6-8

*<sup>6</sup> For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. <sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup> Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.* [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#)

Up to this point Paul has not indicated his expectations with regard to his imprisonment. He has indicated that he is a prisoner in chains, and that he is suffering like a criminal (1:8, 12, 16; 2:9). In this paragraph (vv. 6–8) and in the final section (vv. 9–22), Paul says that he expects this imprisonment to result in his death. He is aware that his ministry is coming to an end. Timothy must carry on the work.

Paul uses two metaphors to describe his expected death. First, he says that he is “**already being poured out like a drink offering.**” Libations or drink offerings are taken from OT sacrificial imagery of pouring out wine (cf. Exod 29:40–41; Lev 23:13; Num 15:1–10; 28:4–8). Paul had used the same metaphor in Phil 2:17 where he says that, even if this were to happen in his service to the Philippians, he would still rejoice. The use of the present tense verb and the word “**already**” indicates that Paul was aware that the wheels were already in motion to usher in his upcoming death. The second metaphor is that of a ship lifting its anchor to leave harbor or of a group of soldiers breaking camp: “**the time of my departure has come.**” “**Departure**” was a common euphemism for death.

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Paul did not want the young preacher to get sidetracked and worry about his future. Instead he used three very graphic expressions to describe the conclusion to his ministry. The first two represent athletic metaphors. **“I have fought the good fight”**. It is a metaphor from athletic competition. See 1 Tim 6:12 where Paul used the same figure. Paul’s designation of the “fight” or “contest” as “good” (or “noble”) in no way indicates that his effort has been good, but rather that the task, namely his ministry, is a noble one. Paul saw his departure as completing his task by stating that he has “finished the race” (cf. Acts 20:24). Both verbs in the first two metaphors are in the perfect tense indicating a completed task and an ongoing effect. The contest and the race are over, and Paul is ready to enjoy the rewards of the competition.

Finally, Paul says that he has **“kept the faith.”** Paul proudly admitted that he has not wavered in the gospel. He is saying, “I have loyally held on to the gospel which has been entrusted to me and the consequences of that are ongoing. I know the final result.” Some have sought to see Paul’s third statement as a metaphor after the sort of the first—either an athlete’s promise to compete by the rules, a soldier’s oath of fidelity, or a steward’s care for the deposit he has received. It is better to see the final statement as an explanation or clarification of the first two analogies.

Because Paul has competed in this noble contest, and he understood that a glorious reward now awaited him: **“Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness.”** The **“crown”** referred not to a royal diadem but to a victor’s crown or garland reserved for those who compete victoriously in athletic events, who return victorious from battle, or who have done something noble for their Lord. **“Crown of righteousness”** means “the crown which consists of righteousness,” referring to the final righteous state of believers. Thus, it will be

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given not only to Paul, but to all those who have loved His appearing, a reference to all believers, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. This crown is to be awarded by **“the Lord, the righteous Judge.”** He could have used this phrase in order to draw attention to the judges or referees in athletic events. Paul knew that people were not perfect, and at times even judges will make mistakes, but he held on to the truth that Jesus, the true and righteous judge, the One who never makes a mistake will give to him his reward.<sup>2</sup>

While everything we needed for salvation was completed in Christ, Jesus gave us His Great Commission to carry out, knowing that there would be suffering to endure in order to lead others to Christ. Paul’s testimony was certainly replete with such suffering. Today we find believers in many parts of the world facing death itself for their faith, but even in our country, persecution comes in many forms for believers, whether public shunning or mocking, or limits to advancement in our jobs or education. When such testing occurs, we gain a quiet confidence that our faith in Jesus is worth whatever it may cost. We can be thankful for the example of those around us who suffer with great joy, thereby setting a selfless example for us as we, too, learn to live as light. We must continue to train the next generation to keep running the race until the Lord returns for His own.

**What are some ways Paul had modeled such living for Timothy?**

**How does the promise of future reward for faithfulness now work toward the perfecting of the saints?**

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<sup>2</sup> C. Michael Moss, [1, 2 Timothy & Titus](#), The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1994), 2 Ti 4:1–8.