



# DEVELOPING DISCIPLES

WEEK 7  
07.17.16

## FOCUS VERSE

### I Corinthians 4:17

For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

## LESSON TEXT

### Acts 16:1–3

1 Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:

2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

### Philippians 2:19–23

19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.

20 For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.

21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

23 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

### II Timothy 1:5–7

5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.



## FOCUS THOUGHT

Developing disciples requires someone with knowledge who is willing to share it, and others who are willing to receive it.



## CULTURE CONNECTION

### The Blessing of Having a Mentor in One's Life

In the small business open forum section of [www.americanexpress.com](http://www.americanexpress.com), Brian Moran wrote an excellent article on mentoring titled "7 Traits of a Great Mentor." Moran wrote, "Winston Churchill once said, 'We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give.' That statement should resonate with anyone who is a mentor, or aspires to be one."

Moran goes on to cite seven traits he considers vital for one who desires to be a great mentor:

1. Listen.
2. Be there when people need you.
3. Teach.
4. Let them fall.
5. Pick people up.
6. Keep them grounded.
7. Leave a legacy.

Every believer needs someone in his life to serve him as a mentor. We all need to grow spiritually, and to grow spiritually we all need someone to listen to our questions, teach us, and help us when we fail. Further, both the mentor and the mentee are blessed through mentors sharing from their knowledge, wisdom, and empathy.

Timothy had Paul as a mentor in his development, and it undoubtedly made a profound impact upon his success in the kingdom. Timothy had a strong foundation of a godly heritage through his mother and grandmother, but he still needed the guidance and strength of Paul in his continued spiritual development. We do not have Paul to mentor us, but we all need spiritual guidance and assistance.

### OUTLINE

#### I. IDENTIFYING GIFTS AND POTENTIAL

- A. Paul Chose Timothy
- B. Paul Discipled Timothy

#### II. DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION

- A. Knowing and Understanding the Generation
- B. Teaching Biblical Principles

#### III. PRESERVING A GODLY HERITAGE

- A. Timothy Had Unfeigned Faith
- B. Timothy Had a Godly Mother and Grandmother
- C. Timothy Was Charged to Use the Gift of God
- D. Christians Have a Responsibility to Make Disciples

### CONTEMPLATING THE TOPIC

Some ideas, while instructive for a short period of time, are not worth being passed on to the next generation. Tips on how to rearrange

the keys on a typewriter, the best methods of cleaning and storing an eight-track tape, or the *How to Survive in 2005* self-help book are a few examples of ideas that were developed in the context of unique and temporal circumstances and are no longer helpful. But other ideas are developed in the context of realities that persist regardless of the environment.

The calendar may change, but human nature is what it has been since the fall of Adam. Kingdoms and empires may come and go, but moral principles and theological truths are what they were before Tutankhamen ruled the ancient Nile. Not only are these truths worth learning, but once acquired they should be passed down for the sake of generations to come.

The Christian faith—its distinctive doctrines, sacred narratives, ethics, principles, and histories—reveals truths about God, the universe, and the predicament and destiny of human beings. Should it be lost, altered, diminished, or corrupted, the effect would deal a death blow to the human race. But should it be successful in transmission from generation to generation, it will continue to provide

the world with its only source of hope, an agent of peace, and a comprehensive and comprehensible revelation of God. Without Christianity, the true identity of God, which Jesus revealed during His earthly life, would remain hidden.

Christianity is a “revealed” faith; that is, it is a faith that comes by revelation and not merely by mankind’s natural reasoning. A few theological truths are innate and do not necessarily need to be taught for someone to know them. Paul told the Roman Christians: “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20).

The intricate design of the human body, the sheer sublimity of a starry sky, the majesty of a sunrise, the solemnity of the setting sun, the mysterious marriage between the moon and the seas, the exact precision of animal migrations, the reliability of the seasons should cause us to join David in exultant praise: “O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!” (Psalm 8:9). How could a person view all these things and still not believe in the great Creator? “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Psalm 14:1).

On the other hand, that Jesus of Nazareth was born of a virgin, is God manifest in the flesh, was crucified under the administration of a Judeo-Roman conspiracy, resurrected from a guarded tomb, ascended into Heaven, and will soon return is not something someone can know without the aid of revelation.

Through Jesus, God more fully revealed Himself to the apostles, and the apostles passed their eyewitness reports on to the next generation. They committed themselves to ensuring that this revelation of God would not pass from the earth. This commitment is expressed in the form of discipleship; the apostles discipled the next generation of believers. Among the apostles, Paul intentionally and closely discipled younger believers, and he expected these disciples to learn every tenet of the gospel and to pass it on, in the exact form it was received, to younger believers.

### I. IDENTIFYING GIFTS AND POTENTIAL

#### A. Paul Chose Timothy

Not long after being disappointed by Mark, Paul found himself impressed by another promising young man. In Acts 16:1–3, Paul and Silas, after strengthening the churches in Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:41), came a second time to Lycaonia, a province of Galatia. The last time Paul had been here, he had healed a cripple, had been mistakenly worshiped as the Roman god Mercury (Greek: Hermes), and had been stoned and left for dead (Acts 14:6–19). This time the journey was somewhat less adventurous; but on this trip he experienced an event that would forever strengthen the Christian movement as a whole.

“Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium” (Acts 16:1–2). It does not seem a coincidence that we learn the young man was a disciple before we learn his name. It may be that Timothy’s mother and grandmother converted to Christianity during Paul’s earlier visit and subsequently taught young Timothy the tenets of this faith. If so, we can understand why Luke referred to Timothy as a disciple when Paul met him.

Whatever the case, Timothy already had an impeccable reputation among the brethren at Lystra and Iconium. Perhaps Paul’s sufferings on his first journey to Lycaonia made such an impression on Timothy’s family that the family raised him to worship the God of this fearless apostle. Paul’s second letter to Timothy suggests Timothy was aware of the stoning: “But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me” (II Timothy 3:10–11).

Paul chose to bring Timothy along on his mission trip. Paul could see his potential and wanted the opportunity to mentor him.

## B. Paul Discipled Timothy

We are blessed to have two of the letters Paul wrote to Timothy (and one to another young minister, Titus). In them, we have a fairly comprehensive record of the kind of efforts Paul put toward transmitting the lifesaving gospel to the next generation. In his second letter alone, he gave a good indication of his daily intentionality in discipling Timothy. From this we can extract the qualities of a good mentor.

1. A mentor develops affection toward a disciple.

*"To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. . . . without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day" (II Timothy 1:2-3).*

2. Good discipleship involves reminding the disciple of the investment that has been put into him or her.

*"I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands" (II Timothy 1:5-6).*

*"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us" (II Timothy 1:13-14).*

*"Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith" (II Timothy 3:10).*

*"Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned" (II Timothy 3:14).*

3. A mentor commands the disciple to be faithful to Christ in his own private thoughts and actions.

*"Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Timothy 2:3).*

*"Shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness" (II Timothy 2:16).*

*"Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (II Timothy 2:22).*

*"Foolish and unlearned questions avoid" (II Timothy 2:23).*

*"Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (II Timothy 4:5).*

4. A mentor commands that the disciple's teaching be faithful to Christ; the disciple is to teach exactly what he himself has been taught.

*"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God" (II Timothy 1:8).*

*"Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:1-2).*

*"Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel" (II Timothy 2:7-8).*

*"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word" (II Timothy 4:1-2).*

5. A mentor teaches the disciple certain methods with which he is to approach all situations, no matter how complex.

*"The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" (II Timothy 2:24).*

6. A mentor informs the disciple what kind of work ethic and attitude he needs to apply to his knowledge and application of Scripture.

*"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).*

*“All scripture is given by inspiration of God” (II Timothy 3:16).*

## II. DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION

### A. Knowing and Understanding the Generation

Knowing and understanding the next generation has little or nothing to do with knowing and understanding its new gadgets, slogans, and fashions. We do not become acquainted with young people by knowing their “Top Ten” playlists or knowing our way around an iPad. Attempts to “relate” to any people group is likely doomed to failure—and this is especially true of young people. The younger generation is likely only to be amused by the elder generation’s attempt at being on “the cutting edge”; these attempts will usually be interpreted as over-compensating, contrived, artificial, anxiety-driven attempts to be relative.

The salesman often tries to use our interest in sports, the weather, or a hobby as a transition into his sales pitch. When he manages to bring the conversation to where he wants it, we often find ourselves resenting the fact that he was not trying to relate to us as a friend or even an acquaintance. He was only trying to sell us something and had little or no interest in us as people. So it is when we try to relate to a particular “generation” instead of trying to relate to individuals—who just happen to be a part of that generation.

If we are to become acquainted with a young person, we would be best advised to find out on an individual basis what he or she loves, hates, fears, and hopes. We are likely to discover that he or she is just like us in all the points that really matter. She fears death, being alone, wasting her life; he is afraid of being overlooked, being unappreciated, and failing. So are we. From generation to generation, this does not change. If we want to know and understand the generation, we should simply know and understand the person.

### B. Teaching Biblical Principles

*Timothy taught what Paul taught.* The responsibility for reaching across a generational divide is not solely the responsibility of the older generation. In fact, both generations

have to be completely committed to the project. The older generation needs first to have something to pass down; second, it needs to persuade the younger generation the cause is worth carrying on. However, the younger generation needs to have a healthy appreciation and respect for its elders’ hard-won ideals.

In science, younger scientists do not ignore the discoveries and theories of the previous generation of scientists; they engage in and build upon them. Yet younger generations often act as if knowledge is flawed simply by virtue of having been acquired by the previous generation; they are like Shakespeare’s Cicero, of whom it was said, “He will not follow anything that other men begin” (*Julius Caesar*, Act 2, scene 1). Science advances because of its healthy attitude toward the work of previous generations. Unfortunately, social, religious, and political ideals often stagnate and die because of an unhealthy view of the past.

The gospel, however, is a mutual trust between generations. What came as “good news” to one generation should be good news for the next.

*Timothy went where Paul sent.* Paul wrote a letter to the Philippians when he was imprisoned (Philippians 1:7)—perhaps in Rome, Caesarea, or Ephesus. In order to allay any fears of disunity or doctrinal discord and to ensure that the Philippian church continued to thrive, Paul wanted to send Timothy to Philippi immediately. However, for reasons that are not entirely clear, Paul reluctantly told the Philippians he needed to keep Timothy for a short time while Paul sorted out whatever difficulty he was presently experiencing (Philippians 2:19). Perhaps contentious brethren troubled him when he wrote the letter (Philippians 1:16).

Whatever the reason, Paul’s willingness (1) to wait to send Timothy until Paul’s issues were resolved and (2) once resolved, to send Timothy to ensure the stability of the Philippian church is telling. Whatever doubts Paul may have had with respect to the faithfulness of the church at Philippi, he had no doubts about the faithfulness of Timothy. Paul taught Timothy eternal truths, and Paul found in Timothy one who was willing to pass down precisely what was given to him. In fact, Paul found Timothy’s fidelity to the gospel and love

for the church unparalleled: “For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state” (Philippians 2:20).

*Timothy was not self-serving.* Paul’s experience had taught him that people tend to be selfish. He even found that people could teach the true gospel but do so for selfish ends (Philippians 1:16; 2:21). However, he found in Timothy one who cared for Paul’s congregations the way a son cares for his father’s name, business, and reputation (Philippians 2:22). It is not enough to be theologically sound; the disciple has to show trustworthiness.

*Timothy was a student of the gospel.* It is essential that we set our clocks to eternity. Because Scripture is eternal, it always answers the questions every generation considers important. While ancient architects were building the seven wonders of the world, Jehoiakim, king of Jerusalem, burned the prophecies of Jeremiah in his fireplace. (See Jeremiah 36.) The seven wonders were built of sturdy stone; Jeremiah’s words were committed to fragile and flammable paper. But today the seven wonders are mostly a distant memory (except for the crumbling pyramid at Giza), and yet the prophecies of Jeremiah are alive and well and studied every day by millions of people.

Timothy learned Scripture from a young age, and Paul emphasized the importance of Scripture: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (II Timothy 3:16–17).

Once Timothy understood the nature of Scripture, he was to know the Scriptures like a shipbuilder knows ships. The shipbuilder knows not only what kind of wood to use, what length individual boards should be, and how many bolts are needed, but he also knows how each individual part fits into the whole plan of the ship. He knows how each board relates to the other boards. So should the Christian know not only individual texts and books but also how each part works in unity with the rest of Scripture. This kind of knowledge takes a great deal of study along with a serious devotion to the Scriptures.

### III. PRESERVING A GODLY HERITAGE

#### A. Timothy Had Unfeigned Faith

Paul called attention to the sincerity of Timothy’s faith. In contrast to those who used their faith to achieve faithless personal goals, Timothy’s motives for holding the faith were easy to interpret (II Timothy 1:5).

#### B. Timothy Had a Godly Mother and Grandmother

Timothy’s training came at an early age; when Paul met him, Timothy already possessed a solid spiritual foundation. Paul told Timothy to “continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that 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” (II Timothy 3:14–15). Paul’s comment, “knowing of whom thou hast learned them” most likely refers to Timothy’s mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois) (II Timothy 1:5). Parents and grandparents play a key role in molding their children and grandchildren into great disciples.

#### C. Timothy Was Charged to Use the Gift of God

Timothy had to function in a leadership role in an environment rife with heresy, division, and ambition. In this atmosphere, one could easily question one’s own calling. Paul, however, reminded Timothy of the official charge he had been given when the apostle laid his hands on Timothy as a symbol of his ordination. While the laying on of hands did not provide Timothy with a ministry he did not already have, the symbolic act did take Timothy’s calling out of the realm of personal subjectivity and gave him an objective reminder of the fact that others had confirmed Timothy’s calling. Timothy was no longer to doubt his high calling; instead, Paul reminded him to build upon this confirmation instead of allowing personal doubts and fears to detract from his spiritual gifts.

The rest of II Timothy provided Timothy with a blueprint for how to “stir up the gift” that was in the young disciple.

## D. Christians Have a Responsibility to Make Disciples

It has been said that information becomes knowledge when it is shared with others. We cannot be said to truly “know” anything until we are able to communicate and teach it. We can hear information, but it remains mere information until we put our minds to the work of teaching it to others. Ironically, knowledge becomes our own personal possession only when it is given away.

The same can be said of our relationship with the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is mere information until we pass it on; and once we pass it on to someone else, it becomes knowledge and we begin to understand it for ourselves. Do not wait until you have “learned” the Bible before you begin to give a Bible study. It will be in the act of teaching a Bible study that you will learn the most about the Bible.

Our Lord commanded His disciples to “teach all nations” (Matthew 28:19). We are His disciples. Disciples do not just receive the gospel—disciples teach the gospel.

## INTERNALIZING THE MESSAGE

In the late summer or early fall, as Paul awaited an order of execution, Paul implored Timothy to bring Paul’s cloak, books, and parchments before winter (II Timothy 4:13, 21). He needed the coat he had left in Troas, probably due to a hasty flight, to stave off the damp cold of the prison he was already feeling during the milder season. He wanted to read his scrolls, and he desired greatly his

parchments—probably so he could write a few more letters before he was executed.

Most of all, he wanted Timothy to come during the limited sailing season. If Timothy had waited until winter to see Paul, he would have been unable to take the faster route by ship; he would have had to journey by road, which probably would have meant never seeing the soon-to-be-executed apostle.

It is significant that he asked Timothy, his son in the gospel, for these final, humble comforts. The request is symbolic of the relationship between a mentor and a disciple. Before it is too late, the mentor first brings the warmth of the gospel, the knowledge of Scripture, and the means to communicate it. In turn, the good disciple becomes the comfort of the mentor’s old age, the memory’s warm glow amidst many cold disappointments, and the legacy of his devotion.

Timothy remembered Paul’s ways. (See I Corinthians 4:17.) The obvious meaning of this statement is that Timothy taught churches what Paul taught. But it should also be understood that, as a son reminds others of his father, when Timothy visited the churches where Paul had preached, Timothy literally reminded the churches of Paul. When they saw and heard Timothy, they thought of Paul. Timothy’s gospel had distinctly Pauline traits.

It is a truism that there is no success without a successor; it ought to be a truism that the successor is the measure of one’s success. What would Timothy have been without Paul? And what would Paul have been without a Timothy to carry on? ■

## REFLECTIONS

- Have you disciplined anyone?
- Timothy’s gospel reflected the traits of Paul’s distinct gospel. Does the disciple you have made reflect the traits of the gospel of Christ?
- What compels a young man or woman to choose one mentor over other potential mentors?