

Training Others To Preach God's Word

2 Timothy 1:11-14, 2:1-2, 2:3-6

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History of Training Preachers

Education is simply the key to life. No matter the field of labor, if we want the best in said fields, then people need to be trained. We appreciate educational programs that give us doctors, lawyers, carpenters, welders, farmers, etc. Where would our nation be today without these professionals and the programs that taught them? Training is important!

When it comes to training men for ministry, even from old, we can read of schools for prophets in 1 Samuel 19:18-24, 2 Kings 2:5, and 2 Kings 4:38-44. The New Testament even mentions Rabban Gamaliel I, the grandson of the famed Rabbi Hillel, who was a great teacher of Jewish Law and worked with a training program, training minds in Pharisaism. His most outstanding pupil of all was the Apostle to the Gentiles, Saul of Tarsus (Acts 22:3).

Many other Jewish religious training programs taught priests, rabbis, and scribes—even the nations with their false gods--organized training programs and philosophical schools. The first-century cult known as the Druids, famed in Britain, Ireland, and Gaul, had a 20-year training program for their religious leaders. History has proven that religious training programs are effective.

The biblical pattern for training men for ministry is that men of God teach the word to the masses and then intensively train others to do the same. Ezra publicly taught the law (Nehemiah 8:2-3,8) but also privately taught the heads of families, priests, and Levites (Nehemiah 8:13). Jesus taught the masses (Matthew 5-7) and at the same time was given twelve extraordinary men by the Father to train to further His ministry (Matthew 10; John 17:6-8,17-20). Even the Apostle Paul taught the masses as he did in Ephesus. At the same time, Paul had his private classes (Acts 20:20). He even disputed daily in Tyrannus's school (Acts 19:9) for two years. From that work, God's word spread to all the Jews and Greeks throughout Asia (Acts 19:20). He had students like Epaphras, who went to Colossae (Colossians 1:6-7; 4:12), and Tychicus and Trophimus, who went into Ephesus and Asia (Acts 20:4; Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7).

The biblical pattern is clear: Men should be trained and accomplished by preaching to the masses and training select others to multiply the souls willing, capable, and able to carry the banner of Christ!

Context of 2 Timothy 2:1-2

Paul once again writes to his beloved son in the faith (2 Timothy 1:2), Timothy, to exhort and encourage him in righteousness. Knowing that his time on earth was limited, Paul wrote as a caring spiritual father to the somewhat young, green, and notably timid Timothy (2 Timothy 1:7), encouraging, warning, and preparing him. When one reads this tiny epistle, one must remember that Paul is Timothy's mentor. This book is filled with wisdom, knowledge, and compassion. We have an aged man writing to his beloved son; we must remember their relational context. Paul writes as a caring father, giving Timothy some final advice that will hopefully carry him strong into eternity because he wants what is best for Timothy, the church, and the souls at Ephesus. What Paul deemed best for Ephesus was a strong Timothy who would remember "the pattern of sound words" (2 Timothy 1:13), stand firm "in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 2:1) and then preach those very words "in season and out of season" (2 Timothy 4:2).

One of the reasons for these warnings is a falling and a departure of men from Paul. In 2 Timothy 1:15, Paul mentions Phygellus and Hermogenes, who seem to be noted leaders in some rebellion against Paul. Scholars are divided on what this rebellion was in the Roman Province called Asia, which embraced the small countries of Caria, Lydia, Mysia, and most of Phrygia. Some claim, based on 2 Timothy 1:15-18, that the desertion was

simply personal. As Paul languished in Roman containment, he felt that certain men could have relieved his burden, but instead of trying to provide an easement, they ignored his situation, perhaps for fear of retribution. Others look at a broader context starting in verse 13 and note these two men were leaders in a great apostasy, leading people from the pure gospel. There are two things to note about this rebellion: 1) Paul took it personally and 2) The Greek verb "apostrepho" translated as "turned away" in the KJV, is the same word found in 2 Timothy 4:4 and Titus 1:4 referencing desertion from the truth.

In many ways, this book is Paul's John 6 moment. Jesus had a great following. Men and women follow His every move, listening to His every word, just trying to figure out who He is and what He is about. On this occasion, Jesus miraculously fed 5,000 souls and performed many signs while trying to instill into His vast audience that He is the Bread of Life (John 6:27, 32-35, 41, 50), the only avenue to the Father and eternal bliss (6:43-58). Still, the message was just too much for His audience to bear, and in John 6:66-67, we read some of the most discouraging words in Scripture, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, 'Will ye also go away?'" Paul has labored for a long time in Ephesus, specifically with the young man, Timothy. The desertion noted in 2 Timothy 1:15 hit Paul particularly hard, and now the question is what his beloved son in the faith will do. Will Timothy follow the examples of Phygelus and Hermogenes? Or will Timothy allow Paul to pass the baton by keeping "That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us" (2 Timothy 1:14). The "good thing" being the "good deposit," the "treasure," the faith.

Why Is Training Men To Preach So Important (From 1 & 2 Timothy)

First, training men for ministry is essential because it is biblically mandated. In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul wrote, "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." For those who love God, His church, and the souls of men, we realize there is a great day coming when all the living and the dead must appear before God in judgment (2 Timothy 4:1). Therefore, we are commanded to "preach the word" (2 Timothy 4:2) because those words can make us "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15).

Secondly, we train men to preach for the prolongation and multiplication of the church (2 Timothy 1:12-14). God did not establish the church in Acts 2 to stand for one or two generations. This is evident in the command to "commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." We are to see the gospel, and the church's glory is to be spread from one faithful man to another so that others can "obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Timothy 2:10).

Thirdly, we train men to preach to be as effective as possible to glorify God while realizing that souls are on the line. Paul wrote of God's desire for preachers in 2 Timothy 2:25-26. He declared their job was to instruct those who "oppose themselves" to eventually deliver them over to repentance and out of the snare and captivity of Satan. To accomplish this, a minister must be trained and good at his job. In 1 Timothy 4:6, Paul mentions the phrase "good minister of Jesus Christ." That is our goal in preacher training--To make sure each man who desires to preach will be a "good minister." In instructing Timothy in preacher training, Paul mentions six foundational facts that any good preaching training student should have to be effective.

Number one, to be an effective preacher - he must be faithful (2 Timothy 2:2). He must have already proven himself reliable and responsible. This rules out someone not faithful in attendance, someone who has not established themselves to be a dutiful servant, and it rules out a newborn babe in Christ. A good minister will flee from the love of money "and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." (1 Timothy 6:10-11). He must not be quarrelsome, but he should be gentle...and patient (2 Timothy 2:26).

Number two, to be an effective preacher - he should have talent and enough talent to instruct others (2 Timothy 2:2) or be "apt to teach" (2 Timothy 2:26). Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:14, "Do not neglect the gift that is

in you." Though the age of miracles has passed, men today have many tapped and untapped talents that must be refined to make one a good minister. A good candidate for preaching must have the skills to "preach the word" (2 Timothy 4:2).

Number three, to be an effective preacher - a good preacher needs to know the truth. He will be "nourished up in words of faith and of good doctrine" while refusing "profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness" (1 Timothy 4:6-7). He must be able to recognize "other doctrine" and have a desire not to be concerned with the endless fables that do not lend to godly edification (1 Timothy 1:3-4). As Timothy was taught from birth and knew the Holy Scriptures, which made him "wise unto salvation" (2 Timothy 3:15; 1:5) and equipped him "for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:17), so must all this be true for a man to be a good minister!

Number four, to be an effective preacher - he must know how to "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). This implies he needs to know how to handle it in such a way that when it comes to the lost, he can lead them to repentance (2 Timothy 2:25-26). And when it comes to the saved, he can teach them how to "behave in the house of God" (1 Timothy 3:15) and how to flee the temptation of sin and apostasy (1 Timothy 4:1-5).

Number five, to be an effective minister – he must be "watchful in all things." (2 Timothy 4:5). Also, translated as "be sober" (NASV), "exercise self-control" (Christian Standard), "be serious" (Holman Christian Standard), and carries with it the idea of "being calm, vigilant, circumspect." He has a serious role with eternal consequences and must not go into or be part of ministry if he is not strong enough to accomplish the task. How many great congregations were ruined by a preacher who failed to be vigilant?

Number six, to be an effective minister, he must be able to fulfill his ministry (2 Timothy 4:5), meaning to carry it out entirely. Most members of the pew never really understand what a preacher must be involved with to fulfill his ministry. Let's note that to fulfill one's ministry from 1 & 2 Timothy he must:

Teach no other doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3).

Pay no attention to frivolous ideologies (1 Tim. 1:4, 4:7; 2 Tim. 2:16).

Love with a pure heart and having a sincere faith (1 Tim. 1:5).

Use God's word lawfully (1 Tim. 1:8).

Use God's law to save the lost (1 Tim. 1:9-11).

Fight a good fight (1 Tim. 1:18).

Keep faith and a good conscience (1 Tim. 1:19).

Have a great prayer life (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

Teach women their purpose in the church (1 Tim. 2:9-15).

Teach men about the qualifications of leadership (1 Tim. 3:1-13).

Teach the church how to behave (1 Tim. 3:15).

Stand against false teaching (1 Tim. 4:1-5).

Keep reminding brethren of these things (1 Tim. 4:6).

Live as an example of faith (1 Tim. 4:12).

Must be reading, studying, and preparing (1 Tim. 4:13).

Should never neglect his talents (1 Tim. 4:14).

Give himself entirely over to his ministry (1 Tim. 4:15).

Be careful and watch his life and doctrine (1 Tim. 4:15).

Understand his goal is to save himself and others (1 Tim. 4:16).

Teach the church to honor the widows (1 Tim. 5:3, 9-16).

Rule his household well and teach others to do the same (1 Tim. 5:8).

Teach the widows how to live righteous lives (1 Tim. 5:11-15).

Help the church understand the importance of godly elders (1 Tim. 5:17-19).

Must not receive frivolous accusations against elders (1 Tim. 5:19), which implies don't gossip about elders.

Rebuke sin and the sinner (1 Tim. 5:20).
 Do everything without prejudice and partiality (1 Tim. 5:21).
 Ensure church leaders are known and respected (1 Tim. 5:22).
 Must not partake in other's sins (1 Tim. 5:22).
 Keep himself pure (1 Tim. 5:22).
 Take care of his health (1 Tim. 5:23).
 Ensure employees respect their jobs and employers (1 Tim. 6:1).
 Teach employees and employers in Christ how to respect each other's role (1 Tim. 6:2).
 Ensure the church is ready to withdraw from those who try to push false doctrine upon the church (1 Tim. 6:3-5).
 Condemn the pitfalls of chasing wealth (1 Tim. 6:6-10, 17).
 Follow after all that is good and pure (1 Tim. 6:11).
 Fight the good fight wherein is eternal life (1 Tim. 6:12).
 Keep the commandment without spot (1 Tim. 6:14).
 Teach the rich to use their blessings for the glory of God (1 Tim. 6:18-19).
 Guard himself to ensure he accomplishes all this (1 Tim. 6:20).
 Must not be timid (2 Tim. 1:7).
 Never be ashamed of Christ and His message (2 Tim. 1:8).
 Hold the pattern of sound words (2 Tim. 1:13).
 Guard truth (2 Tim. 1:14).
 Be strong in Christ (2 Tim. 2:2).
 Share and train others to share the gospel (2 Tim. 2:2).
 Learn to endure like a soldier, be disciplined like an athlete, and perform hard, dirty work like a farmer (2 Tim. 2:3-7).
 Be a peacemaker and try to keep brethren from arguing about things that don't matter (2 Tim. 2:14).
 Prepare himself to be a great worker (2 Tim. 2:15).
 Study how to use his Sword of the Spirit (2 Tim. 2:15).
 Teach Christians to depart from sin (2 Tim. 2:19).
 Teach Christians to sanctify themselves for honor (2 Tim. 2:20-21).
 Avoid foolishness and things that cause strife (2 Tim. 2:22-23).
 Be gentle, kind, patient, and always teaching (2 Tim. 2:24).
 Be a soul-winner (2 Tim. 2:25-26).
 Turn away from those who want to walk in sin (2 Tim. 3:1-5).
 Turn away from those who pretend to know the truth but are only corrupting souls (2 Tim. 3:6-9).
 Continue all the things Paul has taught (2 Tim. 3:14).
 Preach the word, "when they want to hear it and when they don't, preach it" (2 Tim. 4:2).
 Prove his ministry by being alert, careful, and conscientious (2 Tim. 4:5).
 Evangelize (2 Tim. 4:5).

This is a list of what Paul considers an excellent minister to be. Now a little folly, then you mingle in what the modern church believes makes a good preacher being: one who is highly educated, always between 35-40 years old, with a very active and leading wife, the most obedient teen children, specifically boys, who are trained to lead the singing, the prayers, and even fill in if dad gets sick at the last minute. A man is willing to work for 100 bosses, typically several who are very cranky and constantly agitated. We claim good preachers will weekly preach two sermons, teach two classes, write articles, produce the bulletin, use social media proficiently, make Power Point hand-outs, do radio podcasts while visiting all the sick, travel to each hospital, help each widow and all those in need, evangelizing, door knocking, a little more of this and a little more of that. If a preacher can do all that Paul commands and what the 21st-century church demands, plus a little electrical, mechanical, and plumbing, and is willing to clean the church building, take care of the shrubs, mow the grass, all of this without complaining and always happy with little emotional and financial support, and succeed! Then today, we have a good preacher, as long as he never needs a raise. He will always kiss the babies, smile, and shake every hand as they enter and leave the worship complex that he showed up early to open and prepare, and then leave

later than anyone else to ensure everything is turned off and locked up. And remember, he is responsible for the room temperature and sound equipment, and they better be set just right! After all, that is what makes a 21st-century preacher a "good minister." I wonder why there is a massive preacher shortage today.

Fourth, we train men to preach to help develop healthy congregations. The Bible is clear that elders are to oversee the flock, and part of that is to ensure the congregation has a preacher who can play an essential role in developing the congregation. We learn from 1 & 2 Timothy that God considers a healthy congregation to stand against false doctrine and sin and is aware of the danger of apostasy (1 Tim. 1:3-11; 4:1-4; 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 3:1-9). A vital congregation prays and evangelizes (1 Tim. 2:1-8) and practices the roles given to the different genders (1 Tim. 2:11-3:12). A strong congregation will have a faithful preacher who uses his talents, knows pure doctrine, and sticks to preaching the truth, while shying away from non-biblical doctrines and myths (1 Tim. 4:6-16). A vital congregation will make sure all its members are loved, respected, and helped when needed (1 Tim. 5:1-6:2). They will also make sure the congregation understands where true contentment comes from. It is not from pursuing the riches of planet earth (1 Tim. 6:6-10). A good congregation will be loyal to the pattern of truth (2 Tim. 1:3-18). They will make sure God is pleased by training preachers for now and the future (1 Tim. 2). A good congregation will understand the offer of eternal salvation is provided through words breathed from the Creator, written in the Holy Scriptures, which can make the individual member and the congregation "complete, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim 3:16-17). The church is to be a nursery for preachers!

Does the Local Preacher And Congregation Play a Part In Preacher Training

The evidence within the pages of the New Testament suggests the need to pass the baton. The Father sent Jesus with His words of life, and Jesus came speaking nothing but what the Father spoke (John 12:49-50). Then Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to work with the Apostles and the early church, and the Holy Spirit as well only spoke as the Father instructed (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit passed on those truths to the Apostles and inspired writers (John 16:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Paul, being an apostle, spread those words to Timothy (2 Timothy 2:1-7) and others. Timothy was then commanded to teach faithful men, who would then train others (2 Timothy 2:1-2). The baton was passed from the Father to Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Apostles, inspired writers, Timothy, faithful men, and others. Are we passing the baton? Is your congregation a nursery for training good ministers (1 Timothy 4:6)?

Do congregations know today that we are to be a nursery for preachers? We must train men to propagate "the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." Who will guard the good treasure (2 Tim. 1:13-14), and not only prepare preachers (2 Tim. 2:1-2), but prepare men and women for the good works God requires of them (1 Tim. 2:11-3:12) so that the body may be built up, mature, and ready for service (Ephesians 4:11-13)? In Scripture, training men and women to serve in their God-given roles is evidenced. Many elderships or individual church leaders have forgotten that every Christian's vocation is ministry, and our second vocation is to put food on the table. We have it messed up. Too many elders and church leaders are more concerned with their youth finding their "second vocation" and succeeding in secular life while allowing others and other congregations to figure out who will preach. This may be why we have a considerable preacher shortage today, and that is because congregations are not promoting, pushing, or training their young men to consider ministry. Indeed, congregations are to be a nursery for preachers.

Today, the Lord's church is blessed to have several congregations that have developed preachers' training programs. These congregations often survive off donations and contributions from the overseeing and sister congregations. Young men come from all over America, and sometimes the world, to study in a two-year intensive training program. After graduation, they start their ministries by finding a position within a sister congregation. Though these two-year programs do a fantastic job, congregations must understand that when you hire said young men straight out of school, they have been given the tools to succeed, but they still need time to mature, learn, grow, and be the most effective they can be. In short, someone out of a school of preaching is just a nervous, easily intimidated rookie who knows they have been trained, but part of their training is learning how

much they still don't know! If they are going to succeed in ministry, their first position is what will break or make them. Yes, congregations who hire a preacher trained somewhere else must know the training must continue under them. You are a nursery for training ministers.

Not all PTS graduates are the same. New graduates who are in their late 20s, 30s, and 40s who have secular work experience and understand how to navigate people, problems, and situations through experiences learned through secular work, have an advantage, and even more so if they were raised in the church and served in various capacities too. Those who are that age are more prepared than a young 20-year-old boy who went from mom to preacher training to you. They may know how to make and present a lesson, but learning to deal with, communicate with, and relate with people who are married and have families and solving problems is very difficult for them. Plus, dealing with people sometimes three to four times their age is a challenge. This and more can't be taught through books; it is taught through experience. All this is to remind you that their training does not end with us. If you desire your new rookie preacher to grow, you must put them in a position to succeed. They need elders, aged men by their side, providing insight, wisdom, love, forgiveness, organization, etc.

In some extreme cases, particularly young preachers, even need to be taught a work ethic and how to be a self-starter. If they have never had a career or punched a time clock, there is much to learn! In 1 Corinthians 16:10-11, Paul mentions sending young Timothy to labor with this congregation. Notice Paul demands the congregation "put him at ease among you" (ESV). The King James says, "that he may be with you without fear." Then, in verse 11, they were commanded not to despise or treat him with contempt. This may be another reason we have a preacher shortage today, and that is because congregations hire rookies who have little to no experience with handling people and situations. The church dumps all the responsibilities and problems of the congregation and members on their young whipper snapper while expecting someone just a few years removed from diapers to perform miracles.

Yes, congregations and their preachers must be involved in preachers' training. They should train their young men and beg them to consider said ministry. Then, when they hire rookies, they should consider who they are hiring and work to put them in an environment that will make them as successful and help them learn to love ministry to the point they want to serve as a preacher their entire lives. Paul wanted the church of Corinth to provide peace for Timothy. Is your congregation a nursery for preachers that gives peace?

Breakdown of 2 Tim 2:1-2

1 & 2 Timothy is not a letter from teacher to student. However, there are lots of said instructions in these epistles. These are epistles from an aged father figure who knows his time on earth is limited. He is writing to his beloved son in the faith, giving him precious insights into what he needs to know to be a good minister (1 Timothy 4:6). The epistles are personal and passionate, filled with love and concern for Timothy, his ministry, and the present and future church. The passage breakdown comes from the New American Standard Bible.

"You, therefore"

Paul starts in verse 1, speaking to Timothy. Notice the pronoun "You." This pronoun is emphatic and draws Timothy back to 1:15, where Paul mentions those who are defecting. As negative as that was, Paul is positive in his approach to Timothy, setting for him a goal to train others who will be beneficial in carrying the faith for generations to come. There is a contrast here, between them of 1:15, and you who needs to be mighty like a warrior (2:3-4), diligent like an athlete (2:5), and hard working like a farmer (2:6). And if Timothy is dedicated like these hard-working groups of men, then others may defect. Still, his ministry will be successful because, after all, he will be marching with faith!

"My son"

It is a fantastic designation indicating affection and trust. As Timothy's mentor and father figure, Paul was plucking at Timothy's heartstrings, reminding him of their shared love and respect and preparing him for what was to come. Paul was getting Timothy's attention here, saying, "My son" it is time to listen; I have some significant things to say.

"Be strong"

Paul wrote this phrase in the present tense, an admonition that will follow Timothy for the rest of his life. He was commanded to find the strength needed to be a good minister in what God supplies. Written in the present tense, it meant he needed to keep getting strong, do, and focus on what would keep him strong and mighty in the Lord. Preaching is hard, and training others to follow you in ministry is difficult. That is why Paul compared ministry to going to war, preparing for significant athletic events, and working the fields (2:3-6). Ministry is not for the weak and faint of heart.

"In the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 1, stated, "I am what I am because of Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:10). In Ephesians 3:7-9, Paul said, "I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God." The strength needed to be a good minister (1 Timothy 4:6) cannot come from us. Those who rely on their strength, knowledge, and wisdom are doomed to fail. By grace, we are saved, and we are enabled to be great ministers of Christ through grace. Notice one of Paul's favorite phrases, "In Christ Jesus," and variants such as "In Christ" or "In Him." Paul uses this phrase about 145 times in his epistles, depending on your version. His emphasis is that we can do nothing for God on our own. We find our beginnings of faith and salvation, our ministry in faith, and our eternal reward all wrapped up, immersed, and possible "in Christ Jesus" alone.

"The things which you have heard from me."

If Timothy was going to be strong, he needed to rely on Christ and the message of Jesus that Paul presented to him. The reality is there was already too much heresy in Ephesus that the Lord's church had to deal with. Yet, this stands as a constant reminder to us, training preachers and educating the church and the masses amid so much false doctrine and false philosophies, that we must "hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13), translated as "follow the pattern" in the ESV. In 2 Tim 1:14, he was commanded: "The good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost." The NIV translates this as "guard the good deposit." The NASB says, "guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you." Paul was not talking about guarding a solo lesson or point. Every church doctrine Timothy had heard from Paul and other faithful witnesses must be guarded like a treasure. If the "Nuclear Football" ended up in your lap, what lengths would you go to protect it and its power? If we understand the value in God's word, to what length would you go to protect His truths?

"In the presence of many witnesses."

There were many fellow teachers that Paul labored with whom Timothy knew and would have heard preach and teach. All these men like Silas, Barnabas, Luke, Mark, and more didn't run around claiming they had secret knowledge or code words that they could only teach in secret, in shadows, to understand the secrets of the spiritual realms. There was enough of that in those days, but all Paul presented was open for all to hear and understand. Paul said in Ephesians 3:3-9 that the mystery was made known to him by revelation, and it was now revealed to him and others so they could make everyone see God's plan for them. As Paul was open about his doctrine, publicly preaching and teaching it everywhere he went, Timothy and we should teach the same.

"Entrust"

When it comes to preaching and preparing preachers, studying, understanding, writing articles, passing out tracts, making podcasts, and preaching are one thing. Another thing is to pass it on accurately so others can, too. The word "entrust" is the verbal form of the noun in 1:14, translated as "treasure, precious truth, good deposit, and the good thing" in various versions. "Guard...the treasure which has been entrusted to you" (NASB). Timothy has heard from Paul that he was not only to teach but also to guard. This is not the concept of "one man's junk is another's treasure." But the idea of protecting something of extreme value, like your mother's wedding ring, was left for your protection after her passing.

"Faithful men."

Faithful is often seen as passive, meaning "believing, accepting." Here, the concept is active. Timothy is to entrust God's word to future ministers who just do not accept there is a Christ but train those who are active and have proven themselves to be reliable, responsible, trustworthy, and dependable. Ephesus now had many intelligent people, but very few were engaged in their faith in God. Today, unfortunately, and I hate to say this, but as a former missionary and someone who has trained preachers since the mid-1990s, we sometimes will send anyone to a training program if they are good ole boys or simply breathing and halfway willing. No! Timothy was to find dependable men active in the faith who have already proved their worth.

"Who will be able to teach others also."

For a man to train others in ministry, like Timothy, who can then perpetuate the church's growth, they too must be qualified – knowing it and modeling it. And they must be willing to pass it on; there is no other option. Notice the passing up to this point; there were seven links already, from the Father to Jesus, to the Spirit, to Paul, to Timothy, to faithful men, and then to others. As Paul trained Timothy, Timothy would train others in knowledge, character, and skill. He was to teach the total man to be a "good minister."

To follow said patterns found in these epistles, we are to: 1) train in knowledge, open the book, and remind them of what Paul and faithful men had previously said and written and 2) prepare them in character by teaching them what the new man is and how to live a life that radiates the light of Christ. Face it: preachers today are held to a very high standard, often much higher than the members. Preachers accept that, whether right or wrong, we must live high moral lives and teach our students the same. Now, some would disagree with this apparent double standard. Yet, I write this knowing the Super Bowl is tomorrow. And if a regular member misses Sunday night worship to attend a Super Bowl party, nothing will likely be said. But if the preacher misses. Yep! "Houston, we've got a problem." 3) We are to train them in skills, such as how to properly study, divide Scripture, evangelize, lead meetings, settle disputes, discern priorities, prepare men for church offices, women unto good works, etc. Then today, as back then, we are to teach it, model it, rehearse it, repeat it, own it, and make sure they get it so they can do the same!

Schools of Preaching

My Rantings

The onus of training preachers is placed squarely on congregations and their leaders. I have been blessed over the years to sit at the feet of many a fine gospel preacher, an aged man, and various congregational leaders who taught me in doctrine to serve and to love my fellow brethren and our God. I have spent much time listening, watching, and learning from their behavior and stories of old, service, and doctrine. I was blessed to be around men like my father, Robert Stapleton, Andrew Connally, Ferman Carpenter, Linkosi Mkwama, and more, who set great examples in ministry for me. In my first pulpit work, I was blessed to have two men, Robbie McDonald and Bobby Fife, who served as elders and were patient and kind. I was blessed to have members who saw potential in me, like Gary Smith, Melvin Shavers, and Thomas Williams, who were always ready to work with me, mentor me, and knock me upside the head when needed.

I can remember listening to gospel preachers like Arnold Holmes and Randall Morris. Hearing how when they were teenagers, the deceased Johnny Ramsey would work with them and Ken Hope, preparing them for ministry, which decades later, years after Brother Ramsey's passing, they are all still faithful to Christ, doctrine, and preaching! Congregations, this needed training has been done and still can be if, in our desire to mold young minds, we organize and do something about it!

Congregations and preachers have been training young men for ministry even since the inception of the Restoration Movement. Thomas Campbell worked hard to shape and mold his son, Alexander, into being the voice of their movement. Not long after moving to Bethany, Virginia (Now West Virginia), Alexander started educating and training men for ministry on his farm in his small house. Then, in 1836, Walter Scott and others took over a fledgling educational program and formed the Bacon University in Georgetown, Kentucky, a school to prepare men for ministry and provide secular education. Then, within 100 years, there were Christian Colleges across America dedicated to training men for ministry. Then, starting in the 1960s, we witnessed the development of Preacher's Training Schools, with the first two being in Texas, one in Lubbock and the other north of Fort Worth. Since then, at least 100 Preacher Training Schools have been established, many not lasting for a few years, yet many still faithfully accomplishing their task today.

But why? Why do we have these "brotherhood" preacher training institutions? We don't have too many Thomas Campbells anymore, whose desire was to train his son for ministry. And unfortunately, most individual congregations have forsaken that aspect of training for decades. The reasons are many, and fingers could be pointed everywhere. Still, congregations became too concerned with babysitting their teen boys instead of training them, and the result is, where are our home-grown preacher boys today?

Therefore, few congregations, like the Brown Trail church of Christ, have established preacher training programs, and now congregations look to them to provide preachers for all. But really, is that what God originally intended? It is scriptural for a congregation to start a school to train their men. But, I believe, and could be wrong, that too many look to us to do their job! Are you preparing your own? If not, are you at least supporting these institutions? Have you forgotten the congregation where you attend is a nursery for training men to be good ministers (1 Timothy 4:6)?

Then, as mentioned earlier, when congregations hire men out of schools of preaching, they must understand, more often than not, that they just hired a rookie, expectations must be held in check, and training must continue. If the men and the elders are not prepared to continue their training, don't hire them; you will do more harm than good in their development and to the congregation you oversee. At Brown Trail and other schools I have been involved with, they all have two-year programs, which are great! They are good training programs. They are imperfect, and students will only learn some of what they need to know in two years. I have been in ministry for thirty years and still have more to learn than I have ever learned. Brother Johnny Ramsey used to say, "A graduate will learn more in six months of preaching than they will in two years at a school of preaching."

When you hire a rookie straight out of preaching training schools, you must continue their training, or you will probably break them and hurt your own. These young men often have never prepared three to four lessons each week, dealt with elders, heated business meetings, members, church problems, member problems, and personal attacks against them while living in a glass house. They have never counseled or performed a wedding or a funeral. They are rookies! And if you hire a rookie – and want a hall of famer out of him one day – then the training must continue. We demand our doctors, engineers, and accountants further their training throughout their careers to be most effective; the same is true with preachers. If you are ready to hire a rookie – then remember what Paul told the church in Corinth about the young man Timothy coming to them in 1 Corinthians 16:10-11. Be patient, kind, wise, guide, love, support, and help the rookie become a hall of famer. I love that Paul told Corinth that they should send him away in peace when Timothy was done there. For that to happen then, Timothy needed to be the man Paul trained him to be, and the church needed to be his guidance and support system! Is your congregation a nursery for preachers?

