

THE TWELVE STEPS TO A FANTASTIC FINISH

II Timothy 2:1-7

Step Number Four - Legacy: What Am I Passing On?

Here are some lines from, *Over the Hill & On a Roll*:

- * Many people are like the famous Liberty Bell—old, heavy, and slightly cracked.
- * Milton Berle said he's so old that when he orders a three-minute egg, they ask for the money up front.
- * And I love this one. Remember Bette Davis way back there when? She says, "Old age? That's the period of life when you buy a see-through nightgown and then remember you don't know anybody who can still see through one."

Twelve Steps to a Fantastic Finish is the study in 2 Timothy. This is the last letter by the apostle.

If you can get a picture of him sitting in a cell, he is waiting the execution.

Whatever the Roman government decides to do the court case has already taken place and he is simply waiting for that. He is a man on a mission.

I see him burning the midnight oil, writing this letter by flickering candlelight in the hopes that this will get to Timothy in time for him to respond in Ephesus.

And come to Rome, bring his coat and the books and for them to have some time together before he has the call to go home to glory.

Let's review what we have studied in the past three weeks. Step number one – Integrity: Getting It All Together. Here we talked about the fact that integrity begins at the moment I receive Christ as Savior.

I have been given a clean, white sheet of paper. Building on that clean, white sheet of paper

I live life in accordance with the word of God.

I am in the book on a regular basis

and the Spirit of God has free reign

to produce Christ-likeness in my life on a daily basis. That is the foundation of integrity.

That leads us to Step number two - Conviction. Conviction is recognizing the fact that Biblical mandates are very different from the culture. Therefore, Conviction: Here I Stand, God Help Me.

Then that led us to number three, Courage: I Am Willing to Pay the Price.

In courage, as we finished last week's study, we were introduced to one of my favorite Biblical characters.

Onesiphorus was a man who demonstrated incredible courage because he was a man on a one-way street going the wrong way.

All the Christians were making a mass exodus from Rome because many of them had been thrown to the lions in the coliseum and were just being massacred. Here comes this lonely figure into Rome

and he has one mission and that is to find Paul.

And Paul tells us that he found him.

And he refreshed him and met his needs.
You talk about courage and Onesiphorus is the illustration.

When you study the Bible you need to remember that chapter divisions are manmade.
So we need to pick up right where we were last week.

Onesiphorus has just been used as an illustration and when you get to verse 1 of chapter 2 the first word you have in the emphatic position is the word "*You*." It is like Paul is through talking about suffering and about others who have, now he is talking to the man.

He is coming right back to Timothy and his words are measured as he speaks to him. This fourth study is Legacy: What Are We Passing On to Others?
Our key verse is going to be verse 2 when we get there.

I believe that every believer has the responsibility to be sure that during his or her lifetime they have done something that has eternal ramifications that allows their legacy to live on into the next generation.

Every one of us is like a link in a chain.
There is a generation behind us which we inherited. There is a generation in front of us who is going to inherit what we leave.
But this generation counts for everything.
It is our responsibility to do this.
In great urgency, God is saying the same thing.
And Paul is saying the same thing to young Timothy.
Be sure that you keep things intact and pass on the message.

Now how concerned are you about the legacy that you are going to leave?

You say, well, I have never really thought about it.

You have thought about your will haven't you?

You have probably thought about a lot of other things that, if in the event of a premature accident and you die, that things are cared for.

You have planned those things.

But have you ever taken time – and I have never heard anybody speak on this before as a Christian, to sit down and realize your greatest responsibility is your legacy?

What is it that you are going to leave to your family, to your friends, and to others?

Now, in order to probe this a minute, I want to ask four questions:

1. What are you passing on?
2. What is the benefit of your being here on earth?
3. What story is your sequel going to tell?
What are people going to say about you?
What are you going to hear at the funeral?
What is it that has characterized your life that people will always treasure in their memory?
4. What is the aftermath, the afterglow, the aftertaste, the fallout, from your journey through life?

Steven Lawson has written several great books.

His latest book is called *The Legacy: What Every Father Wants to Leave His Child*.

In the book there is a study that is performed contrasting a couple who are not Christian and a couple who are Christian and their descendants.

What they did was take a guy by the name of Max Jukes, who was an atheist, his wife was not a believer, and they traced their 1,200 descendants.

And then they took Jonathan Edwards who preached that great sermon *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* and his wonderful, godly wife Sarah, and traced their descendants.

What I want to do is to help you understand one thing.

Sincerity is not enough.

You are making decisions in your life right now that determine your legacy.

Therefore, be very careful, because listen to the two. Jukes first of all:

- * 440 lives of outright debauchery
- * 310 paupers and vagrants
- * 190 public prostitutes
- * 130 convicted criminals
- * 100 alcoholics
- * 60 habitual thieves
- * 55 victims of impurity
- * 7 murderers

Total cost of their making their journey down here on earth to the state of New York was one million two hundred thousand dollars!

Are you ready for Jonathan Edwards?

- * 300 clergymen, missionaries, or theological professors
- * 120 college professors
- * 110 lawyers
- * 60 physicians
- * 60 authors of good books
- * 30 judges
- * 14 presidents of universities
- * numerous giants in American industry
- * 3 U.S. congressmen
- * 1 vice-president of the United States

Choices, decisions, make the impact on the legacy that you and I are going to leave.

Of course one of the first things you do when you become a grandparent, if you have not become one yet you will discover it, is you start praying daily for your grandchildren. Pray that the Lord will protect them and put a hedge around them until they all come to know Jesus Christ as personal Savior. That is a grandparent's prayer because that is part and parcel of your legacy that is going to outlive you.

Now, how would you like to have the legacy of Phygellus and Hermogenes from last week?

Here are the two guys who are ugly in character and ugly in what they did and deserted the Apostle Paul.

It would be interesting to trace their legacy because of the decision that they made at this critical time.

This study is a piece of cake.

You have three commands and three illustrations and a final thought.

The three commands are in verses one, two, and three, and the three illustrations are in verses three through six, and then the final thought is in verse seven.

Let me just give you an overview.

The three commands are:

Command #1 (verse 1):

Be strengthened by means of the grace which is in Christ Jesus.

Command #2 (verse 2):

These things commit to faithful men.

Command #3 (verse 3):

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

If I were to take one word and summarize these three commands,
command number one, provides the strength,
command number two, the duty or obligation or responsibility;
the sharing, and
command number three, is the suffering.
So in the three commands you have:

1. Strength
2. Sharing
3. Suffering

Now the three illustrations:

1. You have a good soldier verse 3 & 4.

2. You have a runner who is competing according to the rules verse 5.
3. You have a hard-working farmer verse 6.

Now I call this the “Texas Aggie passage”
[because there are soldiers, athletes, and farmers involved.]

Are you ready?

Verse 1: “*You therefore, my son, be strong by means of the grace which is in Christ Jesus.*”

You (emphatic position)—be like Onesiphorus.
Be a faithful servant.

My son—Paul is the Father of Timothy spiritually because Paul never had a son and Timothy never really had a godly father and Paul became that image to him. So this relationship is intimate and very close.

Now why does Paul start out by saying,
“*be strong by means of the grace which is in Christ Jesus*”?
How would you have framed that if you wanted him to really do a good job?
You may hear a coach say buck up, get in there and get after it, right?
You do not do that in a godly life.

In a godly life you learn the first principle of blessing is dependence and that God has provided all the resources. This is God’s gracious enabling power that makes it possible for Timothy to be and to do

what needs to be done successfully in these circumstances. **Be strong.**

Now I am going to use some English terminology here, do not lose me.

This is a present, passive, imperative.

By present it means that every minute, sitting here right now, you must avail yourself to the power.

Just like we are aware that this light is on, and it is on because it is connected to the power and the power is on.

You throw the switch, the power goes off.

When you quench and grieve the Spirit of God, the power (the lights) goes off in our lives.

The challenge of the Christian life is to live everyday in total, complete dependence upon his enabling power.

To “*be strong*” in the passive sense, rather than the active, means that Timothy is going to be acted upon by someone. He is passive. God is acting upon him to provide the strength necessary to live life successfully.

So if I tried to translate it so that I communicated the command, it is keep in touch with the power and do not try to do it on your own.

It is John 15:5 in big, bold letters.
“*Without me you can do nothing.*”

It is Phil. 4:13. “*I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*”

So, what is the key to command number one?

It is continuous cooperation with God.

It is clinging and committing and allowing God to be the one.

You and I to be successful, must be dependent and wait for him.

Remember what Paul said to the Galatians in 2:20?

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”

Why does Timothy need to be strengthened by means of grace?

Stop and think about it.

When you get through seeing these three illustrations of what he will go through it will be a miracle if he survives.

And God is going to get the glory.

Grace is always needed to have the courage and the conviction to stand and speak boldly against the culture and to be willing to have these other things all be true of you.

You cannot do that in your own strength.

And the strength comes from the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Ken Hutcheson who played with the Seattle Seahawks for years is a pastor in Washington and has written a book on the church and he says, “And when God’s work is done by God’s people in God’s way, empowered by God’s mighty, indwelling Spirit, look out, Jack!”

We are a force to be contended with.

Oswald Chambers said, “God never gives strength for tomorrow, or for the next hour, but only for the strain of the minute.” What is the key to that?

Every minute of the day is a declaration of dependence so you can be a candidate for that.

Verse two is our key verse.

Verse 2, “And the things you heard from me, in the presence of many witnesses, these things (that is, the things that you heard from me) entrust to faithful men, who will be qualified to teach others also.

Over verse one I wrote the word “maintenance.”
Be strengthened.

Over verse two I wrote the word “mission.”
This is my mission, this is my duty, this is my obligation, this is my legacy when you write it down.

My legacy is to be a person who passes on the message of Jesus Christ to others.

I am strengthened by him for this and, therefore,
I move forward in service to do what he has asked me to do.

Paul tells Timothy do *the things you have heard* but *trust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also*. The Greek word “faithful” means:

- * Dependable
- * Loyal
- * Believing
- * Reliable

It is the responsibility in conduct and commitment to recognize that your legacy is going to be in people who have come to know Christ because of your faithful communication of the gospel message.

What a serious awesome responsibility!

Your key verse 2. The legacy. This is my responsibility.

Samuel Butler said, “When you have told anyone you have left him a legacy the only decent thing to do is to die at once.”

On my computer I have a dictionary and a thesaurus so I had punched in the thesaurus for legacy and I came up with a great word. The word sequel.

Here is the definition of the word sequel:

sequel *noun*

1. continuation of a story: a movie, novel, or play that continues a story begun in a previous movie, novel, or play.
2. something following something else: something that happens after something else, especially as a consequence of it.

What is your sequel?

What chapter is going to be written that follows up your life here on earth?

Oswald Chambers said, “God rarely allows a soul to see how great a blessing he is.” But he also said, “It is the most natural thing to be like the person you live with the most, therefore live the most with Jesus Christ.”

Therefore, you will share him with others.

Henrietta Mears is Christian Ed Director in Hollywood Presbyterian Church in Hollywood, California.

She is famous for touching three men's lives.

The First one was Robert Munger, Presbyterian Minister, you may know him by the little book he wrote *My Heart, Christ's Home*.

And then the second one you might know a little better by the name of Bill Bright who was the Executive Director for Campus Crusade for Christ.

And the third one is just as well known, Billy Graham.

All three of those men had an encounter at Forest Home Christian Conference Center which was the conference center for Hollywood Presbyterian Church and Henrietta Mears was instrumental in those guys being away for a period of time to get their heads together.

While Billy Graham was in Los Angeles after his first crusade he spent time before the Lord at Forest Home and it was through those decisions that he came back and resigned the presidency of Northwestern College and went into fulltime evangelism.

That lady was responsible for a whole lot of that.

And she made this statement,

“Your influence is negative or positive, never neutral.” And what a sobering thought for each of us.

William Barclay gave a very sharp statement when he said, “There can be no such thing as secret discipleship, for either the secrecy destroys the discipleship, or the discipleship destroys the secrecy.”

Matt. 5:16, “*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven.*”

Are you ready for this? Ninety-five percent of Christians in the body of Christ today have never led a person to Jesus Christ.

Warren Wiersbe said, "You are a Christian today because somebody cared. Now it's your turn."

Let's look at command number three.

Verse 3, "*Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.*"

The key to maintenance is his strength.
The key to ministry is with boldness,
communicate the message.

But now, what is the manner of this ministry going to be?

What is my life going to be like if I am faithful in trying to establish a legacy?

Paul just puts down three pictures of what it looks like and what you can expect your manner of life will be. You are going to be a soldier, you are going to be an athlete that is running a race,

and you are going to be a farmer sowing seed.

The first thing Paul says is "*suffer hardship with me as a good soldier.*" That tells me something.

Ministry is a warfare. You are in a battle.

And I will tell you three things:

1. You are going to be successful in that battle if you understand a warfare principle.
The greater the knowledge of the enemy, the better the chance for victory.

Acknowledge you are in war.

2. Know that you are in war on three fronts: the world, the flesh, and the devil are trying to string you up and nail your hide and make you unsuccessful in your commitment to Christ.
3. The thing that gripes me the most is Satan has home field advantage and with that home field advantage he is the god of this world and he orchestrates things that literally just blow us out of the tub when these things come in our lives so unexpectedly.

Then you have the athlete.

What do you think of with an athlete?

He is training, he is disciplined, he is persevering, and he is obedient.

What do you think of when you think of a farmer?

He is tilling the soil, and then he is planting the seed, and then he is sitting around, weeding, and watering, and praying, and waiting for what?

Fruit that is going to come from his labor.

What an illustration of the Christian life.

The major concern of the soldier is for protection.

The major concern of the athlete is performance that is prize winning.

The major concern of the farmer is patience to wait for fruit.

So Timothy recognize this is the way life is for the believer.

Verse 3, “*Suffer hardships with me as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*”

That is the way the Christian life is lived.

We are in a warfare.

Satan has all kinds of fiery darts in his quiver.

In Don Anderson’s book, *Drawing Closer Growing Stronger* he lists eleven of them:

Doubt

Deceit

Defensiveness

Discouragement

Distraction

Division

Destruction

Disobedience

Doctrinal Error

Delay

Denial

All of those things, he delights to fire at us.

C.S. Lewis said, “The real problem is not why some pious, humble, believing people suffer, but why some do not.”

Because it is part and parcel of what we are going through.

Tom Landry said, “To live a disciplined life, and to accept the result of that discipline as the will of God—that is the mark of a man.”

Look at verse 4.

“No one engaging in military service is allowing himself to become entangled.”

That is a picture of a sheep who has his wool entangled in thorns.

He needs the shepherd to come and extricate him.

He is caught.

“No one engaging in military service allows himself to become entangled in civilian pursuits in order that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.”

The soldier's single focus is the conflict and pleasing the general, the commander-in-chief.

No one going into the army goes into the army with prenuptial agreements.

No one goes into the army with a contract of stipulations as to how you are going to serve as a soldier.

You go into the army to serve where, when, how, what, totally available, 100%, and you do not get any input in where you are going to go and what you are going to do.

That is what Paul is saying.

Now what is wrong with us.

Well, we forget why we are here.

And we forget what we are supposed to do.

And we forget that a war is going on.

We do not have the divine perspective as a result.

We come across so soft and so silly sometimes and so selfish.

Vance Havner said, “Today the quality of our church people is at a frightening low. We are many but not much. Doing has become a substitute for being and we have failed on character.”

The second illustration is in verse 5.

“And if a person is competing in athletic games, he is not being crowned as the winner unless he competed according to the rules.”

They were meticulous in the Olympic teams in those days that every person who ran in the race had disciplined themselves to train according to the rules of the committees and to participate in the race in order to win they had to follow the rules.

You know, whenever you think of a race, it is not how fast you run, it is being sure you finish and the Lord is faithful to finishers.

Here are four f's that would be a great tribute to have placed upon yours or my tombstone.

1. Forgiven – because of the blood of Jesus Christ.
4. Faithful – because I kept hanging in there.
5. Fruitful – I stayed and abided in him so that fruit was born through my life.
6. Finisher – I fought a good fight, I finished the course, I kept the faith.

Think about those words because that is the summary of these illustrations.

Last one, verse 6.

“The hardworking farmer must be the first to receive his share of the crops.”

You have had a soldier, you have had an athlete,
now you have a hardworking farmer.

If you are going to leave a legacy
it is going to be because your manner of life
is described in these verses.

You are a soldier, you are an athlete,
and you are a farmer.

With patience, you keep sowing the seed
and the time will come when the crop
and the harvest will take place.

Here are four words that are common
to all three of these illustrations.

Hard work, discipline, submission, and goals.

You put them all together.

The soldier must not be distracted.

The athlete must run by the rules.

And the farmer is the first to eat the fruit of his labor. His
project is fruit.

Now , verse 7.

Let's put our name before we read the verse.

It makes it personal.

*“_____, think over what I am saying, for the Lord will give
you understanding in all things.”*

Timothy, think over the three commands

I have just given you and the three illustrations.

The maintenance for your ministry

is the strength of the Lord.

The mission that you are upon is to leave a legacy

by passing it on.

And the manner of life you can expect from here on in is that of a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer.

Now, please, *“Think over what I am saying for the Lord will give you understanding.”*

The Greek word *“to think over”* means:

- * Perceive
- * Apprehend
- * Understand
- * Gain an insight into

Gain some insight into so that you, indeed, will understand that the legacy will come to the person who is a soldier with a single purpose for pleasing the Lord, the athlete who is obedient, and the farmer who prepares and plants and is faithful in doing so.

There are 13 lessons that come out of this study.

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: We can get through anything and everything if we are sustained by the strength of His grace.

LESSON #2: We cannot be victorious by ourselves. We must be dependant upon Him.

LESSON #3: His strength is there for us in the time of test, trial, and temptation. We will be victorious if we avail ourselves of this resource.

LESSON #4: What are you doing in your legacy to pass on the great message of the Gospel to the next generation?

LESSON #5: How about making it a goal to become a faithful man or woman “who will be qualified to teach others also”? (verse 2).

LESSON #6: Are you prepared to be obedient to Paul's command to Timothy in verse 3: "Suffer hardships with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus"?

LESSON #7: Are you entangled in "civilian pursuits" that keep you from being a soldier who is pleasing the Lord? (verse 4).

LESSON #8: Can you say that you want written on your tombstone: forgiven, faithful, fruitful, finisher?

LESSON #9: Are you sowing seeds on a daily basis in anticipation of a rich harvest?

LESSON #10: Lord, make me a soldier that is not distracted, an athlete who is running by the rules, and a farmer who is enjoying eating the fruit of his labor.

LESSON #11: Hard-work, discipline, submission, and goals are part and parcel to the normal Christian life.

LESSON #12: The legacy will come to the soldier with a single focus of pleasing the Lord, to the athlete who is obedient, and to the farmer who prepares and plans.

STUDIES IN THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

"The Twelve Steps to a Fantastic Finish"

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."

STEP NUMBER FOUR – Legacy: What Am I Passing On? 2 Timothy 2:1-7

Key verse 2:2

Notes

v. 1 You therefore, my son, be strong by means of the grace which is in Christ Jesus.

v. 2 And the things you heard from me, in the presence of many witnesses, these things entrust to faithful men, who will be qualified to teach others also.

v. 3 Suffer hardships with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

v. 4 No one engaging in military service is allowing himself to become entangled in civilian pursuits in order that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

v. 5 And if a person is competing in the athletic games, he is not being crowned as the winner unless he competed according to the rules.

v. 6 The hard-working farmer must be the first to receive his share of the crops.

v. 7 Think over what I am saying, for the Lord will give you understanding in all things.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Read 2 Timothy 2:1-7 and summarize in your own words what Paul is saying in this section.**
- 2. How is Timothy to be strengthened, according to verse 1?**
- 3. What is Timothy to do with the message he has heard, according to verse 2?**
- 4. What do "good soldiers of Christ Jesus" do in verse 3?**
- 5. What do we have to be careful of in verse 4?**

6. Who are we trying to please in verse 4?
7. How must we compete in verse 5, if we are going to win?
8. What illustration does Paul use in verse 6?
9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?
10. What lesson have you learned from this study?