THE GOSPEL PROJECT FOR STUDENTS

THE GOD WHO DIRECTS HIS PEOPLE
SESSION 6

THE GOSPEL CALLS FOR OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD

1 Timothy 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 4:1-8; Titus 2:11-14

The Point: God uses pastors to lead His church in obedience to His Word.

HIS STORY

Pastors Should Set an Example

Paul lists what was supposed to mark Timothy's ministry (vv. 12-16). First, Timothy was to set an example. A major way pastors lead churches to grow is through the examples they set. Timothy may have been considered a younger leader, but his age was not to be an excuse failure to set an example for his church, even the members who were much older.

In what ways was Timothy supposed to be an example? He was an example outwardly in speech and in conduct. Speech would of course include clearly communicating the Word of God, but Paul meant much more. Paul wanted Timothy to be known for wise words rather than harsh rants. Today, this could include refusing to post outrage on social media, choosing instead to speak words of grace and compassion, and so on. Paul also encouraged Timothy to set an example inwardly through building traits of love, faith (or faithfulness), and purity (both sexual and general integrity).

▶ **What are some ways you personally could choose to follow the advice Paul gave to Timothy in these verses?**

Pastors Should Faithfully Teach the Word

Employing athletic and military metaphors, Paul reminded Timothy it's not how you start in ministry but how you finish that matters most. Paul fought the good fight, he finished the race, and he kept the faith. Don't get confused by Paul's use of metaphors here. He was not calling for needless arguing with people in the church or giving permission for fist fights! Pastors should not be theological snobs who believe rightly but are jerks about it when preaching, teaching, and talking with others.

Pastors Point People to Christ

Paul first reminded Titus of a fundamental conviction of Scripture—the belief that all are accepted by God through faith in Jesus. Scripture clearly indicates the requirement of faith in salvation and the danger of unbelief. What this means is that salvation is available to all who believe—no matter their ethnicity, social status, language, or any other factor.

Essential Doctrines

Inspiration of Scripture: *The inspiration of Scripture refers to God directing the Bible's human authors as they composed and recorded His message to humankind in their original writings (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:19-21). Occasionally this inspiration was achieved through dictation, meaning God spoke directly to the original authors. However, this inspiration came most often through the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit and personalities of the authors so that their writings can be considered the very words of God.*

Leader Note: *Because some content from the Personal Study Guide will not be available on the One Sheet, make sure to adapt the session based on how you use the material with your group.*

YOUR STORY

- **What are some ways we can faithfully call on others to obey God's commands without sounding harsh or timid?**
- **How have you been corrected or encouraged by a pastor or leader that proved helpful?**
- **What are some of the theological convictions that are becoming more difficult for us to hold faithfully in our culture?**
- **How should remembering the gospel change the way we live each day in our homes, schools, neighborhoods, and beyond?**

YOUR MISSION

Head

Paul instructed Timothy to continue to grow as a believer (1 Tim. 4:15-16). These instructions apply to both pastors and us. "Practice these things" (v. 15) carries the idea of a consistent routine. Paul exhorted Timothy to develop healthy routines and follow them, which is something we should all be doing as we seek to grow and mature in our walk with Christ.

- **How can we relate Paul's instructions to Timothy to our lives, even if we are not pastors?**
- **What are some ways we can encourage our pastor(s) and leaders as they lead out in practicing spiritual disciplines?**

Heart

We can live godly lives, even now, knowing this life is not the end. There is a blessed hope in the restoration of all things, a hope that is grounded in Jesus who is God, Savior, and Redeemer. Jesus redeems us from lawlessness, so we can deny godlessness and lusts and live doing good works that bring God glory. To be clear, we don't do good works to earn anything from God; we can't earn anything from Him! We do good works because the transforming work of the Spirit changes our nature (2 Cor. 5:16-17), creating a new heart in us that is eager to do good works out of gratitude.

- **What are some personal challenges in your daily life that distract you from pursuing godliness?**
- **How should Christ's return and future redemption of all things frame how we live now?**

Hands

God uses pastors to model God's Word for the church, proclaim God's Word to the church, and call on us to submit to God's Word under the authority and leadership of Christ. While pastors are a blessing from God to the church, the church should also strive to be a blessing to their pastors as we seek to love, encourage, pray for, and support them. Take time this week to consider how you can encourage your pastor(s) and leaders in the church and pour into them as they pour into you.

- **What are some ways you can serve the pastors and leaders of your church in the coming weeks?**
- **How have the pastors and leaders in your church encouraged you to follow Christ?**