

STUDIES IN THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

“THE TWELVE STEPS TO A FANTASTIC FINISH”

STEP #9: 2 Timothy 3:10-17

“Faithful: May he Find Me Faithful”

Key verse 2:15 — *“Make every effort to present yourself to God, approved, as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, guiding the word of truth along a straight path.”*

TEXT:

v. 10 But you followed faithfully my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, steadfastness, love, perseverance,

v. 11 Persecutions, sufferings, such as came to me in Antioch, in Iconium, in Lystra, what manner of persecutions I endured; and out of them all the Lord delivered me.

v. 12 And indeed all those who are desiring to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

v. 13 But evil men and imposters will go on from bad to worse, leading astray and being led astray.

v. 14 But you be remaining in the things which you learned and became convinced of, knowing from whom you learned them.

v. 15 And that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

v. 16 Every Scripture is God-breathed and beneficial for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for training in righteousness,

v. 17 in order that the man of God may be adequate, having been equipped for every good work.

INTRODUCTION:**HIT BY A TAXI**

Hit by a taxi, Doris was unconscious and had a near-death experience, where she saw God at the end of a bright tunnel. “Is my time up?” she asked. “No, Doris,” God replied. “You have another 43 years, 2 months and 8 days left, so go back down.”

With that, she found herself back on the street. In the hospital she decided that, with the guarantee of a long life, she would make the most of it. She blew her savings to get a facelift, liposuction, and a tummy tuck.

As she strutted proudly out of the hospital two months later, she was hit by another taxi. There she was again, face to face with God. “What gives?” she huffed. “You said I had another 40 years!”

“Gee, Doris, sorry about that,” God said with a shrug. “I didn’t recognize you.”

(Source unknown)

Marriage: the process of finding out what kind of person your spouse would have preferred.

(Source unknown)

(The 776 Stupidest Things Ever Said by Ross & Kathryn Petras) New York, NY: Doubleday. Copyright – Ross & Kathryn Petras, 1993.

On Criticism:

That lowdown scoundrel deserves to be kicked to death by a jackass—and I’m just the one to do it.

a congressional candidate in Texas,
reported by Massachusetts State Senator **John F. Parker.**

On Criticism:

It rolls off my back like a duck.

movie mogul **Samuel Goldwyn**

p. 36

(The 776 Stupidest Things Ever Said by Ross & Kathryn Petras) New York, NY: Doubleday. Copyright – Ross & Kathryn Petras, 1993.

On Football, Losses and Mixed Metaphors in:

If you can't make the putts and can't get the man in from second on the bottom of the ninth, you're not going to win enough football games in this league, and that's the problem we had today.

Sam Rutigliano, Cleveland Browns coach,
on why his team lost

p. 68

In my old age I am suffering from a new disease:

MENTAL PAUSE.

EVER STOP TO THINK AND FORGET TO START AGAIN?

(The 776 Stupidest Things Ever Said by Ross & Kathryn Petras) New York, NY: Doubleday. Copyright – Ross & Kathryn Petras, 1993.

On Forgetting Things:

I must have had ambrosia.

Milwaukee Brewers **Jim Gantner**,
on why he forgot to appear on a talk show

p. 69

On Health:

I've been laid up with the intentional flu.

movie mogul **Samuel Goldwyn**

p. 88

On Knee Surgery:

I've never had major knee surgery on any other part of my body.

Winston Bennett,
University of Kentucky basketball forward

p. 102

(The 776 Stupidest Things Ever Said by Ross & Kathryn Petras) New York, NY: Doubleday. Copyright – Ross & Kathryn Petras, 1993.

On Life, the True Value of:

It's not a matter of life and death. It's more important than that.

Lou Duva, on the upcoming fight of his protégé against boxer Mike Tyson

p. 107

(Congratulations! Now What?: A Book for Graduates by Bill Cosby) New York, NY: Hyperion. Copyright – William H. Cosby, Jr., 1999.

When I was at Temple, I had one elderly professor who passed me on the campus one afternoon for the second time that day.

“Mr. Crosley,” he said, almost remembering me, “did you happen to pass me earlier today?”

“Yes, sir,” I replied. “About one o’clock.”

“And was I going in *this* direction?”

“You were.”

“Oh, good! That means I had lunch.”

Now that man had a brilliant mind, but it didn’t happen to be in this particular universe.

p. 17

(Living Somewhere Between Estrogen and Death by Barbara Johnson)
Dallas, TX: Word. Copyright - Barbara Johnson, 1997.

Someone sent me a little clipping from an unidentified source that comes closer to describing many grandmothers today. It says, "Move over, Superwoman. Here comes Supergranny, that fifty-plus ball of fire who has a pilot's license, a law degree, and a doctorate in political science!"

It's true. Many women sail through the half-century mark on their way up the corporate ladder—or Mount Everest. Astronaut Shannon Lucid isn't the only gray-haired woman who's setting records and making stunning achievements in what used to be called middle-age (or even OLD age!). I think this little poem sums it up pretty well:

Supergranny

Don't look for her in the rocking chair,
 Granny isn't in it.
 She's off to fight a fire somewhere
 Or serving in the Senate.

She might be in a cockpit
 Or removing an appendix,
 Or checking test tubes in a lab
 Or speaking from a pulpit.

She could be on a book tour
 Or working as a chef.
 Or running a big company
 From behind a corporate desk.

A lot has changed in granny's world;
 She studies to keep up.
 But one thing still comes naturally:
 That special Granny LOVE!

Ann Luna

pp. 112-13

(More Holy Hilarity by Cal & Rose Samra) Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press. Copyright – Fellowship of Merry Christians, Inc., 1999.

When a pastor joined a local service club in his community, some of the members of his congregation made up the nametags for the group. They decided to play a practical joke on the pastor by labeling his occupation as “Hog Caller” on his nametag.

When the pastor saw his nametag, he commented: “They usually call me the ‘Shepherd of the Sheep,’ but I suppose our members know themselves better than I do.”

—VIA **REV. DENNIS R. FAKES**, LINDSBORG, KANSAS

p. 15

(Cowboy Psalms: A Collection of Cowboy Traditions with Biblical Understanding by Darlene Austin Lang) Waco, TX: Shelby’s House of Printing. Copyright – Darlene Austin Lang, 1999.

Old Saddle

See that “Ol’ Saddle” on the ground,
 That saddle and me really been around.
 That “Ol’ Saddle” was won by me,
 Thought, I was the best, you see.
 That “Ol’ Saddle” and me, been through lots of stuff,
 We’re both pretty darn tough.
 Time for this cowboy to retire,
 Spend time sitting by the fire.
 Been a ranch hand all my life,
 Never had time to have a wife.
 In my house, that “Ol’ Saddle” now sits on a stand,
 I’m that “Ol’ Saddle’s” best fan.
 All is left is that “Ol’ Saddle” and me,
 A cowboy’s life is the best, don’t you agree?

p. 2

(Christ and the Cowboy by Kenneth Wyatt) Tulia, TX: Y-8 Publishing Co.
Copyright – Y-8 Publishing Co., 1998.

When Daddy Reached The Bible Down

With supper et an' th' dishes all dried,
Fire banked and the damper dried,
The milkin' done an' strained an' such,
Beds turned down with Mother's touch. . .
Then Daddy reached the Bible down.

Position his chair, an' motion us near,
Gittin' close – the better to hear.
He'd check the coal oil an' trim the light,
End of day an' startin' of night. . .
Then Daddy reached the Bible down.

Breathe on his glasses an' polish em' good,
Clear his throat like we knew he would,
Then, gentle an' soft as a lovin' look,
Those work-hard hands opened the Book. . .
When Daddy reached the Bible down.

To turn the page, he'd lick his thumb wet,
Look over his glasses, get everything set,
Then, in a voice that sounded like Love,
He read about Christ sent from above. . .
When Daddy reached the Bible down.

In the summer months he read about good:
Carpenter Jesus, where He stood,
Sermons He preached, the miracles done,
Read the parables one by one. . .
When Daddy reached the Bible down.

Come fall an' Daddy thumbed to John.
Read about Love – th' perfect bond –
“Love one another,” he'd gravely say,
Then wink at Ma his special way. . .
When Daddy reached the Bible down.

Middle of winter brung a special part
 “’Bout the Baby Child,” strong of heart,
 And Mary, his mother, the wise men three.
 Readin’s a pleasure near a Christmas tree. . .
 When Daddy reached the Bible down.

Resurrection part that came in spring
 Made more sense than anything.
 With God all things are new through Him,
 Like these memories by lamplight dim. . .
 When Daddy reached the Bible down.

p. 32

(The Book of Cowboy Wisdom: Common Sense and Uncommon Genius From the World of Cowboys compiled and edited by Criswell Freeman)
 Nashville, TN: Walnut Grove Press. Copyright – Walnut Grove Press, 1997.

A cowboy never betrays a trust.

Gene Autry

Never betray a friend or comrade
 for the sake of your own gain.

Belle Starr

One of the most notable characteristics
 of the cowboy is loyalty.

Texas Livestock Journal, 1882

p. 40

For cowboys, there is a right and a wrong,
 and there isn’t a lot of gray area.

John Beckett

p. 40

The more ignorant you are,
 the quicker you fight.

Will Rogers

p. 126

(The Book of Cowboy Wisdom: Common Sense and Uncommon Genius From the World of Cowboys compiled and edited by Criswell Freeman)
Nashville, TN: Walnut Grove Press. Copyright – Walnut Grove Press, 1997.

We are all here for a spell;
get all the good laughs you can.

Will Rogers

p. 136

When a fellow ain't got much mind,
it don't take him long to make it up.

Will Rogers

p. 145

(All Hat & No Cattle: A Guide for New Texans and All the West of Us by Anne Dingus) Houston, TX: Lone Star Books. Copyright – Gulf Publishing Co., 1999.

SHORT

They picked her before she was ripe.

Born short and slapped down flat.

SICK

The wheels are falling off my wagon.

My sawdust is leaking.

He's heading through the gate and eyeing the river.

She's all right; she just can't do the laundry for a while.

She's circling the drain.

So sick he threw up his socks.

**I'M DRINKING FROM MY SAUCER
'CAUSE MY CUP IS OVERFLOWED**

I've never made a fortune,
 And it's probably too late now,
 But I don't worry about that much—
 I'm happy anyhow.

As I go along life's journey
 I'm reaping better than I sowed,
 And I'm drinkin' from my saucer,
 'Cause my cup is overflowed.

Don't have a lot of riches,
 And sometimes the going's tough.
 But I've got some kids who love me,
 And that makes me rich enough.

Aw, I remember times when things went wrong,
 And my faith got a little bit thin,
 But then all at once the dark clouds broke,
 And that old sun peeked through again.

So, Lord, help me not to gripe
 About the tough rows that I've hoed—
 I'm drinkin' from my saucer,
 'Cause my cup is overflowed.

And if God gives me strength and courage
 When the way seems steep and rough,
 I'll not ask for other blessings—
 I'm already blessed enough.

And may I never be too busy
 To help another bear his load.
 Then I'll keep drinkin' from my saucer,
 'Cause my cup is overflowed.

(Source unknown)

—Jimmy Dean

In our series of studies in 2 Timothy, we have been considering:

THE TWELVE STEPS TO A FANTASTIC FINISH.

Paul is in prison waiting for his **EXECUTION**.

This is his **FINAL LETTER** that he writes to his young understudy, **TIMOTHY**, who has been entrusted with the pastorate of the **CHURCH AT EPHESUS**.

In my study of these precious four chapters, I have found **PAUL'S LEGACY** left behind in **THE TWELVE STEPS TO A FANTASTIC FINISH**:

Step #1: INTEGRITY: Getting It All Together (2 Tim. 1:1-7)

Step #2: CONVICTION: Here I Stand, God Help Me (2 Tim. 1:8-12)

Step #3: COURAGE: I Am Willing To Pay The Price (2 Tim. 1:13-18)

Step #4: LEGACY: What Am I Passing On? (2 Tim. 2:1-7)

Step #5: PERSEVERANCE: In Single-Minded Steadfastness, I Will Stay The Course (2 Tim. 2:8-13)

Step #6: FOCUSED: This One Thing I Do (2 Tim. 2:14-19)

Step #7: SATANIC SEDUCTION: I Am Keeping My Eyes on Jesus (2 Tim. 2:20-26)

Step #8: COUNTER CULTURE: Lord, Where You Lead Me I Will Follow (2 Tim. 3:1-9)

That brings us now to:

Step #9: FAITHFUL: May He Find Me Faithful

We will be considering together:

2 Timothy 3:10-17.

Our **KEY VERSE** for this study is:

“BUT YOU BE REMAINING IN THE THINGS WHICH YOU LEARNED AND BECAME CONVINCED OF, KNOWING FROM WHOM YOU LEARNED THEM.”

HOUSE OF DYING

Mark Hatfield tells of touring Calcutta with **Mother Teresa** and visiting the so-called “House of Dying,” where sick children are cared for in their last days, and the dispensary, where the poor line up by the hundreds to receive medical attention. Watching Mother Teresa minister to these people, feeding and nursing those left by others to die, Hatfield was overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the suffering she and her co-workers face daily. “How can you bear the load without being crushed by it?” he asked. Mother Teresa replied, “My dear Senator, I am not called to be successful, I am called to be faithful.”

Beyond Hunger, Beals

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

The Bible Knowledge Commentary titles **verses 10-13** and then says:

Faithfulness in the face of opposition

Paul returned . . . to his own example of endurance and faithfulness in another of his direct exhortations to Timothy . . . The contrast with the false teachers is a strong one . . .

p. 757

J. Vernon McGee titles these verses:

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURES IN THE LAST DAYS

p. 472

Wiersbe summarizes this passage by breaking it into two parts:

Follow the right examples (10-12). We tend to emulate the people we admire, so be careful about the heroes you select. Modern-day Christian celebrities may not exemplify the lifestyle God wants us to have.

Stay with the Bible (13-17). Believe God's Word will save you (v. 15), mature you from childhood to adulthood (vv. 15, 17), and equip you to serve the Lord (v. 17). Satanic deception is rampant today and has infected the church (v. 13), and the only weapon that defeats the deceivers is God's inspired Word.

p. 804

Demarest says:

Paul closes this chapter by giving Timothy some very personal advice. Paul bases his appeal to Timothy on his own experience. Timothy is called to turn away from the false teachers and to stand alone, if need be, and take persecution for his fidelity to Jesus. In this section, Paul reminds Timothy of their intimate bonds.

p. 279

Kelly titles the passage:

AN EXHORTATION TO STEADFASTNESS. iii. 10-17

p. 197

He then says:

From the sombre picture he has painted of the last days, and of the demoralized Christians whose character and conduct provide a foretaste of them, the Apostle turns with relief to Timothy, confident that he at any rate, by modelling himself on his master, has laid a sure foundation for his ministry.

p. 198

Towner says:

Paul's goal for Timothy surfaces in verse 14: *continue in what you have learned*. But to do so effectively in a turbulent situation requires looking in at least two directions. In verses 10-13 Paul reminds him to learn from the pattern of life and service that he saw up close in the apostle. Then Paul urges reflection on the source of that life, Scripture, and on the impact that this has already had on Timothy's spiritual history.

pp. 197-198

Stott says:

In this paragraph Paul twice addresses Timothy with the same two little Greek monosyllables *su de*. They come at the beginning of verses 10 and 14 . . . and should be translated ‘But as for you . . .’. In stark contrast to the contemporary decline in morals, empty show of religion and spread of false teaching Timothy is called to be different, and if necessary to stand alone.
p. 92

Lange says of those words:

But *thou*; with these words the Apostle returns to Timothy, not to praise him unnecessarily, but to appeal to Timothy himself, as to a witness, that his teacher and friend had walked an entirely different path from that of those false teachers. The recurrence to the example furnished him by the Apostle (vers. 10-13) serves to introduce also the exhortation to enduring fidelity.
p. 107

Larson says:

In turbulent and stressful times, it becomes easy to lose heart, to feel weary and hopeless. Paul, wanting Timothy to refocus, offered Timothy a reflection on his own life of godliness in the midst of persecution. Paul referred to Timothy’s heritage and reminded him of the unshakable source of truth for life and holiness—the Scriptures.
p. 304

Fee titles these verses:

Another Appeal to Loyalty and Endurance (2 Tim. 3:10-17)

p. 275

Fee then says:

The paragraph is in two parts (vv. 10-13, 14-17), structured around two occurrences of *su de* (“you, however,” v. 10; “but as for you,” v. 14) and the central imperative of verse 14. The two parts hold the keys to Timothy’s abiding loyalty: first, to recall the past, especially Paul’s teaching and example, learned through long association, and second, to give heed to the Scriptures, with which he has also had long association, and which both lead to salvation through Christ and are useful for all the tasks of his ministry.
p. 275

Hughes titles verses 10-13:

**Remembrance and Continuance
2 Timothy 3:10-13**

p. 229

He then says:

Timothy’s continuance in the apostolic ministry was a vital concern of Paul in the Pastoral Letters. And it is the main concern of 2 Timothy 3:10-17, which has as its central imperative the word *continue* in verse 14—“But as for you, continue in what you have learned. . . .”¹ Paul grounds this call to continuance on two things—first, remembering the past (vv. 10-13) and, second, focusing on the Scriptures (vv. 14-17).
p. 230

Quinn & Wacker title verses 10-13 and then they paraphrase those verses:

PAUL'S LIFE (3:10-13)

3 ¹⁰*You, however, Timothy, were quite familiar
with the instruction,
with the approach to living,
with the design,
with the faithfulness,
with the patience,
with the charity,
with the steadfastness*

that were mine, ¹¹along with the persecutions, with the sufferings, such as happened to me in Pisidian Antioch, in Iconium, in Lystra. What persecutions I bore! Still, from all of them the Lord delivered me. ¹²Moreover, all who want to live in a godly way in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. ¹³However, vicious people and charlatans will progress—from bad to worse, deluding and deluded.

p. 734

MacArthur says:

The conjunction **but** marks a contrast and a change of emphasis. The faithful character and ministry of Paul are contrasted with the ungodly character and ministry of the false preachers and teachers (the “men,” v. 2) mentioned in verses 1-9.

p. 126

Knight titles this section:

**CONTINUE STEADFASTLY IN WHAT
HAS BEEN LEARNED: 3:10-17**

p. 438

He then says:

Here Paul addresses Timothy directly and contrasts him with the false teachers by means of a twice-repeated “but you” . . . The focal point of his instruction is the imperative to “continue . . . in the things that you have learned and become convinced of” (v. 14).

p. 438

Lea & Griffin title this paragraph:

Sources of Strength for Endurance (3:10-17)

p. 230

They then say:

Paul had used a frightening picture to portray the opposition Timothy would face. Where could anyone find the strength and wisdom for resisting and overcoming such opposition? Two sources of help were the sterling example Paul had demonstrated (vv. 10-13) and the instruction of Scripture (vv. 14-17). Paul directed Timothy to consider and use the strength each resource could provide.

p. 230

In my **SEMINARY LECTURE NOTES**, these verses were divided into **TWO SECTIONS** similar to what we have heard from the commentaries:

- I. **The Way of the Apostle (3:10-13)**
- II. **The Word of God (3:14-17)**

v. 10 But you followed faithfully my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, steadfastness, love, perseverance,

Paul, in this verse, and verse 11 mentions **NINE THINGS** that Timothy had **“FOLLOWED [carefully and] FAITHFULLY”** from the Apostle Paul.

This makes him **DIFFERENT** from those who have been described in the previous section.

1. Timothy has **“FOLLOWED FAITHFULLY”** Paul’s **TEACHING**.

To this point he has not been deceived by those who are presenting error.

Timothy has seen in the **APOSTLE PAUL** that:

his **LIP** and **LIFE** coincide and

he truly is a **MENTOR** and a **MODEL** of the teaching which he communicates.

Timothy has followed Paul’s **TEACHING** in this regard and has been faithful.

He has not deviated from the truth. He has been faithful in guiding the Word of Truth along a straight path.

2. Timothy has “FOLLOWED FAITHFULLY” Paul’s CONDUCT.

Philippians 3:17, 18 (TLB)

Dear brothers, pattern your lives after mine and notice who else lives up to my example. For I have told you often before, and I say it again now with tears in my eyes, there are many who walk along the Christian road who are really enemies of the cross of Christ.

3. Timothy has “FOLLOWED FAITHFULLY” Paul’s PURPOSE.

Paul had a definite aim in life. I believe it is best expressed in:

Philippians 3:10 (TLB)

Now I have given up everything else—I have found it to be the only way to really know Christ and to experience the mighty power that brought Him back to life again, and find out what it means to suffer and to die with him. So, whatever it takes, I will be one who lives in the fresh newness of life of those who are alive from the dead.

Timothy’s PURPOSE in life was the same as the great Apostle Paul.

4. He has “FOLLOWED FAITHFULLY” Paul’s FAITH.

Paul trusted God. Timothy trusted God.

Paul speaks of this faith in:

2 Timothy 1:5 (version unknown)

Remembering the genuine, sincere or unhypocritical faith which is in you which lived first in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and I am convinced in you as well.

Timothy, don't get upset in your faith like those who have followed the false teachers and as a result have been disqualified concerning their faith.

Hebrews 11:6 (TLB)

You can never please God without faith, without depending on him. Anyone who wants to come to God must believe that there is a God and that [he will reveal himself] to those who sincerely look for Him.

Erich Sauer in his book The King of the Earth says:

Such a living faith is continually on the winning side. For unbelief would gain nothing, even were it right. But it loses everything if it is wrong. Faith, however, would lose nothing, even were it wrong, but it gains everything if it is right.

p. (unknown)

5. Timothy has "FOLLOWED FAITHFULLY" Paul's STEADFASTNESS.

1 Timothy 1:12 (version unknown)

On which account I am also suffering these things, but I am not ashamed, for I am knowing whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard my deposit which has been entrusted to him against that day.

Ephesians 6:13 (TLB)

So use every piece of God's armor to resist the enemy whenever he attacks, and when it is all over, you will still be standing up.

Our daughter, **Becky**, has certainly been through the fires of adversity fighting against diabetes from the age of thirteen. Most of her life has been spent struggling with the consequences of this disease. She has gone through the **kidney transplant**, the **laser treatment** on the eyes, and had **minor heart problems** to this point.

I was wanting to pay **TRIBUTE** to our five children and I came up with the idea to use the meaning of their name and build my tribute around that.

I was fascinated to find that Rebecca means “Steadfast.”

This is what I wrote:

MY TRIBUTE TO REBECCA

“Steadfast”

I go on record honoring my second born. You are a very special treasure, made precious in the fires of suffering. The sweetness of your person is on display in your sincerity, sacrificial service and steadfast spirit in the storms of adversity.

“But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I will come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).

“In my opinion whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us” (Romans 8:18).

My charge to you is to keep looking unto Jesus. He will walk with you on the waves.

“Therefore my beloved (Becky), be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Steadfast one!! I pay tribute to you this day!!!

6. Timothy has “FOLLOWED FAITHFULLY” Paul’s LOVE which is been manifested in the life of the apostle.

This “LOVE” has not been love which he has conjured up in his own strength. It has been the love of Christ flowing through him, which is a fruitage of the spirit in:

Galatians 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

F. B. Meyer in his work on Ephesians says:

When there is faith in the Lord Jesus, there will always be love toward all the saints, because faith is the faculty of taking God into the heart. Faith is God receptiveness. Faith appropriates the nature of God as the expanded lung does the mountain air. Or as the child does the parents’ gift. Faith, like a narrow channel, conveys God’s ocean fullness into the lagoons of human needs. Wherever therefore faith links the believer to the Lord Jesus, his nature, which is love pure as mountain dew, begins to flow into the waiting expectant heart, and then to flow out thence toward all the saints.

The love of God knows no favorite sect, it singles out no special school, but as the sun and wind of nature breathes and shines like on all, it is cosmopolitan and universal. You cannot imprison it within the walls of any one Christian community. It laughs at your restrictions and with equal grace rises up witnesses and standard bearers from all parts of the church. Thus, as we become more like God, our love overleaps the barrier of our little pond and passes out to greet all saints and to expend itself on the great world of men.

p. (unknown)

Paul said of Timothy in:

Philippians 2:20, 21 (TLB)

There is no one like Timothy for having a real interest in you; everyone else seems to be worrying about his own plans and not those of Jesus Christ.

Lord crucified, give me a love like Thine.
 Help me to win the dying souls of men.
 Lord keep my heart in closest touch with Thine,
 And give me love, pure Calvary love,
 To bring the lost to Thee.

(source unknown)

7. Timothy has “FOLLOWED FAITHFULLY” Paul’s PERSEVERANCE.

I will have more to say about this word as we continue in our exposition of this verse.

What Paul is doing here in verse 10 is CONTRASTING the previous VICES and Paul’s VIRTUES in these NINE CHARACTERISTICS.

When Paul speaks of his “CONDUCT,” he is speaking of:

HIS MANNER OF LIFE,

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES, and

THE OUTWARD EXPRESSION OF LIFE.

Lea & Griffin say:

His “way of life” referred to those guiding principles of his life which he had demonstrated in conduct, His “purpose” was his resolve to show “single-minded commitment to Christ.”³⁶ His “faith” described his stalwart confidence in God.

p. 231

Knight observes:

Paul lists nine things that Timothy “followed,” prefacing the list with $\mu\omicron\nu$ both for emphasis and also to indicate that it governs all that follows. The first seven are singular and are principles or concepts. The last two (in v. 11) are plural and give concrete examples of the seventh principle.
p. 439

He says further:

[Hupomone] expresses the “endurance, steadfastness, and perseverance” of one who lives in the midst of the difficulties of this life kept and strengthened by Christ while awaiting Christ’s return . . . Paul sums up in these words his ministry (teaching, conduct, and purpose) and his life (faith, patience, love, and perseverance).
p. 439

MacArthur says:

The nine leadership qualities, or characteristics, mentioned in 3:10-13 can be divided into three categories: ministry duties (**teaching, conduct, purpose**, v. 10a), personal virtues (**faith, patience, love, perseverance**, v. 10b), and difficult experiences, summarized by **persecutions and sufferings** (vv. 11-13).
p. 128

He says further:

A third ministry duty Timothy had observed in Paul was that of having a godly **purpose**. A leader’s **purpose** relates to his personal motive for service, the driving passion of his heart. Paul was under compulsion, confessing, “Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16). Yet his was an inner compulsion, a voluntary yielding of all that he had to the Lord, to the Lord’s worship, the Lord’s service, and the Lord’s people. He was not forced by God to minister but willingly and gladly served everywhere just as he had at Ephesus.
p. 129

MacArthur then says finally:

The single great motive of their lives was the unreserved passion to fulfill the **purpose** of their divine calling to the glory of God.
p. 129

Quinn & Wacker, speaking about the word “FOLLOWED” says:

The author appeals to Timothy as one who participated in the life and work of the apostle Paul, as one who “followed” his words and deeds. “The instruction” occupies pride of place in the nine-member list that follows and that Spicq calls “a little biography of Paul.”
pp. 738-9

Hughes says:

In addition, Paul’s consistent lifestyle was infused with purpose. One of Charles Schulz’s *Peanuts* cartoons memorably pictures Snoopy coming to terms with purposelessness. Linus had just thrown a stick for Snoopy to retrieve. His first instinct was to do what he was accustomed to doing—chase the stick. But he paused for a few moments and decided against it, thinking, “I want people to have more to say about me after I’m gone than ‘He was a nice guy . . . He chased sticks.’” Paul never merely chased sticks. He was single-minded about the most important things—the gospel and Christ’s glory.
p. 231

He says further:

These four virtues—faith (toward God), love (toward all), patience (toward others), and endurance (to the end)⁴—were showcased in Paul’s life. These remembrances loomed large and beautiful before Timothy, and they would draw him upward.
p. 232

Larson says:

Our lives exhibit the reality of our inner character. The manner in which we live, the decisions we make, the circumstances with which we must contend—all these reveal the beliefs we hold and the priorities we maintain. Paul concluded the last paragraph by assuring Timothy that the false teachers and their ideas would come to ruin. Their folly would be revealed through the disparity of their lives against the truth. Now Paul boldly offered himself as a counter argument to these false teachers.

p. 304

Kelly says:

The verb used (Gk. *parakolouthein*) literally means ‘follow’ in the sense of accompanying, but although Timothy has been Paul’s constant companion this meaning is in the background here. It is also a technical term defining the relation of a disciple to his master, and can be paraphrased ‘study at close quarters’, ‘follow in spirit’, ‘carefully note with a view to reproducing’, and so ‘take as an example’.

p. 198

Demarest says:

Paul, the great theologian, was at his best telling his story. Here he refers to nine areas of his story, ranging from his doctrine to his sufferings. Here, the testimony clearly blends belief and behavior, theology and practice. Doctrine, with Paul, was never an end in itself, but always a means to right living. He begins by linking “*doctrine,*” “*manner of life,*” and “*purpose.*” Out of them issues “*faith, longsuffering, love [and] perseverance.*” One is reminded here of Paul’s favorite trilogy of faith, love, and hope, since we meet again our old friend *hupomonē*, here translated “*perseverance,*” and always related to hope.

p. 280

J. Vernon McGee says:

Timothy knew Paul, knew him well. Paul's life was an open book, as every Christian's life ought to be.
p. 472

Wiersbe says:

Paul turned from the false leaders to remind Timothy that he (Paul) had been a faithful servant of God. It is important in these difficult days that we follow the right spiritual leaders. What are their characteristics?

A. THEIR LIVES ARE OPEN FOR ALL TO SEE (2 Tim. 3:10).

Paul had nothing to hide. Like his Master, he could say, "In secret have I said nothing" (John 18:20). "My manner of life from my youth . . . know all the Jews," Paul had told Agrippa (Acts 26:4). Timothy had lived and labored with Paul and knew the man well. Paul had not hidden behind extravagant claims or religious propaganda.

B. THEY TEACH TRUE DOCTRINE (2 Tim. 3:10).

"My doctrine" in Paul's case meant the true faith, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. No matter how appealing a preacher may be, if he does not preach the truth of God's Word, he does not deserve our support. On radio and TV today, we have a great deal of "pseudo-Christianity" which is a mixture of psychology, success motivation, and personality cults, with a little bit of Bible thrown in to make it look religious. Beware!

C. THEY PRACTICE WHAT THEY PREACH (2 Tim. 3:10).

Paul's "manner of life" backed up his messages. He did not preach sacrifice and live in luxury. He gave to others far more than he received from them. He stood up for the truth even when it meant losing friends and, in the end, losing his life. Paul was a servant, not a celebrity.

D. THEIR PURPOSE IS TO GLORIFY GOD (2 Tim. 3:10).

There was never a question about Paul's "purpose" in ministry: He wanted to do God's will and finish the work God gave him to do (Acts 20:24; Phil. 1:21). The Apostle Paul was a man of "faith" who trusted God to meet his needs. He was a man of "long-suffering" who bore up under people's attacks. He was a man of *love* ("charity") who willingly gave himself to serve others.

The word *patience* at the end of 2 Timothy 3:10 means "endurance, the ability to stick with it when the going gets tough."
pp. 146-7

Barnes says:

The margin is more in accordance with the usual meaning of the Greek word, which means, properly, to accompany side by side; to follow closely; to trace out; to examine . . . and to conform to. The meaning here, however, seems to be, that Timothy had an opportunity to follow out, *i.e.* to examine closely, the manner of life of the apostle Paul. He had been so long his companion, that he had had the fullest opportunity of knowing how he had lived and taught, and how he had borne persecutions. The *object* of this reference to his own life and sufferings is evidently to encourage Timothy to bear persecutions and trials in the same manner;

p. 236

Griffiths says:

The word translated as *know all about* (NIV) is a special discipleship word used by Greek philosophers to describe the imitating of teachers by disciples, meaning ‘study carefully with a view to reproducing’.

p. 201

Lenski says:

By no means let the profound feeling underlying these words escape the calm reader of today. The heart that wrote these lines, and the heart that first read them were stirred with repressed tears. Just a few lines, but oh, how much they call to mind! The present practically all of Paul’s labor as an apostle and all that was intertwined with it, namely Timothy’s labor and life as the apostle’s disciple and more than a disciple. We are gripped when we read this today.

p. 830

Lenski says further:

. . . “*Thou*, however, *thou* didst follow” in extreme contrast to the people mentioned in v. 2-8. “Follow” is the only proper word. Paul led, Timothy followed: apostle and disciple—father and child beloved (1:1)—leader and companion, associate, assistant—head and guide to inspire, direct, and lend courage—example and friend with whom ever to clasp hands—foremost to bear the brunt and never flinching or uttering complaint, ever noble, true, unconquered, and Timothy ever at his side.

p. 831

He then says finally:

The nine items are in proper order, each item just where it belongs: teaching, conduct, purpose—faith, longsuffering—love, perseverance—persecutions, sufferings; two threes; the second three being a pair each; the second three emphasizing the first three. On the “teaching” rest Paul’s “faith and longsuffering”—on his “conduct” rest his “love and perseverance”—on his “purpose” all that resulted from putting it into effect, all the “persecutions and sufferings,” and these are necessarily plurals.

p. 831

A. T. Robertson says:

Nine associative-instrumental cases here after the verb (*teaching, didaskaliāi*, Rom. 12:7; *conduct* . . . [is an] old word here only in N.T.; *purpose* . . . Rom. 8:28; *faith* . . . I Thess. 3:6; *longsuffering* . . . Col. 1:11; *persecutions* . . . II Thess 1:4; *sufferings* . . . II Cor. 1:6f.). The two last items belong to verse 11.

p. 625

Hendriksen says of these first verses:

Now in view of the fact that grievous seasons will set in, in which wicked men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, Timothy, who has hitherto followed Paul's teaching, etc., should exert himself the more to *abide in* this sound doctrine, which he has learned from trustworthy persons and which is based upon those divinely inspired writings in which from the days of infancy he has been instructed.

p. 289

He says further:

my teaching. Logically this comes first, for it was *the teaching* of Paul, *the gospel* which he preached, which had first of all impressed Timothy, and had been sanctified to his heart unto conversion . . .

p. 291

He then continues:

my conduct. Paul's consecrated walk of life . . . his completely unselfish behavior, giving all honor to God and refusing to receive any honor for himself, had also left its imprint upon Timothy . . . Moreover, not only at the beginning but throughout their association with each other Paul's teaching and his conduct in harmony with that teaching has constantly been watched with sympathetic interest by the younger man.

p. 291

He then says, speaking about "MY PURPOSE":

A man's real, inner person is not clearly evident the first time you meet him. Though his words may be very fine, he may be a deceiver. But when, as in the case of Paul, teaching and conduct are in beautiful harmony, no legitimate doubt remains as to the purpose of one's life.

p. 291

Hendriksen says finally, with regard to “PERSEVERANCE”:

Stedfast perseverance amid trying circumstances, the grace to hold up under, had been characteristic of Paul throughout his glorious missionary-career.
p. 292

Liefeld says:

PAUL’S AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES in the Pastorals serve several purposes. They demonstrate the sovereign grace of God in his life, acknowledge that faithful service does bring suffering, and provide a model for Timothy. The present passage accomplishes the second and third of those purposes. It opens with the emphatic “You, however” which calls Timothy as a witness to the difference between the false teachers just described and Paul’s teaching and way of life.
p. 277

He says further:

In place of the familiar “faith, hope, and love” Paul replaces “hope” with “patience” and after “love” writes “endurance.” These four words convey the idea of waiting a situation out with steadfastness, an appropriate action for a person who has hope.
p. 278

Hawthorne & Martin say:

The Pastoral Letters are revealing here. Although there are hints that they reflect a later, more structured state of affairs, Paul’s associates still have no settled, formal role in the congregations but an ambassadorial, exemplary one . . . They are to relate to people in the churches in a familial way, reflecting their limited age and experience, rather than from a position of command . . . They provide instruction on how the churches are to order certain aspects of their worship and govern themselves, but they do not provide regulations to control these.
pp 136-7

Hawthorne & Martin say further:

The terms *faith* . . . and *love* are frequently linked in Paul's writings: together they represent a summary of his greatest theological and ethical concerns. Reference to his readers' faith in Christ and love for one another often occurs in the initial thanksgiving sections of his letters, and it suggests the importance of these two concepts in his thinking.
p. 576

Matthew Henry says:

Those cannot expect to profit the people at all that preach well and live ill. Timothy fully knew what was the great thing that Paul had in view: "Thou hast known *my purpose*, what I drive at." Timothy fully knew Paul's good character.
p. 1897

He says further:

Those who will live godly must expect it; especially those who will live godly *in Christ Jesus*, especially when they are resolute in it.
p. 1897

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say, speaking on the word:

fully known—lit., "fully followed up" and traced; viz., with a view to following me as thy pattern, so far as I follow Christ; the same *Greek* as in Luke 1:3, "*having had perfect understanding of all things.*"
p. 1379

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown then say further, with regard to the word:

purpose—The *Greek* is elsewhere usually used of *God's* “purpose.” But here, as in Acts 11:23, of Paul’s determined “purpose of heart in cleaving unto the Lord.” My *set aim*, or *resolution*, in my apostolic function, and in every action is, not my selfish gain, but the glory of God in Christ.
p. 1380

They then say further, with regard to:

. . . “endurance”; *patient continuance* in well-doing amidst adversities.
p. 1380

Patrick & Lowth say:

“Thou hast known, thou hast learnt exactly,” as the word imports, Luke i. 4. The primary sense of it, “Thou hast followed, or resembled me, in my persecutions,” may also be applied to Timothy, who was in bonds at Rome also . . .
p. 864

Fee says:

As usual the list has been tailored to the situation. It begins with the two urgent items in these letters, **teaching** and **way of life** . . . then moves to his **purpose** (i.e., Paul’s resolve, his single-minded commitment to Christ). Next appear the cardinal Christian virtues . . . **faith** (toward God), **love** (toward all), and **endurance** (to the End), interrupted in this case with **patience** (forbearance toward others, as well as toward circumstances, in the midst of trying situations;
p. 276

Stott says:

One might paraphrase the apostle's double exhortation to Timothy in verses 10 to 14 like this: 'But as for you, in spite of all the current false teaching, what you have been closely following is *my* doctrine and *my* way of life, together with *my* purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions and sufferings . . . Wicked men and charlatans, deceiving others and themselves deceived, will still make their strange progress from bad to worse. But as for you, you are not to progress in any direction, least of all away from or beyond my teaching (for that would be declension, not advance). On the contrary, you are to stand firm, to continue and abide in what you learned and have believed, because you know from whom you learned it . . .'

pp. 92-93

He says further:

So Paul goes on to list the characteristics of his life, in contrast to that of the self-lovers whom he has characterized in verses 2-5. The emphatic words are the personal pronouns and possessive adjectives. They bring out the contrast clearly: 'For men will be lovers of self . . . *They* will be and do this and that. But as for *you*, Timothy, *you* (as distinct from *them*) have followed *me*, *my* teaching, *my* conduct, *etc.*'

p. 94

Wilson says:

But in contrast to the teachers of error, Timothy is fully qualified to teach the true faith, having closely followed the steps of his master and observed the example thus set both in doctrine and life. Paul describes the content of this course of instruction in a list of nine items.

pp. 153-4

Wilson says further:

'My teaching' is naturally placed first and covers what the apostle taught and the way he taught it, while 'conduct' shows that his manner of life was perfectly consistent with the truth he confessed. Paul was sustained in his 'purpose', his steadfast resolve to devote his life to the furtherance of the gospel, by his own 'faith' in God's word. His 'long-suffering' enabled him to persevere in his labours until the fruit appeared, and this was made possible by his outgoing 'love' for the lost.

p. 154

Barclay has this to say about verse 10:

Here Paul contrasts the conduct of Timothy, his loyal disciple, with the conduct of the heretics who were doing their utmost to wreck the Church. The word which we have translated *to be a disciple* is a word which includes so much that it is beyond translation in any single English word. It is the Greek word *parakolouthein*; it literally means *to follow alongside*; but in Greek it is used with a magnificent width of meaning. It means to follow a person *physically*, to stick by him through thick and thin, to be by his side in fair weather and in foul. It means to follow a person *mentally*, to attend diligently to his teaching, and fully to understand the meaning and the significance of what he says. It means to follow a person *spiritually*, not only to understand what he says, but also to carry out his ideas, and to be the kind of person that he wishes us to be. *Paraklouthein* is indeed the word for the disciple, for it includes the unwavering loyalty to the true comrade, the full understanding of the true scholar, and the complete obedience of the dedicated servant.

p. 224

Barclay, speaking of the matter of “PURPOSE,” says:

First and foremost the apostle has an *aim in life*. Two men were talking of a great satirist who had been filled with moral earnestness. “He kicked the world about,” said one, “as if it had been a football.” “True,” said the other, “but he kicked it to a goal.” As individuals, we should sometimes pause and ask ourselves: what is our aim in life? Have we got one at all? As teachers we should sometimes ask ourselves: what am I trying to do with these people whom I teach? Once Agesilaus, the Sparta king, was asked, “What shall we teach our boys?” His answer was: “That which will be most useful to them when they are men.”

p. 225

Barclay, speaking on the word “PERSEVERANCE,” says:

The Greek word is *hupomonē*, which does not mean a passive sitting down and bearing things; it means a triumphant facing of things, so that out of even evil things there can come good. *Hupomonē* describes, not the spirit which *accepts* life, but the spirit which *masters* life.

And that quality of conquering endurance is necessary, because persecution is an essential part of the experience of an apostle.

pp 226-7

Guy King says:

There will be no denial that Paul’s one great overmastering purpose in life was the all-out, and all-in, service of God. Listen to him on the storm-tossed vessel in Acts [27] xxvii. 23, “God, Whose I am, and Whom I serve”. We may, next, take the “faith” in the sense of fidelity—utter faithfulness to the service which he had undertaken; and the “long-suffering” [which] will indicate something of the price demanded by his fidelity to that purpose to serve.

p. 98

Milne says:

As a result Timothy had been privileged to watch Paul in action—listening to his preaching, observing his lifestyle, studying his professional goals, and learning from his leadership qualities such as faith, love, patience, endurance. Paul had made himself a role model for his younger colleague and disciple, so that when his time for responsible leadership arrived he would know how to react and what to teach.
pp. 162-3

Guthrie says:

In a catalogue of nine features the apostle cites his own example not for his own enhancement but for Timothy's encouragement. Paul's life had borne rich testimony to God's faithfulness.
p. 160

Gaebelein says:

How happy in the Lord Paul must have been that he could point to himself as an example. The grace of God had enabled him to be all he writes to his beloved son Timothy.
p. 194

Joseph Parker says:

So this Paul and his Testament are always writing to oncoming Timothies: it is a great speech to the coming men, a mighty military charge to the infant soldiers of the world. To read the last will and testament of Paul! Let us hasten to it; every word will be music.
p. 151

Spurgeon says:

Paul taught young Timothy the gospel himself: he made him not only hear his doctrine, but see his practice. We cannot force truth upon men, but we can make our own teaching clear and decided, and make our lives consistent therewith. Truth and holiness are the surest antidotes to error and unrighteousness.

p. 880

I'LL NEVER MAKE IT

In February 1985, 60 young people headed south on their bicycles from St. Simons Island, Georgia. Before them stretched a 12,000-mile journey through 34 states. They would circle America in 10 months, a first for Bob Davenport and his Wandering Wheels staff from Taylor University in Upland, Indiana. Could they take the stress of living together under all sorts of conditions? And what about the unending ribbon of highway across parched deserts over steep mountain passes, and through the heavy traffic of large cities? They would have to endure chilling rains, scorching heat, and hostile headwinds on a 27-pound 12-speed Schwinn bike.

Two weeks into the trip, 20-year-old Jane called home from somewhere in Florida. "I'll never make it," she confided in her older brother Kirk. "You can do it, Jane," he urged. "Don't look at the whole trip. Just take it one day at a time!" Today her bike hangs in the garage, weary and worn from its 12,000-mile journey.

God allocates strength in daily amounts.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

LITTLE CHALLENGES

A large department store was very crowded with shoppers. A young mother was having a difficult time with her small daughter, who kept pulling and tugging on her skirt and whining. Finally, the harassed mother softly pleaded, "Quiet now, Cynthia, just calm down and take it easy."

A salesclerk watching commented to the little girl, "So your name is Cynthia."

"Oh, no," interrupted the mother, "her name is Amy. I'm Cynthia."

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(God's Little Devotional Book on Success by Honor Books) Tulsa, OK: Honor Books. Copyright - Honor Books, Inc., 1997.

**It's not enough
to get all the breaks.
You've got to know
how to use them.**

■ ■ ■

He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.
Proverbs 10:5

Shortly after moving into a new home a number of years ago, a family was besieged by salesmen offering everything from laundry service to life insurance. One busy day a dairyman came to their door. “No,” the woman of the house said firmly, “my husband and I don’t drink milk.”

“I’d be glad to deliver a quart every morning for cooking,” the salesman said. “That’s more than I need,” she replied, starting to close the door. “Well, ma’am, how about some cream? Berries comin’ in now, and . . .” She said curtly, “No, we never use cream.”

The dairyman slowly retreated and the woman congratulated herself on her sales resistance. The fact was, she had already ordered from another dairy and she had simply taken the easy way out. The next morning, however, the same dairyman appeared at her door, a bowl of dewy ripe strawberries held carefully in one hand and a half-pint bottle of cream in the other. “Lady,” he said, as he poured the cream over the berries and handed them to her, “I got to thinkin’—you sure have missed a lot!” Needless to say, she switched dairies.²¹

You haven’t exhausted all of your opportunities until you’ve tapped all your creativity—and creativity is an inexhaustible resource!

²¹*Illustrations Unlimited*, James Hewett (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1988), p. 469. pp. 56-57

(God's Little Devotional Book for Leaders by Honor Books, Inc.) Tulsa, OK:
Honor Books. Copyright - Honor Books, Inc., 1997.

**Dreams don't work
unless you do.**

n n n

The desire of the sluggard puts him to death, for his hands refuse to work.
Proverbs 21:25 NASB

Prizefighter James J. Corbett made many memorable statements during his colorful career, but perhaps his most famous was when he was asked, "What is the most important thing for a man to do to become a champion?" Corbett replied, "Fight one more round."

Nearly all successful people have that perspective. Thomas Gray wrote 75 drafts of "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" before he was satisfied with his poetic masterpiece.

S. N. Behrman, an American playwright, wrote plays for eleven years before he sold one. Somerset Maugham earned only \$500 in his first ten years as a writer. While working full-time in a factory, Enrico Caruso studied voice for a dozen years before he became a successful performer. George Gershwin composed almost one hundred melodies before he sold his first one — for \$5. During his first five years as a writer, Zane Grey couldn't sell a single story.

Don't be discouraged if your dream doesn't come true immediately. Continue to pursue your craft or talent. Study and learn. Grow by experience. Keep working. The victory goes to those who are willing to fight "one more round!"

pp. 18-19

(Time-Out Leadership by Donald Luce) Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishing. Copyright - Donald Luce, 1996.

“He conquers who endures.”

ITALIAN PROVERB

Sometimes it seems as though you will never get the big break that you need to really come close to achieving your goals. You try and try. You talk to all the right people. You work hard. You courageously move toward your goals without fear and apprehension. You fight to win. You have ambition. You have drive. Yet nothing happens!

Perseverance is the factor that finally brings you over the edge. Unfortunately, many people give up their goals or compromise on them, because they do not have patience. It is hard to hold your enthusiasm when there is a new obstacle around every corner. You have to, however. You have a vision that is strong and sound. Be patient. It may take only one more phone call. You may need only one more day or one more week. Keep your eye on the end result and you will be able to persevere to make it happen.

Today I take action to be sure that I stick to my goals, no matter how restless I feel. Success is just around the corner.

p. 351

(The Power of Prayer in a Believer’s Life by Charles Spurgeon, compiled and edited by Robert Hall) Lynnwood, WA: Emerald Books. Copyright – Lance C. Wubbels, 1993.

Our first observation is that Daniel was *determined to obtain the blessing that he was seeking*. Note carefully the expression that he used: “I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications” (Dan. 9:3). That setting of the face is expressive of resolute purpose, firm determination, undivided attention, fixed resolute perseverance: “I set my face unto the Lord.” We never do anything in this world until we set our faces thoroughly toward the Lord. The warriors who win battles are those who are resolved to conquer or die. The heroes who emancipate nations are those who count no hazards and reckon no odds but are resolved that the yoke shall be broken from the neck of their country. The merchants who prosper in this world are those who do their business with all their hearts and watch for wealth with eagerness. The half-hearted man gets nowhere in their ace of life, is usually considered contemptible by others, and is a misery to himself. If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing well, and if it is not worth doing thoroughly, wise men let it alone.

p. 80

(*Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage* by Alfred Lansing) Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House. Copyright – Alfred Lansing, 1999.

But **Shackleton** was not an ordinary individual. He was a man who believed completely in his own invincibility and to whom defeat was a reflection of personal inadequacy. What might have been an act of reasonable caution to the average person was to Shackleton a detestable admission that failure was a possibility.
p. 89

Almost everything he had undertaken—the expedition, saving the *Endurance*, and two attempted marches to safety—had failed miserably. In addition, the lives of twenty-seven other men were in his hands. “I am rather tired,” he wrote one day. “I suppose it is the strain.” Then later, “I long for some rest, free from thought.”
p. 90

(*Quotes for the Journey, Wisdom for the Way* compiled by Gordon S. Jackson) Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress. Copyright – Gordon S. Jackson, 2000.

Let each remember that he will make progress in all spiritual things only insofar as he rids himself of self-love, self-will and self-interest.
—ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA
p. 42

(Illustrations Unlimited by James S. Hewett, editor) Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House. Copyright – James S. Hewett, 1988.

LOVE NEVER GIVES UP

A New England girl had just been engaged when the Civil War broke out. Her fiance was called into the army, so their wedding had to be postponed. The young soldier managed to get through most of the conflict without injury, but at the Battle of the Wilderness he was severely wounded. His bride-to-be, not knowing his condition, read and reread his letters, counting the days until he would return. Suddenly the letters stopped coming. Finally she received one, but it was written in an unfamiliar handwriting. It read, “There has been another terrible battle. It is very difficult for me to tell you this, but I have lost both my arms. I cannot write myself. So a friend is writing this letter for me. While you are as dear to me as ever, I feel I should release you from the obligation of our engagement.”

The letter was never answered. Instead, the young woman took the next train and went directly to the place her loved one was being cared for. On arrival she found a sympathetic captain who gave her directions to her soldier’s cot. Tearfully, she searched for him. The moment she saw the young man, she threw her arms around his neck and kissed him. “I will never give you up!” she cried. “These hands of mine will help you. I will take care of you.”

p. 325

(Taking Flight: Wisdom for Your Journey by Elisabeth Elliot) Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. Copyright – Elisabeth Elliot, 1999.

By the grace of God, we can will to do His will. Forget the past. Press toward the goal.

p. 41

(The Little Book of Olympic Inspiration: Quotes, Little Known Facts and Stories of Olympic Glory by Trade Life) Tulsa, OK: Trade Life. Copyright – Trade Life, 1996.

The Outer Limits

After satisfying himself that there must be some absolute limits to human strength, speed, agility, and endurance, Brutus Hamilton, coach of the U.S. Olympic team some twenty years ago, compiled a list of what he considered to be the “ultimate” in track and field performance. Based on his long experience in coaching, Hamilton said that no one would ever . . .

- run the 100-yard dash in less than 9.2 seconds,
- run the mile in less than 3 minutes, 57.8 seconds,
- put the shot more than 62 feet,
- throw the discus more than 200 feet,
- pole vault higher than 16 feet, or
- complete a high jump better than 7 feet, 1 inch.

Since his prediction, every one of these records has been broken.
p. 114

THE WILL THAT WINS

The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will.

—Vincent T. Lombardi

(From *Parson's Technology*)

I saw this little gem on the wall at my son's gymnastics class. It really challenged me as a pastor.

“If you want to perform like a champion, you must practice like one!”

(From *Parson's Technology*)

(The Most Brilliant Thoughts of All Time: In Two Lines or Less edited by John M. Shanahan) New York, NY: HarperCollins. Copyright – John M. Shanahan, 1999.

Success is going from failure to failure without a loss of enthusiasm.

Anonymous

p. 71

You don't hold your own in the world by standing on guard, but by attacking and getting well hammered yourself.

George Bernard Shaw, 1856-1950

p. 75

(God's Most Precious Jewels are Crystallized Tears: True Stories of Women Who Turned Their Misery Into Ministry by Barbara Johnson) Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – Barbara Johnson, 2001.

Like Thelma, the **bumblebee** seems an unlikely prospect for success. Its body is too big; its wingspan too short. "But," as Thelma loves to say, "nobody told that fool it can't fly!" Not knowing any better, the bumblebee happily soars through every day. And so does Thelma. She sees her life as being symbolized by the bumblebee. But to me, she's nothing less than a diamond.

p. 54

**(The Ten(der) Commandments: Reflections on the Father's Love by Ron Mehl)
Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers. Copyright - Ron Mehl, 1998.**

I love the story of **Walter Peyton**, the greathearted, Hall of Fame running back for the Chicago Bears. Greatly esteemed and highly regarded, Peyton's rushing yards are unparalleled. But what amazes me most about this man was his commitment. Through his long career, he rushed more than *nine miles* with a football.

Not long ago, two television football commentators were talking about Peyton's accomplishments. One said, "Can you believe that Walter Peyton has run more than nine miles with the football?" The other announcer replied, "Let me tell you what's really amazing. Did you know that every 3.8 yards Peyton was knocked down by a guy twice his size? And he did *that* for nine miles."

Every 3.8 yards, the man got hit by what seemed to be a freight train. But do you know what he did? He got back up, tucked in his shirt, and trotted (or limped) back to the huddle. It was Walter Peyton's commitment that kept him going through all those miles of bruising hits and hard knocks.

That principle works just the same way in a marriage. And the best part is this: when you have the Lord in your life, He's blocking for you! You don't have to keep that commitment alone.

pp. 188-9

v. 11 Persecutions, sufferings, such as came to me in Antioch, in Iconium, in Lystra, what manner of persecutions I endured; and out of them all the Lord delivered me.

Thus far we have considered in verse 10, the fact that Timothy has “followed faithfully” the apostle’s:

1. **“TEACHING,”**
2. **“CONDUCT,”**
3. **“PURPOSE,”**
4. **“FAITH,”**
5. **“STEADFASTNESS,”**
6. **“LOVE,”** and
7. **“PERSEVERANCE.”**

While here in verse 11, we have:

8. **“PERSECUTIONS”** and
9. **“SUFFERINGS.”**

We then have the **LOCATION** of some of these:

1. **“ANTIOCH,”**
2. **“ICONIUM,”** and
3. **“LYSTRA.”**

8. Timothy has “FOLLOWED FAITHFULLY” Paul’s PERSECUTIONS.

2 Corinthians 4:8-12 (TLB)

We are pressed on every side by troubles, but not crushed and broken. We are perplexed because we don’t know why things happen as they do. But we don’t give up and quit. We are hunted down, but God never abandons us. We got knocked down, but we get up again and keep going. These bodies of ours are constantly facing death just as Jesus did; so it is clear to all that it is only the living Christ within [who keeps us safe]. Yes, we live under constant danger to our lives because we serve the Lord, but this gives us constant opportunities to show forth the power of Jesus Christ within our dying bodies. Because of our preaching, we face death, but it has resulted in eternal life for you.

The ninth word that Paul uses is:

“SUFFERINGS.”

Paul has much to say about “SUFFERINGS” in this little epistle. We read in:

2 Timothy 1:8

Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God;

2 Timothy 2:3

Suffer hardships with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 2:9 (version unknown)

For which I am suffering hardship even wearing chains as a criminal, but the word of God has not been bound.

In the next phrase, Paul lists **THREE CITIES** where he had endured **“SUFFERINGS”**:

1. **“ANTIOCH,”**
2. **“ICONIU,”** and
3. **“LYSTRA.”**

Acts 13 records the account of Paul being in Antioch. After preaching there, the Jews became jealous. We read in:

Acts 13:50 (TLB)

Then the Jewish leaders stirred up both the godly women and the civic leaders of the city and incited a mob against Paul and Barnabas, and ran them out of town.

From **“ANTIOCH”** they went on to **“ICONIUM.”** The record of this visit is seen in Acts, the results of which we read in:

Acts 14:5, 6 (TLB)

When Paul and Barnabas learned of a plot to incite a mob of Gentiles, Jews, and Jewish leaders to attack and stone them, they fled for their lives going to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra, Derbe, and the surrounding area . . .

The account of what took place in **“LYSTRA”** is seen in:

Acts 14:19 (TLB)

Yet only a few days later, some Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium and turned the crowds into a murderous mob that stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, apparently dead.

It is believed by many that **TIMOTHY'S HOMETOWN** was **“LYSTRA.”**

William Hendriksen says:

Timothy had heard Paul's preaching at Lystra, had probably witnessed the miraculous cure of the born-cripple, the manner in which Paul (and Barnabas) had restrained the multitude from worshipping him, and the stoning. Very vividly Timothy must have recalled how the people, believing that Paul was dead, had dragged him out of the city . . . On this occasion or shortly afterward the new convert must also have learned about the tribulations which the missionaries had endured just before entering Lystra, namely, at Antioch . . . and at Iconium . . .
p. 292

What a **VICTORIOUS PHRASE** we find at the conclusion of verse 11:

"OUT OF THEM ALL THE LORD DELIVERED ME."

One is reminded at this point of:

2 Timothy 2:19 (version unknown)

However the firm foundation of God stands, having this inscription
"The Lord knows those who are his, and let those who are naming the name of the Lord abstain from all wickedness."

We are also reminded of the statement in:

2 Timothy 2:9 (version unknown)

For which I am suffering hardship, even wearing chains as a criminal,
but the Word of God has not been bound.

Psalm 50:15

and call upon me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you will honor me.”

Psalm 34:17-19

The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them;
he delivers them from all their troubles.
The Lord is close to the brokenhearted
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.
A righteous man may have many troubles,
but the Lord delivers him from them all;

Milne says:

Repeatedly Paul had managed to elude his enemies and to go on to do more work for Christ. He attributed all of this good fortune to the personal oversight of Christ his Lord who had intervened providentially for him again and again. Even in his present imprisonment in Rome Paul had been experiencing the same faithfulness of his Lord towards him . . . These repeated experiences of divine deliverance had built up in Paul the confidence that the one who had called him to suffer in his service . . . would always stand by him to rescue him by his presence.

p. 164

King says:

. . . “out of them all the Lord delivered me”. Not “from”, you notice—as if we are told we shall not have unpleasant things. The Christian is not necessarily granted immunity from the sufferings of the common human lot: here and there, with one or another, that may be in God’s plan for him; but normally he will be subject to the buffetings and batterings of life. Yes, they may *hurt* him, but they will not *harm* him, for “*out of them all*” he shall be delivered. I love to recall this same truth in Daniel [3] iii. 17—“Our God . . . is able to deliver us from . . . and He will deliver us out of . . .” He is perfectly well able to prevent them being thrown into the burning fiery furnace, if that be His plan; but they cannot rely on that, must not expect it. Their business is to go loyally on, fully assured that He most certainly will deliver them “out of”, even if not “from”. How we may praise God for His wonderful “out of” deliverances: that, by His infinite grace, we shall be brought through life, if not unscarred, at least unsullied.

pp. 100-101

Stott says:

The reference to ‘steadfastness’ or ‘endurance’ naturally leads on to the ‘persecutions’ and the ‘sufferings’ which Paul had had to endure. In particular, he mentions the three Galatian cities Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, because Timothy was a citizen of Lystra and had possibly himself witnessed the occasion when the apostle had been stoned by a hostile mob, dragged out of the city and left in the gutter for dead, though from this and all other persecutions so far the Lord had rescued him. Perhaps Paul’s courage under persecution had even played a part in Timothy’s conversion, much as Stephen’s bravery in martyrdom had done in Paul’s.

pp. 95-96

Fee comments:

. . . **Yet the Lord**, as you well know, **rescued me from all of them** . . . which in this case, of course, does not mean **rescued** from the persecutions themselves but from the death that was so often at hand. “So take heart, pilgrim, because you, too,” Paul assures him in the next sentence, “are due for your share of the sufferings.”

p. 277

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say this verse is:

An encouragement to Timothy not to fear persecutions.
p. 1380

Matthew Henry says:

The apostle's life was very exemplary for three things: for his *doctrine*, for his *life*, and for his *persecutions and sufferings*. His life was a life of great usefulness, yet it was a life of great sufferings. The apostle mentions the Lord's delivering him out of them all, for Timothy's and our encouragement under suffering.
p. 1897

Hawthorne & Martin say:

The wisdom and power of God first made known through the cross and resurrection of Christ were therefore now being further manifest and revealed publicly through Paul's own suffering as an apostle.
p. 920

They say further:

These lists aim at magnifying the sage's endurance . . . and serenity . . . proving that he is a *sophos* [or a wise person] who cannot be prevented from acting virtuously by even the most dire calamities.
p. 972

A. T. Robertson says:

What persecutions I endured . . . Qualitative relative again with *diōgmous*. The verb is first aorist active indicative of *hupopherō*, old verb, to bear under as in I Cor. 10:13.
p. 625

Lenski says:

The subject and the predicate are transposed, and thus both are emphatic: *this* is what the Lord did, *this* is, indeed, what *he* did. Timothy saw and knew all of it at the time, and such things in Paul's past life and work he followed.
p. 833

Griffiths says:

. . . Paul uses the Bible to support and strengthen him in his sufferings, here echoing Psalm 34:19, a psalm in which 'saved' and 'delivered' recur again and again). The Lord is not rescuing him from being attacked, or having to suffer, but, so far, from death, its possible result.
p. 202

J. Vernon McGee says:

Timothy knew well Paul's suffering which he had endured in his journeys. Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, and Lystra were all places in the Galatian country where Paul had gone on his first, second, and third missionary journeys. When Paul was at Lystra, he was stoned and left for dead—I think he *was* dead and God raised him up from the dead. Paul said that God intervened in his behalf: "But out of them all the Lord delivered me." Timothy knew of these things because he and his family were from that area.
p. 472

Kelly says:

. . . **yet the Lord rescued me from them all**—expresses Paul's spontaneous gratitude as he looks back on his career; it is also intended as an encouragement to Timothy, who can rely on similar help.
p. 199

Hughes says:

This is a near quotation of Psalm 34:19, where King David celebrated his deliverance. The only way Paul was going to get released from his dungeon was by going to his death, and he was at peace with that. But God had rescued him time and time again, which meant that he would do it for Timothy again and again if he willed to do so. Actually God always rescues his people—either in this life or by taking them to Heaven! And God’s final rescue of Paul was the best of all.

p. 233

Lea & Griffin say:

Paul concluded his observation of hardship with a reference to Ps 34:19, exclaiming that God had indeed rescued him from death and disobedience to his calling. Hendriksen notes: “The Lord ever rescues his people, frequently from death, sometimes by means of death. Either way, nothing ever separates them from his love (Rom 8:38-39).”³⁸ Paul’s words reminded Timothy of the certainty of suffering, but they also contained a promise of divine protection.³⁹

p. 231

Calvin says:

The fact that afflictions always end happily is most consoling and goes a long way to mitigating their bitterness. If anyone objects that the happy end he claims is not always obvious, I agree that this is true as far as outward appearances are concerned, for Paul himself had not yet been set free from prison. But by delivering us often, God testifies that he is with us and will always be with us. From our present experience of his help, we should take confidence about the future. It is as if Paul said, “You know from experience that God has never failed me, so that there is no reason for you to hesitate to follow my example.”

p. 152

Lock says:

Wohlenberg separates this verse from 10, and treats it as an exclamation. Oh, what I suffered! what persecutions I endured from the first—yet the Lord delivered me!

. . . There is here perhaps a conscious reminiscence of Ps 33:18 and 20.
p. 108

Joseph Parker says:

After the “Amen” of Timothy, tradition, not history, follows Paul away, sees him fall down before the execution, sees the uplifted flashing sword, sees the venerable head rolling in the dust. It was a grand Amen—“it may be that only in heaven we shall hear the grand Amen.” How stood the old man at the last? Bravely? Tell us, ye that saw him, how he looked: did he tremble, did he apologise, did he ask for mercy? The account is before us. It never could have been such an ending, but for the great ribwork of principles round about the man, and in which he lived.

p. 151

THE MAMARTIME PRISON IN ROME

One man who traveled to the Mamartime Prison wrote this about it:

“Descending the winding stone staircase, you come finally to the dismal dark low-arched chamber where the apostle once lay bound, waiting to be offered up. Even on a hot summer day the visitor in Rome will sense the constriction of the low ceiling and the dampness of that dark dungeon.”

That describes the place where the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy.

(From Parson's Technology)

SUFFERING

A deep distress has humanized my soul.

—WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)

A man who fears suffering is already suffering from what he fears.

—MICHAEL EYQUEM DE MONTAIGNE (1533-1592)

A man who has not suffered, what does he know?

—HENRY SUSO (1295-1366)

Accept suffering graciously. When you have reached such a point, all misery will seem sweet and you will relish it for Christ's sake and think that you have discovered paradise on earth. As long as you object to suffering you will be ill at ease. Accept it, and you will find peace.

—THOMAS À KEMPIS (c. 1380-1471)

Affliction can be a treasure. Absolutely functional, it triggers life's greatest insights and accomplishments.

—FRED GREVE

All thought worth thinking is conceived in the furnace of suffering.

—THOMAS CARLYLE (1795-1881)

Better to suffer ill, than do ill.

—PROVERB

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

(Final Call by Steven J. Lawson) Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books. Copyright - Steven J. Lawson, 1994.

In America today, we Christians are losing our religious freedom at the hands of our government. Our spiritual liberties are being stripped away almost daily as persecution from our government is increasing. Consider the examples that follow. (Granted, some of these situations have not occurred everywhere, but they are happening in an increasing number of places.)

It is unconstitutional today if a student prays out loud over his lunch in school.

It is unconstitutional today for kindergarten students to recite, “We thank You for the flowers so sweet, we thank You for the food we eat, we thank You for the birds that sing, we thank You for everything.” (You’ll notice there is no mention of God in that prayer. Yet, it acknowledges one who is the Giver of all good thing.)

It is unconstitutional today for students to arrive voluntarily early to school and to read out loud prayers that have been uttered by the chaplains in the U. S. Senate and House of Representatives and imprinted in the congressional records.

It is unconstitutional today for a Board of Education to use or refer to the word God in any of their official writings.

It is unconstitutional today for a kindergarten class to ask during a holiday celebration, “Whose birthday is it?”

It is unconstitutional today for the Ten Commandments to be hung on the walls of our schools.

It is unconstitutional today to introduce any bill, though it may be completely religiously neutral, if it can be ascertained that the person who introduced that bill had some religious motive.

It is unconstitutional for a school graduation to contain an opening prayer or a closing prayer.

In Alaska in 1987, some students were told they could not use the word “Christmas” because it contained the name Christ. Nor could it be found written in any of their notebooks by their own hand. Nor could they pass out Christmas cards to their friends in school (see the James Kennedy TV sermon/booklet, Dawn’s Early Light).

If you think that’s bad, those are just nine isolated sightings. There are currently some 500 cases just like these now proceeding through our legal systems. With every passing day, there are greater bites being taken out of our religious freedom. The nose of the government’s anti-Christian agenda is being slipped around our neck, and one day, sooner than we would like to think, it is going to jerk a knot around our throats.

pp. 98-99

(Final Call by Steven J. Lawson) Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books. Copyright - Steven J. Lawson, 1994.

There are countless churches across this land that are nothing more than strongholds of Satan. They do not preach the true gospel of Christ. They deny the inerrancy of Scripture. They cast scorn on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. They promote all kinds of sexual license. They have forsaken the Word of God by ordaining homosexuals into the ministry of their churches. They condone living in gross perversion.

These “churches” are hellholes—synagogues of Satan—that will, one day soon, persecute the true church of God.

p. 103

v. 12 And indeed all those who are desiring to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Paul is making a **SUMMARY STATEMENT** to Timothy telling him that he can expect suffering if he is going to be living in a **"GODLY"** manner **"IN CHRIST JESUS."**

Philippians 1:29 (KJV)

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.

1 Peter 2:21

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

George McDonald, in his Handbook of Preaching, says:

Millions of human beings, but for suffering, would never develop an atom of affection. A man who would spare due suffering is not wise. It is folly to conclude a thing ought not to be perfected, sinners to be redeemed through the ministry of pain, that could be born perfected redeemed in no other way.
p. (unknown)

Matthew 5:10-12

“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men revile you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

John 15:18-21

If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.

1 Thessalonians 3:3, 4

so that no man may be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know.

1 Peter 1:6, 7

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Romans 8:18

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

. . . Timothy could . . . expect the situation to get worse and the pressure to intensify.
p. 757

Calvin says:

It is pointless to try and separate Christ from his cross, and it is only natural that the world should hate Christ even in his followers. And since cruelty goes with hatred, persecutions come. We should reckon with the fact that if we are Christians, we will be liable to many tribulations and struggles of different kinds.

p. 152

Lea & Griffin say:

Persecution “may vary in degree and take different forms in different countries and in different ages, but the basic hostility of the world to the godly man remains unchanged.”⁴¹ Christians will suffer because the world is hostile to the kingdom of God.

p. 232

Hughes says:

If anyone accepts a set of standards that are different from the world’s standards, he is bound to have trouble. And if, as Barclay says, “Anyone proposes to introduce into his life a loyalty which surpasses all earthly loyalties, then there are bound to be clashes and collisions.”⁷ Some form of opposition will come if we attempt to witness to a world that hates to be told the truth and loves darkness.

p. 234

J. Vernon McGee says:

I believe that we are beginning to move into a time in this country when it will cost you something to be a Christian. Melvin Laird, long before he was Secretary of Defense, made a statement in San Francisco at a Republican convention. I do not know the circumstances which prompted the statement, but he said, “In this world it is becoming more and more unpopular to be a Christian. Soon it may become dangerous.” We are seeing the accuracy of this statement. Real Christianity and real Christians are becoming very unpopular.

p. 472

A. T. Robertson says:

“Those who desire (will, determine) to live godly.” Paul does not regard his experience as peculiar, but only part of the price of loyal service to Christ. *Shall suffer persecution* . . . Future passive of *diōkō*, “shall be persecuted” (shall be hunted as wild beasts).
p. 626

Hawthorne & Martin say:

The existence of conflict can strengthen a group by defining its boundaries, disciplining its members, bonding them together in more intense relationships against a common enemy . . . demanding total adherence and heightening the sense members have of belonging. As well as energizing a group, it calls forth creative leadership and even makes a group attractive to nonmembers. All this is evident in the churches of Paul.
p. 886

They say further:

When seeking to encourage his converts, Paul reminded them that they had been granted the privilege “not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well” (Phil 1:29 NRSV). This was something for which they had been destined (1 Thess 3:3-4; cf. 2 Tim 3:12).
p. 19

They say finally:

Paul recognizes that all Christians simply *will suffer* as a result of identifying themselves with Christ . . . and, to varying degrees, as a result of their distinct circumstances, since such suffering is inevitable in this evil age . . .
p. 920

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

. . . if he *wishes to live godly in Christ*, he must make up his mind to encounter persecution.
p. 1380

Milne says:

Suffering is Christ's school, in which he teaches his servants some of the deepest lessons of faith and life so that they can instruct and counsel those who are suffering (2 Cor. 1:3-11). How a Christian teacher handles and interprets suffering says a great deal about his own relationship to God and the quality of his work for Christ.
p. 163

He then says further:

Because a life of godliness lived out of loyalty to Jesus Christ as King runs directly counter to this world's ungodly aims and values, friction results which spills over into persecution of one degree of intensity or another (John 15:18-21).
p. 164

Gaebelein says:

If the believer is true to the Lord, if he lives in separation, the world, and especially that which is called "the religious world," with its unscriptural aims and endeavors, will not applaud him, but he will have to bear the reproach of Christ and suffer persecution. Why do so few Christians suffer persecutions? Because they have not purged themselves from the vessels unto dishonor, and are consequently yoked with unbelievers.
p. 194

Wilson says:

Moreover, Paul's experience was not exceptional, for persecution is the lot of all who intend to live a godly life in union with Christ Jesus . . . The world's hostility to the gospel will not always be of the same intensity, but in so far as it 'retains its native character, those who are bent on leading in it lives of piety shall have to meet persecution' (Fairbairn).
pp. 154-5

Hendriksen says:

Now the apostle makes the definite statement that *all* those who desire to live devoutly in Christ Jesus *will be persecuted*. Paul's own experience (see verse 11 above) is by no means peculiar. Scars are the price which *every* believer pays for his loyalty to Christ. They are also his *credentials* before God.
p. 293

Barnes says:

Paul takes occasion from the reference to his own persecutions, to say that his case was not peculiar. It was the common lot of all who endeavoured to serve their Redeemer faithfully; and Timothy himself, therefore, must not hope to escape from it.
p. 237

Demarest is telling a story from a novel when he says:

. . . "Mr. Nene rose, and looked cheerfully around him. 'I don't worry about the wounds. When I go up there, which is my intention, the Big Judge will say to me, "Where are your wounds?" and if I say I haven't any, he will say, "Was there nothing to fight for?" I couldn't face that question.'"
p. 281

Larson says:

Timothy had experienced it before, was suffering under it now, and would undoubtedly continue in the sufferings of Christ after Paul's execution. Distress belongs to the believer who commits himself to loyal obedience and growth in godliness. But it remains in the hands of each believer whether he will choose the life of godly obedience or shy away into the shadows of compromise.

p. 305

Larson says further:

- Truth will always be opposed. A spiritual war rages, and those who commit themselves to living obediently to Christ will suffer; often the persecution will be harsh.

p. 308

He then says finally:

We need to understand, however, that suffering takes many forms. The root word which Paul used for persecution, *dioko*, carries the meaning of "pursuit," or "chasing after." In other words, those who commit themselves to godly living will be hounded by those who are intent on evil, ungodliness, and deception; the righteous will not be left alone. Though inwardly they rest in the peace of God, outwardly they encounter the relentless antagonism of Satan through those who are opposed to God.

This pressure may evidence itself through torture, beatings, imprisonment, or death. But the godly may also experience persecution in the form of betrayal, hatred, scorn, slander, and contempt. These express the hostility of those who are opposed to Christ and his followers.

p. 309

Quinn & Wacker say:

Lit. “And . . . all persons . . . moreover . . . wishing . . . to live in a godly way in Christ Jesus will be persecuted . . .”
p. 737

They say further:

In this verse, as a reflective appendix to and justification for the long list that has preceded, with its final stress on apostolic sufferings, the author now adds . . . “Moreover, all who want . . . to live in a godly way in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”
p. 744

Knight says:

Thus, as a general rule, all Christians “will be persecuted” as Paul was . . . This principle was already stated by Jesus . . . and by Paul, both on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:22) and in his earliest correspondence (1 Thes. 3:4).
p. 441

Towner says:

Paul does not expand on the purpose of suffering in this letter. Instead, we, along with Timothy, learn simply that it is a normal part of the Christian experience.
p. 198

He says further:

In light of this history, the present struggle was nothing new. The apostle might just as well have said, “You have been there before [from the beginning], you are there now, and you will be there again.” To suffer for Christ is normal, and not just for apostles and their disciples.
p. 199

Towner says finally:

If Paul's concept of godliness is understood and embraced by us, we can expect in some measure to pay the price of following Christ.
p. 199

In my book, **Drawing Closer Growing Stronger**, I have this to say:

My precious Pearl paints the graphic picture of the way it all happens:

Ah, suffering my painful friend;
you take the bubble of comfort
I have so carefully built around myself
and in a seemingly cruel fashion
snatch it from my clinging hands
and dash it to the ground;
where it breaks into a hundred pieces
and leaves me exposed and trembling.
Again, I must make the choice:
Do I retreat or do I move on?

p. 189

DELAY, NOT DENIAL

When God does not immediately respond to the cries of His children, it is because He wants to accomplish some gracious purpose in their lives. The life of **John Bunyan** is an example of this. The door of the jail in which he was confined has been preserved in Bedford, England. We don't know what agonizing petitions must have ascended to Heaven from behind that heavy barrier. Yet it remained locked for 12 long years. This delay, however, was most fruitful, for within his bolted prison cell Bunyan wrote that outstanding Christian allegory **The Pilgrim's Progress**. If he had been given his freedom shortly after his imprisonment, millions of people would have been denied the help and encouragement of his great inspirational classic.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Are you going through a hard time? Maybe these words from a song sung by **Kristine Wyrzten** will help you like they helped me. The song is called *The Fire*:

I've been through a fire that has deepened my desire, to know the living God more and more.

It hasn't been much fun, but the work that it has done in my life has been worth the hurt.

You see sometimes we need the hard times to bring us to our knees, otherwise we do as we please and never heed him.

For he always knows what's best and it's when we are distressed that we really come to know God as he is.

(From *Parson's Technology*)

MORALS OF THE STORY

A little bird was flying south for the winter. It got so cold it froze up and fell to the ground in a large field. While it was lying there, a cow came by and dropped some manure on it. As it lay there in the pile of manure, it began to realize how warm it was. The manure was actually thawing him out! He lay there all warm and happy, and soon began to sing for joy. A passing cat heard the little bird singing, and promptly dug him out—and then ate him.

The morals of the story are:

1. Not everyone who drops manure on you is your enemy.
2. Not everyone who digs you out of a pile of manure is your friend.
3. When you're in the manure, keep your mouth shut!

Source unknown

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

SUFFERING

Supposing you eliminated suffering, what a dreadful place the world would be! I would almost rather eliminate happiness. The world would be the most ghastly place because everything that corrects the tendency of this unspeakable little creature, man, to feel over-important and over-pleased with himself would disappear. He's bad enough now, but he would be absolutely intolerable if he never suffered. However, we needn't fear that.

—MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE (1903-1990)

The avoidance of legitimate suffering means we also avoid the growth that problems demand of us.

—CHARLES R. SWINDOLL (1934-)

The language of heartbreak is not learned in the schools of men but in the furnace of suffering and the crucible of trouble.

—VANCE HAVNER

Pearls are the product of pain . . . a precious, tiny jewel conceived through irritation, born of adversity, nursed by adjustments. Some oysters are never wounded . . . and those who seek for gems toss them aside, fit only for stew.

—CHARLES R. SWINDOLL (1934-)

Oft the cloud which wraps the present hour,
Serves but to brighten all our future days!

—JOHN BROWN (1715-1766)

It is the fire of suffering which will bring forth the gold of godliness.

—MADAME JEANNE MARIE DE LA MOTHE GUYON (1648-1717)

Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong.

—HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807-1882)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

God is a Master Artist. And there are aspects of your life and character—good, quality things—he wants others to notice. So without using blatant tricks or obvious gimmicks, God brings the cool, dark contrast of suffering into your life. That contrast, laid up against the golden character of Christ within you, will draw attention . . . to him. Light against darkness. Beauty against affliction. Joy against sorrow. A sweet, patient spirit against pain and disappointment—major contrasts that have a way of attracting notice. You are the canvas on which he paints glorious truths, sharing beauty, and inspiring others. So that people might see him.

—JONI EARECKSON TADA

God's wisest saints are often people who endure pain rather than escape it.

—CHARLES R. SWINDOLL (1934-)

Great souls suffer in silence.

—JOHANN FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER (1759-1805)

He who suffers much will know much.

—GREEK PROVERB

I can look back at my darkest periods and realize that these were the times when the Lord was holding me closest. But I couldn't see his face because my face was in his breast—crying.

—JOHN MICHAEL TALBOT

I love the majesty of human suffering.

—ALFRED DE VIGNY (1797-1863)

I owe more to the fire and the hammer and the file than to anything else in my Lord's workshop. I sometimes question whether I have ever learned anything except through the rod. When my schoolroom is darkened, I see most.

—CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON (1834-1892)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

Faith

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
 The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;
 When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
 Help of the helpless, O, abide with me
 Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
 Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
 Change and decay in all around I see;
 Thou, who changest not, abide with me.

Henry Francis Lyte (1793-1847), British hymn writer and clergyman.
 "Abide with Me" (1847?).

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Elisabeth Elliot, speaking about John 11 and the death of Lazarus, says:

(Taking Flight: Wisdom for Your Journey by Elisabeth Elliot) Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. Copyright – Elisabeth Elliot, 1999.

The truth of the story is that God knew what was happening. Nothing was separating the grieving women from His love. He heard their prayers, counted their tears, held His peace. *But He was faithful, and He was at work.* He had a grand miracle in mind.

The duration of my suffering may be longer than that of Lazarus's sisters, but if I believe, trust, flee to God for refuge, I am safe even in my sorrow, I am held by the confidence of God's utter trustworthiness. He is at work, producing miracles I haven't imagined. I must wait for them.

p. 95

(Wild At Heart: Discovering The Secret of A Man's Soul by John Eldredge)
 Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. Copyright – John Eldredge, 2001.

Yes. True strength does not come out of bravado. Until we are broken, our life will be self-centered, self-reliant; our strength will be our own. So long as you think you are really something in and of yourself, what will you need God for? I don't trust a man who hasn't suffered; I don't let a man get close to me who hasn't faced his wound. Think of the posers you know—are they the kind of man you would call at 2:00 A.M., when life is collapsing around you? Not me. I don't want clichés; I want deep, soulful truth, and that only comes when a man has walked the road I've been talking about. As Buechner says,

To do for yourself the best that you have it in you to do—to grit your teeth and clench your fists in order to survive the world at its harshest and worst—is, by that very act, to be unable to let something be done for you and in you that is more wonderful still. The trouble with steeling yourself against the harshness of reality is that the same steel that secures your life against being destroyed secures your life also against being opened and transformed. (*The Sacred Journey*)

p. 137

As **Rick Joyner** says, "It is an honor to be wounded in the service of the Lord."
 p. 176

(Great Souls at Prayer: Fourteen Centuries of Prayer, Praise and Aspiration by Mary W. Tileston) New Canaan, CT: Keats Publishing, Inc.
 Copyright – unknown, 1983.

. . . And when the storm is loud, and the night is dark, and the soul is sad, and the heart oppressed; then, as weary travellers, may we look to Thee; and beholding the light of Thy love, may it bear us on, until we learn to sing Thy song in the night. . . .

George Dawson.

p. 333

(A Bend in the Road: Experiencing God When Your World Caves In by David Jeremiah) Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – Word Publishing, 2000.

M. Scott Peck begins his bestseller *The Road Less Traveled* with three simple, indisputable words, “Life is difficult.” Who will argue with that? Life *is* difficult.

My cancer diagnosis confirmed Peck’s words. It was a profoundly disruptive moment in my life. This was no mere bump in the road, it felt like a gigantic and bottomless pothole. It opened up my road quite suddenly, with no highway markers to warn me, and I plunged into its darkness. I had not been offered alternate routes or given a vote on the matter.

Life is difficult, and difficulty is the only path to wisdom.

p. 10

British journalist Malcolm Muggeridge wisely explained this concept to William F. Buckley: “As an old man, Bill, looking back on one’s life, it’s one of the things that strikes you most forcibly—that the only thing that’s taught one anything is suffering. Not success, not happiness, not anything like that. The only thing that really teaches one what life’s about—the joy of understanding, the joy of coming in contact with what life really signifies—is suffering, affliction.”⁴

4. MacDonald, *The Life God Blesses*, 25-26.

p. 17

THIS IS UNREAL!

I didn't realize I was a "cultist" until I read Janet Reno's definition of one (see below). Now, I find out I'm not only a cultist, but a threat to my country! I don't think I need to say any more!

Read this statement from Janet Reno:

"A cultist is one who has a strong belief in the Bible and the Second Coming of Christ; who frequently attends Bible studies; who has a high level of financial giving to a Christian cause; who home schools their children; who has accumulated survival foods and has strong belief in the Second Amendment; and who distrusts big government.

"Any of these may qualify a person as a cultist but certainly more than one of these would cause us to look at this person as a threat and his family as being in a risk situation that qualifies for government interference."

Janet Reno, Attny. General of the United States during an Interview with CBS "60 Minutes" on June 26, 1999.

Do YOU qualify as a cultist by Reno's definition? Are you (as defined by the US Attorney General) a threat to the U.S.? This concerns me. Does it bother you? Everyone in this country—"the land of the free" with computer access should copy this and send a copy to every other man, woman and child who has the ability to read.

(Received via e-mail from David Coleman, July 17, 2000)

(Quotes for the Journey, Wisdom for the Way compiled by Gordon S. Jackson)
Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress. Copyright – Gordon S. Jackson, 2000.

Dear God: Help me get up. I can fall down by myself.

—JEWISH SAYING

p. 169

A season of suffering is a small price to pay for a clear view of God.

—MAX LUCADO

p. 169

(Shattered Dreams: God's Unexpected Pathway to Joy by Larry Crabb)
 Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press. Copyright – Lawrence J. Crabb, Jr., 2001.

If given the choice, we would prefer to keep whatever happiness we've already found. Like the child who never wants to grow beyond the wide-eyed excitement of Christmas morning, we like to remain naively happy. Keep the blessings coming. Keep the good times rolling. When we signed on to the Christian life, that's what we thought was the deal. We do what we're told, and God stacks presents under the tree.

p. 56

(God's Most Precious Jewels are Crystallized Tears: True Stories of Women Who Turned Their Misery Into Ministry by Barbara Johnson)
 Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – Barbara Johnson, 2001.

God is too good to be unkind and He is too wise to be mistaken. And when we cannot trace His hand, we must trust His heart.

—CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON

p. 45

Barb's gem: *We talk about grief and hardship as time spent in the "the valley." But later, looking back from the hilltop, we see that it was there, in that valley, that we became better persons, selfless servants, stronger Christians. As my daughter-in-love, Shannon, says, we grow when we're down in the valley, because that's where the fertilizer is!*

p. 173

(The Christian in Complete Armour by William Gurnall) Chicago, IL: Moody Press. Copyright - James S. Bell, Jr., 1994.

He refused to let himself or any other Christian undervalue the inheritance or the love of God that settled this glory on him by dwelling on the severity of suffering. It is as if he asked, "Has God made us His heirs, and given us heaven, for us to sit down and moan about a few minor problems in our short lives?" How important can suffering be, compared to the vast circumference of eternity that we will spend worshiping at the feet of Jesus?

(September 26)

**(Diamonds in the Dust: 366 Sparkling Devotions by Joni Eareckson Tada)
Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – Joni Eareckson Tada, 1993.**

Suffering According to God's Will

“So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.”

—1 Peter 4:19

All suffering is within God's sovereign will. There is not a sparrow that falls without His knowledge or a soul lost for eternity without His tearful purpose being accomplished. In the midst of the expanse of the sovereign will of God is one kind of suffering initiated by us that God not only allows but rewards.

There are many ways to suffer in this world, where things happen to us. But the kind of suffering referred to by Peter is suffering we experience by choice, through obedience. Such obedience may result in mockery, beatings, discrimination, trials, and temptations. It's the price one pays for having our bodies in the world and our spirits in the kingdom. Like being on a rack, we can't escape the torture.

My wheelchair is a suffering that came from the sovereign purpose of the glory of God. And since that time twenty-five years ago, I've always suffered things that have come upon my spirit as a result of being in the kingdom. I have chosen to flee temptation, to drag my body from church to hospital, to endure the scorn of those who don't know God. And I have suffered as a result. Such is the will of God for my life.

The common suffering He comforts. The godly suffering He rewards. Exchange neither for anything. We can “entrust our souls to a faithful Creator.”

Lord, grant my strength to endure the common sufferings of life and the willful sufferings of Your kingdom. In all these, may Your presence sustain me and Your glory be made known.

(September 24)

In essence, Paul is saying to Timothy:

“It's a law of life for believers. 'ALL THOSE WHO ARE DESIRING TO LIVE GODLY IN CHRIST JESUS WILL BE PERSECUTED.' Timothy, you are not alone in this. Even as I have faced the persecution, so you, as well, will face the same.”

v. 13 But evil men and imposters will go on from bad to worse, leading astray and being led astray.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

. . . **evil men and impostors** (lit., “magicians,” but here with the connotation of “charlatans”) **go from bad to worse** (lit., “advance further”) . . . Error feeds on itself.
p. 757

In this verse we get the **CONTRAST** between the:

RIGHTEOUS and

WICKED.

We see in Psalm 1, the entire Psalm contrasts the righteous and the wicked and is summarized in:

Psalm 1:6 (version unknown)

The Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

There are **THREE THINGS** that Paul is going to say here about the **“EVIL MEN AND IMPOSTERS”**:

1. **“[They] GO ON FROM BAD TO WORSE.”**

This is the obvious conclusion of what we have seen in the first verses of this chapter, as he has characterized these wicked men.

2. **“[They are] LEADING ASTRAY.”**

We have seen in:

2 Timothy 2:18 (version unknown)

the very ones who have deviated from the truth saying that the resurrection already has taken place and they are upsetting the faith of some.

3. **“[They are] BEING LED ASTRAY.”**

They are not only **“LEADING ASTRAY”** others, but they likewise themselves are **“BEING LED ASTRAY”** by:

SATAN,

SELF, and

SIN.

The **CONTRAST** between the believer and the unbeliever is for the:

BELIEVER, things constantly go from **BAD TO BETTER**, and

UNBELIEVER, things go **“FROM BAD TO WORSE.”**

Knight says:

The statements that the false teachers “will progress to worse” and that “they will not make further progress” (v. 9) show that Paul can look at their progress from two entirely different perspectives. This verse recognizes that evil becomes intensively worse as time goes on. The other recognizes that the teaching of evil does not necessarily capture a wider audience as it becomes more intense and therefore does not become more extensive as it becomes more intensive.

p. 442

Quinn & Wacker translate “LEADING STRAY AND BEING LED ASTRAY”:

deluding and deluded. The verb *planaō* recurs in Titus 3:3, and is known in the other Paulines only in the warning “Be not deluded”

p. 738

They say further:

In contrast now . . . to those who strive for holiness and thus suffer persecution are “vicious people and charlatans . . .”

p. 745

They say finally:

The “progress” of these quacks and charlatans who are sorcerers, not prophets, is ironic indeed, for in the very act of “misleading” they are “misled,” . . . “deluding and deluded.”

p. 746

Larson says:

Those who neglect the truth of God become enmeshed in a confusing web of deception. Their consciences and reasoning capabilities suffer damage through sin, and they become incapable of extricating themselves from Satan's delusions. Only God's truth possesses the power to free such persons.
p. 305

Barnes has this to say:

He was to anticipate in them the operation of the general law in regard to bad men and seducers—that they would grow worse and worse. From this fact, he was to regard it as certain that he, as well as others, would be liable to be persecuted.
p. 238

He then says:

The advocates of error are often themselves as really under deception, as those whom they impose upon.
p. 238

Hendriksen says:

These “wicked men” and “impostors” are the ones described in verses 2-9. They must not be thought of as two mutually exclusive groups (one group consisting of nothing but “wicked men,” the other of nothing but “impostors”). It is *one and the same* group, *one* predicate applying to everyone included in the group, though in the subject *two* descriptive terms are used to characterize this group.
p. 294

Wilson says:

But though untouched by such distress, evil men and imposters of the kind already mentioned [*vv 2-9*] will progress from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. As teachers their success will be limited [*v 9*], but they will increase in wickedness through becoming the dupes of their self-chosen errors. For those who set out to deceive others are themselves brought under the enslaving power of the same delusion.
p. 155

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say that verse 13 is the:

Reason why persecutions must be expected, and these becoming worse and worse as the end approaches. The breach between light and darkness, so far from being healed, shall be widened [ALFORD].
p. 1380

Hawthorne & Martin say:

The text of 2 Timothy 3:13 predicts that “evil men and imposters . . . will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived” (NIV). The term *goēs* is commonly used in literature as a derogatory reference to a magician—a person who is a charlatan or a swindler. Although it is possible that 2 Timothy 3:13 uses the term in the general sense, it is more likely that a magician is in mind, perhaps of the same sort as Apollonius of Tyana . . . This interpretation is rendered more likely because the deceivers are compared in 2 Timothy 3:8 with magicians who opposed Moses (Jannes and Jambres). Here again, the practice of magic is viewed in the worst possible light.
p. 582

A. T. Robertson, speaking of the words “LEADING ASTRAY AND BEING LED ASTRAY,” says:

[They are] Present active and present passive participles of *planaō*. The tragedy of it all is that these seducers are able to deceive others as well as themselves.
p. 626

J. Vernon McGee says:

The only antidote against a world of apostasy is the Word of God.
The only resource and recourse for the child of God is the Word of God.
p. 472

Kelly says:

Paul declares that they **will advance** . . . and we expect him to complete the clause by some reference to the ‘progress’ they will make. Instead he turns the idea upside down and lashes out with the ironical **from bad to worse**. For all its apparent freedom from discomfort and distress, their lot will really be a pitiable one, since they are at once **deceivers and deceived** (a proverbial tag).
p. 200

Lenski says:

“Wicked men and imposters” are the opposite of “all those who intend to live in a godly way in Christ Jesus,” and while the latter are bound to be persecuted and in this way have much to endure, the former are bound to progress to what is worse than their wickedness, a million times worse than that which the godly experience in the way of persecution. “Wicked men” are those described in v. 6-9. They are aptly called . . . “sorceres,” in allusion to Jannes and Jambres who were both sorcerers and imposters.
p. 834

Matthew Henry says:

As good men, by the grace of God, grow better and better, so bad men, through the subtlety of Satan and the power of their own corruptions, grow worse and worse.
p. 1897

Wiersbe says:

The only way to defeat Satan's lies is with God's truth. "Thus saith the Lord!" is the final answer to every question. Evil men and deceivers are going to get worse and worse. They will deceive more and more. Why? Because they are being deceived by Satan! In these last days, there will be more deception and imitation; and the only way a believer will be able to tell the true from the false is by knowing the Word of God.
p. 148

JESUS opens his final message on the **MOUNT OF OLIVES** with these words:

Matthew 24:4-12

And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. And at that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many. And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.

(The Sins We Love: Embracing Brokenness, Hoping for Wholeness by Randy Rowland) New York, NY: Doubleday. Copyright – Randy L. Rowland, 2000.

Beyond the intellectual flaw of nihilistic philosophy of nothingness is the pleasure principle of hedonism—maximize pleasure, minimize pain. I actually have friends who claim this mode of thinking as their way of life. When held accountable for an action, they simply say, “It felt good,” “It brought me pleasure,” or, “It snuffed out the pain.” And believe me, practical hedonism rules in our culture. We are all but begged to lie back, hang loose, slow down, and look out for “me.”

p. 110

(The 776 Stupidest Things Ever Said by Ross & Kathryn Petras) New York, NY: Doubleday. Copyright – Ross & Kathryn Petras, 1993.

On Directions, Giving Clear:

Yogi Berra (on the phone to a lost Joe Garagiola):

Where are you?

Joe Garagiola:

Some guys says to tell you I’m at the library.

Yogi Berra:

Oh, you ain’t too far, just a couple of blocks.

Only don’t go that way, come this way.

p. 48

v. 14 But you be remaining in the things which you learned and became convinced of, knowing from whom you learned them.

Once again, we have the little words **“BUT YOU.”**

We ran into this phrase **BACK** in the first verse of the study, verse 10:

“But you followed faithfully my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, steadfastness, love, perseverance.”

Whereas, it was:

“followed faithfully”—verse 10, now it is

“BE REMAINING”—**STAYING ON COURSE**—verse 14.

THE CULTURE IS GOING DOWN BUT YOU STAY BY THE STUFF!

1 Timothy 4:16

Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

Ruth 1:16, 17

But Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me.”

Matthew 25:21

“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.’”

2 John 9

Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

This is the **KEY VERSE** to **Step #9**:

FAITHFUL: May He Find Me Faithful.

faith•ful . . . *adjective*

1. **with unwavering belief:** believing firmly in something or somebody, especially a religion
2. **consistently loyal:** consistently trustworthy and loyal, especially a person, a promise, or duty
3. **not promiscuous:** not having sexual relations with somebody other than a spouse or partner
4. **conscientious:** displaying or resulting from a sense of responsibility or devotion to duty
5. **correct:** accurate and true • *a faithful account of the events*

noun

somebody or something reliable: somebody who or something that can be trusted or depended on

plural noun **faith•ful Faith•ful**

RELIGION religious believers: the believers in a religion considered as a group, especially Muslims or Christians

—**faith•ful•ly**, *adverb*

—**faith•ful•ness**, *noun*

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Here we are **FOCUSING** on:

LOYALTY and

DEVOTION.

IT IS THE CONSTANCY OF FIDELITY.

Wilkinson said:

The world crowns success, but God crowns faithfulness.
(source unknown)

Revelation 3:11

I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown.

This step toward making a **FANTASTIC FINISH** involves **STICKING TO:**

THE WRITTEN WORD and

THE LIVING WORD.

Our **TOTAL AND COMPLETE DEVOTION** to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God is the way to make a fantastic finish.

Although these other “evil men and imposters will go on from bad to worse, leading astray and being led astray,” you form a **CONTRAST** to them by:

“REMAINING IN THE THINGS WHICH YOU LEARNED AND [have been] CONVINCED . . . KNOWING FROM WHOM YOU [have] LEARNED THEM.”

The **COMMAND** is:

“BE REMAINING.”

This takes us **BACK** to:

2 Timothy 1:13, 14 (version unknown)

Be holding fast the pattern of sound words which you heard from me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Guard the precious deposit which has been entrusted to you through the Holy Spirit who is dwelling in us.

Don't be led “astray” by the storms of opposition which are blowing against you, but remain steadfast “in the things which you learned.”

Here I believe Paul is reminding Timothy once again of his heritage and the faith which he had learned from:

his grandmother LOIS,

his mother EUNICE, and

the Apostle PAUL.

Not only had he learned them, but he has been **“CONVINCED OF [these things] “KNOWING FROM WHOM [he had] LEARNED THEM.”**

There are many in our own day who would destroy the authority of the Word of God by **POKING FUN** at it and also endeavoring to **SHOW ERROR AND INCONSISTENCY** in it.

Yet **THE BIBLE LIVES ON** and has a tremendous life-giving power which is able to transform those who read.

When we think of this step toward a fantastic finish, we need to reflect on the fact that what God is asking of us is also one of **HIS DOMINANT CHARACTERISTICS**.

Isaiah 25:1

O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvelous things, things planned long ago.

Lamentations 3:22, 23

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

1 Thessalonians 5:24

Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

Psalm 36:5

Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the skies.

Psalm 86:15

But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God,
slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

Psalm 92:1, 2

It is good to praise the Lord
and make music to your name, O Most High,
to proclaim your love in the morning
and your faithfulness at night,

2 Timothy 2:13 (DAV)

If we are unfaithful, He is remaining faithful for He is not able to deny Himself.

No matter what we do:

NOTHING WE DO AFFECTS THE CHARACTER OF GOD!

Matthew Henry says:

If Timothy would adhere to the truth as he has been taught it, this would arm him against the snares and insinuations of seducers.

1. It is a great happiness to know the certainty of the things wherein we have been instructed. Consider of *whom thou hast learned them*; not of evil men and seducers, but good men, who had themselves experienced the power of the truths they taught thee.

p. 1897

Lenski titles this final section of the chapter:

Timothy's Future Stand Is to Be True to His Childhood Past

p. 835

He then says further of verse 14:

. . . “in which things thou didst get conviction and firm assurance as to their being altogether true and reliable.”

p. 836

A. T. Robertson, speaking on the words “BECAME CONVINCED,” says:

[It is a] First aorist passive indicative of *pistoō*, old verb (from *pistos*, faithful), to make reliable, only here in N.T. *Knowing from whom . . .* Second perfect active participle of *oida*. . . . The list included the O.T. prophets, Paul, Eunice, Lois. There ought to be moral authority in such personages.
p. 626

Hendriksen says the word:

You (note emphatic position in the original, at the very head of the sentence, just as in verse 10) must pursue a course which is the very opposite of that which was followed by the false teachers and their adherents.
p. 295

Larson says:

Our faith is proved by its endurance.
p. 305

Romans 5:3-5

And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Quinn & Wacker translate these verses:

3 ¹⁴You, however, Timothy, persevere in the things you learned and became sure of. You are well aware of the people you learned from ¹⁵and that from your tenderest years you have known the sacred letters which have the power to make you astute in attaining salvation through faith which comes from union with Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All the Scripture is inspired by God and useful—
 for instruction,
 for censuring,
 for straightening people out,
 for giving training in upright conduct,
¹⁷so that the man of God may be complete, that is, completely equipped for every excellent deed.
 pp. 746-7

Demarest says:

Following his testimony, Paul now directs his personal challenge to Timothy. Paul again calls his young friend to be faithful to Jesus.
 p. 281

Gaebelein says:

The inspired Scriptures of God are the need, the supreme need of the believer in the last days.
 p. 195

Amos 8:11

“The days are coming,” declares the Sovereign Lord, “when I will send a famine through the land—not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.

Hughes says:

Paul's call to remembrance as a key to continuance was a substantial gift to Timothy, and Timothy took it to heart, finishing well.

He remembered Paul's *lifestyle*—his teaching, his way of life, and the way Paul lived validated what he taught. This gave Timothy an eternal purpose.

He remembered Paul's *virtues*—his “faith, patience, love and endurance”—and held them high as his standards.

He remembered Paul's *persecutions* in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra and how the Lord rescued him from them all—and he took heart.

He remembered the *axiom*—”In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and imposters will go from bad to worse deceiving and being deceived” (vv. 12, 13). He embraced it, and its reality steeled him.

p. 234

Lea & Griffin say:

The term “continue” (*menō*) is the same term translated “hold to” or “remain” in John 8:31; 15:5-6. It demands more than merely continuing in orthodoxy. It called for a commitment to live and abide in what Timothy had learned.

p. 233

Calvin says:

Although ungodliness is increasing and making progress, Paul tells Timothy to stand firm. This is the acid test of our faith. With untiring zeal we should resist all the devil's schemes and refuse to alter course with every wind that blows and thus remain fixed on God's truth as on a sure anchor.

pp. 153-4

Ephesians 4:14

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

Lock translates the word “REMAINING”:

“remain loyal to,” . . . perhaps also . . . “remain stationary” . . .
p. 109

He then speaks of the word “CONVINCED”:

. . . “confirmed in by experience” . . .
p. 109

King says:

In such an age as this, when there is abroad so much loose thinking, lax living, and lop-sided teaching, few things are so important as that Christians should be men and women of the Bible—stayed on it, and steeped in it.
p. 102

Guthrie says:

But against such a background of militant error, the Christian leader must stand firm on what he knows of the truth, like a rock resisting the increasing fury of the waves.
p. 162

Barclay says:

Paul concludes this section with an appeal to Timothy to remain loyal to all the teaching which he had received.
p. 228

Liefeld says:

VERSE 14 BEGINS with the strong “but . . . you” and contains a call to Timothy to consistency in doctrine and conviction. Not only had Timothy “learned” the truth from Paul and others, he had become “convinced” of it. The reason for this lies largely with the integrity of the people from whom he learned it, such as his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice (1:5). Surely Paul has himself in mind also.
p. 279

Baxter says:

Yes, undoubtedly Paul is directly thinking about these eventualities; but the further point which we are here making is that perhaps in a way which he himself did not suspect, his two Timothy letters *as a whole* (not just their occasional direct references to the latter days) give a *prophetic photograph* of our own twentieth-century Christendom. If this is so, how carefully ought the Lord’s Timothies to be studying them, and praying over them again today! Of course, quite apart from that, they have an intrinsic value which makes them precious at *any* time; yet their peculiar reference to these age-end days of ours gives them an urgent interest and significance such as they can scarcely ever have had before.
p. 242

TOO EASY!

A milk company came up with a neat little slogan which they painted in large letters on the side of their delivery trucks. It read: "OUR COWS ARE NOT CONTENTED! THEY'RE ANXIOUS TO DO BETTER!" If we are to avoid becoming self-satisfied, we need to adopt a similar attitude. Industrial studies show that employees are more likely to quit when they have it too easy than when their work is tough and calls forth the best that is in them.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

STICK WITH IT

Dr. H. Norman Wright tells the story of a man who, many years ago, got the idea for a cartoon character called "Steamboat Willie." This man went all over Hollywood trying to get somebody to buy into the concept. He had practically no money at the time, and almost everyone he talked to viewed him as a failure. But the young man stuck with it, and eventually the "Steamboat Willie" character became Mickey Mouse.

Like **Walt Disney**, everybody has failures in life, but that's OK. Says Dr. Wright: "Failure brings about growth and change. It only stops us when we see it as the final chapter in life. If we see it as nothing more than a detour, we can learn from it and go on."

[**Marriage Partnership**, Fall 1997. Page 69.]

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Friend: What is your son going to be when he graduates?

Father: An old man.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Father: How did you do on your tests today?

Son: I did what Abraham Lincoln did.

Father: What was that?

Son: I went down in history.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

LIFE WISH

A Colorado mountaineer and guide was once asked if he thought climbers had a death wish. He replied, “Actually, they have a life wish, to live life to the fullest.” As a careful yet adventurous climber, he explained why he considered the risks worth taking: “When it comes time for me to die,” he said, “I do not wish to discover that I have not lived.”

As the apostle Paul traveled to Jerusalem, it may have appeared to his closest friends that he had a death wish. At one point, several people warned him of the danger and urged him not to go (Acts 21:4, 12). But Paul had already made up his mind in Ephesus, where he clearly stated that his purpose was to “finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God” (20:24).

Paul did not take unnecessary risks in his witness as a Christian, but he never shied away from publicly declaring his faith in Jesus Christ. His goal was not to play it safe and protect himself. Instead, he lived to finish his spiritual race with joy, and to complete God’s task for him.

Paul’s courage challenges us to live for Christ with selfless abandon, not apprehension. That’s the way to know ultimate fulfillment and joy. Do we share his life wish today? —DCM

*Only this hour is mine, Lord—
May it be used for Thee;
May every passing moment
Count for eternity. —Christiansen*

**TO FIND THE GREATEST JOY IN LIFE,
GIVE YOUR LIFE TO CHRIST.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Monday, July 16, 2001)

CONSECRATION

Fred Craddock, in an address to ministers, caught the practical implications of consecration. “To give my life for Christ appears glorious,” he said.

“To pour myself out for others . . . to pay the ultimate price or martyrdom—I’ll do it. I’m ready, Lord, to go out in a blaze of glory. “We think giving our all to the Lord is like taking [a] \$1,000 bill and laying it on the table—’Here’s my life, Lord. I’m giving it all.’ But the reality for most of us is that he sends us to the bank and has us cash in the \$1,000 for quarters. We go through life putting out 25 cents here and 50 cents there. Listen to the neighbor kid’s troubles instead of saying, ‘Get lost.’ Go to a committee meeting. Give a cup of water to a shaky old man in a nursing home.

Usually giving our life to Christ isn’t glorious. It’s done in all those little acts of love, 25 cents at a time. It would be easy to go out in a flash of glory; it’s harder to live the Christian life little by little over the long haul.”

—Darryl Bell

Source unknown

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

FAITHFULNESS

Faithfulness in little things is a big thing.

—SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM (C. 347-407)

Faithfulness is consecration in overalls.

—EVELYN UNDERHILL (1875-1941)

He who is faithful over a few things is a lord of cities. It does not matter whether you preach in Westminster Abbey, or teach a ragged class, so you be faithful. The faithfulness is all.

—GEORGE MACDONALD (1824-1905)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

If we are correct and right in our Christian life at every point, but refuse to stand for the truth at a particular point where the battle rages—then we are traitors to Christ.

—MARTIN LUTHER (1483-1546)

Is your place a small place?
Tend it with care!—He set you there.
Is your place a large place?
Guard it with care!—He set you there.
Whate'er your place, it is
Not yours alone, but his
Who set you there.

—JOHN OXENHAM (1861-1941)

Watch where Jesus went. The one dominant note in his life was to do his Father's will. His is not the way of wisdom or of success, but the way of faithfulness.

—OSWALD CHAMBERS (1874-1917)

When men cease to be faithful to their God, he who expects to find them so to each other will be much disappointed.

—GEORGE HORNE (1730-1792)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

HEADED RIGHT? KEEP GOING!

Joseph Chamberlain was a famous British statesman (1836-1914).

In his younger years, he taught Sunday school in Birmingham. His favorite verse of Scripture was a sentence from Genesis 12:5, “They went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came” (KJV). It was a motto well-suited to a man of his determination and iron will. It also gave him a biblical basis for citing two qualifications for success in life. One is to have the right destination—“They went forth to go to the land of Canaan.” The second is to keep going after we have started—“into the land of Canaan they came.”

As he was facing death, the apostle Paul reflected on his life. He was not a leaf tossed about by the winds; he was an arrow headed for a target. Paul found his direction and destination in his relationship with Christ. And he wanted to cultivate in Timothy the virtues of a well-lived life. He offered himself as a model: “You have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance” (2 Tim. 3:10). “Stay with it,” he seemed to be saying to young Timothy.

Keeping Christ uppermost in our lives will keep us headed right and give us the strength to keep going. —HWR

*My life, my love I give to Thee,
Thou Lamb of God who died for me;
O may I ever faithful be,
My Savior and my God! —Hudson*

**CONSIDER THE POSTAGE STAMP: ITS VALUE LIES IN
STICKING TO ONE THING UNTIL IT GETS THERE.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Monday, June 21, year unknown)

WHY KEEP THE FAITH?

Many Christians are on the front lines of some very important battles. Some are speaking out on social issues and moral decline. Others are helping a relieve suffering and battling the effects of poverty. Still others are trying to make a difference in government or entertainment.

Sometimes these battles are won, but often the other side gains ground. It can be a discouraging effort.

When we lose a skirmish on the front lines of today's battles, how does that affect us? We may feel discouraged, but we need not feel hopeless. We know Christ will win ultimately, and we can be encouraged because there are some things that cannot be taken away from us:

- Jesus Christ's continual presence with us (Heb. 13:5).
- The Lord's promise of eternal life (Titus 1:2).
- The Holy Spirit's indwelling (1 Cor. 6:19).
- Access to our heavenly Father through prayer (Eph. 2:18).
- Spiritual gifts to serve the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12).

It hurts to lose a battle in the daily fight for what is right. But as Paul made clear in 2 Timothy 3, it should come as no surprise. We are called only to be faithful. And when we contemplate what Christ has given us, we'll never have to wonder why we should keep the faith. —JDB

*Day by day perform your mission,
With Christ's help keep at your tasks;
Be encouraged by His presence—
Faithfulness is all He asks. —HGB*

**HAVING THE HOLY SPIRIT ON THE INSIDE
PREPARES YOU FOR ANY BATTLE ON THE OUTSIDE.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Saturday, July 23, 1994)

STANDING OR FALLING?

Part of the training to be a US Secret Service agent includes learning to detect counterfeit money. Agents-in-training make a thorough study of the genuine bills—not the phonies—so that they can spot the fake currency immediately because of its contrast to the real thing.

The child of God can learn a lesson from this. While it is helpful to study false religions and be fully aware of their dangerous dogmas, the best defense against such error is to be so familiar with God’s Word that whenever we encounter error, we will spot it at once and won’t fall for it.

Today many are being led astray because they don’t recognize how they are being deceived. For example, if a person isn’t solidly grounded in the teaching of salvation by grace, he may swallow the line of the legalists who inject human works into the matter of being saved. If he is not well instructed about the person of Christ, he might accept the error of those who deny the Savior’s deity. A thorough knowledge of essential biblical doctrines is the only way to detect counterfeits.

Let’s be diligent in our study of the Word of God. Then, instead of falling into error, we will stand firmly on the truth. —RWD

*Lord, grant us wisdom to discern
The truth You have made known,
And may we not believe one word
Beyond what You have shown. —DJD*

**BEWARE! ERROR OFTEN RIDES TO ITS DEADLY WORK
ON THE BACK OF TRUTH! —Spurgeon**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Saturday, November 25, 1995)

SPELLING PROBLEMS

My mother was moving from the house we had called home for 36 years, and we were cleaning out the treasures. As I rummaged through my stuff, I discovered something I felt would be instructive for Steve, my 10-year-old fifth-grader. It was my old fifth-grade spelling book. I thought I would show him how much tougher things were back in those days. But when Steve and I later compared his book and mine, we agreed that his words were harder!

As I considered this, I began to think about the culture in which our children are growing up. It is not just spelling that is harder. Life itself has added layers of toughness since my school days.

With so much overt sinfulness being pushed a child's way, it could be harder to resist temptation and to do what is right. New negative influences challenge a young person as he tries to make wise choices.

Yet the answer is the same as it has always been. "From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures"—that was how Paul characterized Timothy's training (2 Tim. 3:15). This is still the way it should be for our children. No matter how tough the times, the solutions are always spelled out in God's Word. It's one book that never changes. —JDB

*Begin to train them early
To fear and love the Lord,
To carry on life's pathway
God's lamp, His holy Word. —Fennema*

**IN A CHANGING WORLD
YOU CAN TRUST GOD'S UNCHANGING WORD.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Thursday, July 9, 1998)

LOYALTY

It is best not to swap horses in mid-stream.

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), U.S. president, June 9, 1864.
Reply to the National Union League.
Collected Works (R.P. Baster ed.; 1953).

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FAITHFULNESS

Faithless is he that says farewell when the road darkens.

J. R. R. Tolkien (1892-1973), British scholar, philologist, and writer.
The Lord of the Rings (1954).

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DEFEAT

A man is not finished when he is defeated. He is finished when he quits.

Attributed to: **Richard Milhous Nixon** (1913-1994), U.S. president.

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QUOTES

Don't waste your time waiting and longing for large opportunities which may never come. But faithfully handle the little things that are always claiming your attention.

—F. B. Meyer
Source unknown

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

Dear Don and Pearl,

When you are young, fifty years doing the same thing sounds like a boring ramble. But teaching at Dallas Seminary has never been humdrum for me. How could it be with people like you passing through? It has been a long while, I admit, and there have been places to slide off track, but the secret to longevity is the dirty little word, discipline.

The legendary football receiver **Jerry Rice** said, “I think guys are always curious about my regimen, but they don’t want to pay the price. They don’t want to feel the pain. You just have to take your body to another level; you’re going to hurt.”

The “other level” is what we who are in the ministry really want, but to reach it we have to lock in on the asking price. With no sugar coating, Jesus told His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself” (Luke 9:23). In our feel-good balloons filled with fantasy and romanticism, happiness is too often our destination. It is not easy to take yourself by the scruff of the neck and hide away to do the hard work of praying, studying, and scraping off the barnacles of a decaying culture.

I am convinced that discipline separates the men from the boys and the women from the girls. Make no mistake; it is the fruit of the Spirit. John Calvin said that true knowledge of God is born out of obedience. We are like Peter, asking, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come” (Matt. 14:28). We have to step out of the boat and onto the water.

My prayers for our alumni are sprinkled with this concern for discipline. Your thoughts, finances, and time—and your physical, sexual, marital, and ministerial lives—need continuous maintenance. Spiritual power seeps out through unguarded personal gates. Think about the end of the race. “Run in such a way that you may win” (1 Cor. 9:24). The willingness to forgo immediate pleasure in order to obtain the ultimate prize lies at the core of victory.

My words wobble trying to convey this idea, but I love you too much not to try. Good intentions are worthless if not coupled to the engine of effort.

Mastered by the Master,
Howard G. Hendricks

(Letter from Howard G. Hendricks, February 28, 2001)

Pamela Reeve said:

At any hour of the day or night, no matter what my circumstances, I am deeply and intensely loved.

He and I, in that bright glory, one deep joy shall share; mine to be forever with Him; His that I am there.

(source unknown)

Charles Spurgeon tells of a Mr. Welch, a Suffolk minister, who was noticed to sit and weep; and one said to him, “My dear Mr. Welch, why are you weeping?”

“Well,” he replied, “I can’t tell you.” But when they pressed him very hard, he answered, “I am weeping because I cannot love Christ more.”

(From *Parson’s Technology*)

Since every day is a gift from God, I live each one enthusiastically for Him.

(From *Parson’s Technology*)

A GREAT STORY

At the prodding of my friends, I am writing this story. My name is Mildred Hondorf. I am a former elementary school music teacher from DeMoines, Iowa. I've always supplemented my income by teaching piano lessons—something I've done for over 30 years. Over the years I found that children have many levels of musical ability. I've never had the pleasure of having a protégé though I have taught some talented students. However, I've also had my share of what I call “musically challenged” pupils.

One such student was Robby.

Robby was 11 years old when his mother (a single mom) dropped him off for his first piano lesson. I prefer that students (especially boys!) begin at an earlier age, which I explained to Robby. But Robby said that it had always been his mother's dream to hear him play the piano. So I took him as a student. Well, Robby began with his piano lessons and from the beginning I thought it was a hopeless endeavor. As much as Robby tried, he lacked the sense of tone and basic rhythm needed to excel. But he dutifully reviewed his scales and some elementary pieces that I require all my students to learn.

Over the months he tried and tried while I listened and cringed and tried to encourage him. At the end of each weekly lesson he always said, “My mom's going to hear me play some day.” But it seemed hopeless. He just did not have any inborn ability. I only knew his mother from a distance as she dropped Robby off or waited in her aged car to pick him up. She always waved and smiled but never stopped in. Then one day Robby stopped coming to our lessons. I thought about calling him but assumed, because of his lack of ability, that he had decided to pursue something else.

I also was glad that he stopped coming. He was a bad advertisement for my teaching! Several weeks later I mailed to the student's homes a flyer on the upcoming recital. To my surprise Robby (who received a flyer) asked me if he could be in the recital. I told him that the recital was for current pupils and because he had dropped out he really did not qualify. He said that his mom had been sick and was unable to take him to piano lessons but he was still practicing. “Miss Hondorf . . . I've just got to play!” he insisted. I don't know what led me to allow him to play in the recital.

Maybe it was his persistence or maybe it was something inside of me saying that it would be alright. The night for the recital came. The high school gymnasium was packed with parents, friends and relatives. I put Robby up last in the program before I was to come up and thank all the students and play a finishing piece. I thought that any damage he would do would come at the end of the program and I could always salvage his poor performance through my “curtain closer.”

Well the recital went off without a hitch. The students had been practicing and it showed. Then Robby came up on stage. His clothes were wrinkled and his hair looked like he'd run an egg-beater through it. “Why didn't he dress up like the other students?” I thought. “Why didn't his

mother at least make him comb his hair for this special night?” Robby pulled out the piano bench and he began. I was surprised when he announced that he had chosen Mozart’s Concerto #21 in C Major. I was not prepared for what I heard next. His fingers were light on the keys, they even danced nimbly on the ivories.

He went from pianissimo to fortissimo . . . from allegro to virtuoso.

He suspended chords that Mozart demands were magnificent! Never had I heard Mozart played so well by people his age. After six and a half minutes he ended in a grand crescendo and everyone was on their feet in wild applause. Overcome and in tears I ran up on stage and put my arms around Robby in joy. “I’ve never heard you play like that Robby! How’d you do it”

Through the microphone Robby explained: “Well Miss Hondorf . . . remember I told you my mom was sick? Well, actually she had cancer and passed away this morning. And well . . . she was born deaf so tonight was the first time she ever heard me play. I wanted to make it special.” There wasn’t a dry eye in the house that evening. As the people from Social Services led Robby from the stage to be placed into foster care, I noticed that even their eyes were red and puffy and I thought to myself how much richer my life had been for taking Robby as my pupil. No, I’ve never had a protégé, but that night I became a protégé . . . of Robby’s. He was the teacher and I was the pupil. For it is he that taught me the meaning of perseverance and love and believing in myself and maybe even taking a chance in someone and you don’t know why.

This is especially meaningful to me since after serving in Desert Storm, Robby was killed in the senseless bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in April of 1995, where he was reportedly . . . playing the piano.

And now, a footnote to the story. If you are thinking about forwarding this message, you are probably thinking about which people on your address list aren’t the “appropriate” ones to receive this type of message. The person who sent this to you believes that we can all make a difference. We all have thousands of opportunities a day to help realize God’s plan. So many seemingly trivial interactions between two people present us with the choice:

Do we pass along a spark of the Divine?

Or do we pass up that opportunity, and leave the world a bit colder in the process?

(Received via e-mail from Bill Lawrence, June 22, 2001)

In my book, **Ecclesiastes: A Mid-Life Crisis**, I tell this story:

I remember running in my first marathon in Las Vegas several years ago. Believe me, I was motivated only by the desire to finish the 26.2 miles; I had no aspirations of setting any records (except maybe for the slowest time in the event). At the twenty-mile point in the race, I “hit the wall.” My stomach and legs cramped. I didn’t care if I completed the course. As I stopped to walk for a moment, thoughts of all the friends back home who were praying for me surfaced. How guilty I felt when I realized that I was failing them. Then a thought popped into my head. Just because I had to walk part of the way did not mean that I couldn’t finish the race! And before you know it, the next 6.2 miles were behind me. The marathon was history, and I had crossed the line (without, I might add, the slowest time of the day).

My point is, we must accept the fact that the race of life set before us can be finished well, no matter what has taken place before—no matter if we stumble, fall, or have to “walk” a little.

p. 258

Paul is telling Timothy to:

HANG IN THERE,

TAKE IT A DAY AT TIME, and

BE FAITHFUL.

What is STEP #9 to a Fantastic Finish?

FAITHFUL: MAY HE FIND ME FAITHFUL.

v. 15 And that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Timothy needed to be reminded again of his **"CHILDHOOD"** and the fact that he had been raised in a Christian home and had opportunity to know the Scriptures from earliest recollections.

Paul also tells Timothy what the Scriptures are able to do:

"ARE ABLE TO MAKE YOU WISE UNTO SALVATION THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS."

It is in the Word of God we get the message of life, which can be ours in Christ.

"Through faith in Christ" we come to know **LIFE ETERNAL**.

We read the **WRITTEN WORD** and receive the **LIVING WORD**, and thus our lives and destinies are changed eternally.

Barclay says:

It was the glory of the Jews that their children from their earliest days were taught and trained in the law. The Jews claimed that their children learned the law even from their swaddling clothes, and that they drank it in with their mother's milk. They claimed that the law was so imprinted on the heart and mind of a Jewish child that he would sooner forget his own name than he would forget the law.

pp. 228-9

Lock says:

The Jewish parent's duty was to teach his child the Law when in his fifth year . . .
p. 109

Calvin says:

The fact that Timothy had been used to reading the Scriptures since his childhood was a powerful spur to keep him faithful, as this long-established habit can make a person much more prepared to meet any kind of deception.
p. 154

Quinn & Wacker translate it:

from your tenderest years. Lit. "from infancy."
p. 748

J. Vernon McGee says:

It is my contention that the constant study of the Word of God is the only help that any of us has. It is able to make us "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." And I think it makes us wise in knowing how to live down here.
p. 473

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

from a child—lit., "from an infant." The tender age of the first dawn of reason is that wherein the most lasting impressions of faith may be made.
p. 1380

Wilson says:

Paul affirms that the ‘sacred’ writings, in contrast to all those of purely human origin, are uniquely able to give the wisdom that leads to salvation.
p. 156

Barnes says:

Rabbi Judah says, “The boy of five years of age ought to apply to the study of the sacred Scriptures.” Rabbi Solomon, on Deut. [11] xi. 19, says, “When the boy begins to talk, his father ought to converse with him in the sacred language, and to teach him the law; if he does not do that, he seems to bury him.”
p. 239

He says further:

There is no book that has so much *power* as the Bible; none that is so efficient in moving the hearts, and consciences, and intellects of mankind. There is no book that *has* moved so many minds; none that has produced so deep and permanent effects on the world.
p. 240

Griffiths says:

‘*They are able to make you wise*’, says Paul, alluding to Psalm 19:7: ‘The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple’.
p. 204

Fee says:

Thus Paul reminds him that what he is to **continue in** has deep roots in his own past and that he can trust those, his family and his closest friend, whose legacy he is to carry on.
p. 278

Patrick & Lowth say:

Note here, the care of the Jews to teach their children the scriptures even from their childhood: from five years old, say the Talmudists, we put our children to read the Bible.

p. 864

Spurgeon, when he preaches on this passage, says:

This was to young Timothy one of his best safeguards. His early training held him like an anchor, and saved him from the dreadful drift of the age. Happy young man, of whom the apostle could say, “From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”!

p. 880

He then continues:

This expression is, no doubt, used to show that we cannot begin too early to imbue the minds of our children with scriptural knowledge. Babes receive impressions long before we are aware of the fact. During the first months of a child’s life it learns more than we imagine. It soon learns the love of its mother, and its own dependence; and if the mother be wise, it learns the meaning of obedience and the necessity of yielding its will to a higher will. This may be the key-note of its whole future life. If it learns obedience and submission early, it may save a thousand tears from the child’s eyes, and as many from the mother’s heart. A special vantage-ground is lost when even babyhood is left uncultured.

p. 880

He continues:

Wise teachers know how to lead their little ones into the green pastures beside the still waters.

p. 881

Spurgeon then continues:

Give us the first seven years of a child, with God's grace, and we may defy the world, the flesh, and the devil to ruin that immortal soul. Those first years, while yet the clay is soft and plastic, go far to decide the form of the vessel.

p. 881

He continues:

O dear teachers—and I speak here to myself also—let our teaching be more and more scriptural! Fret not if our classes forget what *we* say, but pray them to remember what the Lord says. May divine truths about sin, and righteousness, and judgment to come, be written on their hearts! May revealed truths concerning the love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the work of the Holy Ghost never be forgotten by them! May they know the virtue and necessity of the atoning blood of our Lord, the power of His resurrection, and the glory of His second coming! May the doctrines of grace be graven as with a pen of iron upon their minds, and written as with the point of a diamond upon their hearts, never to be erased!

p. 882

He says finally:

Paul is to die. Poor Timothy! Yes, it will be “poor Timothy!” if he carries his faith in Paul's bosom, and has none in his own heart. But Timothy's Bible is not going to die. Timothy's knowledge of Scripture is not going to be taken from him; nor is the Holy Spirit about to depart from him.

p. 884

Wiersbe says:

Timothy had been taught the Word of God from the time he was a child. Some people are prone to say, “Well, I needed the Bible when I was younger; but I can do without it now that I’m older.” How wrong they are! Adults need the guidance of the Word far more than children do because adults face more temptations and make more decisions. Timothy’s grandmother and mother had faithfully taught him the Old Testament Scriptures. (The word *whom* in v. 14 is plural, referring to these women; see 1:5.) Timothy was to continue in what he had been taught. We never outgrow the Word of God.

p. 148

He then says finally:

As soon as your child is born, surround him with the Word of God and prayer. You will not have this opportunity after he grows up.

p. 148

Our daughter, **Donna**, and her husband **Mark** do a very effective job with their **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOLS** each summer.

They tell the story of a little 5-year-old who came to VBS wanting desperately to invite the Lord Jesus Christ into his heart but his grandmother warned him not to do that!

The next year at Bible school, when he was 6-years-old, he literally ran to the front to come to know the Lord Jesus. I really believe we do a terrible disservice to our children by restraining them with regard to the compelling call of the Spirit of God to the conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment and to a loving Christ who waits to become their Savior.

(God's Little Daily Devotional: 365 Days of Inspiration To Lift Your Spirit & Bring Peace to Your Soul by Honor Books) Tulsa, OK: Honor Books. Copyright – Honor Books, Inc., 1997.

TEACHING OUR CHILDREN

*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old,
he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6*

The importance of the first few years of a child's life cannot be overestimated. It is during those years that the foundation is laid for a child's language ability, ethics, morality, and values. In his book, *All Men Are Brothers*, Mahatma Gandhi said this about instilling values in very early childhood: "I am convinced that for the proper upbringing of children the parents ought to have a general knowledge of the care and nursing of babies . . . We labour under a sort of superstition that the child has nothing to learn during the first five years of its life. On the contrary, the fact is that the child never learns in after life what it does in its first five years. The education of the child begins with conception."

The famous psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud agreed. A Viennese woman once asked him, "How early should I begin the education of my child?"

Freud replied with a question of his own, "When will your child be born?"

"Born?" the woman asked. "Why, he is already five years old!"

"My goodness, woman," Freud cried, "don't stand there talking to me—hurry home! You have already wasted the five best years!"

*The cure of crime is not the electric chair,
but in the high chair.*

(June 24)

(God's Little Daily Devotional: 365 Days of Inspiration To Lift Your Spirit & Bring Peace to Your Soul by Honor Books) Tulsa, OK: Honor Books. Copyright – Honor Books, Inc., 1997.

THE DISCERNMENT OF CHILDREN

Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it eat the fruit thereof. Proverbs 18:21

A man once told this poignant story about his own conversion experience: “My father was the senior elder in our church for many years. When I was a boy, eleven years of age, an evangelist held a series of meetings in our church. One night he asked every Christian to come forward and also asked those who desired to confess Christ to come with them. My father, of course, went up, and, as I felt the call of God, I followed after him.

“Just as he reached the front he turned around, and seeing me, said, ‘Johnnie, you go back; you are too young.’ I obeyed him, as I had been taught to do, and at thirty-three I came again, but I did not know what I was coming for as clearly at thirty-three as I did at eleven.

“The church lost twenty-two years of service, while I lost twenty-two years of growth because my own father, an officer in the church, had said, ‘Go back.’”

If you are at all, err on the side of your child knowing God, of his being old enough to experience God, and of his being mature enough to respond to God’s offer of love and forgiveness. God’s offer of salvation is to all, young or old.

*We can either grace our children, or damn them
with unrequited wounds which never seem to heal . . .
men, as fathers you have such power!*

(July 5)

GODLY GRANDMOTHERS

A little boy described grandmothers like this: “A grandmother is a lady who has no children of her own, so she loves everybody else’s. Grandmas don’t have to do anything but be there. If they take you for a walk, they slow down past leaves and caterpillars. . . . They can answer questions like why dogs hate cats and why God isn’t married. When they read to you, they don’t skip parts or mind if it’s the same story again. Everyone should have a grandmother because they are the only grown-ups who have time for you.”

Timothy is a prime example of how a young life can be greatly influenced by a grandmother, especially if she is a godly woman. He held a position of great responsibility in leading the congregation at Ephesus. It was a difficult assignment for a young man who was timid by nature. To help his young protégé stand firm, the apostle Paul reminded him of the faith of his grandmother Lois (2 Tim. 1:5). It isn’t hard to imagine her playing with him when he was little, teaching him Scripture passages, putting him to bed with hugs and kisses and childlike prayers, and in the process nurturing the faith of her grandson.

God is a wise Father who knows how to help grandmothers—and all of us—to influence young lives. —HWR

TIPS FOR GRANDMOTHERS

Pray for your grandchildren.

Play with your grandchildren.

Pass on your faith to your grandchildren.

**IF YOU WANT YOUR INFLUENCE TO LAST,
PUT CHRIST FIRST.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Sunday, September 12, year unknown)

(God's Little Devotional Book for Teachers by Honor Books) Tulsa, OK: Honor Books. Copyright – Honor Books, 1999.

A little girl was once asked by her Sunday school teacher, “Who made you?”

She quickly answered, “Well, God made a part of me.”

The teacher asked, “What do you mean, God made a part of you?”

She replied, “Well, God made me real little, and I just grewed the rest myself.”

p. 29

v. 16 Every Scripture is God-breathed and beneficial for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for training in righteousness,

Here in this verse, **PAUL GIVES US HIS OWN FEELINGS** about the Scripture, and the value of the Scriptures in our lives.

First of all, he makes the statement:

“EVERY SCRIPTURE IS GOD-BREATHED.”

There are many today who would deny this fact and say that **THE BIBLE IS ONLY A WORK OF MAN**. Yet, Paul felt very different about it.

2 Peter 1:20, 21

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Not only do we find that the Scriptures are:

“GOD-BREATHED” but they are also

“BENEFICIAL.”

Now, Paul gives us **FOUR REASONS** they are **“BENEFICIAL”**:

1. **“FOR TEACHING,”**
2. **“FOR CONVICTION,”**
3. **“FOR CORRECTION,”** and
4. **“FOR TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS.”**

The “SCRIPTURE IS . . . BENEFICIAL”:

1. “FOR TEACHING.”

Teaching is essential to Spiritual growth. As we are taught the Scriptures, so we begin to grow into Christlikeness.

1 Peter 2:2, 3 (KJV)

As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

We would ask ourselves the **QUESTION**:

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THINGS WE NEED TO BE TAUGHT?

The doctrines of:

the **THEOLOGY** of God the **FATHER**, God the **SON**, and
God the **HOLY SPIRIT**,

SALVATION.

SATAN—our enemy,

LAW AND GRACE,

SANCTIFICATION—being made more like the Lord Jesus, and

the **CHURCH** and the **SECOND COMING** of Jesus Christ.

The “SCRIPTURE IS . . . BENEFICIAL”:

2. “FOR CONVICTION.”

As the Scriptures are faithfully expounded, they are going to bring **CONVICTION** and **CORRECTION** to our wayward ways. This is the ministry that is going to keep us from “being led astray” into error.

Barclay says of this word:

[It is a word] for convincing a man of the error of his ways, and for pointing him on the right way.

p. 230

What are some of the ways we **RECEIVE REPROOF** from the Word?

Well, in our lives the sins of:

THE TONGUE,

PRIDE,

JEALOUSY,

REVENGE,

SOWING DISCORD,

INSINCERITY,

INGRATITUDE,

DOUBTS,

TEMPTATION,

LAZINESS, and

SELFISHNESS.

All of these things are **MATTERS FOR DISCIPLINE** that take place when we are reproved by the Word of God.

The “SCRIPTURE IS . . . BENEFICIAL”:

3. “FOR CORRECTION.”

Hendriksen says of this word:

If *reproof* stresses the negative aspect of pastoral work, *correction* emphasizes the positive side. Not only must the sinner be warned to leave the wrong path, but he must also be directed to the *right* or *straight* path (Dan. 12:3). This, too, “all scripture” is able to do.
p. 303

Many of the BIBLICAL CHARACTERS had to struggle with the issue of OBEDIENCE having priority over any other aspect of their spiritual lives.

The “SCRIPTURE IS . . . BENEFICIAL”:

4. “FOR TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

As we would DISCIPLINE AND TRAIN OUR CHILDREN so that they would grow up to be good representatives of the Lord Jesus, so likewise, the Scripture will train us in the ways of “RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

The Word of God was designed for:

“TEACHING” us,

TESTING us,

TURNING us, and

“TRAINING” us.

“Timothy, stick to the word, because in it you will find everything that you are going to need to meet all the demands of living the Christian life.”

J. Vernon McGee says:

When Paul says “all scripture,” he means *all* of it, from Genesis to Revelation. Somebody will say, “But don’t you know that Revelation hadn’t been written at the time 2 Timothy was written?” Yes, I know that. But the important thing to know is that Revelation became Scripture, so it is covered by this word *all*.

The word *inspiration* means “God-breathed.” The writers of Scripture were not just pens that the Lord picked up and wrote with. The marvel I that God used these men’s personalities, expressed things in their own thought patterns, yet got through exactly what He wanted to say. Through these men God has given us His Word. He has nothing more to say to us today. If He spoke out of heaven today, He wouldn’t add anything to what He has already said.

p. 473

Calvin says:

Training in righteousness means instruction in a godly and holy life.
p. 156

Quinn & Wacker say:

and useful for instruction, censuring, for straightening people out, for giving training in upright conduct. Lit. “and useful . . . for teaching . . . for reproof . . . for correcting . . . for training in righteousness . . .”
p. 750

Patrick & Lowth say:

. . . *being inspired by God, is also* profitable for doctrine (*to teach us what we are to believe*), for reproof (*or conviction of error*), for correction (*and reformation of vice, and*) for instruction in (*the way of*) righteousness: . . .
p. 865

Wiersbe says:

We must not think of “inspiration” the way the world thinks when it says “Shakespeare was certainly an inspired writer.” What we mean by biblical *inspiration* is the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit on the Bible’s writers, which guaranteed that what they wrote was accurate and trustworthy. *Revelation* means the communicating of truth to man by God; *inspiration* has to do with the *recording* of this communication in a way that is dependable.
p. 150

Wiersbe says further:

They are profitable for *doctrine* (what is right), for *reproof* (what is not right), for *correction* (how to get right), and for *instruction in righteousness* (how to stay right). A Christian who studies the Bible and applies what he learns will grow in holiness and avoid many pitfalls in this world.
pp. 150-1

Fee says:

For **rebuking**: This is the other side of the task; he must use Scripture to expose the errors of the false teachers and their teachings.

For **correcting**: This word occurs only here in the NT. It is a companion of **rebuking**, but emphasizes the behavioral, ethical side of things.
p. 280

Griffiths, commenting on verse 16, says:

Paul goes on to say two important things about the Scriptures in verse 16:

- Their *source*—inspired by God himself
 - Their *purpose*—they are useful to us
- p. 204

Barnes says:

It is a holy and a safe guide. It has conducted millions along the dark and dangerous way of life, and has never led one astray.
p. 242

Wilson says:

As Warfield was at pains to point out, the Greek term does not mean that God inspired ('breathed into') the Scripture or its human authors, but that Scripture is the product of divine spiration ('breathed out by God'). 'What it affirms is that the Scriptures owe their origin to an activity of God the Holy Ghost and are in the highest and truest sense His creation. It is on this foundation of Divine origin that all the high attributes of Scripture are built' (*The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, p. 296).
p. 157

Lock, speaking on the word "CONVICTION," says:

[It is the] refutation of false teaching . . . and rebuke of sin . . .
p. 110

Lock, speaking on the word "CORRECTION," says:

. . . correction, recovery, setting upright on their moral feet . . .
p. 110

He then says of "TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS":

. . . the final training in an active Christian life . . .
p. 111

Barclay says:

The Scriptures are valuable for *reproof*. It is not meant that the Scriptures are valuable for *finding fault*; what is meant is that they are valuable for *conviction*, for convincing a man of the error of his ways, and for pointing him on the right way.
p. 230

Gaebelein says:

How important it is to hold fast the great truth that the Bible is the Word of God, and therefore “God-breathed.” All apostasy starts with the denial of this fact. The Scriptures are the permanent expression of the mind and will of God. It is not merely that the truth is given in them by inspiration, but they are inspired. They are the expression of His own thoughts. They are our only authority. Upon the constant use of them depends everything.

pp. 195-6

Demarest says:

They are “*profitable . . . for reproof.*” That’s a fascinating phrase to me, for I do not readily think of reproof as something desirable. Deeper reflection reminds me that reproof is often necessary for growth. Without confrontation, life tends to go on, directed by the same prejudices and guided by the same assumptions. Lately, we’ve required manufacturers of certain products to provide labeling which indicates their dangers. Perhaps we should place labels on our Bibles which read, *Danger: this book may upset you!*

p. 284

Larson says:

The Scriptures were written by men “as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21). The picture is that of a sailboat being moved along by the wind. Indeed, men wrote the Bible, but the words and substance of what they wrote came from God. This makes the Bible **useful**. Paul listed four main uses of Scripture, all of which intertwine with one another.

p. 306

Larson says further:

Rebuking and **correcting** are the disciplinary authority of Scripture. Because the Bible is God’s Word and because it reveals truth, it exercises authority over those who deviate from its standard. “Rebuking” points out sin and confronts disobedience. “Correcting” recognizes that a person has strayed from the truth. Graciously, lovingly, yet firmly, we should try to guide the errant individual back into obedience.
p. 306

Hendriksen says:

The word *God-breathed*, occurring only here ¹⁶³ indicates that “all scripture” owes its origin and contents to the divine breath, and Spirit of God. The human authors were powerfully guided and directed by the Holy Spirit. As a result, what they wrote is not only without error but of supreme value for man. It is *all* that God wanted it to be. It constitutes the infallible rule of faith and practice for mankind.
p. 302

A. T. Robertson says:

Inspired of . . . [that is] “God-breathed.” Late word . . . here only in N.T.
p. 627

Lenski says:

As the wind wafts and bears a sailing vessel along on its course, so men spoke from God, borne along by the Holy Spirit.
p. 844

Matthew Henry says:

It is *profitable* to us for all the purposes of the Christian life. It instructs us in that which is true, reproves us for that which is amiss, directs us in that which is good.

p. 1897

Hawthorne & Martin say:

. . . “training in righteousness” . . . the context is clearly that of moral, ethical living.

p. 831

Knight says:

The reminder of Timothy’s long acquaintance with the scriptures and their central function (v. 15) leads Paul to conclude this section with a fuller statement on the divine origin and specific usefulness of scripture (v. 16) and on the purpose that it serves in the life of the man of God (v. 17).

p. 444

Milne says:

- Scripture is useful for teaching about God, his creation, human nature created and fallen, and the way of salvation in Jesus Christ.
- Scripture is useful for rebuking us about our sinful selves, for exposing particular sins and faults, along with all those dishonest reasonings that we use to rationalise our wrongdoing.
- Scripture is useful for correcting our lives by pointing out the right way to live, and by presenting supportive arguments and promises with which to implement the necessary changes.
- Scripture is useful for training us in righteousness by empowering us to recognise and choose what is good and to reject what is evil, so that we begin to live in ways that are pleasing to God and useful to others.

p. 170

MacArthur makes this comment on the word “CORRECTION”:

. . . (**correction**) is used only here in the New Testament and refers to the restoration of something to its original and proper condition. In secular Greek literature it was used of setting upright an object that had fallen down and of helping a person back on his feet after stumbling. After exposing and condemning false belief and sinful conduct in believers, Scripture then builds them up through its divine **correction**.
p. 160

Lange says:

The word of God an indispensable teacher, a severe ruler, and a genuine helper to salvation.
p. 111

(Approaching God by Paul Enns) source information unknown.

**THE BIBLE:
BREATHED BY GOD**

*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable
for teaching, for reproof, for correction,
for training in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16)*

As a young boy growing up in Winnipeg, Canada, I endured many cold winter days. An actual temperature of 35 degrees below zero was not uncommon. On those frigid days we would sometimes exhale onto the windowpane. The moisture from our breath would freeze on the window, creating a layer of frost.

Second Timothy 3:16 states that Scripture is the “exhalation” of God. Just as one may breathe out, creating frost on a windowpane, so God has “breathed out,” creating the Scriptures. The phrase translated “is inspired by God” is but one word in Greek, *theopneustos*, meaning God-breathed. Hence, one may read the verse, “All Scripture is God-breathed.” God didn’t breath divine power into human writings; rather, the Scriptures are the result of God’s breathing out. The Bible is the product of the exhalation of God.

The word “God-breathed” is not active, as though the Scriptures are purely a human product, but passive, meaning that the Scriptures have their origin with God, not man. That is also consistent with many Old Testament passages that state, “God spoke all these words” (cf. Exodus 20:1; Deuteronomy 5:22), or, “the Lord speaks” (Isaiah 1:2), or, “thus says the Lord” (Isaiah 44:2), or, “the word of the Lord came to me saying” (Jeremiah 1:4). The emphasis in those passages is that God spoke, and the result was a perfect word. That is the idea of the Scriptures as stated in 2 Timothy 3:16. God spoke forth, and the Scriptures were the result.

The purpose for the God-breathed Bible is found in verse 17: “So that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (NIV). God has “completely outfitted” us that we may produce “every good work” as we actively put the Word of God to work in our lives. Depend on His Word at work in you to produce beautiful, Christlike works!

LESSON: *The Scriptures are the product of the creative, out-breathing of God and are therefore perfect and able to equip us for every good work.*
(February 23)

(Preaching and Teaching with Imagination by Warren Wiersbe) source information unknown.

A sermon isn't a picture on the wall, hanging there for folks to admire. It isn't even a window in the wall, giving people a glimpse of the beautiful life that's beyond their reach. The sermon is a door that opens onto a path that leads the pilgrim into new steps of growth and service to the glory of God.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for:

doctrine—what is right

reproof—what is not right

correction—how to get right

instruction in righteousness—how to stay right

Isn't that what preaching is all about? A sermon isn't a picture on the wall, hanging there for folks to admire. It isn't even a window in the wall, giving people a glimpse of a beautiful life that's beyond their reach. The sermon is a door that opens onto a path that leads the pilgrim into new steps of growth and service to the glory of God. What a privilege we have to be called to preach the Word! Now let's think about the mechanics of "imagineering" a sermon.

p. 218

A HARMLESS DIVERSION?

Internationally acclaimed novelist Thomas Mann wrote a whole series of books on Joseph, the person who is the focus of Genesis 37 through 50. So we know that Mann had more than a superficial acquaintance with the Bible.

Yet his biographer records that on Christmas in 1940, Mann read aloud from the Bible for the “general amusement” of his family. At one point he said, “This book is a harmless diversion, exactly what I need.”

We may wonder why the family was amused and what Mann meant by calling God’s holy Word “a harmless diversion.” While the bible does contain humor, its message speaks about matters that are deeply serious and of eternal importance.

Because it is the Word of God and therefore the Word of Truth, the Bible is to be read with reverence. Its timeless teachings should elicit a response of gratitude and obedience, but certainly not amusement.

How do you and I read Scripture? As a harmless diversion, like a piece of pulp fiction? Or do we read it as a priceless source of light and hope that daily demands our concentrated, prayerful attention?

The Bible’s truth is exactly what we need. —VCG

The Word is a lamp to my feet,

A light to my path always,

To guide and to save me from sin

And show me the heavenly way. —Sellers

**READ THE BIBLE AS IF GOD WERE SPEAKING TO YOU.
HE IS!**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Saturday, December 13, 1997)

EYE CONTACT

Researchers studying eye movement during normal conversation have found that sustaining eye contact for any length of time is difficult, if not impossible. Special cameras reveal that what appears to be a steady gaze at someone is actually a series of rapid scans of the face. Eye movement is essential because the nerves in the eye need a constant change of stimulation if we are to see properly. Studies show that if we look at the same spot continuously, the rest of our visual field will go blank.

We can experience a similar problem in our study of the Word of God. If we “stare” exclusively at certain biblical truths while excluding other important doctrines, our spiritual vision will begin to blur out. Some people, for instance, tend to look only at the love of God, or the wrath of God, or evangelism, or church growth, or the endtimes, or the devil, or sin. No matter what particular truth we are interested in, we need to be careful lest we lose our perspective.

The Bible tells us that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16) and is profitable for our spiritual development. Only as we see the big picture—how the many biblical doctrines fit together—will we avoid staring at some truths and becoming blind to others. —MRD II

God’s Word was given for our good

And we are to obey;

Not choose the parts that we like best,

Then live in our own way. —Hess

**YOU CAN’T ENJOY THE HARMONY OF SCRIPTURE
IF YOU PLAY JUST ONE NOTE OF TRUTH.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Wednesday, May 10, 2000)

A MAP AND A COMPASS

I was driving on the outskirts of Orlando, searching for the little town of Zellwood. I had carefully located it on the map, but I discovered that I was on an unfamiliar road. A glance at the compass attached to my windshield, however, assured me that I was headed in the right direction and would eventually cross the highway leading to Zellwood.

The Bible and the work of God's Holy Spirit are like a map and a compass. The Bible is our map. Paul assured Timothy that Scripture lays out the route of sound doctrine and righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16). But where is the compass in this passage?

The compass is the work of the Holy Spirit in Paul's "manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance" (vv 10, 14). Because Timothy carefully followed Paul's Spirit-led example, he didn't lose his way.

Perhaps Bible reading, prayer, and Sunday worship were once part of your childhood, but you no longer practice them. Now you are wandering and don't know what to believe. Now you are wandering and don't know what to believe. Look at the map and compass again! Read the Bible and recall the life of parents, ministers, or friends who walked with Christ. Follow their example and soon you'll be back on the right course. —DJD

*Thy Word is a lamp to my feet,
A light to my path always,
To guide and to save me from sin
And show me the heavenly way. —Sellers*

**WITH GOD'S WORD AS YOUR MAP AND HIS SPIRIT AS YOUR
COMPASS, YOU'RE SURE TO STAY ON COURSE.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Sunday, May 5, year unknown)

MEMORIZE IT!

Before the choir began to sing an anthem of praise, Cindy quoted the first Bible verse she had ever memorized. It was inspirational for our congregation to hear her repeat from memory that passage from the Psalms.

At the same time, in another part of the church, adult workers were listening to more than 50 children recite verses they had memorized. They were involved in a Scripture memory program designed to hide God's Word in their hearts for a lifetime.

I remember when I first became a believer as a teenager. A godly woman was conducting a similar memorization program in our little church. I learned 110 verses and won an award—a book that told the story of the Bible.

I no longer have that book, but I am still carrying the best prize—those precious verses. When I need them—while visiting a sick friend, while making an important decision, while going through difficult days, while I'm talking about or writing about the Lord—the Holy Spirit brings the appropriate verses to my mind.

The psalmist referred to hiding God's Word in his heart (Ps. 119:1). We do that by memorizing it. Then it's always there, even when we don't have a Bible. —DCE

*Hiding God's Word in our hearts
Will strengthen our spirit within,
Giving the help that we need*

To turn from temptation and sin. —Sper

**WHEN THE BIBLE BECOMES A PART OF YOU,
YOU'LL BE LESS LIKELY TO COME APART.**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Thursday, July 10, year unknown)

(1001 Great Stories & “Quotes” by R. Kent Hughes) Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Copyright – R. Kent Hughes, 1998.

An art enthusiast in New York had on the walls of his office an outstanding collection of etchings, including one of the Leaning Tower of Pisa. For a long time he noticed that it persisted in hanging crooked, despite the fact that he straightened it every morning. At last he spoke to the lady who cleaned up the room each night, asking her if she was responsible for its lopsided condition. “Why, yes,” she said, “I have to hang it crooked to make the tower hang straight!” In the same fashion some twist the Scripture in order to justify their own opinions or to make their imperfect lives appear right. Let us beware of thus deceitfully handling the Word of God, for to distort its meaning in order to fit our preconceived ideas is a dangerous practice and a terrible sin.

Our Daily Bread, reprinted by *Walk Thru the Bible Press, Inc., 1978.*

p. 26

(The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart: And 1,501 Other Stories by Charles R. Swindoll) Nashville, TN: Word Publishing. Copyright - Word Publishing, Inc., 1998.

I GOT SOME FUNNY ANSWERS when I took poll regarding the Book of Habakkuk. Some of the answers were:

- a word spelled backwards,
- a Jewish holiday,
- a village in Vietnam,
- a new game,
- a disease of the lower back.

p. 48

v. 17 in order that the man of God may be adequate, having been equipped for every good work.

Now we have a **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE** for why the Word of God is “God-breathed and beneficial for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for training in righteousness”:

“IN ORDER THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE ADEQUATE, HAVING BEEN EQUIPPED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK.”

In verse 16 we got the **POWER** and the **PROFIT** of the Word of God.

The **POWER** being that the:

“Scripture is God-breathed.”

The **PROFIT** being:

“teaching,”

“conviction,”

“correction,” and

“training in righteousness” which can be ours.

Now we come to the **PURPOSE**:

“IN ORDER THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE ADEQUATE, HAVING BEEN EQUIPPED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK.”

The first thing Paul says is:

“IN ORDER THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE ADEQUATE.”

Paul says in:

1 Thessalonians 3:10

as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith?

Paul’s concern for the Thessalonians is that they might have supplied that which is lacking in their faith. This, of course, can be done through an exposition of Scriptural truth.

Hebrews 5:11-14

Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for some one to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For every one who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

Here Paul tells us the **FIRST PURPOSE** of the Word of God is that:

“THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE ADEQUATE” or
MATURE.

Now we come to a consideration of the **SECOND PURPOSE** of the Word of God:

“THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE . . . EQUIPPED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK.”

The **FOCUS** of the first purpose was upon the **“MAN.”**

The **FOCUS** of the second purpose is upon the **MINISTRY.**

The **PICTURE** in this word is of a **SHIP** that is fully equipped for a voyage.

Paul mentioned in:

2 Timothy 2:21 (version unknown)

If therefore a person cleanse himself from these, he shall be a vessel for honorable use, set apart and useful to the Master equipped for every good work.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary, speaking about the word “ADEQUATE,” says it is:

. . . “complete, capable, proficient in the sense of being able to meet all demands.”
p. 757

Lange quotes Tholuck:

“A Book that has had such a past as the Bible, will have also a future.”
p. 111

Knight says:

. . . he has given scripture to instruct them so that they may know in principle what God expects of them and thus be equipped to do that particular “good deed” called for in each situation.
p. 450

Matthew Henry says:

Scripture is a perfect rule of faith and practice. If we consult the scripture which was given by inspiration of God, and follow its directions, we shall be made men of God, *perfect and thoroughly furnished to every good work*.
O that we may love our Bibles more, and keep closer to them than ever!
p. 1897

Barclay says:

But Paul makes one final point. The study of the Scriptures trains a man in righteousness until he is equipped for every good work. Here is the essential conclusion. The study of the Scriptures must never be selfish; it must never be simply for the good of a man's own soul. Any change, any conversion which makes a man think of nothing but of the fact that *he* has been saved is no true change and no true conversion. He must study the Scriptures to make himself useful to God and useful to his fellow men. He must study, not simply and solely to save his own soul, but that he may make himself such that God will use him to help to save the souls and comfort the lives of others. No man is saved unless he is on fire to save his fellow men.
p. 232

Lock, speaking on the phrase "EQUIPPED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK," says:

. . . [It is] here only in N.T., [and it is] fit for his task . . .
p. 111

Quinn & Wacker translate the last words:

completely equipped. "The complete man of God" is one who has been "completely equipped for every excellent deed."
p. 751

J. Vernon McGee says:

“Perfect” doesn’t mean that you and I will reach the kind of perfection where absolutely everything we do is right. Rather, it means we will attain full maturation. (There are a lot of baby Christians around today.) We’ll be complete, full-grown people.

“Thoroughly furnished” is *thoroughly* furnished. That is the Word of God can fit you out for life for every good work.

p. 473

Guthrie says:

The Christian minister has in his hands a God-given instrument designed to equip him completely for his work.

p. 165

Kelly says:

If Scripture is used in all these ways, it fulfils a definite function, causing **the man of God to be complete and completely equipped for every good work**. The clause is introduced by **so that . . .** which in classical Greek normally expresses purpose, but which in the *koinē* was often used to denote result.

p. 204

Stott says:

Indeed, Scripture is the chief means which God employs to bring ‘the man of God’ to maturity.

p. 103

Wiersbe says:

In other words, the Word of God furnishes and equips a believer so that he can live a life that pleases God and do the work God wants him to do. The better we know the Word, the better we are able to live and work for God.

The purpose of Bible study is *not* just to understand doctrines or to be able to defend the faith, as important as these things are. The ultimate purpose is the equipping of the believers who read it. It is the Word of God that equips God's people to do the work of God.

p. 151

In my book, Drawing Closer, Growing Stronger, I say:

Often it seems during the times of greatest stress and even during times when we seem to be growing spiritually, Satan tries to tempt us and get us to neglect God's truth. He may offer a half-truth or try to disguise something as good when it is not.

He delights in cluttering our lives with so many demands that we fail to have any time in the Word. Satan knows we may have a great defense, but we will never score without an offense. If he can keep the sword out of our hand, it's a piece of cake to whip us!

I remember in my early ministry how I used to rationalize my study time in the Word for teaching others as adequate for my own soul as well. After getting nailed real good a couple of times, the Lord got my attention. Now my own funeral will be all that breaks my earthly appointment with my heavenly Father. And really that's no big deal since I will have already entered His presence for eternity. I am committed to spending personal quality time in the Word first thing every day. Reading, meditating, and memorizing passages that will make me fruitful as the day unfolds.

p. 68

JULY 12

A Gift from Prison

The Law of the LORD makes them happy, and they think about it day and night. Psalm 1:2, CEV

The following was written on the last page of her Greek New Testament, which Lady Jane Grey sent to her sister the night before she herself was martyred.

I have sent you a book. It is not rimmed with gold, but its contents are worth more than precious stones. It contains the laws of the Lord. It is his last will and testament. It will lead you to the path of eternal joy. If you will read it with an earnest desire to follow it, it will bring you to immortal and everlasting life. It will teach you to live and die. It will win more for you than you could have gained from your deplorable father's real estate. In the same way that you should have inherited his lands, you shall be an inheritor of riches that can never be lost or stolen.

Apply yourself diligently to this book. Direct your life after it. Desire with David, good sister, to understand the law of the Lord God. Your youth does not guarantee you a long life. If God calls, the young go as quickly as the old. Learn to die. Deny the world, defy the devil, despise the flesh, and delight yourself only in the Lord. Be penitent for your sins, but don't despair. Be steady in faith, but not presumptuous.

Since you bear the name of a Christian, follow Christ's steps as nearly as you can. Take up your cross. Lay your sins on his back. Embrace him always.

Regarding my death, rejoice as I do, good sister. I shall be delivered of this corruption and put on incorruption.

—LADY JANE GREY: *Letters*

It's hard for me to understand how this young woman should be required to surrender her promising life because of her faith, dear God. She lived in difficult and troubled times. Help me to keep the advice she gave her sister. It comes from one who can speak in authentic terms.
p. 204 (source unknown)

A LETTER FROM GOD'S HEART

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. 2 Timothy 3:16
I will hear what God, the Lord, will speak. Psalm 85:6

To get the most out of the Bible, we must receive it as a letter from God's heart to ours. Unless we apply His Word to our lives, realizing that the Holy Spirit is seeking to guide, correct, and encourage us through its precepts, it will do us little good.

John Bunyan wrote his immortal allegory *Pilgrim's Progress* only after mastering the Scriptures and taking them into his heart. He often told people not to become discouraged if they couldn't fully understand a particular Bible passage. He said, "Although you may have no commentaries at hand, continue to read the Word and pray; for a little from God is better than a great deal received from man. Too many are content to listen to what comes from men's mouths, without searching and kneeling before God to know the real truth. That which we receive directly from the Lord through the study of His Word is from the 'minting house' itself. Even old truths are new if they come to us with the smell of Heaven upon them."

We will recognize the importance of the Bible for daily living when we remember that we are born of the Word (1 Pet. 1:23), we grow by it (1 Pet. 2:2), and we are cleansed through its study (John 15:3). We are sanctified (John 17:17), edified (Acts 20:32), illuminated (Ps. 119:105), and satisfied by it (Ps. 119:103). The Bible keeps us from sin, energizes for service, sheds prophetic light upon the future, and provides balm for our comfort.

As Christians, we must consult this wonderful "love letter" daily, saying with receptive hearts, "I will hear what God, the Lord, will speak." —H.G.B.

O may I love Thy precious Word,

May I explore the mine;

May I its fragrant flowers glean,

May light upon me shine.

—Hodder

THOT: Love for the Author of the Bible is the best preparation for the study of the Bible.

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Monday, May 21, year unknown)

A DANGEROUS BOOK?

**The commandment of the Lord is pure,
enlightening the eyes. —Psalm 19:8**

Two items in the evening paper caught my attention. The first was an article about a group that wants to remove Gideon Bibles from hotel rooms, claiming that the Bible is so gruesome it prohibits a good night's sleep. The second item was a comment by a columnist who equated the Bible to oft-censored books like *Catcher in the Rye*.

Are these people right? The Bible does contain sections that are a bit harsh. And what about the stories of adultery, perversion, hatred, and murder? Do these less-than-genteel portions prove the allegations of immorality made by these two media reports? Is the Bible dangerous?

God's Word does paint an unmistakably realistic portrait of sin. Yet evil is never depicted as good in the Bible. It is sketched in the somber colors of sorrow, pain, and death. God's Word is painfully honest in its portrayal of sin. And God has a unique reason for that. He alone has a solution to the problem. Only He can enlighten our eyes to the Messiah—the One who can do something about sin.

What a contrast the Scripture gives! It shows the dark, loathsome world of sin but offers the bright, joyful world of salvation. Is the Bible dangerous? Only if you don't read it. —J.D.B.

*We won't give up the Bible,
For it alone can tell
The way to save our ruined souls
From sin and death and hell. —Anon.*

**THE BIBLE IS A RECORD OF MAN'S COMPLETE RUIN IN SIN
AND GOD'S COMPLETE REMEDY IN CHRIST. —Barnhouse**

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Wednesday, December 6, year unknown)

(God's Little Devotional Book by Honor Books, Inc.) Tulsa, OK: Honor Books, Inc. Copyright - Honor Books, Inc., 1995.

One of the people most admired by Charles Swindoll is Dawson Trotman, who died after helping to rescue two drowning girls. Says Swindoll:

“When Dawson Trotman passed away he probably left a legacy of discipleship on this earth that will never be matched except perhaps in the life of Jesus Christ Himself. I've become a real student of Dawson Trotman and believe wholeheartedly in the methods of discipleship that he taught and emulated throughout his days. He died in Schroon Lake, New York. He died of all things in the midst of an area that he was expert in — he drowned. He was an expert swimmer. The last few moments he had in the water he lifted one girl out of the water. He went down and got the other girl and lifted her out of the water and then submerged and was not found again until the dragnet found him a few hours later. . . . *Time* ran an article on Trotman's life the next week, and they put a caption beneath his name, and it read, 'Always Holding Somebody Up.' In one sentence, that was Trotman's life — investment in people . . . holding them up.”

Discipleship is not having others follow you as much as it is lifting others up to see the Lord and then serving them so they can follow Him wholeheartedly.

p. 307

(It's Time For Your Comeback: Don't Take a Step Back with a Set Back by Tim Storey) Tulsa, OK: Harrison House. Copyright – Tim Storey, 1998.

The angel is thinking, *We can handle this. I'll just pull it up on the computer under **www.semi-retarded people God has helped.com**. Wow, look at that list: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Rahab . . . Yeah, we can handle him!*

p. 30

(The Game and the Glory: An Autobiography by Michelle Akers with Gregg Lewis) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – Michelle Akers, 2000.

So, now we go into the final vs. China. Hacker (our sports shrink) gave us a great quote by George Bernard Shaw. It says, “Our lives are shaped not as much by our experiences as by our expectations.”
p. 230

(Seize the Day with Dietrich Bonhoeffer by Charles Ringma) Colorado Springs, CO: Piñon Press. Copyright – Charles Ringma, 2000.

Center Point

Psalm 119:130

“Daily, quiet reflection on the word of God as it applies to me . . . becomes for one a point of crystallization for everything which gives interior and exterior order to my life.”

—MEDITATING ON THE WORD

Scripture can be more than the rule of faith. It can also be the source of meaning which inspires all our willing, planning, acting, and serving in the world. Scripture’s history, personalities, stories, prophets, precepts, wisdom, and challenges can all become a source of inspiration to me as I see to apply them to my life’s circumstances. In order for this to occur, I need to make time to reflect on my life’s circumstances as well as Scripture and then bring the two into careful dialogue.

Meditation

Scripture is the wisdom of God by which

I can order my daily life.

(March 30)

CONCLUSION:

What lessons did you learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Step #9 is Faithful: May He Find Me Faithful.

LESSON #2: The world crowns success, but God crowns faithfulness.

LESSON #3: Timothy was faithful to listen to his mentor and follow his model.

LESSON #4: Suffering is part of the godly life.

LESSON #5: The Word of God is our message to the world.

LESSON #6: The Lord has been faithful to deliver Paul out of all his troubles.

LESSON #7: Things keep getting worse and worse for the non-Christian and better and better for the Christian.

LESSON #8: The Word of God teaches us, turns us, tests us, and trains us (verse 16).

LESSON #9: The culture is going down but you stay by the stuff.

LESSON #10: The secret to faithfulness is to stay steadfast in the storm.

LESSON #11: It is never too early to start exposing our children to the Scriptures.

LESSON #12: The Scriptures make us “wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (verse 15).

LESSON #13: Scripture is “beneficial for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for training in righteousness” (verse 16).

LESSON #14: Knowledge of the Scriptures prepares us to “be adequate” and to be “equipped for every good work” (verse 17).

Barnes has this little poetic piece:

How precious is the book divine,
 By inspiration given!
 Bring as a lamp its doctrines shine,
 To guide our souls to heaven.

It sweetly cheers our drooping hearts
 In this dark vale of tears;
 Life, light, and joy it still imparts,
 And quells our rising fears.

This lamp, through all the tedious night
 Of life, shall guide our way;
 Till we behold the clearer light
 Of an eternal day.

p. 242

Lea & Griffin summarize the passage by saying:

Christians can receive strength for the Christian pilgrimage from two sources. First, they can observe the lives of other believers. Paul urged Timothy to look at his life in order to learn and apply Christian truth (vv. 10-13). Timothy could observe two features from Paul's life. He could learn that persecution was certain (v. 12). He could also be reminded of divine strength and protection (v. 11). Even though hardship was certain, divine strength was even more pervasive.

The second source of strength for the Christian pilgrimage is Scripture. Paul focused on three contributions Scripture can provide for the believer. The Scriptures contain the explanation of God's plan of salvation (v. 15). They contain an outline of doctrine and truth that support the plan of salvation (v. 16). The Scriptures also provide warning to keep Christians from wandering afield from God's will.

Those who obey the commands and respond to the promises of Scripture can find the strength to live a life of such arresting quality that it can encourage and enlighten others.

p. 238

Step #9: Faithful: May He Find Me Faithful

Verse 14 is our **KEY VERSE**:

“But you be remaining in the things which you learned and became convinced of, knowing from whom you learned them.”

2 Samuel 22:26

“To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless,

The world needs men . . . (and I might add women)
 who cannot be bought;
 whose word is their bond;
 who put character above wealth;
 who possess opinions and a will;
 who are larger than their vocations;
 who do not hesitate to take chances;
 who will not lose their individuality in a crowd;
 who will be as honest in small things as in great things;
 who will make no compromise with wrong;
 whose ambitions are not confined to their own selfish desires;
 who will not say they do it “because everybody else does it”;
 who are true to their friends through good report and evil report in
 adversity as well as in prosperity;
 who do not believe that shrewdness, cunning, and hardheadedness
 are the best qualities for winning success;
 who are not ashamed or afraid to stand for the truth when it is
 unpopular;
 who can say “no” with emphasis, although all the rest of the world
 says “yes.”

(From *Parson's Technology*)

The real problem is not why some pious, humble, believing people suffer but why some do not.

—C. S. LEWIS (1898-1963)

Those things that hurt, instruct.

—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1706-1790)

When it is dark enough, men see the stars.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882)

You can't have a mountain without valleys.

—ERIN W. LUTZER (1941-)

You desire to know the art of living, my friend? It is contained in one phrase: make use of suffering.

—HENRI FRÉDÉRIC AMIEL (1821-1881)

The way you and I handle our big and little trials makes the world pause in its frantic, headlong pursuits. Our godly response to those obstacles and perplexities in our lives literally kicks the psychological crutches right out from under the skeptic. The unbeliever can no longer refuse to face the reality of our faith.

—JONI EARECKSON TADA

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

FULLY TRUSTWORTHY

Chuck Swindoll tells the story of a house church in the former Soviet Union several years ago. They had to meet in secret to avoid reprisals from the communist government.

“One Sunday these believers arrived inconspicuously in small groups throughout the day so as not to arouse the suspicion of KGB informers. By dusk they were all safely inside, windows closed, and doors locked. They began by singing a hymn quietly but with deep emotion. Suddenly, the door was pushed open and in walked two soldiers with loaded automatic weapons at the ready. One shouted, ‘All right—everybody line up against the wall. If you wish to renounce your commitment to Jesus Christ, leave now!’”

“Two or three quickly left, then another. After a few more seconds, two more. ‘This is your last chance. Either turn against your faith in Christ,’ he ordered, ‘or stay and suffer the consequences.’”

“Another left. Finally, two more in embarrassed silence with their faces covered slipped out into the night. No one else left moved. Parents with small children trembling beside them looked down reassuringly. They fully expected to be gunned down or, at best, be imprisoned.

“After a few moments of complete silence, the other soldier closed the door, looked back at those who stood against the wall and said, ‘Keep your hands up—but this time in praise to our Lord Jesus Christ, brothers and sisters. We, too, are Christians. We were sent to another house church several weeks ago to arrest a group of believers . . .’”

“The other soldier interrupted, ‘But, instead, we were converted! We have learned by experience, however, that unless people are willing to die for their faith, they cannot be fully trusted.’”

Our commitment to Christ affects all our other relationships. The more devoted we are to Jesus, the more faithful we will be to our church, family, and friends.

[Living Above the Level of Mediocrity by **Charles Swindoll**.]

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(Prayer—The Great Adventure by David Jeremiah) Sister, OR: Multnomah Publishers, Inc. Copyright - David Jeremiah, 1997.

Jesus insists that the power to accomplish our purpose comes from God alone. The only way we can stay on target is by giving ourselves to His authority. How does this work? Author Jamie Buckingham illustrated it well in a column he wrote a few years ago, just before Operation Desert Storm erupted in the sands of the Middle East:

This month marks the 200th anniversary of John Wesley's death. On February 24, 1791, six days before he died, the 88-year-old minister asked his helper to bring paper and quill to his bed.

For years Wesley had followed the attempts of William Wilberforce, a member of Parliament, to have slavery abolished in England. In 1774, Wesley had written *Thoughts on Slavery*, a book that had influenced Wilberforce to push for abolition. Sadly, all attempts had been unsuccessful.

Now, on his deathbed, Wesley heard that Wilberforce was about to give up the fight. The vested interests of slavery in Parliament were too powerful.

With Faltering hand, Wesley wrote Wilberforce a powerful letter of encouragement.

“Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them stronger than God?”

“O be not weary of well-doing! Go on, in the name of God and in the power of His might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it.

“Reading this morning a tract wrote by a poor African, I was particularly struck by the circumstance that a man who has a black skin, being wronged or outraged by a white man, can have no redress; it being a law in all our Colonies that the oath of a black man against a white goes for nothing. What villainy is this!

“That He who has guided you from youth up may continue to strengthen you in this and all things is the prayer of, dear sir, your affectionate servant. John Wesley.”

Wilberforce received the letter after Wesley died. He vowed to once again take up the fight. It took 16 years, but in 1807 the British empire abolished slavery.

pp. 214-5

(Payne Stewart by Tracey Stewart with Ken Abraham) Nashville, TN:
Broadman & Holman. Copyright – Anastasia T. Stewart, 2000.

As I leafed through the devotional books, I came to the pages Payne would have read the night before his crash. I was astounded. The message of the Scripture was powerfully appropriate to Payne and what we were about to face:

INTERCESSION

Grant that I may be used to open the eyes of others and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Jesus. Acts 26:18

AFFIRMATION

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. James 1:12

THANKSGIVING

Bless the Lord, O my soul;
And all that is within me, bless His holy name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits;
Who forgives all your iniquities
And heals all your diseases;
Who redeems your life from the pit
And crowns you with love and compassion;
Who satisfies your desires with good things,
So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. Psalm 103:1-5

CLOSING PRAYER

The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;
My God is my rock; I will take refuge in Him,
My shield and the horn of my salvation,
My stronghold and my refuge—
My Savior, You save me from violence.
I call on the Lord, who is worthy of praise,
And I am saved from my enemies. 2 Samuel 22:2-4

pp. 311-12