

1 & 2 Timothy: Applying These Letters to Evangelism Leadership

We're at a time in our ministry at Good Messengers Ministries where we're looking back on what happened in 2007 and planning 2008- and we're so excited. 2007 was an amazing year with three conferences and many new faces joining us witnessing on the streets, in the malls, out by the track and everywhere else, and the Lord raising up ministry leaders. We handed out more tracts (around 200,000) in 2007 than the previous five years, and have for the first time designed new tracts, including seven new tracts and booklets that have been written and are in final design and production as we write. We've seen evangelism classes spring up at multiple churches. We've also seen people adding different regular evangelism times and places to get out and share their faith "favorite fishing holes" for fishermen, resulting in many more opportunities for newcomers to join us at times that work with their schedules.

Some Things to Chew on Regarding Leadership and Evangelism from 1 & 2 Timothy

Imagine if Paul was our mentor for our leadership in street evangelism ministries- what would he write to us? I picture him speaking to us at Good Messengers Ministries. Most of you are leaders in evangelism- after all, many of you are doing the work of an evangelist, and there are so many in your churches that aren't. See yourself as Timothy, heed the encouragements, admonishments and warnings Paul gives Timothy to fight the good fight of faith- there's a war out there, and the Lord has made us soldiers in His army. Much of the church in America isn't active in sharing their faith- they've been blinded by the devil. These words from Paul to Timothy are matters of life and death for the church- they are to us as well in evangelism ministry.

Below are some main themes of 1 & 2 Timothy that definitely have applications for us for our leadership in evangelism...

I. The continual battle over pursuing sanctification vs. those who are abandoning the faith:

(1 Timothy 1:19-20, 4:1-5, 5:19-20, 22, 24-25, 3:3,8, 14-15, 4:1-5, 4:12, 5:2, 5:19-20, 6:5-10, 17-21, 2 Tim 1:15, 3:1-9, 4:3-4, 10, 14-16)

- A. Some have abandoned/shipwrecked their faith: *1 Tim 1:19-20, 4:1-5, 6:20-21, 2 Tim 1:15, 4:3-4, 10, 14-16*
- B. Discipline of Leaders: *1 Tim 5:19-20*
- C. Sexual Purity: *1 Tim 3:2, 4:12, 5:2, 2 Tim 3:3-9*
- D. Fleeing Covetousness: *1 Tim 3:3, 8, 6:5-10, 17-19*
- E. Pride: *1 Timothy 2:9, 3:6, 6:3-5*

II. Proper Order in Ministry and Leadership

- A. Qualifications for Leadership: *1 Tim 3:1-15, 5:22, 24-25*
- B. Financial Support of Leaders: *1 Tim 5:17-18*
- C. Discipline of Leaders: *1 Tim 5:19-20*

III. Prayer: 1 Tim 2:1, 2, 8, 2 Tim 1:3

IV. Our Frailties and God's Enabling Mercy, Grace and Power Through Us to Minister

- A. God's All-Sufficient Grace, Mercy, Power, Wisdom: *1 Tim 1:2, 12-17, 2:3-5, 3:16, 4:10, 6:14-16, 2 Tim 1:2, 9-10, 12, 14, 2:8, 4:8, 17-18*

- B. The Charge to the Man of God: Continued Diligence, Sobriety, Watchfulness: *1 Tim 1:18-19, 4:8, 12, 14-16, 6:11-16, 20, 2 Tim 1:13-14, 2:1, 3-7, 11-13, 19-22*
- C. Importance of Mentoring and Close Relationships in Leadership: *2 Tim 1:3-4, 16-18, 2:2, 3:10-11, 4:10-13, 19-21*
- D. Health Issues: *1 Tim 5:23, 2 Tim 4:20*
- E. Timidity: *2 Tim 1:7, 4:5*
- F. Youthfulness: *1 Tim 4:12*
- G. Lusts: *1 Tim 5:2, 2 Tim 2:20-22*
- H. Persecutions: *1 Tim 4:10, 2 Tim 1:8, 12, 2:3, 9-10, 3:11-13, 4:5-6, 14-18*

Some initial thoughts to chew on:

I. The continual battle over pursuing sanctification vs. those who are abandoning the faith:

Notice how many people abandoned the faith in these two books- how heartbreaking- the same is happening today- are you prepared for it- people whom you've depended upon to co-labor with you- some will abandon the faith, others will hold onto their faith, but in a way that is cowardly, abandoning evangelism and sinking back into a comfortable churchianity. We've seen it in the last six years of evangelism ministry- some have departed for the pleasures of this world; some were unwilling to repent of patterns of sins that surfaced during months of ministry, and they departed from us. It's helpful to have a sober assessment about the troubles that will occur in evangelism ministry and be prepared- it isn't fatalistic, but rather, it should encourage each of us to rely on the Lord Jesus, to watch our own lives closely and prayerfully, and humbly and patiently address those who are straying- we are our brother's keeper. In leadership of ministries, there are three prime areas Satan seeks to disqualify us/destroy us in: covetousness (for position or money), sexual lusts and pride. We've each seen these temptations and struggles as leaders in our own lives and the lives of those who co-labor with us, and we receive gladly Paul's exhortations, warnings and encouragements to young Timothy, "O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." (*1 Tim 6:11-12*)

II. Proper Order in Ministry and Leadership

Paul gives us God's word on what to look for in leaders, and to be cautious- not everyone who desires to lead and/or to teach on evangelism or preach with us is ready/qualified to do so- we've learned the hard way! There are also times when a leader will need to be disciplined- the Word tells us how. Also, just as in a church, there are financial needs for our ministry- there is a proper way to get those needs met- and we're seeking as a ministry to lay a good foundation for raising support for this ministry.

III. Prayer

Paul was committed to daily praying for Timothy- should we not be praying for each other in this ministry on a daily basis- wow- that's convicting, isn't it?

IV. Our Frailties and God's Enabling Mercy, Grace and Power to Minister

The longer Paul lived, the more he marveled at the grace of God to take him who was once a blasphemer and a violent man and convert him and make him leader over the Gentile church- he who is forgiven

much, loves much. Paul continually challenged Timothy to trust in God's sufficient grace, mercy and power. In dynamic tension with trust in God's work in his life, Paul also continually charged Timothy to be sober minded, alert, watchful, prayerful and sold out to Jesus Christ and to the ministry the Lord gave him as a true soldier in the Lord's army. In all Timothy's frailties in the flesh (and in all of ours as well), the grace of God was more than sufficient to make them Timothy's strength. Paul wasn't worried over Timothy's health problems- he knew the Lord would provide- we have some in our ministry even now that are struggling with health problems. Paul encouraged Timothy to take his temptations of timidity, lust, covetousness and fear to the Lord and to watch his life and doctrine closely- the stakes were his own spiritual life and the life of his hearers as well. Satan wants to take out leaders- look at all the leaders in 1 & 2 Timothy that were strewn along the roadside, and take heart, young Timothies- God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power, of love and a sound mind. Fight the good fight of faith- Jesus is coming back with His reward!