

THE MAN GOD USES 1

This message was published for the 3rd - 9th January 2011

TEXT: 2 Timothy 1:1-8

Opening Prayer:

Our Father and our God we bless You we worship You and adore You for Your loving-kindness, we honour You for what You have been doing for us.

Thank You Lord for this opportunity again to come on Living Seed. We ask that as we begin to open our hearts to you for personal instructions, may You release Your wisdom to us, may You visit us individually, may You instruct us in the paths of righteousness that Father we may become vessels in Your hand.

Thank You for hearing us for we have prayed in Jesus Name. Amen.

PERSONAL INSTRUCTIONS TO THE MAN GOD USES 1

For today, I would like us to turn our Bibles to 2nd Timothy chapter 1, I would like to read some few verses from the 1st chapter before we go on. Today will be

a day of general introduction as the Lord will enable us.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; {Greatly...: or, remembering thy tears, I greatly desire to see thee that} 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. 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. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 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; (2 Timothy 1:1-8 KJV)

I would like us to stop here in verse 8. and trust that God would grant us further insight as we go on in this study. Before we get into the depth of this series, I would like to make some certain comments and observation on the general preview of this particular letter that Paul is writing to Timothy.

First and foremost, I would like you to look at the fact that this is a personal instruction, an instruction that is coming from an elderly man of God, from a

servant of God who had experienced God for several years unto a younger person, unto Timothy who has been walking with God following our brother Paul. Now while we go through this study, we might see some personal comments that were deliberately put (I believe that God doesn't want to hide it from us) so that we might know that the men that God use are not men that are not natural. I want you to realise that there are few things that we are going to be talking about which are not peculiar: they are issues that are common to man, things that all of us go through in life, what God allows to be put in Scriptures because He uses men. When God begins to use a man He doesn't forget that he is a man, that it is a human vessel, a human form that God has placed His hand upon.

So in this series we are going to be dealing with Man that God Uses, a man that God can use: what are the peculiar instructions that God gives to them and what are the areas of emphasis that God would want you and me to focus upon even as we seek for God to make use of our lives.

Now let's look at the passage basically before we go ahead.

The letter was addressed by Brother Paul so we see

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, 2Ti 1:1

Now that is very, very critical for me and I must comment on it before I proceed.

We thank God that the Holy Spirit has allowed us to know the Author of a letter such as this one: this remark is very critical. Why did I say that? Now I want you to discover that before a man can receive instructions that can benefit his life, we need to have an insight into the life of the instructor. There are so many of you listening to me now that you have so many people you try to take instructions from - you have so many people that you try to pattern your life after and many of such people you cannot vouch for their personal lives. You don't know what is happening to them neither do you know the dealing of God on their life! While I am calling you to listen and to be instructed and to take instructions from men I would again want to say that ever before you pattern your life after a man, you need to have an insight on what kind of man he is.

We are in such a time and in such a moment where young people are being misled, being misguided by all kinds of serious men, all kinds of leaders, all kinds of men that spring up - self appointed - claiming to be men of God, claiming to be apostles. Now, if you want God to use you and if you don't want to be misguided in your life, you need to first of all have an insight into the man, into his ministry, into the personal experiences of such men that you listen to! This is because the man you listen to will affect your life negatively if he himself is not following the correct path.

So it was very important for us to note that 2Timothy chapter 1 and verse 1 began with a proper introduction of the person that is writing this letter. It was

necessary for us to consider this once more because as you are growing up, there is need not just to follow any kind of man you see, there is need not just to listen to any kind of man that you hear making noise here and there! We have come to a critical state in the development of our Christian faith especially in our time when you need to be careful who you follow.

The Bible says "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God..."

I would like you to see something there very quickly as I go ahead. This letter is coming from Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. Even though the kind of thing that we have seen here looks very simple, yet it is very necessary for us to note it.

Now you will see the way the letter was addressed: it was not addressed as Apostle Paul! You may be wondering "what does bro Gbile mean: what is the difference between 'Apostle Paul' ...and 'brother Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God?' " This question has a lot of value for us.

Value number 1 is: we are realising that Paul never forgets that he is just a brother. He is just a man. He is just a servant of God. And so the call of God on his life never became his title! The call of God upon his life never became a status for him! The call of God upon his life never became what he allowed people to address him with as several of us would like to emphasise our title in this present generation. We realised that this men that God used, they were men that were not willing to arrogate to themselves anything that would make them

so big and bogus! So you see a letter that is coming from Paul was still simply written "Paul." "Paul.." And if you go through all the letters that Paul has written either to the Corinthian church, either to the Ephesians, either to the Galatians, either to the Phillipians, the Thessalonians, letters he wrote to even Philemon, to the Hebrews, all the epistles of Paul and even letters that people like Peter wrote, they never assumed any title. They never assumed any status! They always remembered that they were servants of God by the privilege that God has given to them. Now! You wonder why am I emphasising this? I want you to go back to Scriptures if you are going to get proper instruction for your own life.

We are discovering that men that were masters in those days, men that God had descended upon to lead other men - they were not proud men! They were not men that were struggling for position. They were not men that were struggling for recognition; they were not men that were imposing themselves upon men.

And so let's look at this verse again - " 'Paul, '...brother Paul,' an apostle of Jesus Christ' " Again I want you to note the word "..An apostle of Jesus Christ" If it were to be this present day, it would have read like this "Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ" as if he were the only apostle around. Many people that would have the liberty today claim the monopoly of anointing, they carry themselves as if they are only the man of God in town, as if there is no other way by which God can work through men or use men. Again I notice in the life of Paul and from this Bible verse that says "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ.." that makes it clear to us

that Paul was just fulfilling a call, there are other men that God has sent that way. There are other men that God is using and Paul recognises them; he knows that he is just a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here Paul is saying "I am just a man called to serve the Lord."

Now! That is very critical.

And I want to ask you my friend: "Who are you following, Who is leading you, Who is the man that is giving you instruction that you are patterning your Christian life or your ministry after?" Have you seen such men you are following also following the lifestyle of the Lord Jesus Christ? Are they following the Biblical Principle by which the church was established in those days or you just saw a man who is full of himself, who is full of his personal achievement and who has made ministry a status rather than a service? Is your leader such a man who would rather be known by so much appellation that he has put around himself, rather than the life that Jesus Christ asked us to project - is that the kind of man you are following? Is that the kind of man that you are taking instructions from?

The first thing I want to say to you today is that while it is very necessary and very good for you to be instructed and for you to be brought up by men, - now proven men of God, men that have proven their service to the Lord, men whose lives are impeccable, men that you cannot reproach in any way - I would like you again to note that if you learn from the wrong source, your life, your ministry is

likely to be wrong. If you pattern your life after men that are not following after Jesus, your life, your ministry and in fact the whole of your career will end in the dungeon of hell fire. May God help you in the name of Jesus Christ.

I am just looking at that opening verse and it says

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, 2Ti 1:1

Note the word "an" and I want you also to mark it for your own life. Paul was just an apostle, but now let me go forward as that Bible verse says

...an apostle of Jesus Christ...2Ti 1:1

Now! What is the implication of that? Paul realised that he was a messenger. If you read that Scripture from other versions, for example if you pick it from Phillips Modern English, it puts it like this

Paul, messenger, by God's appointment in the promised life of Jesus Christ 2Ti 1:1

"Paul, messenger..." A messenger of Jesus Christ!

If you look at Living Bible, it says

Paul, Jesus Christ's missionary...2Ti 1:1

Good News Bible says

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will. 2Ti 1:1

So you see that Paul realised that he was a messenger of Jesus Christ. Once again before you take instruction from any man, you need to know who sent him. You need to know who sent him and who does he represent! Who does he speak for?

There are so many great, great men today, great in quotes, that you really, really don't know their master. They themselves have never been mastered by anybody but they are planning to become your own master today! Such men cannot give you instruction that will lead you to heaven. Such men will not be able to help your life with instructions that will help your life to become correct!

There are people that you suddenly just find raising themselves up and call themselves "Prophet Something" or "Prophetess That" or "Senior Apostle This" and all those wonderful titles. And some others are becoming "Bishops" "Archbishops" and all kind of bishops! And you keep wondering whose messengers are those? Whom do they really, really represent? Who are they speaking for - are they speaking for our Lord Jesus? Do you remember Jesus said "A servant cannot be more than his master nor he that is sent greater than who sent him" (John 13:16 paraphrased). You are surprised that some of these men to be messengers of Jesus they are claiming more glory, more power, more authority, even that the Master whom they are claiming has sent them. This is very, very strange.

We realise that Paul ever before he proceeded with this instruction to Timothy

made his identity very clear. He said "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ," not "the apostle of Jesus Christ"

If there is any man, if there is any preacher, if there is any pastor that makes you to believe that apart from him and outside of him there is no other man that God is using, there is no other man that God is speaking through, there is no other man that God is working with, you should know that man is either a false prophet, or he has inflated himself to a point of no return, that if you follow him, by the time you crash-land, you yourself would have broken your back-bone. I pray that you don't die young in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you are under any instruction where they make you believe that they are the only one, that they don't learn from anybody, they don't receive from anybody, and they don't recognise other gifts in the body of Christ, you need again to check whether you are in the right place or not. You now realise Paul says "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ" and that is very interesting. He says "Look at me, I am not standing by myself, even myself in all that I am - I am a messenger." "Even myself I am a servant, I am an emmisary; I am a missionary of the Lord Jesus Christ." "I have a Master myself, I report to Him - I give Him report of what I am doing!" "I am not just a man raised from nowhere; I'm a messenger of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Now I want to ask you again: before you put your life under the personal instruction of certain men, you need to find out who is their own master. You

must ask yourself "whose messenger is this man?" And if he claims to be a messenger of Jesus Christ, there is a way by which you check it and the way to check is by asking yourself:

Is he living by Jesus' pattern?

Does he teach the kind of thing Jesus Christ teaches, does he stand by the principle by which we know the Lord Jesus Christ?

Does this man project Jesus or he projects himself?

Does Jesus increase everyday in his life, everyday in his message, everyday in his ministry or is the man only projecting himself?

Do you know more of Jesus as you listen to him or you know more and more of this man?

Do you hear more and more of Jesus as he preaches or you hear more and more of himself of his own personal idea, personal ambition, personal program, personal vision, personal exploit, personal powers ..and all of this?

I must tell you young men, I must tell you young women, I must tell you those that are upcoming in the service of God and you are desiring for God to use you: ever before you place your life under any man, you need to know who sent him!

In fact I would think it is good for you to find out in your spirit "who sent this man, who does he represent?" So you notice that in that single verse alone Paul

had said, I am just Paul! That is very interesting for me. ..."I am just Paul, an apostle - I am not the only apostle, I recognise that others have been sent ahead of me, others are going to come behind me, and others are going alongside with me! I'm just an apostle." May God give us such men, such leaders who do not take too much to themselves, who do not grab position and monopolise God's grace and anointing so that younger generation of believers, younger generation of Christians, younger generation of ministers will be raised after the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now let's go ahead still on that verse 1 of our passage, I am trusting that you will lay your hand upon these general introductions which is very needful for your personal journey in the service of the Lord. May God help you in the Name of Jesus.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God 2Ti 1:1

Let's note that again - Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. Again we can see a leader here, a leader that is giving us a force of his ordination, the force of his calling. He said "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God" ...not by my merit, not by my experience, not by my expertise nor my personal effort, not by what I have personally achieved but he said "I Paul am an apostle by the will of God."

By the will of God.

Now! This man recognised that he couldn't have been in the ministry but by the will of God, he couldn't have been an apostle, he couldn't have said anything for Jesus if not by the will of God.

If you take a little time to turn your Bibles to the book of Hebrews chapter 5 and see a point I want you to note vis-a-vis what we are learning here. Hebrews chapter 5 and I want you to look at it from verse 4. Please join me as we read, may God help us. I will take it from King James first and then read it from other versions so that understanding may come to us.

And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. Heb 5:4

So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee"; Heb 5:5

Now! You note something in verse 4 here that no man takes the honour of ministry, the honour of being a servant of God upon himself by himself except he that is called of God. Let's get that from other versions, it might be of help to you right now.

4 Note also that nobody chooses for himself the honour of being a High Priest, but he is called by God to the work, as was Aaron, the first High Priest in ancient times. Heb 5:4 Philips Modern English Bible

Another thing to remember is that no one can be a high priest just because he

wants to be. He has to be called by God for this work in the same way God chose Aaron. Heb 5:4 The Living Bible

So you notice that Paul realised and our elders also knew that becoming a servant of God, becoming a vessel in the hand of God, becoming an apostle or a preacher is not what a man arrogates to himself, is not what a man jumps at and grabs. God's men are never self made unlike our days when we have so many self-made prophets, so many self-made bishops, we have so many self-made apostles: men have just sat in the corner of their rooms and said 'from today, I am an apostle.' And from that day they continue to call themselves that. No!

Paul said "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God" that is to say these men that must give instruction to your life must be a man that has the backing of God, he was not just struggling to be in a position nor to put himself up, he was not just struggling to become anything, he was a man that was called of God. He said "An apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.."

Now let me ask you: the man you are following and those of you who are in leadership "Who called you, who appointed you, the title you have given yourself now where did you get it? how did you get it my brother?" Brother! Listen carefully to me "Who placed you where you are, who placed this thing upon you." I hope you are not struggling to put yourself up there. The Bible says no man makes himself high priest just because he wants to be. No! He must be called.

And I want to ask you: "what is the calling of God upon your life, have you been properly called?" And if you are the one that is being instructed: "the man you are following, do you know who called him?.." "Do you know whether it is God that has placed him over there?" I ask you because the man you listen to affects your life so much. And this brother concludes that verse saying

...by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus. 2Ti
1:1

Action Point

Just before I stop here, you see that I have been able to deal with verse 1 today. If you are listening to me today, I want you to now begin to pray, if your life must be personally instructed: "Who are the men that you are following?" And if you are a leader can I ask you: "Whose messenger are you? Are you following the Lord Jesus or are you walking in the light of your own personal wisdom?" May God touch you right now as we bow your head and as we pray personally with you. May the Holy Spirit help you. Are you following a wrong man? Are you in a wrong set-up? Can you pray for God to give you personal direction today? Anywhere that you cannot see Jesus, anywhere Jesus Christ is not exalted, anywhere Jesus Christ is not the main thing, can you quickly bow your head and say to Him "Lord, only Jesus I must follow" and pull out of such places. God bless you in Jesus Name.

Closing Prayer:

Our Father we thank You, we are coming back to you that you will open up our eyes to see the way we are going. O Lord that if we are not following You we will come back today to follow You in Jesus Name. Amen.

THE MAN GOD USES 2

This message was posted for the 10th - 16th of Jan, 2011

TEXT: 2 Timothy 1:1-8

Opening Prayer:

Our Lord and our God we bless You, we worship You for another opportunity to gather at Your feet even to learn from Your word, thank You for our listeners and all those that You have used Living Seed to affect over the years. We are praying furthermore that You will instruct us, You will guide us into all Truth, and issues that pertain to men that You can use, may You make it plain to our lives. Thank You Father for hearing us; for we have prayed in Jesus Name. Amen.

Review:

We thank God for his help in your life and the opportunity He has given to us to

study together with you again on this program Living Seed. Last week we began to discuss on personal instructions to the Man God uses. We have been using Timothy as a case study.

Generally last week we looked at the instructor - the kind of men that can instruct us, the kind of men that can bring us up to become something in the hand of God. And we are going to continue from there today as I ask you to turn your Bibles to Second Timothy chapter One.

DIVINE PROCESS THAT MAKES A MAN USABLE TO GOD

We largely studied verse 1 of that Scripture last week, we are going to continue again. So I would like you to take your Bible as I read from verse 1 down to verse 8,

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have

remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; {Greatly...: or, remembering thy tears, I greatly desire to see thee that} 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. 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. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 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; (2 Timothy 1:1-8 KJV)

Let's stop there, may God bless His Word into our hearts in Jesus Name. Amen.

Last week as I was looking at this matter of personal instructions to the Man God Uses, I began by looking at men that are worthy of emulation, men that are worthy to be followed, men that are qualified to bring spiritual instructions to your life. And we looked at Paul and we saw that he was not a man that is given unto desire for fame, desire for status, desire for recognition. We saw that he was a man no matter how God used him, no matter how greatly the Lord has granted insight into the Word of God to him, he still recognised himself as Paul: he never called himself different from what God has called him - 'Paul.' And several

places he had also referred to himself as just brother Paul, an apostle. We noticed there also that he never, ever forgot to know that he was not the only man of God in town, he did not forget to recognise that there are so many others that God is using and God has called even to labour along with him in the work of ministry and in the vineyard. We noticed that he also recognised himself as a messenger of Jesus Christ.

All these points were what we raised about who is qualified to be an instructor unto men that God can use: we noticed that such instructors should be men that are unassuming, they must be men that are not clinging unto positions and unto titles - they are men that recognize, and with humility of heart, they know that whatsoever they were able to do was done by the grace of God. And it is by the will of God. They also recognise that they have a Master and they never forget that they are an apostle of Jesus Christ - a messenger. They are being sent by the Lord Jesus Christ! They never saw themselves as apostles to themselves. They saw themselves as men that are sent, men that are commissioned by God to do some definite work. They also saw that their privileges in ministry is not by their merit, is not by their effort, is not by their past achievements, it's not because of who they were, it has been by the will of God.

Now I want us to go ahead and begin our study properly on the man that is to be instructed. The man being instructed. And I want to use Timothy briefly again today to impress upon you what kind of man can God bring up to be used - a man that can be instructed. What are the characteristic features we noticed in the life of Timothy that made him to become a man that God can use and the kind of life he lived as to become a man that can be instructed. Unfortunately, there are so many young people in our time, so many pastors and teachers that are going beyond instruction - they have never submitted their lives to be instructed by any man and we want to see what is the Biblical pattern: how does God raise His men? How does God bring men up even to the place of ministry and to the place of service?

And in case as the word of God goes forth today you need to make an adjustment, you need to repent or you need to relocate your life, don't hesitate to do so. I believe that these instructions are meant for your life, they are meant for your progress, they are meant for God to use you, they are meant to put you where God can have a favourable disposition towards your life, and towards your service. Now let's go on as we look from verse 2.

2Ti 1:2 To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

2Ti 1:3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

2Ti 1:4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

I want us to note one or two things as a link to where we stopped our discussion last week. Again we notice that Paul was a man who served the Lord with a pure conscience, who served the Lord with an uncorrupted conscience. There are many things that people do nowadays that appears good and appears correct but not with a correct conscience, not with a pure conscience, many don't serve with a correct consciousness of God's presence upon their lives. And men that God use to lead others, to bring up others must be men with pure conscience, men who are not of dubious character, men that serve God not because others are looking at them, they were not basically men-pleasers, but they were men

willing to serve God and lay down their lives for others to emulate and to follow.

But, now let's look at Timothy. Paul said

2Ti 1:2 To Timothy...

Now I want us to begin from that verse..

As if in these instruction Paul realised there is a message there - there is somebody there called Timothy who is willing to listen.

Now, that is the first qualification in order for your life to be brought up - you must be a man with a listening ear! You must be a man that is available to be instructed, you must be a man that is there. Now, there are many times God wants to send instructions to your life through men, through others that he has picked, through men that he has raised but you are not available, you never submit yourself to any leadership, you've never allowed God's word to flow through your life or to come to your life with a definite effect. But here we notice in verse 2, that that passage began by saying...

To Timothy...

That is, this letter is specifically addressed to Timothy so you can see an instruction coming not just as a general unidentified instruction, and I want to say to you - when God begins to focus on your life, when God plans to use you for something definite or something great in His vineyard, He will begin to concentrate His instruction unto you much more than a general sermon that you hear, much more than being lost in a congregation. God begins to speak particularly to your life. God begins to speak particularly to your situation. When the word of God is coming and you are realising that 'Yes, others may be hearing, others may be believing but this message is specifically to my life!' When you put yourself under God's Word as if it is being specifically directed to your life, I know that God is about to make something good out of you, God is about to raise you up. But if you are such a person that hears the message and instead of applying it to your life, as Paul puts these instructions to

Timothy here, you just say 'Well, the Lord has spoken to everybody..' and everybody is nobody, you keep the message as a general message and it never

applies to your own particular life, you are not going to go far in the Christian race. When God begins to speak and you take it as if He were speaking to you personally, as if the message was being personally addressed to you: every time a message comes, every time you study the word of God, every time you have a quiet time or you went to church, and you hear a word that touches your life, you accept it as a personal instruction to your life, you apply it to your situation, and you are ready to bear the responsibility and the implication of such a message - when you are a man that is available to be instructed, I then know that God is about to make you something!

Now, so one thing we notice about Timothy is that he was a man that could be instructed and I would like to prove that as we check some several other Scriptures.

To Timothy, my dearly beloved son... 2Ti 1:2

Now, all of us are aware and we know that Paul was not married all through his earthly ministry - Paul never got engaged to any woman. And we also know that he did not have any son out of wedlock. So the word 'son' we are seeing talks about a spiritual relationship, it must be a father-son relationship in the spirit, in the gospel, in the work of God. We are going to see that as we go ahead right

now.

I want you to consider where Paul first encountered Timothy and how did Timothy become such a man that could be addressed as my dearly beloved son. We may not go beyond there even today but I am trusting that whatever we are able to study, God will help your heart in the Name of Jesus Christ.

Now, how did Paul encounter Timothy and how did Timothy become a son to brother Paul? I want you to turn your Bibles with me quickly to the book of Acts and let's look at chapter 16 and read quickly from verse 1. Maybe I should read down from chapter 15 and verse 40 and then you will get a link

Act 15:40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

Act 15:41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

Act 16:1 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:

Act 16:2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

Act 16:3 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.

Let's stop there, we thank God for this.

You will discover that chapter 16 began to give us the natural background, the natural descent of Timothy, and that is leading us to some certain conclusions, as the Lord will help us to draw even now. We notice that the Bible says Paul came to Derbe and Lystra and... 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: Act 16:1

So we realise here that Timothy was living in either Derbe or Lystra, and discover that he was born of a certain woman who was a believer, this woman was a Jewess, and she believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, but his father, that is, Timothy's father, was Greek. In the book of Second Timothy, we have further information about that. If you look at chapter one and verse five of Second Timothy: 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. 2Ti 1:5

So here we discover that brother Paul was referring to the natural parents of Timothy:

number 1, we notice that this young man was born of Jewish woman - a Jewess, her name was now supplied to us in Second Timothy: her name was Eunice. So we see that Timothy's mother was called Eunice, and Timothy's grandmother - that is the mother of Eunice - was Lois. But one thing that was very, very striking is that Timothy had a descent from Godly parents, that is his grandmother Lois and his own mother Eunice were believers and Paul could attest to is that there was unfeigned faith that dwelt in his grandmother Lois and in his own mother Eunice. Apart from that, we don't know whether Timothy's father was converted or not, but we are told that he was Greek. Now that showed us that when Paul

called Timothy my beloved son - my dearly beloved son - he did not mean that he was his physical son. Timothy was Paul's spiritual son.

Now, how did they come to that kind of relationship? We again saw something there: we notice that Timothy had been well reported among the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium, they prove that he had a good report, he was zealous. He was not a zig-zag believer. So I want you to note that when God begins to plan to use you, first and foremost He deals with your life. We notice that Timothy, even though a young man, was living among brethren, and they knew him.

Now, my first challenge to you before I leave that - where you are staying now Brother, where you are living now Sister, do you have a good report among the brethren? You may say well your father is not a believer, among the believers do you have a good report?

Among the neighbours where you live do they really know you as a believer?

Do they know you as a disciple, do they know you as a child of God?

Do you have a correct testimony ever before you venture to serve God?

Are there some of you listening to me now - you have travelled from your village, you are now in town and you are claiming to be a pastor, or you are claiming to be serving one man of God somewhere, but it is because maybe you impregnated a girl in your village that is why you ran into the city and you are now going about with a Bible saying you are a man of God.

I wish you would go back home first and clear your testimony, and let people know that Jesus has actually changed your life before you begin to go up and

down in the name of ministry. One thing we noticed about Timothy is that he had a good beginning: not only that his grandmother was converted or that his own mother was converted, he himself also was a convert!

Now, maybe you are listening to me, and the only reason why you think you are a Christian is because your mother or your grandmother or your father was a pastor or an evangelist and you just assume that 'Yes! me also I am a believer since my father was the pastor that brought the church to my village; or since my mother is the deaconess in the church I am also a Christian.' No! That's not how to begin. If you want to have a correct relationship with God, that faith that is in your father or the faith that was in your mother, which they personally received when they gave their lives to Jesus, you ought also to receive it! You ought also to have that experience! Christianity and Christian faith is not transferable by tradition or by birth. It must come by your own personal encounter with the Lord Jesus.

So we notice that Timothy had a good report.

Now, friend! What are you doing about your testimony? What are you doing about your own report among men? Before God can put a man into His work, before God can allow a man to be identified with His ministry, God needs that

man to become a man that people respect around because he has lived right! Christianity is not just singing, it's not just going from one activity to another activity! You may be a young girl, everyday you return from school you carry your Bible, you are going from one fellowship to another. Everyday - there is this night vigil, there is that night vigil! Whereas I thank God for all such night vigils, I want to ask you: What impression are you creating in your family? Are you an obedient girl or you use fellowship to evade duty, you use fellowship to dodge cooking for your parents? You are grown up and you don't know how to cook, you don't know how to make common soup for your parents and you say you are a believer, that's not a correct testimony. I want to tell you that whether you are member of the choir ... you are singing, you are prophesying in the church, but what is your testimony at home. One thing that we notice about this young man Timothy was that he had a good report among brethren, not only at his village in Derbe or Lystra but even brethren at Iconium knew him to be a believer, they knew him to be a believer, they knew him to be a stable disciple!

Who do your people know you to be? Are you a teacher at the Primary School - what do your students, your pupils know you to be and the villagers around you, what do they know your life to be? Do you have a correct testimony? Do you have a life-style that people can talk about? Supposing we should go quietly to

your house and ask 'Can anybody talk to us about Sister Uche?' what would they say about you? What would your parents say about you? Forget about that "They don't like Christianity" which is what you say every time! That is not the issue. Men know what is correct!! And whenever they see a life that is striking, a life that is full of testimony, they are not going to hide it.

Now! The Bible says Timothy was a believer, he had a faith and his faith was unfeigned. There was no hypocrisy about it! That faith is not the one that is double -faced all about: that faith was clear! He was not a Christian maybe in Oyo town and when he travels to Ilorin town, he has changed!! We are not talking about such people. She was not wearing a good long robe as a good Christian sister when she goes for retreat and then when she goes for interview she is wearing mini-skirt: we are not talking of such people! Timothy had an unfeigned faith: faith that you cannot fault, faith that you cannot discredit, faith that is sincere, faith that is straightforward.

Can I ask you: how are you beginning your Christian life, how are you starting your own race? Are you starting on a correct background or on a faulty background? How are you living? Do you have a correct testimony?

Now back to the point I am raising - how did Paul become a spiritual father to

this young man? Now let's look at that verse 2. of Acts chapter 16. The Bible said Timothy

Act 16:2 ...was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

Act 16:3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him...

So point number one, we notice that Paul desired that Timothy would go along with him. Now let me ask you my brother: there are many times that God wanted to involve you in the work of ministry but He cannot let you go on your own because first of all He wants you to go as an apprentice under a proven man of God, are you such a brother, are you such a sister that proven men of God would like you to go with them? Do you spoil their message because of your lifestyle? Are you someone following a man of God somewhere and once they set food before you, you will really show your greediness and the man of God started being afraid of going about with you? Are you such a girl that when they carry you somewhere, you just begin to mess around?

Timothy was not like that!

Paul was so happy, Paul was so proud of Timothy's reputation and the life he

continually lived that he wanted this young man to come with him. Can I ask you because it is clear right now that for a man to have a good instruction and for a proven man of God to instruct his life, you the younger man must have such a good witness that you can be commended to such men: Can I ask you as a young man, as a young girl, as a young brother, is there any reason that God is avoiding you? Is there anything in your life that is making even men to be afraid of identifying with you? Have they sent you somewhere to deliver a message and instead of delivering a message, you collected money from the people ...and that has spoilt your testimony?

Now I want to say to you as I ask you to bow your head in prayer, can you check your life i.) Do you have the kind of unfeigned faith that we discover was in Timothy?

ii.) Do you have good report among the brethren?

If there is any secret sin in your life, if there is any secret practice that God cannot allow to be identified with His work, you need to repent right now. Christianity is not an activity. Christianity is a life-style! Walking with God is not just running from one place to another, it is maintaining a life that gives glory to God even in your community.

Action Point:

As we bow our head and as we pray with you and our brother leads you, can you take a decision right now and say "Lord! don't let me be a man that men will run away from because of a wrong testimony."

Shall we pray together?

Concluding Prayer:

Our Father we thank You that we are before you again, we ask O God that Your searching light in our hearts will expose us and as many as are coming back crying O God to correct their lives, grant them grace today and grant them help for we have prayed in Jesus Name. Amen.

THE MAN GOD USES 3

Biblical pattern of how God raises His men

This message was posted for the 17th to the 23rd of Jan 2011

TEXT: 2 Timothy 1:1-8

This week we continue with our study of what is the divine process that makes a man usable to God using the life of Timothy as our case study.

Prayer:

Our Father and our God we honour you for yet another opportunity to look into Your word. Thank You Lord for gathering all of us especially our listeners, we ask that You meet them at the point of their need even today. Let the Spirit of Truth and Revelation come upon us as we look into Your word again. Thank You for hearing this prayer for we have prayed in Jesus Name. Amen.

Review/Introduction:

We praise the Lord for yet another time to be with you on this program Living Seed. In the past two weeks we have been looking at personal instructions to the Man God Uses. We have been using the case-study of Timothy and our Bible Text has been Second Timothy.

Last week, we looked at the young man Timothy, his background and the kind of person he was that drew God towards him and that also made men of God like Paul to want to go with him. And I said in concluding that if God must provide

spiritual instruction and spiritual leadership for your life, you must be a man, you must be a woman that has a good report, which God will not be ashamed to identify with, neither any of His servants. If you are a young man that does not have a testimony, it would be too dangerous and it would be very difficult for anybody to want to go with you in ministry.

THE PRINCIPLE OF DISCIPLESHIP (CASE STUDY OF TIMOTHY)

Today we are going to still continue and I want to specifically look at the relationship between Paul and Timothy that led him to become the kind of man that he was. Once again, please take your Bibles and turn to Second Timothy chapter and we will read from verses 1 to verse 8. We might be able to go beyond that as the Lord leads us but if not, let's go ahead.

2Ti 1 (1) Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, (2) To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. (3) I

thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; (4) Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; (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. (8) 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;

I still wish we can stop there. May God bless His word into our hearts in Jesus Name. Amen.

Today like I said, I want us to explore what was the basis of the relationship between Timothy and Paul and also to find if that kind of relationship is still necessary for men whom God wants to use. How can we cultivate such a relationship? I would like us to look on both sides i.e. both on the side of the man that God can use to raise others and the men that God wants to raise by the

instrumentality of His proven men.

Now you will notice in verse 2, Paul said

To Timothy, my dearly beloved son...

If you read it from different other places even in the letter to Timothy the first letter of Paul to him in Chapter One of that letter, you will again see brother Paul referring to Timothy as his own son. Let's see that

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; 1Ti 1:1

Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. 1Ti 1:2

Now I note here that the relationship is in the faith. The question I am raising today is how did that relationship begin? And how could such a relationship be cultivated in order for a man to become what God wants him to be. Now I want us to refer back to Acts Chapter 16 where we read about how Paul first encountered Timothy in Lystra. We are told that Timothy had a good report, he was well reported of by the brethren that were in Lystra and Iconium. Verse 3 now says

Him would Paul have to go forth with him... Act 16:3

Last week we noted that Timothy must have been a man that God could identify with such that Paul would like him to go with him, Paul would like him to come along with him. Now let's take a very quick look at this section of the Scripture as the Lord is leading us.

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. Act 16:3. I want us to stop there.

Why would Paul want Timothy to go forth with him, after all Paul had already chosen Silas in chapter 15 and verse 40 and they had been travelling together as companions in ministry, yet we notice a principle by which God raises men that is being replayed here again in the life of Timothy. I shall call it the Principle of Apprenticeship! Or the Principle of Discipleship. Now if you remember when God called Moses and he began his ministry to bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt, there were some certain young men that were going forth with him, and you can remember some of these young men like Caleb, Joshua and some others. But among all these young men that Moses had, there was this Joshua. And you remember that everywhere that Moses went Joshua was going with him.

So we notice that there was a way by which God raises men - and that is the way of discipleship: by the pouring of a life into another life in order to make that life become useful in the hand of God. You remember that by the time that Moses

was concluding his ministry there was no other person that could have taken over from him except the young man that had been with him, that had been going forth with him, into battles into situations into problems, into ministry even unto the mountain. Several times that Moses was called up to come and to wait on the Lord in fasting and prayer, Joshua was there with him. No wonder Joshua became the man in whom the Spirit of God chose to dwell, and he became a vessel that God can use to take over from the ministry of Moses. So you find that from the beginning, right from the Old Testament, God's method for raising men, God's method of preparing men, God's method of passing on the mantle of ministry and the oil of anointing upon men is through the instrumentality of discipleship i.e. a close relationship, a kind of apprenticeship to be a man that God has called, a man that God has approved, and a young man or a young woman that God is about to put forth unto the work of ministry. It has always been God's method.

You remember that when Elijah was about to go, God also initiated a relationship - a relationship between Elijah and Elisha. If you remember what happened to Elisha, he was a farmer - he had about twelve yoke of oxen - and Elijah passed by and cast his mantle upon him. Now! That mantle was not yet the mantle of ministry, it was not yet the mantle of anointing, it was the mantle of

discipleship, it was the mantle of a kind of apprenticeship that if Elisha was able to respond to and follow, he would become a man that can take over in the work of the ministry! And if you read your Bible very well, you will discover that most men that became notable for God, most men that God raised both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament were not raised arbitrarily maybe in a Bible School somewhere, they were not raised arbitrarily with a technical training or a technical knowledge, they were raised, they were trained by a process of discipleship, a process of apprenticeship, whereby a life followed closely another life that God had approved.

So when we come to the New Testament you will discover also that the Lord Jesus wanting to raise apostles, wanting to raise men that would carry on the work of ministry - what did He do? He called them to go with Him! You remember how He called Andrew and Peter and He said "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Going forward from there He again called James and John saying "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." He called Matthew who was a Public Treasurer and that man also left his business and followed! They were following in order to become useful to God, they were following in order to become vessels. And I would like to say to you: only followers can become leaders tomorrow, only disciples of today can become

apostles of tomorrow. So we notice that even for Timothy to become useful, there was a need for God to initiate a discipleship relationship between him and another man that God has approved.

I want you to listen carefully to this, because God is bringing you some personal instructions, some instructions that will turn your life around and will help you not to become useless in the service of the kingdom of God: one will discover that God's method of raising men is not just to catch them in the bush and throw them into his work. No! God always wants His approved men to go forth with younger men, and over the years and over time, these young men will begin to discover their place in the work of the ministry and their calling, they will begin to discover God's will, God's plan and God's pattern for their lives. Usually God always wants to depend on some men - some men that He has walked with for years, some men that He has tested and proven their lives, that they might provide opportunity for other young men to go forth with them.

Now! that's a very serious challenge I am putting before you as we go on in this discussion today.

I discover that if God must raise men and if our land will not become scarce of useable men and useful anointed men, if the ministry of the Word of God will not suffer lack - lack of correct hands in our time and in our generation: this kind of going forth with men must continue! This kind of moving with men with an idea with a purpose not just to use them, not just to make them house-boys and house-servants, but to raise them for God, to pass on the life, to pass on the anointing, to pass on the message, to pass on the revelation unto their own lives that they in turn may pass it on to others must continue!

Wheresoever discipleship was omitted - anywhere - there is always confusion. Somebody said something that is very important to me, he said "Success without a successor is not a success." Success without a successor is not successful after all! If you are a man of God, you are a great man of God - we thank God for you - but is there anybody that is going to succeed you? Is there any hand that is being trained, that is coming up, that can take over when you are no more there? Or are you thinking you are an everlasting man? Anointing does not make a mortal man to become everlasting - one of these days you will no more be! What are you doing about passing on the mantle?

There was a man of God in Scripture that also made effort in order to go forth with men - this Elisha after he got the double portion of anointing from Elijah, he tried to get men to go forth with him. One of such men was Gehazi. But you remember Gehazi? He was such a wrong fellow - he was not looking for something eternal, he was more concerned about the immediate food, immediate garment, immediate velvet that they brought unto the man of God as reward for divination and he went for that and died a leper!! When Elisha was dying, we discover that there was nobody particularly that he handed over that anointing to. Of course there were some men that rose here and there but we can see a gap, we can see an omission that took place where discipleship was omitted.

Now! We notice one thing that was very, very critical and very prominent in the life of Timothy which I need to pass on to you: that thing was - God brought him into a discipleship relationship with brother Paul! It is this relationship that Paul was referring to and he said

To Timothy, my dearly beloved son... 2Ti 1:2

This kind of relationship is one that comes in the gospel in such a manner that it is like father-son relationship! As if this man that is going with Paul is not less than his own son ...and there was that kind of commitment, that kind of communion, that kind of oneness between Paul and Timothy. We are going to explore that as we go on but let me show you what's required to become a disciple. What does it take to be able to go forth with men? You as a young man listening to me - a young preacher, a young pastor - you find it difficult to go forth with any man. Many times when I see young people say 'God has called me' I ask them 'Whom did God tell you to go forth with?' Most of the time I hear young men say "Ah, No! God say I should not go with any man, God said I should just start my own ministry immediately." Once I hear a young man talking like that immediately I know that most of the time he is just being ambitious, he does not understand Biblical pattern of how God raises His men.

THE PRICE

Now! What did it cost Timothy to go forth with another man? I know that all of us would like to have gone forth by ourselves, some would just like to have gone forth with themselves; some, just trying to spiritualise their foolishness say “Yes, I will go forth not with a man, I will go forth with Jesus Himself!” But I would like to say to you, ever before Jesus can keep company with you in ministry, in anointing, in service He must have watched you keep company with mere men! If you cannot faithfully go forth with a man it is difficult for God to go forth with you.

Let's see what happened to Timothy before this relationship developed. In Acts 16:3, we are told

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. Act 16:3

I imagine that by the time Paul was encountering Timothy here, he must have

been something like 16, 17 or 18 years of age. Let's say he was in his late teens between 16 to 19. Imagine what Paul was asking him to do here - he was asking him to be circumcised!

We all know that circumcision is normally done when you are just about one (1) week old. Now when an old man is to be circumcised, somebody as old as Timothy, there are all kinds of implication: - very painful experience! And yet why did Timothy need to be circumcised? To be circumcised meant that Timothy was willing to give up his own nationality as a Greek! It was a wonderful thing to be a Greek, which he was, in those days. To be a Greek was to be one of the high class citizens of those times. To be a Greek was something to boast about because Greeks were generally known to be Philosophers and wise men. And yet in order for Timothy to go forth with Paul, Paul wanting that Timothy's presence with him will not create conflict for his ministry, will not raise eyebrows in the midst of people, he circumcised Timothy! Again look at a Gentile that is going about with Paul, he decided to circumcise him in order for Timothy to go forth with him.

Now listen! That is one big lesson we are discovering about Timothy. We are

discovering that Timothy was a bendable man, he was a man that was willing to adjust. He was a man that was willing to submit even to carnal ordinances of a leader because I want you to note here: to be circumcised was not a precondition for Timothy to be born again - he had already been born again! To be circumcised was not a precondition for Timothy to find acceptance with God, God had already filled him with His presence, and he was already known among the brethren! To be circumcised was not anything - it was not a spiritual condition because when Jesus Christ came the circumcision that God talked about was not of the flesh but of the spirit. But why was Timothy submitting to a carnal ordinance? It was simply to go with another man: it was in order that he could go with Paul!

You are hearing me.. and there are some of you that the only reason that you have not been able to submit to leaders, the only reason why you have stopped your apprenticeship, your relationship with Godly men that would have brought you up is because you feel they are subjecting you too much to their own personal idiosyncrasies. You feel that they are not giving you the liberty to be yourself, and that's why you ran away. That's why you are trying to float your own ministry now: because they are saying before you go anywhere, before you take any invitation you must first report to them and let them check you and you

say “No! how can I always be reporting to people like this? How can I always be taking permission before I do what I know I should do.”

But here we find Timothy, a young man that is willing to bend in order to go forth with Paul. He was willing to become nothing, he was willing to even lose his own personal identity.

Now are you hearing me today? Let me ask you: "Why is it that God has not been able to bring you up? Why is it that you are just beating about in the bush, you are making so many mistakes, and hitting your head here and there because you don't have anybody to go forth with you, you don't have anybody that could lead you into ministry, you don't have anybody that could lead you into what God wants you to do. Why?" It is because you want to be on your own. You want to maintain your own personal identity and you want to prove out your life. And I want to tell you: in God's own economy, He is not expecting you to make this costly experiment with your valuable life. God would have wanted you to be under Godly men, who will guide you, who will watch your life, who will watch you grow into what God meant and planned for your life. Even Paul couldn't enter into his calling until God had caused him to go forth with Barnabas, he first

of all had to go forth with Barnabas before he could move into what God had called him to do.

Are you hearing me this day? What are you doing about submitting yourself in order to go forth with men? There are some of you that could not just tolerate little, little quarrels, you could not just overlook little, little issues and that's why you are not able to go forth with anybody! That's why you have ran away from where you could have got spiritual leadership and spiritual instruction for your life.

I want to tell you something right now: no matter how wonderfully you have been anointed, no matter the gifts of the spirit you seem to have seen in your life, there is still a process that would prune your life, that would fix you and place you where you ought to be and that process is that of discipleship.

Some of you are not willing that any man will raise you for God, you say "I

want God directly to raise me!" I would like to inform you, it's not that God does not want to raise men directly but he hardly does it: scarcely would you find God doing that, he does it only when there were no correct men to use! Wheresoever God has found correct men, wheresoever God has established correct hands, He prefers that you learn from the hand of a man because you are a man! Even if angels were to be bringing you food, let me tell you - it cannot carry you far! It will not carry you far!

When God sent Elijah to be fed by ravens that was wonderful, but that was not the kind of life God wanted him to live, that soon dried. The brook Cherith also dried up because God wanted him to leave with men. You are a man and you need to learn from the life of men, you need to face the infirmities that other men have faced in order for God to be able to train you so that your victory can be a tested and a proven victory.

My friend! I noticed that brother Timothy was willing to submit to brother Paul and to go with him. How did he go with him: did he go with him like a colleague, did he go with him as an associate and did he go with him as an equal partner?

No! That was not what he did. I want you to look at Philippians Chapter 2, please turn with me to Philippians Chapter 2 and let me draw your attention to how Timothy went forth with Paul and at that I may be stopping trusting God to help you take some definite step today in case you have been trying to establish your own thing when nobody has sent you forth. May God grant you an understanding in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's look at that Scripture.

But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you... Php 2:19

Now! this is Paul talking about Timothy

...that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. Php 2:19

For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. Php 2:20

For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. Php 2:21

But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. Php 2:22

You see that now? As a son, that was how Timothy went! Now how does a son walk with his father? Is it by competing? No! A son never competes with his father. A son is happy to carry his father's bag and to eat the leftover of his father because he knows that when his father is gone he is simply going to step into his father's shoes and collect the father's estate. That was the kind of heart Timothy had in going forth with Paul.

Are you hearing me today and you are a young man and God wants you to go forth with one of his approved men or you have been in the ministry and have been rising and falling. The reason is because nobody has disciplined you into what you are doing, you are only trying to beat your own path in the bush. You need to take correction. Has God pointed a place where you should learn? Has God introduced some men to you? Has God shown you some men who should disciple you and you are trying to run away? Is it because they are very harsh on your life, they are trying to circumcise your flesh- they are trying to cut your

pride, they are trying to cut your arrogance? Is that why you are trying to run away? My brother, my sister, you cannot become anything in the hand of God except you submit unto Godly leadership, you cannot become anything except you are first of all disciplined.

Only a disciplined man can disciple others. Only a broken man can be used to break others. Only a man that had been led can be able to lead others. And if you miss all these it means you don't have a basis to hold any anointing for God, you don't have a basis to bear any responsibility for God, you don't have a basis to be a leader!

Some of you have stagnated because you are running away from where God has posted you.

Action Point:

As I ask you to pray again, consider Timothy and how he submitted himself. Maybe you are planning to resign from where you are right now, I want you to stop it! I want you to stop it!! Bow your head again. Why are you reacting? What are you running away from? That is where God will make you and when God has finished he will yet bring you into the limelight and men would know you that God has brought you up.

May God help you to take this decision. Consider Timothy!

As we go on, we will see the growth of Timothy and how God brought him up, and how he became something in the hand of God. May God help you as our brother leads you in this prayer.

Closing Prayer:

Our Father we thank you. We ask of you today that you will help us to learn submission wherein we shall be raised. Thank you that You will help many that are crying and praying and repenting in Jesus Name we pray. Amen.

THE MAN GOD USES 4

This message was published for the 24th – 30th January 2011

TEXT: 2 Timothy 1:2 & Philippians 2:19-22

Prayer:

Our Father we thank You for this opportunity to look into Your word again with our brethren. We ask You to speak with us this day in Your mercy as we listen with all our hearts, in Jesus Name. Amen.

Lesson Review:

Last week, we looked at Timothy's discipleship with Paul and saw that he was a man that decided to submit to tutelage in order for God to make him. We noted a pattern in Scriptures of how God visits his men via discipleship or apprenticeship under proven men.

LESSONS FROM PAUL-TIMOTHY DESCIPLESHIP

Today, we shall explore further this tutelage of Timothy under Paul, and what lessons he will have us learn for our own lives as we seek to become vessels in God's hands in our own generation. We shall turn our Bibles unto 2nd Timothy 1:2, and then Philippians 2:19-22.

2Ti 1: 2 To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 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.

May the Lord bless his word as we read and as we study in Jesus Name.

We have been looking at the relationship between Paul and Timothy and how Timothy grew under that tutelage as God will want us to take some certain instructions for our own lives even today. One of the things we noted was that brother Paul could refer to Timothy as my dearly beloved son. And we saw in the going forth of Timothy with Paul: he did not go as colleague, he did not go as an associate, he did not go with Paul as a co-sharer. He was not there to struggle with him. The Bible said he went forth with him as a son and we referred you to Philippians 2.

Php 2:19 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.

I want you to note that Scripture as I want to read it from New International Version before I begin to make our comments.

Php 2:19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. 20 I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. 21 For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. 23 I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me.(NIV)

While we were talking about Timothy's life before, we noted that he was a man

that had a good report, even from his own home base. The brethren that grew up with him knew him and had great respect for his life: he wasn't an old man, but he lived a life of emulation. And we said, for God to continuously use you, there is need for your life to be correct. There is need for your relationship with men around to be correct. There is need for you to maintain and cultivate a correct testimony in the midst of men. But much more than that, we also notice Paul speaking in the book of Philippians here, as though comparing several other people that have come along with him in ministry. And it may interest you that while Timothy was going forth with Paul, he was not the only person: Titus also was there. A man like Demas was there, and John Mark was also going. So we have several young men that were in that particular team that were going forth with Paul. And there was one sole purpose why God wanted them to go forth with him - that he might train them, that God might bring them up and make use of them in the work of ministry as years go by. But we found Paul talking about some people - look at what he said, I want you to please note it again. He said, "I have no one like him, no one of so kindred a-spirit who will be so genuinely interested in your welfare and so devoted to your interest, but the others all seek to advance their own interest, not those of Jesus Christ the Messiah."

Now, looking at that comment, you will discover that even as it happened in the

days of Paul, it is happening in our time: several young men that God would have laid hands upon, that God would have used, they are too quick in seeking their own personal interest. They are too quick in seeking something that could be accrued or accredited to their own personal name. They are too quick in speaking what personally satisfies them. And you see, the man of God, Paul, noted them: he said, "I don't have people like Timothy, no one of so kindred a-spirit who will be so genuinely interested in your welfare and so devoted to your interest for the others all seek to advance their own interests."

Now, I want to say this before I press on: when God is preparing and proposing a man for a place in his service, there are certain little, little things God checks - God looks at how faithful you are in the things that belong to others, He looks at how faithful you are in handling little matters. Now, when God sees that a man is too quick in advancing his own personal interest at the expense of the interest of Jesus Christ or the interest even of the leaders under whom God has placed you, then God is compelled to peg your development. God is compelled to peg your progress. God is compelled to peg your growth, because he can see that your heart is not correct! I'm talking to men that want to be really, really used of God: now, let me ask you –

what is the driving force, what is the motive of your life?

What is pushing you up and down, is it your personal interest?

Are you concerned about what you can get for yourself out of the ministry, out of your relationship with men of God?

Are you relating with some men around you just to make a name?

Are you trying just to identify with some certain brothers, some certain sisters who have reputation just because you know you can step on their back to become something: is that why you are there?

When God notices that kind of heart it becomes difficult for the Lord to recommend you and to put you in a position of strategic responsibility.

Now, these are issues we noticed in the life of Timothy. We saw that Timothy, when he went forth with Paul, he left everything. He left his own personal heritage. When he got circumcised, he lost his heritage and his dignity as a Greek, but he was willing to follow the Lord. He was willing to serve God and become whatever God could make of him. And today, I feel like I need to explore with you whether he actually grew or not. But the first thing we note here is that he

had a heart purely for God.

Now, young man, where is your heart? Young woman, where is your heart? Supposing you are under a pastor in a local church, and he has made you an elder, or they have made you a Sunday school teacher, what are you seeking? Are you struggling to carve out a kingdom for yourself even within the congregation? Are you teaching in order to endear yourself unto men rather than point their hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you cutting corners? Are you cutting your masters coat behind him? Are you trying to short-cut issues that would have gone to the attention of your master?

ABSALOM – A CONTRAST

Are you behaving like Absalom? I don't know if you remember the story of Absalom, he was going up with his father David. But when he decided to rebel, do you know what he did? He came out as the Bible reported to us in the book of Second Samuel. He came out and he would stand at the gate, and all the people

that were coming to see David, he diverted their attention. Absalom told them that “Look, I would have quickly attended to your situation if not that you have not allowed me to know about it. My father is becoming too old, he cannot remember you right now.” And he began to reduce the issues. He began to make light the implication of righteousness in the lives of people. We noticed that Timothy was not like that. I think I should ask you to refer to Second Samuel and see something about Absalom. I perceive that one of the reasons why usable men are becoming scarce in our land, why men that God can use are becoming unavailable is because of this quiet deviation in seeking the Lord's interest and rushing and struggling for your own personal interests. I want you to turn your Bibles very quickly to the book of Second Samuel and lets read chapter 15. II Samuel 15:1-6. Let's quickly see what Mr. Absalom was doing.

2Sa 15:1 And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. 2 And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. 3 And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. 4 Absalom said moreover, Oh

that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! 5 And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. 6 And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

Let me stop here, may God help you to understand what I am talking about.

What are the things we saw, what are the features we noticed in the life of Absalom that has rendered so many disciples useless and made it difficult for God to take them to greater heights even in the plan of God for their lives? As we are studying Timothy, I just saw a very large contrast between Timothy and Absalom, between Timothy and several men, several sisters, several brothers, several young pastors! Some of you were posted to go and represent your church denomination somewhere, and when the work started to expand, what did you do? You quickly change the name of the church to your own personal ministry and something tells you you are serving God. I must tell you - You are not! I perceive that you are serving the devil. And in case you get to heaven and your name is omitted, don't ever be surprised - God can never be involved in any form of

unrighteousness!! If you are hearing me today and you started church, you started your ministry, you started your fellowship on the ground of rebellion: you stole the heart of men from your masters and you think now that you are a big man of God, I want to tell you that you better repent, otherwise, I don't see a destiny for you in the kingdom of God. I don't see a place for you in eternity. May God help you.

Now, look at Absalom in contrast to Timothy. Paul was giving a testimony, he said, "I have no other person like Timothy; a man who is not seeking his own interest, who serves with me as a son serves with his father." Here we see another son who is supposed to serve with his father, David, but what did he do here? The Bible said,

...Absalom prepared him chariots and horses 2Sa 15:1

To do what? To do what? To do what? ...What are you running after? What are the issues that you are struggling to get? The Bible said, 'He prepared himself

chariots and horses to run around.' Let me tell you, friend, if you are too much in a haste to let God carry you into his will, you will likely make a mistake. One of the things we noticed about Absalom was that he was too much in haste. He was too much in haste! What does he need chariots and horses to do? The Bible says, "Thou shall not go with haste nor by flight, for the Lord will go before you" That's what Isaiah chapter 52, verse 12 says. But when a young man is too much in haste to be known, when a young preacher is too much in haste to be popular, you cannot but abandon your discipleship program. You cannot but abandon your apprenticeship under the Lord. You will run away, I know. You will likely run and cut away and start something prematurely before God himself has approved you!

Now, the man Absalom prepared himself chariots and horses. My friend! Are you hearing me? What are the chariots? What are the horses that you are gathering around yourself now? What are the things that you are putting around yourself that will hinder God from using you? As a young preacher, as a young girl, even when you want to marry, you are not listening to those that God has placed over you - your sisters, your uncles or aunties whom God placed over you to help you make a correct choice! What are you doing - you are rushing! You are moving on chariots, you are moving on horses, and I don't see any destiny for

you in that thing you are rushing for. I'll give you five years and the whole thing will scatter if you don't repent. If you don't take your time and sit under instructions, you will definitely bite your tongue and bite your fingers in years to come!

Now, this man prepared fifty men to run after him, fifty men to run before him. Look at it: a man that is supposed to be a follower, he already decided to have some sub-ordinates! A man whom God is still training, he decided to carve out his own group of loyalists- fifty men that were running ahead of him.

Excuse me friend, but do you like authority so much that you just want some stooges around you, some mediocres who are running up and down and singing your praise? Do you use posters and hand bills only to put in and print your photograph, and you call yourself something big without reference to men that God has used to raise you up? Excuse me friend, you are going on the way of Absalom! If you are to be a strong man in the hands of God, you should consider the life of Timothy: a son that remained with Paul over the years.

Now! Absalom rose up early: this is a man that will not rise up early to pray, this is a man that will not rise up early to seek the face of God, this is a man that will not rise up early to obey the Lord, but when he decided to seek his own interest, he can be very zealous! There are some of you listening to me now, while you were under the tutelage of your master, how did you handle the work? You handled it with levity. You woke up late, you did it as if it was not your own job. But when you now started seeking your own interests, when you started seeking your own group, when you started seeking your own ministry, see what you are doing now - I see you trying to organize five night vigils per week. You don't even sleep because you think that by making effort you are going to really strike something in the kingdom of God. That's not how the work is done.

The Bible said,

And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy

matters are good.. 2Sa 15:2-3

Now look at this! This man has not even come to hear what they have to say, he had not even understood the facts of the matter! But what they didn't say already, he says "Your matters are good and right." Are you short measuring the word of God to gain audience? When your master, maybe the senior pastor has rebuked a sister, that the way she is moving disorderly is not correct, and they were about to put her under discipline, what do you do brother? You called that sister aside and you say, "I don't know why the General Overseer (G.O.) is being too difficult. I don't know why the G.O. or General Superintendent (G.S.) or the Senior Pastor is trying to make life difficult - he should have listened to you more, he should have prayed and fasted with you more, all this kind of arbitrary decision, me I don't understand it. Let's fix a special prayer meeting!" And so you fix a special prayer for that girl, and you are praying and you are going up and down as if you are doing ministry. You are cutting corners! I tell you, you are not going to go far: God is not going to approve your life that way.

You know Timothy was a man that followed Paul and went with him as a son, a

man that sought no interest of his own, and God decided to promote him. God decided to bless him. He grew on, he became a minister. He became a bishop, if you want to call it that. He became a leader of other leaders! God used him mightily as he went about with his master.

Today I want to say to you, the things that discredit a man from Gods service could be little, little issues. They could be your interest for money. They could be your interest for property. They could be your interest for sharing booties. Are you so eager to be independent because of small, small money that people send you when you go to preach? Or your eyes are open when you see people bring tithes unto your church and you look at your leader and say “Oh! all this tithe is going to his pocket and he will not even remember me. I will start my own one of these days!” ...Because you are looking for money?

Friend! Friend!! Friend!!! No man that went that way became anything. I don't know whether you remember the end of Absalom. What was the end of Absalom? He went and hung himself. He went and hung himself and the Bible said, 'He fell down... and he died' You know he died, he died a useless death. He died a useless

death! You don't need to die young my brother. You don't need to die young my sister. You should submit: these are personal instructions that God is passing to you as a man that God wants to use. If you want to last in the word of God, if you want your inheritance to stand all through the ages and in eternity, if you want to make a mark for God in our generation such that even after you are dead and gone, God will see a reason to refer men unto your life, unto what God used you to do, then you need to pay close attention to this!

A man that does not submit to leadership cannot lead. A man that is too eager to seek his own interests, God will not allow those interests to come into your hand! Are you hearing what I'm saying? Maybe you are struggling, you are moving up and down and they wanted to discipline you in your church, and you say, 'No! how can they disgrace me like that, a whole man like me? No way.' Instead of submitting to your master, what did you do? You ran somewhere else. You ran to an unknown place. Then you became a big man and people are carrying you up and down to go and preach here and there, yet sin is in your life. You should have been corrected, if you will not die young.

Now! look at this. The Bible said,

And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. 2Sa 15:3

What do you notice here now? That is blackmail! Absalom was emphasizing on the weakness of the leader. He was capitalizing on the omission of his master, instead of making up all the weaknesses, instead of filling up all the gaps, instead of providing for the loop holes, he was pointing it out to men. He was pointing it out to men to discredit his master! Is that what you are quietly doing in order to establish your ministry? Are you finding yourself criticizing pastors, criticizing your leaders simply because you want to win the hearts of men? That was the way of Absalom. Timothy was such a different man. Timothy was a man that can be recommended anywhere, can be introduced anywhere because he was willing to submit unto that spiritual tutelage over his life.

I ask you again today brother, I ask you again today sister, I ask you man of God, I ask you senior sister, I ask you those of you that are singing, I ask you those of

you that are trying to float a new work, a new ministry, a mission group or whatever you call it - Are you running away from tutelage? Are you running away? You saw that you should have graduated and actually you want to graduate yourself when God is saying; 'No! wait yet.' You thought you should seek your own, you thought that all your labour is being lost just like Timothy. Timothy laboured so much. But you will not know anything ...if you read the Bible right now, there may have been one particular place that Timothy's name was placed over any work? But we saw him in all the places, we saw him standing with brother Paul, and when we get to heaven you will still see brother Timothy standing and receiving the crown of righteousness that God has prepared for those that love him!

Now look at what Absalom did before I stop. Absalom stole the heart of the people. You know, the Bible said,

And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. 2Sa 15:5

What is that? That is strategy – evil strategy! People that are coming to make obeisance he said, "Don't worry. No, no, no, why should you be lying-down for me. We are all the same: we are the same. Please stand up." And you kiss them. What is that? That is strategy. You are cheapening the truth, you are making cheap the word of God and the demand of God on people's lives, and you are making them to look as if you are more available to them than the Lord Jesus himself! You are trying to think and behave as if you can care for men more than God is willing to care for them. You are a cheat, you a-r-e a cheat!! And if you don't repent, what happened to Absalom is going to happen to you.

Now let me conclude as I explore with you the life of Timothy. You see, Timothy was a man that could be recommended. Can you be recommended? Timothy was a man that grew on with brother Paul over the years - I don't know how many years he went with him, I don't know how many years he served with him, I don't know how long he lived, but you know he started as a young man, and by the time this letter was being written, he had entered into the work. Brother Paul was almost handing over to him, brother Paul was almost telling him "I am going, you will do this, you will do that." I want to ask you, friend, will you be there to receive the mantle from the hand of the man of God

So many great men of God have died with no man to receive their mantles. Do you know why? The young men are too much in haste - they are too much in haste to go out and cut their own mantle! I can see young people right now cutting their own mantles and designing it and putting all kinds of embroidery just to make it beautiful. But you know, the pattern of ministry from the Old Testament up to the New Testament is that it has to be handed down to you! It has to be handed over to you!!

CONCLUSION:

By the grace of God, as I come back on this matter in the coming week, we will look at a pattern that we can see in the word of God about how God put men forth into the work of ministry. We will see that God doesn't just get men arbitrarily: there is a mantle that must be passed on.

There was an anointing that passed from Moses to Joshua, there was an anointing that was passed on from Elijah to Elisha, there was an anointing that was to pass from Eli to Samuel! And that's how it was supposed to be over the

time.

Whose mantle are you receiving, my brother? You might say, "Well, I received my own directly from Jesus." Let me ask you, where did you see Jesus? If Jesus were to be real to you, he will reveal himself as to submit yourself unto the men that he has called! So when we look at this young man Timothy - I call him young because he appeared young in this Scripture - I'm praying that the Spirit of God will help you and bring you to a point of conclusion, to a point of surrender: and you will say, "Lord, I'm willing. I'm willing not to seek my own interests. I'm willing to let you use me."

Action Point:

Now check your heart right now - are there some secret things, secret projects, secret programs that you are running, that is contrary to the will of God? And your masters are not aware of it. You may be cutting your life short, you may be making it difficult for God to bless you.

As we pray with you, I just want you to take a step right now and ask the Lord –
“Lord purge me! Make me a man like Timothy and not like Absalom.” God
bless you.

Concluding Prayer:

Our Father we come back to You, Oh God, we are gathered before you. We ask
that these things that you are revealing to us will not fall on the ground. As many
as are praying and repenting, Lord, we ask that you will touch them and restore
them in the right path. In Jesus name. Amen.

THE MAN GOD USES 5

This message was published for the 31st January – 6th February 2011

TEXT: 2 Timothy 1:2-12

Opeining Prayer:

Our Father and our God we bless You. We honour You for once again You have given us this privilege to gather around You, to sit at Your feet as we listen to Your word. Father we want to pray for all those who listen to us, let Your word mix with faith within them and cause this message to affect our lives and put us on course much more to prepare us for Your service. Thank You for hearing us, for we have prayed in Jesus name. Amen.

Lesson Review:

We want to bless the Lord for how He has helped us in the course of this particular series on personal instructions to the man God uses - a case study of Timothy. Last week, we were looking at the development, the growth of Timothy's tutelage under Paul. We were looking at some peculiar things that God emphasises and God cherishes in the man that He decides to use. We said as a matter of pattern that God normally causes men to go forth with other men in order for them to be trained before they can be released into what God wants to give to them. And we made a brief comparison between two young people in the Scriptures- Timothy and Absalom. Whereas we saw that Timothy would not seek his own personal interest, we discovered that Absalom, right at his youth, arranged horses and chariots and fifty men to run ahead of him to speak of him, to publicise him and to seek a place in the heart of men. We saw Absalom cutting corners, diverting the attention of the people even from his father David. Whereas we noticed with Timothy that brother Paul said that he was a man who served faithfully with him as a son will serve with his father in the gospel.

By the time we were signing off we noticed that this pattern is not just Timothy

and Paul, but that has always been God's method of raising men. And I'd like to say to you that every time God wants to raise a man, He first of all wants him to go with a man, He wants him to learn under another man, that he may receive a mantle of such a man of God. We noticed that for God to raise a Joshua, He wanted Joshua to go forth with Moses. And if you look at the time that God was raising up Joshua, the instruction was that Moses should put his honour, Moses should place his hand, Moses should release his spirit upon Joshua that he might step into that work. We saw the same thing when God was going to bring up Elisha: Elijah was to release his mantle even upon Elisha. We have seen that again and again all through Scriptures. And we saw that actually as a matter of God's pattern of raising men - He always calls men to receive the mantle of other men when they are going. That meant that discipleship, apprenticeship, has always been Gods approved method of raising men and preparing them for ministry.

The challenge that was left with us as we signed off last week was, "Whose mantle are you receiving in your own life? Have you taken time to learn under any man? Have you ever been raised by anybody, are you a son to anybody?"

PERSONAL INSTRUCTIONS TO THE MAN GOD USES 2

Today we are going to now move on and focus more and more on the personal instructions that God was passing to the man that He wants to use, especially this man Timothy. And as we go on, we may be referring to some of the issues we have raised, but I trust that God will help us and help you particularly in the Name of Jesus.

Let's return to our text, our basic text in this particular series, being the book of Second Timothy. And we are still dealing with Second Timothy One. So I want you to please turn your Bibles to Second Timothy Chapter One and we will read from verse Two and we will read to verse Twelve.

2Ti 1:2 To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; 4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of

thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; 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. 8 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; 9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: 11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. 12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Now today I want us to move on – having established the fact of a relationship between Timothy and Paul having established the personality of Timothy as a young man that is willing to learn, a young man that is willing to be submerged,

a young man that is willing to lose his own identity in order to go forth with a man. A young man that never seeks his own personal interest except the interest of the Lord Jesus. A man that can be left behind, a man that can be sent ahead, and you will not be afraid that he would spoil anything. Now let's look at some of the clear instructions that the Spirit of God was using brother Paul to pass unto his life.

Now I want us to note from verses 3 and 4. I just want to read briefly through that as I go ahead.

2Ti 1:3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; 4. Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

Now one thing we are discovering quietly between Paul and Timothy, which also is the same thing we expect between men that God has appointed as disciplers and trainers of young men, men that God has called particularly to

raise others. We noticed a relationship: i) we noticed a transparency in the life of brother Paul for Timothy to examine. And you can see he said, "I serve God with pure conscience." So we noted that the relationship was pure. In the relationship, there was nothing to hide.

And we noticed also that Paul prays for Timothy. He said, "Without ceasing, I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day." That is to say that when God has called you to raise a man, when God has placed some people to work under you as a servant of God, as a preacher, as a pastor, as a leader of a fellowship, or even as a head of a family, one thing that God is expecting you to do for those young men that are coming under you is to pray for them - is to seek the face of God on their lives, that their understanding of God, the understanding of his will be perfected day by day.

As a man that God is trusting to raise other men, we want to say to you just like we are noting between Paul and Timothy, that you cannot raise any man by your fist. You cannot raise any man by your own strength. You cannot influence any man positively by your own techniques. It has to be at the Throne of grace. And a

man that cannot carry his sub-ordinates, his disciples to the Throne of grace, may not have much influence upon their lives. So we noticed that for Paul, he prayed for Timothy every day. He said, "I have remembrance of you in my prayers night and day. I always desire to see you." Once again I discover that there is a fellowship, there is a communion, there is a friendship, there is a relationship, that they always want to be with each other. And that is one very, very critical point in their discipleship. There has to be contact, there has to be fellowship, there has to be interaction. Even when you have to be separated from your discipleship for a while, yet it is not good to keep that gap for too long. He said, "I desire to see you. I am mindful of your tears that I might be filled with joy." But let's go ahead; I'd like you to move with me to verses 6 and 7.

2Ti 1:6 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.

That's one of the first instructions that was coming to the life of Timothy after a time of relating with brother Paul. Now, what is the relevance of this particular instruction? And I want to spend a short while on that now. The Bible says,

...I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands 2Ti 1:6.

So we note one thing very quickly here that while Timothy was relating with Paul, there were points at which Paul had laid hands on Timothy: points at which he had laid hands on Timothy, points at which he had poured forth his heart, he had poured forth his life, he had poured forth his spirit unto Timothy in order for Timothy to receive the power of God. That's one very critical point you need to note here: that to raise a man for God, you need to introduce him to the source of life, to the source of power, to the source of anointing, to the source of revelation, to the source of grace, and that is the Holy Spirit. That is the Holy Spirit! There's not much we can expect from a man if all he is going through is a theological analysis or if all he is exposed to is an abstract mental knowledge. No! Mental knowledge does not make a man. Theological analysis does not raise a man unto any considerable extent for God. Whereas theology is very good for a man to be knowledgeable about things of God or the principles of Scriptures, yet that man remains in spiritual death until the Spirit of God comes upon that man!

So we note something about Timothy here, that as soon as he came to Paul, as soon as he began to follow Paul, Paul was not just trying to play magic ahead of him, Paul was not just struggling to impress him and daze him with power as many people would like to do. Paul decided to lead Timothy to the very source of anointing. He decided to show him the secret of divine revelation, the secret of walking with God, the secret of moving in the light of the power of God.

We notice that he said

...I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. 2Ti 1:6

So we notice that Timothy came under the hand of Paul: he laid his hands on him. Now, let me pause here to say this: there is usually a transfer of spirit, a transfer of grace, a transfer of anointing between men that are relating in discipleship. And one of the ways by which God causes this transfer to take place is by the laying on of hands. Yet the Bible says, "Lay hands suddenly on no man"

we realise that laying on of hands here is a commitment, is a point of connection, between Paul and Timothy in order to release the grace of God and to release the anointing of the Holy Spirit into Timothy's life.

Now we realise that for Timothy to be able to go, Paul introduced him to the power of the Holy Spirit. To those of you that are disciplers, those of you that are pastors and leaders who are leading one group or the other, what do you do to raise up men under you? Do you just daze them with the power of God and when they say "Uncle or Pastor or Reverend, how did this thing take place?" You say "Ah Well, we just thank God, that's how God used to use me, that's how God used to use me several times! Even me myself I don't know but that is how God uses me." No! You know how it came. It was when the Spirit of God came on your life that something definite began to happen. So I notice that Paul was not afraid that if we expose this man to the Holy Spirit, He will pass unto him what God has passed unto us and maybe he will outwit us, maybe this young man will push us aside. No! Paul was not afraid of that: he never kept back from Timothy what was going to be of help to him - he exposed him to the anointing, he exposed him to the power of the Holy Spirit, he showed Timothy that the source of knowledge, the source of anointing, the source of revelation, the source of a proper walk with God is a relationship with the Spirit of God.

And here we note in verse 6, he now said

... I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. 2Ti 1:6

What is the relevance of this instruction to a Timothy, a young person such as you are, listening to me today. One of the things that I would like to say is that the gift of the Spirit of God in your life is not meant to be kept in a napkin! The anointing that you have received might look small in your eyes but except it is stirred up to a flame it would really not create any effect. And so as a young upcoming man, upcoming woman in the hand of God, He is expecting you to stir up your spirit.

And under the encouragement of brother Paul, we saw Timothy being

encouraged, being challenged, being instructed - "Don't let the gift of the Spirit of God in your life become dormant, don't let the fire die out, don't let the grace become useless, don't let the gift become obsolete. Stir it up, stir it to flame!" How do you stir it up, how do you stir yourself? You challenge yourself: challenge yourself! Keep yourself mobilised - mobilised, to pull out the gift of God in your life by exercise. Release your life so that the grace of God, the gift there will find expression. And that is the way of growth.

Now the Bible says in the book of Hebrews chapter 5 that those that have become matured today - how did they become matured? By the exercise of their spirits, by the exercise of their will, they have come now to know, and have come now to discern between good and evil. They have come now to know how to separate between what is the will of God and what is not the will of God. So we realise that for a man to grow, for a man to become useful in the hand of God, he needs to stir up the spirit, he needs to be in a situation, he needs to be in an environment where he receive challenges! And I want to say to you: if where you are right now you are a local champion, there is no challenge, you are the best in town - even when you make mistake people still clap for you, that may not be a good environment for your growth. Why don't you seek a place, seek opportunities where your life will be challenged, where your spirit can be stirred

up, where your inner man can be stirred up until it catches fire for God.

He said because

...God hath not given us the spirit of fear; 2Ti 1:7

One of the things you notice about young people coming up is fear, timidity. Some are so afraid of making a mistake, some are afraid of not knowing how people will accept them. But we find a gentle encouragement from brother Paul unto Timothy: "Stir up the gift of God that is in you, God has not given unto you the spirit of fear..."

...but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 2Ti 1:7

Now let me say this to you before I leave that point: in order for you to grow, you must exercise your spirit - spiritual growth comes by spiritual exercise.

Spiritual development of your gift comes as you stir your spirit up. The anointing will not become matured, in fact will not become sharp, will not become effective in the things that God has called you to do except you stir up yourself! If you feel God is preparing you to be a pastor, there is no way you can become an effective pastor, there is no way you can become an expert in pastoring, except you begin to pastor, except you begin to stir up yourself unto the duties of pastoring and shepherding - maybe just of one soul or two souls or three souls. But you must stir up yourself. A complacent man is not likely to become anything in the hand of God because even the deposit of God in his life will go obsolete, they will go obsolete because he was not ready for any spiritual exercise.

Now what is the second instruction that Paul was passing to Timothy before we leave this part of the body of the message?

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; 2Ti 1:8

What an instruction?

The second thing that every man that wants God to use him must take note of is the matter of being ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. Now, what is the implication of this? There are times that because of the world system, because of the hostility of unbelievers all around, because of men who do not share the principle of life that Jesus Christ has taught us in the kingdom, you might be ashamed, you might want to dodge. You might not want to publicly identify with the truth as you ought to, so you become a secret disciple, you try to stand with God and stand with the brethren when nobody is there, but as soon as you meet others, you change and you try to maintain a double kind of standard. Paul had to instruct Timothy and say to him "Timothy, you are going to become something in the hand of God, don't be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, don't be ashamed of the testimony that the Lord our God stands for, don't be ashamed to stand for the truth. Don't be ashamed to stand for the truth, don't be ashamed to stand for the Word of God no matter how unpopular it is." But not only being ashamed of the Lord, there are times when you may not even be ashamed of the Lord but you are ashamed to identify with servants of the Lord - those that are standing for the Word of the Lord. There are times you deny brethren and you

think you are cleaving to the Lord, and I want to tell you - when you deny the brothers of Jesus, when you deny the servants of Jesus, you have equally denied Him! When you cannot identify with those who have identified with the Word of God, when you cannot stand with those that have stood with God already you are not standing with God!

And so as a second instruction apart from stirring up your spirit, apart from stirring up the gift of God in your life you need not be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of me his prisoner...

...Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner ...2Ti 1:8

Paul was instructing Timothy, I am a prisoner of the Lord, don't be ashamed of me, don't be ashamed of the truth that I stand for, be ready to identify with me. Now listen: when Paul said this, I praise the Lord that he was a man we can identify with. But if you have a leader who is living wrongly, who is tampering

with people's wives and is living carelessly he may not be able to boldly say you should not be ashamed of his testimony! And so if you want to be a leader that men should identify with, I want to charge you - you must live right! You must walk right. You must live a straight-forward life. You must live a life that is beyond reproach.

But he said

...be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God...

2Ti 1:8

Brother, maybe one of the matters we need to emphasise especially to this generation of Christians is that there is an affliction that the gospel of Jesus Christ brings to any man who will be faithful and He says you should be a partaker of it. These are days that all kinds of new gospels are being preached that tells you that "Yes you can wear the crown without carrying the cross" and tells you that "you can be great without dying!!" And yet the Bible says "Except the corn of wheat falls to the ground and dies it abides alone but when it falls

down and dies it bringeth forth much fruit."

Just before we stop here let me say - the gift of God in your life, it has to be stirred up. Now, I need to ask you - What are you doing right now about what God has deposited in your life? Are you in a place of being challenged day by day unto holy living? Are you in a place where you are being challenged unto further obedience? Are you in a place where your spirit is being stirred up, is being charged to seek more and more of God? Are you in a place where you see men study the Word of God and it challenges you to study or you are living among mediocres and among praise singers who sing for you all the time no matter what is going in your life?

For Timothy to grow he was given these instructions and for you also to grow you need to consider these definite instructions. Definite instructions! Are you ashamed of the gospel of Jesus? Are you ashamed to identify publicly with the Word? Are you ashamed to identify with those who preach and who live the Kingdom Principles? Are you ashamed to identify with those who people regard as "Holy, Holy, brothers" and yet they are the ones that are walking on the

narrow path. Are you ashamed to identify and to stand with men that are standing for the gospel? Are you trying to be a friend of Jesus and a friend of the world at the same time? That way you will not make it.

Action Point:

But as I conclude with you and as we ask you to bow your head to pray - look at what God has put in your life, look at the testimony of the Lord, look at men that God has called - can you identify with them? And if there is any area of your life that is unholy, any sin that you are abhorring can you bow your head and confess it? You cannot be a friend of the world and be a friend of Jesus at the same time and expect to make progress. Spiritual development, spiritual growth only comes by spiritual exercise. How do you exercise your spirit unto Godliness, unto fruitfulness, unto service, unto holiness, unto obedience? As we pray with you, may God help you to take the same step that Timothy has taken in his own lifetime. God bless you.

Concluding Prayer:

Our Father we thank you for bringing us these instructions. We ask O God that as many as are praying out there stirring up their spirits and asking You to forgive their past, we ask that O God they will find forgiveness and that they will find help from You in Jesus Name we pray. Amen.

THE MAN GOD USES 6

This message was published for the 7th – 13th February 2011

TEXT: 2 Timothy 1:8-17

Opening Prayer:

Our Father and our God, we give You praise, we worship You for the help and we thank You for the opportunity to look into Your word once again. Lord, as we ask You to give us this personal instructions, we ask that our eyes of understanding may be opened and our hearts may be enlightened and this word may mix with faith within us and will do us good so that we may bring forth fruit that is worthy of repentance. Thank You Lord for hearing us for in Jesus name we have prayed.

Amen.

Review:

We give God praise that we have another opportunity to come your way on this program Living Seed. We have been on this series on personal instructions to the Man God Uses, a close study of Timothy. And our basic text of study is the book of Second Timothy.

This week we are going to go forward looking at these personal instructions. We are going to refer back to Second Timothy 1. We were able to study up to verse 8 the last time we discussed. Today we are going to begin reading from verse 8. We shall try to reach the end of that chapter as the Lord enables us.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS TO THE MAN GOD USES 1

2 Ti 1:8 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. 9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: 11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. 12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. 13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. 15 This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. 16 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: 17 But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. 18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

Let's stop there. May God bless His word in Jesus Name. Amen. Today, as part of our discussions and study on this issue of personal instructions to the man God uses, we are going to look at this instruction that has been passed unto Timothy, particularly.

Now we have studied from verses 1 to 7 before, and we have looked at the fact that for a man to grow, he needs not to be complacent. For a man to become useful to God, he needs not allow the gift of God in his life to become obsolete out of disuse. For a man to be given greater opportunity of service, he must put into use what God has already put into his life before. He must not be like that unfaithful servant or unprofitable servant who received a talent from his Lord and decided to hide it. So we noticed that Paul was giving this definite instruction to Timothy. "I put you in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in you by the putting on of my hands".

But today I want us to begin from that verse 8.

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; 2Ti 1:8

By last week I dealt with that aspect of identifying publicly, privately, personally and corporately with the stand, with the principles of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are living in a time where men are compromising. Even church leaders, even Christians that feel that they have been filled with the Holy Spirit, they begin to cut corners, they begin to dilute what are the principles of the Scriptures. Now the word of God says: if God must use you, and if you want to be useful in the end times, you need to identify with the word of God and with the testimony of the Lord, even if it is looking out-dated in the midst of men, even if it appears so harsh and difficult vis-à-vis the present emphasis of our modern day men.

The Bible says, "Thou shall not therefore be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord nor of me his prisoner. " Now, to stand with God there are some contradictions that would come your way. And to really follow Jesus according to the Biblical principle, you might look like an old fashioned Christian; you might appear as somebody who just wants to go on the narrow way when everybody feels there is an easier way to get to heaven right now. But I want to

ask you to note this, he said, "Be thou not therefore be ashamed. Don't regret ever being attached, identified, with the testimony of our Lord nor of me his prisoner."

Today however, I want us to go on from the second part of verse 8.

But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. 2Ti 1:8

I want you to note that very closely, and I would like to check that verse from other versions of the Bible so that we can have a clearer perspective of what we are saying.

Now Good News Bible says,

Do not be ashamed, then, of witnessing for our Lord; neither be ashamed of me, a prisoner for Christ's sake. Instead, take your part in suffering for the Good

News, as God gives you the strength for it. He saved us and called us to be his own people, not because of what we have done, but because of his own purpose and grace. He gave us this grace by means of Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, 2Ti 1:8-9

Now note what we are saying: it's as if every man that must serve God, every man that must walk with God, every man that must be partakers of the gospel must also be ready to be a partaker of the fellowship his suffering. There is no way you can know Jesus and experience his glory and experience his power in your life and you will not go through the same suffering that He went through. The world that crucified Jesus has not changed. The world system that threw him out of their town is still the same system that we are still dealing with. And Jesus Christ told his disciples, He said, "If they had honoured me, they will honour you. If they would have received me, they would have received you. And if you are of the world, the world would have received its own. But because you are not of the world, the world will hate you." That was what Jesus clearly said. And that principle has not changed! Every effort, every attempt to present Christianity or to present the gospel in such a way that it does not bring about any persecution, any conflict in our business where we are working only means that it is not the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not the gospel of the kingdom! It may be the recent

gospel of convenience. It may be the recent gospel that the flesh would like to preach: the gospel that pampers the flesh, the gospel that encourages greediness, the gospel that does not emphasise holiness and righteousness. Such a gospel that is not at logger heads with the world system, such a gospel that will allow you to wear anything you'd like to wear, to dress anyhow you like to dress, to do any kind of business that you think you can do, once you can pay your tithe! I'm not sure that kind of gospel is the one that will carry you to the kingdom of God . I want you to watch it! The word of God has not changed ...and the way to heaven!! The Lord Jesus Christ told us, He said, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to life. Few there be that enter therein."

So, we want to say that the gospel itself comes along with a definite suffering, a definite affliction. It is not that the gospel itself brings suffering. It is because the gospel confronts the power of darkness, it confronts the principle of worldliness. The gospel itself confronts the principle that is running contrary to the principles of God, and that is where the affliction comes. If you want to identify with God, you cannot identify with God's power without identifying with His suffering. You cannot identify with God's glory without identifying with the Cross. You cannot identify with the miracles of the Lord Jesus if you are a genuine follower, a genuine disciple and you would have avoided all the conflicts, all the

temptations, all the trials that the devil brings to way-lay the path of every saint!!
Every pilgrim that is supposed to please the Lord in this world, sincerely speaking the world system is against you. The world does not approve the kind of life that Jesus Christ taught us to live!

And so from now till eternity, just as it has always been, men that follow Jesus, men that follow the narrow way, they are always men that the world was not worthy of. All the men that suffered persecution, all the men that were thrown into the den of lions - there was nothing to be said against them ordinarily - it was not because they were mediocres, it was not because they did not do their work well: Daniel was one of the best governors in Babylon! Daniel knew more than all his colleagues, he had an excellent spirit, yet he was cast into the den of lions. For what? For his righteousness: for his uncompromising stand for the gospel and for the God of Israel which he believed.

All men that ever stood on the path of righteousness, the Bible says they must suffer persecution. That is what Second Timothy 3:12 says. We are going to refer to that later but let me read that to you.

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. 2Ti 3:12

So as a man that wants to go with God, you better get ready to take your own portion of the afflictions of the gospel. Be ready to get your own allocations of the afflictions of the gospel! Timothy was not cajoled to following Jesus, and several of you that are listening to me that are preachers, you are cajoling young men, you are cajoling your church members to keep coming telling the there is no problem with the gospel. No! If you want them to last, if you are not just raising them as mere chickens to lay eggs for you, and if you are not just raising them as men you want to keep in your pockets, that during Christmas they can come and buy clothes and all manner of gifts for you: if you are preparing them for heaven, let me remind you that all those who must live in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. That business man that is coming to your church, you know the way he's doing business - he keeps giving bribes here and there, he keeps pushing drugs - and you have never confronted him that this kind of business will not allow him to be in the kingdom because you are too interested in the tithes and offerings he brings! You will never tell him the truth?!

I can see Paul instructing Timothy, "Timothy, if you are going to go with me, be ready to take your own portion of the affliction." I can see a sincere discipleship taking place between Paul and Timothy: he did not cajole him, he did not deceive him, he encouraged him on one side to stir up the gift of God in his life, yet he told him - "Be ready to suffer, be ready to suffer - the gospel will bring you suffering." "There are so many of you that are recruiting people to work with you in your ministry, you are recruiting pastors, you are recruiting workers, and what you tell them is that everything will be all right. You tell them that you are going to promote them. Now where did you find that kind of principle of doing God's work? When the Lord Jesus called his disciples, he told them, he said, "If you leave your mother and father and all of that I will give you one-hundred fold of it but with persecution in this world." Jesus never hides from us that the call we have been given is the call to glory, and at the same time is a call to suffering.

Do you remember Paul's instruction to the Colossian church, let's quickly check what he said to them. He said "It is our pleasure, it is a privilege for us to also share in the suffering of the gospel. We have not only been called to rejoice and

experience the power of God, but we have been called to suffer along with him.”

So you see, when you meet people that will tell you the whole truth, the whole counsel of God they will tell you that when you become a child of God, when you become born again, when you become concerned about living holy, the world will not likely clap for you! When you decide that you are going to live right, that you are going to do what Jesus tells you to do day by day, you are likely to be a minority in the midst of men. Others will jeer at you and laugh at you and make your life miserable not because something is wrong with you, not because you are a mediocre, not because you are not passing your exams, but because you have identified with their Enemy - even the Lord Jesus Christ!

And I want to say to you, if you want to be a man that God will use, there is no way you can know the power of his resurrection without knowing the fellowship of his suffering. And so Paul said in his own prayer in the book of Philippians chapter 3, “That I may know him. That I may know the power of His resurrection, that I may experience the fellowship of his suffering, so that I may be made conformable to His death.” Those were the desires of men that walked with God: any instruction that does not prepare you for the eventual affliction that the gospel brings, is not a complete, is not a thorough instruction! Maybe all that you have been taught is prosperity, break-throughs, success and all of that - I want to

say to you that whereas God is going to give you success, He is going to give you prosperity according to His own pattern, I would like you to know that along with the package of His blessing, there is the affliction of the gospel. And it is a privilege to be counted worthy even to bear the affliction along with our Master Jesus Christ.

Now I want you to look at that Scripture again,

...but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; 2 Ti 1:8

When you suffer the affliction of the gospel, it must be by the power of God. Now! We are not calling you to suffer according to your own ability, we are not calling you to partake in the affliction of the gospel according to your own intelligence, God Himself will see you through. For every affliction, for every attack, for every opposition that we go through in this world because of Jesus Christ, the power of God is available to see us through. The world system can

never overcome us. Jesus said "Fear not, greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world." He said "Well, in the world you will have tribulation but in Me you have peace: be of good cheer for I have overcome the world!" So we know that despite the affliction, the believer man, the faithful man, the man who stands with God is going to overcome. And I do not see why you need to be afraid, if you take your position and say "Lord, even if I suffer, let me suffer for You; even if I am misunderstood because of the gospel, let me lose my friends - even if I lose that business because I am not ready to compromise my faith." God is going to give you much more than all of that. God is going to identify publicly and privately with you, He is going to release His power to rest upon your own life.

Now He says in verses 9 and 10

Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: 2Ti 1:9-10

I want you to pause there as we make one or two comments. Now! I want you to know that this calling that God has brought upon us as believers and more especially as men that want to serve God, as young men that want to fit into God's purpose - and I perceive that all of you that are listening to me, the Bible says that God has saved us from our enemies that we may serve Him - you are saved to serve. Every man that has been saved by the grace of God - the Bible says that we are His workmanship, we are crafts in the hand of God, created by Christ Jesus for every good work that God had ordained right from the beginning of the world that we may walk in them. So we realise that every one of you - if you are genuinely born again - God has called you to serve Him. But this calling, the Bible said, is an holy calling – it is a privilege to be a servant of God and it is a privilege you cannot exchange for anything. Even if you are a Managing Director of a big company, an Oil Company or whatever - it cannot compare with the glory of being a servant of God! You can make money - and that is alright - but money is nothing when compared with men that God uses to influence souls, to deliver men, to change people's destiny and that is what God is offering you as you are listening to me even now!

But that calling, you need to know, is not according to our works, is not

according to our achievement, and not according to our merit nor our ability but it is according to God's own purpose.

Now! I saw something that I would like you to note here - brother Paul never forgot that all that God had given him to do has always been not by his own merit, not by his own power. What an humble man - a man who never forgets that this thing that is coming, these opportunities, these grace, these anointing has never been by himself! So he could not have arrogated it to himself, he could not have acclaimed it as his own personal property - he was always giving the glory to God.

Even when we suffer, may it dawn on you that it is a privilege, and God has only given us a calling, an holy calling by which we may be able to serve God in our own life-time.

Now, Paul realised and he said in verse 11

Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the

Gentiles 2Ti 1:11

That to this gospel of Jesus Christ that has abolished death, that has brought immortality and life unto light, God has appointed him a preacher, an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles.

That is the next instruction that I must emphasise before I leave you at this point.

I realize that for a man to be able to serve God aright, that man actually needs to know his appointment! You need to recognise what has God actually called you to do. Look at brother Paul, he said: "It is unto this gospel, I am appointed a preacher." Let me ask you - What are you living for? What is the focus of your ministry? What is the focus of your service - do you know exactly what God has called you to do? Are you sure you have understood what God has particularly committed to your hand?

For brother Paul, he said I am appointed a preacher, an apostle and a teacher unto the Gentiles: he was not confused as to his area of operation, he was not confused about the areas of jurisdiction that God in mercy has allotted to him. And for you also to be able to serve God aright, to be able to walk in the light of God's will, I do not expect you to be jumping from one thing to another, I don't expect you to be involved in everything there is in this world - there is a point, there is a portion, there is an appointment that God has extended to your life and you need to walk in that.

For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. 2Ti 1:12

In this verse brother Paul said, it is for this cause that I suffer these things: he knew he was not

suffering as a sinner, he was not suffering as a drug addict, he was not suffering as a cocaine pusher! In this present generation I have seen so many brothers who call themselves 'Reverend' and yet across the borders of Nigeria, they are being detained, they are being arrested and when you go there and ask "why did you arrest this brother, why did you arrest this Reverend?" They tell you that "he is a cocaine pusher!" What a shame!! There are some of you that are suffering yet you are wearing white collar around our neck - what a shame: you were caught sleeping with another person's wife!! And so you talk and you say 'It is because of the gospel.' NO! It is not because of the gospel - you are suffering because of your own personal trouble, your own personal lust.

Brother Paul could say -

For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless ...2Ti 1:12

And I thank God for that "nevertheless"

...nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am

persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. 2Ti 1:12

Can I ask you - are you persuaded of what you have believed? Are you persuaded of what God has called you to do such that you cannot be ashamed of it, you cannot be ashamed whatever suffering came? You can even endure even if there is no food in your stomach and there is no money in your pocket, you can still stand there and say "Yes Lord I am not ashamed, I know Whom I have believed and I know that what I have committed into His hand He is able to keep it until that day!"

Excuse me brother, excuse me sister as we stop here - can I ask you this question: Do you know who you have believed? And have you committed your life, have you committed your destiny, have you committed your carrier unto God and you are sure that He will keep it?

These are instructions that were coming unto the life of Timothy. The man

Timothy was not being pampered to follow on, he was not being cajoled to follow on, he was not attracted to follow Paul because there was a fat salary. Young man, you are rushing to a seminary and you are rushing to a Bible School , can I ask you - Why are you rushing there? Something tells you in your heart "that is where money is now and once you go there you just start your own church and you start riding a car immediately!" Those of you that were dropped from civil service, those of you that are drop-outs in worldly pursuits, you now think you can come and make a name and make a fame in the gospel. No! you don't have a correct heart.

These men that we are talking about: they are ready not only to serve God, not only to preach the gospel but they are ready to suffer along with Him. Timothy took his decision and followed on - he saw Paul dragged into prison, himself was chained several times with brother Paul but he never regretted.

Action Point:

Are you regretting taking a stand for Jesus? As we pray with you here I want to ask you to pray also, to check your heart - are you ready to be a partaker of the affliction? Only partakers of the affliction of the gospel will be partakers of the glory. May God bless you in the Name of Jesus.

Concluding Prayer:

Our Father we thank You and we ask that this message will drag many back to You. As they repent and renounce their hypocrisies Lord help them and forgive them for we pray in Jesus Name. Amen.

THE MAN GOD USES 7

This message was published for the 14t – 20th February 2011

TEXTS: 2 Timothy 1:13-18 & 1 Timothy 4:12-16

Opening Prayer:

Our Father we thank You for this time, we thank You for the opportunity to look into the Word of Life. Our Lord we are asking that as we look at Timothy and the kind of instructions you passed unto his life for our own learning, we ask that this word will do us good, it will mix with faith within us and it will raise even for your glory in our generation. Thank You for hearing us for we have prayed in Jesus Name. Amen.

Review:

We want to praise the Lord for how far He has led us in dealing with personal instructions to the man God uses - a case study of Timothy. And the book we have been exposing as we study is the book of Second Timothy. By the grace of God we had gone as far as dealing with verse 12 of chapter 1 of that book. Today we are going to go on looking still at the personal instructions to the Man that God Uses. I will be looking at verse 13 today and I will read that chapter down to verse 18; if the Lord gives us further chance we might be able to look at some further Scriptures today but wherever we stop we trust God to continue to help your life in Jesus Name.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS TO THE MAN GOD USES 2

So please open your Bibles along as we look at the book of Second Timothy Chapter 1 and read from verses 13 to 18. I read

2Ti 1:13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. 15 This thou knowest, that all

they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. 16 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: 17 But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. 18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

May God bless His Word even as we study in Jesus Name.

Today we are going to be looking at this further instruction that God gives to the man He uses and I would like to look at it from verse 13, verse 14 and if it is possible, we run down to verse 18.

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Hold fast, hold f-a-s-t 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.

2Ti 1:13,14

I would like you to consider this instruction as we look at the matter of holding fast - holding fast the form of sound words, the form of sound teaching, the form of sound doctrine that God passes unto your life.

Now let me make some definite statements before we go on to study I want to say to you that in order to become a man in God's hand - God's method and God's instrumentality by which He makes men is by speaking to them, is by teaching them. And so when the Word of God comes to your life - when the Word of God comes as an instruction to your life - and you play with it, you trifle with it, you are also trifling with your opportunity to become something in the hand of God! If you are a man that keeps changing your mind every time you hear another new idea without checking whether this is a sound word or not, you are likely to be drifting about and men will push you to and fro with every wind of doctrine. But a man that wants to serve God and a man that God can depend upon even to bear the mantle of ministry must not be a man that is tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine! He must be a man that is firm, he must be a man that is holding fast - a man that is anchored upon the knowledge of the truth. So we notice this instruction coming unto Timothy and what is the essence of that instruction? I want you to look at it as I analyse verses 13 and 14.

The first thing that caught my attention in verse 13 is “hold fast.” Hold fa-st. I

want to check that with you from some other versions here that are available.

Living Bible says

Hold tightly to the pattern of truth I taught you especially concerning the faith and love Christ Jesus offers you. 2Ti 1:13

Let's take note of this. When we use the word 'hold fast' we mean 'hold tightly' - don't let it go! Don't let it fall out of your hand! Don't let it slip out of your hand! Don't let your life lose, hold the pattern of truth, of the form of sound words that you have heard. Let me say this - for you to last in the Kingdom of God and for you to last in the ministry, for you to become useful and for your life not to dissipate and for you not to miss your reward in heaven, you need to hold tightly unto the pattern of truth that you have learnt - the pattern of truth that the Lord Jesus had made available to us, first by His own lifestyle and then by His teaching and by what we saw practised by all the patriarchs and elders and apostles of the faith!

I may want to tell you something today: there are many, many new ideas, there are several forms of teachings that are going on now but not all such forms of teaching are sound. Not all of them are based and faithfully committed unto the

Principle of the whole counsel of God by the Lord Jesus Christ. Several things that men say, several ideas that men practise, simply because it is convenient for the flesh, simply because it is answer for the immediate need of men - several men have gulped this idea into their hearts and into their lives without cross-checking.

But consider this personal instruction coming to Timothy - "Hold tightly to the pattern of truth I taught you, hold to the true words that I taught you!" I am trusting that each one of you, you will let us find out again what is the pattern of truth, what is the pattern of the word of God that we ought to learn, that we ought to hold fast unto, that we ought to not let go despite all the new, new ideas - new friends, new men, new preachers with new gospels that are going on around us. If God is going to work with you, if God is going to establish you, and if His glory is going to bust forth in your life, then you need to insist on being committed, on holding tightly to the pattern of truth that you have been taught. Keep it fast - the pattern of sound teaching that God has released unto you.

Now if you look at First Timothy chapter 4, a similar instruction was passed again even unto Timothy there. Let's look at First Timothy chapter 4 and I want you to look at verse 12, 13, 14 and down to the end of that chapter. He said

1Ti 4:12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. 14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. 15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. 16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

For a man to keep himself, to save himself and to be useful in the hand of God in order to help others to discover the truth and to discover the will of God, he must hold fast, he must continue, he must persist in the truth that he had been taught, he must persist in the truth God has brought into his life. And this truth is not a private truth - please take note of this lest you fall into the error of thinking that there is a new revelation that God is speaking to you personally and specifically that contradicts the Scriptures and does not fit the general life of all men that have followed the Lord. I want to say to you that no Scripture can be subjected to private interpretation: there can be no private idea about the Word of God. Listen! every Word of God that is given had been given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and it had been proved! And so if there is any knowledge that you are

claiming to have - you may say one angel appeared to you or one spirit spoke particularly to you to practise such a thing, when it is not congruent to the total counsel of the gospel, when it is not in keeping with the general lifestyle that we see practised in the Lord Jesus and by the Apostles, we know it cannot be correct! We know it is not right. Those of you that are running after new, new teachings, I want you to take note - nothing new we carry you to heaven! The same gospel, the same truth is the only passage into heaven as you hold it fast - the Word of God is the same Word of God. The reason why we can't be talking about the New Word of God or the New Message is the fact that the Word of God is eternal, it can never, never be outdated! You can discover it anew for your own life, but it is the same old truth! The reason is because everything that God said cannot be improved upon, cannot be edited, it cannot be corrected because it is perfect for ever! It is not only perfect for the time being, it is not only perfect for the time then present, No! It was perfect for their time, it is perfect for our time and it will remain perfect for all generations coming.

So I want to say to you - the form of sound truth, sound words that you have heard, the pattern of truth that God had revealed to you if you don't want to miss out you need to hold fast!

You need to hold fast!

And if you go forward a little, still in the book of Second Timothy, you will see Paul still talking to his son, Timothy, and was instructing him about how to hold fast unto the Word of God, unto the truth of the Gospel. He said in Second Timothy chapter 3 and I want you all to please check verses 10 and 14

But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, 2Ti 3:10

In verse 14 it now says

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 2Ti 3:14

Listen! Listen carefully my brother - some of you are thinking that the lessons God has taught us about holiness, the instructions that we have received about righteousness, the instructions that God has passed upon our lives that has come from one generation to another, you are thinking that maybe God has discarded it. No! God has not discarded any of His Words - His Word is still standing and

binding no matter what you are thinking, it is still the truth worthy of all acceptance that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. It doesn't matter how you shake your head, it doesn't matter how you propound your theory, it doesn't matter how much you are pushing what you are saying and it doesn't matter how much money you have at your disposal to push your ideas - the truth remains unchanging! The truth remains the same, is constant, that without holiness you will not see the Lord.

Friend! As you are listening to me today, are you beginning to shift your boundary? Are you beginning to deviate from the Word of God? Are you beginning to deviate from the old path and you are thinking that there is another way and there is a shortcut by which a man can please the Lord? Look at this instruction

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 2Ti 1:13

Hold tightly: hold tenaciously unto the pattern of truth that you have been taught! Tenaciously hold fast to the form of sound words that ye have been taught. Brother, Sister are you thinking that in those days when you surrendered

your life; sister when you gave up all your boyfriends, brother when you had nothing to do with a tobacco company or an alcohol-producing company - are you now thinking that maybe because you were not civilised that time that was why you obeyed the Word of God in that way and you were not involved in anything that would bring a stumbling block into the lives of men? And the Scripture you knew then is that “if anybody would put a stumbling block in the path of another it were better for a mill-stone to be tied around his neck” - are you now beginning to regret as if you took a wrong decision by turning your life away from every business, every profession that you cannot use successfully to project Jesus Christ? I am asking you a question: Are you beginning to shift boundary? Are you beginning now to relax on the issues of spiritual discipline that God has brought into your life? Are you beginning now to follow the multitude to emphasise the ephemerals of this world and leaving undone the weightier issues of the kingdom of God?

Are you beginning to think that this new wave - this new wave of Christianity, this new wave of teaching, this new wave that is passing everywhere - are you thinking that - Oh you have made a mistake by following the narrow path? I want to again say to you: the instruction to Timothy is the same instruction coming to your own life - hold fast to the pattern of truth you have learned! Hold fast unto the form of sound words that you have been taught!! Hold fast - don't keep

changing your mind, don't keep thinking and keep being turned around by cunning and crafty men who are just lying in wait to confuse you and to deceive you.

So while we look at this instruction to Timothy, the Bible says "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, which I have taught you." Now let's look at a Scripture from the book of Jeremiah, can you please follow me and turn to the book of Jeremiah chapter 6 and verse 16. Let's look at what the Word of God has to say there

Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls...

Jer 6:16

Are you hearing me? The Bible says "Stand in the way, and see, and ask for the old paths..." The old path is still the road that leads to heaven: the way that men are getting to abandon - the way of life, the Biblical way of living that several of you are beginning to turn around, to distort, that old path is still the sure way into heaven. Now I hear about some of you that can freely throw away your wife and marry another one - even there are pastors, there are preachers, there are

evangelists that divorce their wives at will and when you ask them "why are you doing that" they say "Well, well, we are not under the Old Testament we are under grace!" Who told you that grace has given us liberty to misbehave? Who told you that grace had removed the standard of the Word of God from the life of those that will partake in the Kingdom of God? Have you not heard Jesus saying "If any man put away his wife except it be for fornication, he is committing adultery and : whosoever marries a divorcee is committing adultery." I see you there seating on top of another man's wife, and you are claiming to be a preacher and you are shouting, you are speaking in tongues. I want to tell you even those your tongues, they are dubious tongues and you need to repent.

Anything, any manifestation, any spirit that seems to allow you to live carelessly in disobedience and in defiance to the Word of God is not a spirit that will take you to heaven. You might be one of those multitudes that will gather in that day and say "Master, in your Name we cast out devils, in your Name we spoke in tongues and did many miracles" And the Master would say "Sorry, I never knew you - you are workers of iniquity!"

Are you hearing me today? You are doing business yet you know your business is not straight-forward, all that you are talking about on prosperity is simply because you are cheating your staff, you are cheating your workers, you are

inflating all your contracts, you go about paying bribe and giving men all they wanted and you are claiming that God is blessing you! Excuse me, the Bible says "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." I see you running from one place to another, one meeting to another, from one man of God to another, seeking a man who will counsel you according to idols that are in your heart! I want to tell you, if you want God to help you, if you want God to use you, why don't you go back to the old paths? Why don't you go back to the old paths, why don't you return back to the form of sound words, sound teaching that you have been taught? That is the first instruction that is coming to Timothy and that has come into your own life today, that if you are not going to fall aside, if you are not going to be lost in the midst of men, if you are not going to be overthrow in this present world, the Bible says "Hold fast the form of sound words.."

Why must you hold fast? It's because there is tendency to be pushed away from the truth! There is tendency to be pushed away from the Word of God! There is tendency for men to drift you from standing where God wanted you to stand!

There is need for you to hold fast! A lot of winds are blowing; a lot of storms is coming!! But if you stand and you stand on the Scripture and stand on the foundation of the Word of God - if you refuse to compromise, if you refuse to

join the multitude to disobey God, God is going to honour you! God is going to bless you.

The Bible continues and says

That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. 2Ti 1:14

And I wish to say to you, there are good, good things that God has committed to your life - the Word of God, the Oracles of the Kingdom, the knowledge of Jesus, the experience of Jesus, these are things you dare not lose - things you dare not mortgage! You must not behave like Esau who sold the birthright even for a spoon of pottage, a mess of pottage.

I want to ask you, and to charge you that that good thing that God has put in your life - your salvation itself, your sanctification, your deliverance from the power of sin - that you have experienced and you have been walking in for some years now is something that you must not allow to fall off! You must not join friends that are saying "It doesn't matter, It does not matter, It does not matter"

and they are allowing little, little sins - little foxes that destroy the vine is coming
- into their lives!

Young man are you keeping an extra-marital relationship with somebody
somewhere and you say "It does not matter, we just meet there to pray?!" What
kind of thing is that? Th-a-t good thing which was committed unto you - hold fast
and don't let it fall off your hand!!! Don't let it fall off, the Holy Ghost that dwells
in us will help you to keep it.

Now verses 15, 16 and 17 was only giving a report, a report that I wish you also
know before I ask you to pray. The Bible said "You must know this...

that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me..." 2Ti 1:15 ...

It is likely that where you are hearing me, majority of people that you would
have referred to have turned away from the Word of God, they have turned away
from the sound doctrine - they are preaching something else now! Maybe the
pastor that you started with in the 1970s or in the early 1980s are now chasing
shadows, t-h-a-t doesn't matter! Even if all have changed, you must remain. Even

if all have compromised, you must hold on! Even if all have decided to become something else, you must keep keeping on! And my prayer for you today is that if you are already compromising, will you stand up and hold fast the pattern of truth which you have been taught? May God help you.

Action Point:

And as we pray with you, the Spirit of God is willing to correct you if you have made mistake, if you have let go of the truth and have let go some certain disciplines of the Word of God in your life thinking that it does not matter, I call you back - Go back to your beginning, Go back to your source, Go back to where you missed it! And hold fast unto the pattern of truth that you have been taught - that is the only way to ensure your position, to ensure your destiny, and to ensure your eternity! May God bless you in the Name of Jesus.

Closing Prayer:

Our Father we thank You for calling us back to You, and we pray for as many hearts as have been touched, and are coming back O God to renew the standard

which you raised in their lives years ago. We pray today O God that that standard will become firm and they will not abandon it ever again. In Jesus Name we have prayed. Amen

THE MAN GOD USES 8

This message was published for the 21st – 27th February 2011

TEXTS: 2 Timothy 2:1-7 & Titus 2:11-13

Opening Prayer:

Our Father and our God we bless You we give You praise for yet another opportunity to look into the Oracles, even the Word of Life. Thank You Lord for making Your Word available to us in this generation, as many as have taken time to seat with us on this broadcast and to listen to this message, we ask Lord that You will visit them, You will appear unto them in Your wisdom, in Your power, in Your glory such that, Lord, at the end of this we might see a definite outburst of your eternal counsel in the lives of men. Prepare us for Your own glory.

Thank You for hearing us for we have prayed in Jesus Name. Amen

Review:

Last week we pressed further with the personal instructions to the Man God Uses and we have been taking Timothy as a case study and by the grace of God we have been looking at the book of Second Timothy, that is the Second Epistle of Paul to Timothy. We were able to go through the whole of chapter one by the last edition of this program. Today, we are going to move into chapter 2 and look at further instructions unto the man of God.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS TO THE MAN GOD USES 3

And I would like you to take your Bible with me and read Second Timothy chapter 2 from verse 1. Several issues that are arising in this particular chapter would take us some time to deal with but I pray that God will guide us and give

us a focus in the Name of Jesus.

2Ti 2:1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2Ti 2:2 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. 3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. 5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. 6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits. 7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

I want us to stop in verse 7. May God bless His word into our hearts in Jesus Name. Alleluia.

When we were rounding up our study in chapter one of Second Timothy, we noticed that Paul in giving instruction to Timothy was drawing his attention to

the fact of so many that had deserted him. When the Bible said all of them in Asia had deserted Paul, what was the matter? I found out that maybe they did not desert Paul because of his own personal problem, ...they had deserted Paul maybe because they could not endure sound doctrine. You know there are times you run away from preachers who would tell you the truth, there are some of you now that have abandoned your churches, you have abandoned the fellowship where you were brought up because of the truth that was coming continually to your life and you are not ready again to go along with it and that's why you are now a deacon in another new church. And we have so many wonderful pastors nowadays that don't check out anything, they don't know where you are coming from - once you come to church today, by next week you are already a worker in their church! You are already put on the platform, and that does not allow you to think whether you are not deviating from the truth.

So we notice that even men in Asia where Paul had laboured, where Paul had taught - several of them deserted him because they no longer could endure sound doctrine - as if they've discovered a new wave and they are running away from the Word of God. They are running after men that would teach them how to make money - how to become big, how to become bogus! But you see by the time we are ending that Scripture you will see that many others could change - other persons could change their minds, even great men, men of note - look at how

they mentioned some of them:

Phygellus and Hermogenes, these are very, very notable men, people that are popular enough - they have also changed. And there are some of you listening to me saying "Ah ah, If Doctor so and so is also preaching this, it must be correct."

Let me tell you, it must not be correct! When any man of God no matter how greatly he has been used of God before, when he deviates from the word of God, you are not bound to follow him again. No matter how wonderful a man had been used before, when he begins to take for granted the instructions of God that brought him up, when he begins to break down the personal altar that God had taught him to build over the years, when he begins to pull one after the other the strands that made up the wool of his anointing, the wool of his holiness of life - when he begins to pull them one by one strand after strand - you are not bound to follow him, you are not bound to copy him again! When you listen to a man two, three times, and his emphasis has changed from Jesus unto something else, he no longer strikes at sinners, rather he pampers and welcomes sinners, and tells them that there is no problem, he rather even gives them position on the pulpit - you are not bound to listen to such a man, you are not bound to follow him again!

So Paul mentioned about Phygellus and Hermogenes, and it touched my mind that the first time these people would be mentioned in Scriptures, it was connected with backsliding, it was connected with compromise! I don't know what they would mention your name about - maybe when the issue of the church in Nigeria, and in your nation is being compiled, I don't understand what you would like them to connect your name with. Do you want them to say "Oh! Reverend so and so is the one that imported this particular terrible doctrine into the country." Do you want them to talk and say you are the one that brought this kind of permissiveness unto the body of Christ? I don't know what you want God to put to your eternal record. Hermogenes and Phygellus have become eternally identified with compromisers, and if they repented, I would not know. But all that is available for me to study now is that they were deserters, they were people that left the way of faith, they were the people that left the way of the truth just like Demas, who used to be with Paul, he had also deserted - he went to Thessalonica because he loved this present world! Excuse me sir - what do you want the present church to identify your life with? Maybe you are contemplating on changing the message, maybe you are trying now to join this new trend. You just saw that young, young people without anybody knowing them are becoming Reverend Doctors here and there - some of them that never even finished their secondary school are becoming Reverend Doctors here and there and you are starting to embrace emptiness. You have learnt from the life of Jesus that even though he was God, he made himself of no reputation, and here you see young

men around you, you see preachers around you, they are grappling for reputation, even those that don't have any, they are paying so heavily to buy it. Are you beginning to join that train?

Now, it is against that background that this instruction is coming to us even today. He said

Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2Ti 2:1

And that verse is a very interesting verse which I want the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see - I want you to note that if you want to obey God there is enough grace in Christ Jesus to be correct! If you want to follow righteousness, if you want to live soberly, if you want to live Godly in this present world, if you want to live holily in this present world - there is enough grace in Christ Jesus to live like that.

And so the instruction came that "Timothy, you must never imagine that you are helpless, never you imagine that there is nothing you can do against all this trend, never you imagine that Oh! you are lonely and you are helpless and you are not able to take your stand." No! Brother Paul says

Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2Ti 2:1

We are not asking you to stand by the strength of your legs, we are not asking you to stand by the strength of your personal determination, we are asking you to explore the grace that is in Christ Jesus and to be strong in it. The Bible says. And I would like to read a Scripture with you in Titus, can we read Titus chapter 2 from verse 11, I want to read it quickly from the New International Version

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age...while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a

people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. Tit 2:11-14

Please take note of that "in this present age"

The grace of God! ...that bringeth salvation to all men has appeared. And what does grace do? It teaches us to say No to ungodliness! So when brother Paul began to address he said "My son, thou therefore my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Be strong in the, actualise, maximise, the grace that is in Christ Jesus. If you look at the same Scripture from the New English Bible, see the way it put, it said

Now therefore my son, take strength from the grace of God which is ours in Christ Jesus, accept the strength my dear son that comes from the grace of Christ Jesus. 2Tim 2:1

Excuse me brothers, if you want to be strong, there is enough strength that the grace of God provides! If you want to stand without compromising, if you want to stand even against a whole town, a whole city for Jesus Christ, like Daniel did against a whole Babylon, like Stephen did against the Sanhedrin council, like Naboth did against the wicked King Ahab, there is enough grace for you to stand! If I hear you say "brother, I would have taken my stand, I would have kept preaching this kind of message except that I am feeling lonely and I feel weak and there is nobody to support me" I would tell you that you are a liar. There is enough grace if you want to live right! There is enough grace if you want to follow the pattern of the Scriptures! There is enough grace that would provide strength in our life, IF you want to stand faithfully unto death, unto the end to glorify the Lord Jesus in your life and in your ministry! There is enough strength that the grace of God provides, and there is no excuse for you to compromise because grace has appeared to all men, it has appeared to even yourself - there is enough grace for you to stay away from fornication, there is enough grace for you to preach the truth even if they will carry stone and throw at you, there is enough grace! There is enough grace for you to stand and blow the trumpet, the trumpet of the word of God, the trumpet of His will, the trumpet of His demand on the lives of men even if men decide to starve you of funds. There is enough grace, and God would never allow you to be disappointed!

So the first instruction coming to Timothy is this - even though Phygellus and Hermogenes are notable men, notable preachers, wonderful brothers, they have deserted me; even though so many notable brethren, wonderful people in Asia, have changed and are singing a new song right now, even though wonderful brethren, zealous brethren, they are no more following this path - and you are looking lonely, what must you do? - "Thou therefore my son be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus!"

Brother! the only thing that can keep you going in this present age, the only thing that can keep you faithful, in this present age is the grace of God. The only thing that will make you to follow a path - a path that is established by our Lord Jesus, walked upon by our Elders and the Apostles - the only thing that will keep you on this narrow path is the grace of God!

And so that instruction says - as a man that God is looking on to use in this generation - be strong in the grace of God. Are you on the Campus and you are

feeling as if should you follow this truth, your life will be confused? No! You will never be confused. Some of us have lived through the Campus like that before and God has seen us through, He will see you through! There is enough grace for any willing obedient child of God. There is enough grace! You don't have to say "You know I am so old now as a girl nobody is coming to marry me, all the people that are coming you know even though they say they are Christians, they are not living well - they don't believe the real thing" and you are now saying "Well, I will give them a consideration, maybe I will give them a chance." No! There is enough grace even in you to still say No! to a sinner. You can still say No! to a compromiser - you can still say No! and wait for God! And the Bible says the Lord is good to them that wait for Him. He will not disappoint you.

Now go on to verse 2

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. 2Ti 2:2

The things that thou hast heard of me among.. You see when we were looking at chapter 1 verse 13 it says

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 2Ti 1:13

Here again the Word of God is coming, the instruction is coming "... the things you have heard of me..." and I wish you would hear again this instruction from the mouth of the Lord Jesus, that the things you have heard of Him, the things He has willingly taught you which you have been convinced about among many, many witnesses; those things that have been proved, that have been established, you have touched it, you have experienced it, other witnesses have experienced it, other brothers have come through it, we have known believers that have gone to heaven living this kind of life. "Those things you have heard from me," what did He say you should do? Not only did He say you should hold it fast but "the same commit to faithful men." The only way to maintain your faith is to keep spreading it, the only way not to fall into the dungeon that the devil is digging all around is to keep spreading the good news! If you believe in the way, if you believe in the Word of God, if you believe in the doctrine of Jesus Christ, then

you should be fanatical about it, you should be ready to share it, you should
ready to confront any man with it!

And that was the instruction coming to Timothy. He said

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. 2Ti 2:2

If you say you believe in the Word of God and you believe in the Scriptures, then
you need to teach it! You yourself need to commit it to faithful men. The only
way that the gospel is to be transferred is to transfer it from one person to another
- those that have experienced it, those that have witnessed it, they must be ready
to witness it to others, and when those also get it they must be faithful men who
shall be able to teach others also.

Can I ask you brother, have you received the truth even as you are hearing me today on this broadcast - have you received this truth? What the Bible says is this, it says after it has affected your life commit it to someone else!! Can you tell someone else about what this message has done in your life? And you yourself must identify with it - don't be ashamed, don't be ashamed to identify with the truth of the Word of God that has liberated your life. Can you tell someone else? Can you get the material of this message and pass it on? Can you yourself gather people around and tell them "Look this message has touched my life, let us look at it together." That was the instruction that was coming to Timothy and I wonder why that instruction though I am not surprised: I realise that the only way to keep standing is to commit yourself unto the truth and when you have committed the truth in preaching unto others, it would be so difficult for you to deny it except you are a great hypocrite! If you begin to preach and teach the way of life that is correct with the word of God, you will soon discover that you cannot live otherwise. Even when you want to live otherwise, you will run into trouble - you will have to travel far away from your community to go and misbehave and I think that would not be to your advantage!!!

So he said as another instruction: apart from being strong in the grace of God, receiving the strength that the grace provides, the things that you have heard, the

things that you have proved, the things that you have seen among many witnesses, commit the same - not any other, don't dilute it, don't relax it, just as it has come to your life - commit the same unto faithful men.

Why did He say faithful men? These must be men that are willing first and foremost to allow the message to affect their lives, not those that are looking for loop-holes. There are times you are hearing a message, instead of you to allow the Spirit of the word of God to affect you, you are busy criticising the grammar of the preacher, you are busy analysing all the topologies that the preacher is using. No! I want to tell you, the Word of God is spirit and life, it is more than grammar - more than grammar - it is more than human expression. And so that word must affect you and when it has affected you, you must pass it on: as God has taught you, you must be ready to teach others!

Even though Timothy was still under tutelage, he was still instructed himself to keep passing it on. The more you pass on the Truth - the more you pass on the word of God - the more you will see what the Lord is about to bring about even in your own life particularly.

Now, I would like to move on and check verse 3, verse 4 and verse 5 and see what the Lord is saying to us. Even if we don't finish it today, by the grace of God when we come to this broadcast again, we will go on.

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life... 2Ti 2:3,4

Now one thing I would like to draw your attention to in verse 3, just like I am drawing your attention to it in verse 1 where the Bible said "Thou therefore my son..." it says again here in verse 3 "Thou therefore..." even if others are evading the truth, even if others are living carelessly, even if others are not walking according to the purpose of God for their lives, the Word of God says you - you in particular, you Timothy! ...I wish you would put your own name there and say to yourself "Tunde, therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ!" Whereas others are looking for soft, soft cushion and soft treatment, you are a soldier of Jesus!!! Every man that God wants to use, He wants that man to have a military training: He wants him to have the discipline of a soldier man! You must be ready not only to enjoy the Lord Jesus Christ, but be ready to die for Him! Every soldier was trained with a view of being ready to die, being ready to obey

the last command. The Bible says " You, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" you should do what? "Endure hardness."

Can you first of all accept this matter even this moment? That you are a soldier. Can you look into your life and say "Lord indeed I am a soldier and as a soldier what am I doing with civilian affairs?"

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life...2Ti 2:4

What are the affairs that are entangling your life? What are the things that are not making you to travel light? What are the things that are gluing your life down into this world and you are not able to move with the Lord? The Bible says

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. 2Ti 2:4

And indeed God has chosen you and me to be a good soldier and as a good soldier of Jesus Christ be ready to endure hardness, be ready to endure whatever difficulty! The Lord will see you through, the Lord Himself will fight for you. The Lord Himself will support you, and He will stand by you and lead you on.

Now as I draw this message to a close, it is clear that we may not be able to go beyond this verse 3 and verse 4 but as a good soldier one thing God wants you to look at is "What are the entanglements - what are things that are trying to entangle you, what are the civilian affairs?" You are a man in the army of the Lord, can you get yourself ready and say "Lord, I am going to fight for you." A man in the army knows already that he is going to face the enemy of the nation which he had been called to defend. And God has appointed you to go and defend the gospel of the kingdom in the midst of His enemies.

The Bible now says, "Be ready! endure hardness!!" God will soon place a crown

over your head if you

do not backslide, if you do not give up.

May God help you. May the Spirit of God Himself assist you as we study and as you go on with us.

Action Point:

If there is any entanglement, in your life can you repent of it today and say "Lord, as a good soldier, I will receive strength that is in the grace of our Lord Jesus." God bless you.

Concluding Prayer:

Our Father we thank You, thank You for today again that You are lifting up your standard before us. We want to pray for many O God that are out there asking You to forgive them, asking You to cause a change of emphasis in their lives for them to come back to the standard you expect them to live. We want to ask that you will encourage these ones and forgive them and bless them as we pray together in Jesus Name. Amen.

THE MAN GOD USES 9

This message was published for the 28th Feb – 6th March 2011

TEXT: 2 Timothy 2:2-7 & 1 Corinthians 7:25-33

Opening Prayer:

Our Lord and our God we give You praise, we honour You because of Your help in our lives, father this hour we just want to ask that as we look into your Word again, open our eyes of understanding, speak unto us from the depth of your heart and release us Lord for Your service. thank You Lord for hearing us, we pray for all our listeners that whatever be the peculiar need around them, arise Lord today and meet those needs so that Lord your great name will be glorified even by their own testimonies. Thank You Lord for hearing us for we have prayed in Jesus Name. Amen.

Review:

We bless the Lord for bringing us Your way again today. Last week we went as far as looking at personal instructions to the Man God Uses. We have been looking at the book of Second Timothy as our basic text of study and we went as far as looking at Second Timothy chapter 2 where we had been able to study from verse 1 and verse 2 and we were about introducing verses 3 and 4 before we signed off.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS TO THE MAN GOD USES 4

Today again, I'd like you to pick your Bibles and join us as we read from verse 1 of Second Timothy chapter 2 where we shall read from verse 1 and go quickly to verse 7

2Ti 2:2 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. 3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. 5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. 6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits. 7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

Let's stop there and may the Lord bless His word to our hearts as we study today in the Name of Jesus Christ.

While we were looking at this Scripture last week, we saw the fact that even though several people were backsliding, there is enough grace for every man that wants to walk with God: there is enough strength that the grace of God provides once a man decides that he was going to live his life to please the Lord. And so the first instruction we notice in that first verse we read "2Ti 2:1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" is that in order to be able to

walk with God we must accept the strength that the grace of God provides. Then we saw in verse 2 that

...the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men... 2Ti 2:2

The only way to maintain your stand is not only to be committed to the truth, is not only to defend the truth, but to go ahead to teach the truth: to go ahead to spread the truth, to go ahead and commit it unto faithful men "who shall be able to teach others also."

So today I would like us to begin with verse 3 as we go on

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him

who hath chosen him to be a soldier. 2Ti 2:3-4

Let's look at verse 3 and 4 more closely. The Bible said "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." It looks to me as if once God lays hands on you, once God decides to set you apart for His service and for His work and you decide to work with God, He regards you as a soldier, He regards you as a man on duty, a man who is going to combat the kingdom of darkness on His behalf. So the first thing God is enjoining us as an instruction is that every man that God is setting apart to use must prepare himself to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. This is because we have been told and we have been called to occupy in a territory where the men and where the whole world system is hostile to our Master Jesus. It looks as though ministry is a kind of a battle and so, standing with God is actually entering into a kind of warfare.

And towards the end of Second Timothy, we heard how Paul said, "I have fought a good fight." So we realise that serving God, maintaining holiness of life, maintaining personal integrity, walking with God and establishing the Kingdom of God here on earth is actually a warfare!! It does not come just on a platter of

gold - it comes as we insist to ensure that the will of God is done. You remember Jesus said "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." So we realise that we are up against unseen powers, wicked rulers of this present world. So in order to succeed and in order to serve God adequately, every man that God has called must see himself as a soldier who has been appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ to wage war against the kingdom of darkness and to establish the Kingdom of our Lord in the midst of men.

So what then is the instruction coming to Timothy as a good soldier of Jesus Christ? It is: "Endure hardness." Endure hardness! And you will notice that Paul was not teaching what he himself has not experienced. He wasn't talking of what he himself had not gone through. As we go through this Scripture and you see verse 8, 9 up to verse 12, Paul himself said

2Ti 2:8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: 9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. 10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ

Jesus with eternal glory. 11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: 12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

So we notice that walking with God, serving God is actually a warfare - you are going to stand in conflict, you are going to stand in opposition of men against our Lord and His Christ. Therefore as a servant of God and as a young man that is growing up and as a man that wants to maintain a testimony in this world, the word of God said - Endure hardness! That is to say - Prepare yourself, prepare your mind to suffer, prepare your mind to do without several things, prepare your mind to adjust even when conditions look unfavourable towards your life. That is the way to be victorious in this world, and never to fall unto the bait that the devil has presented to so many. If you have made up your mind to say "Yes even if it means I will endure hardship, even if it means to suffer" the devil will not easily attract your attention with little, little things that will make you compromise your faith and your stand in the Lord.

Now I want us to move down quickly, the Bible says

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life...2Ti 2:4

I would like us to check that from other versions for us to have a clearer understanding

A soldier on active duty wants to please his commanding officer and so does not get mixed up in the affairs of civilian life. (2Ti 2:4 Good News Bible)

So we realise that in order to really please the Lord there is need not to be entangled with the affairs of this life, the Good News Bible calls it - the affairs of civilian life. And that is just to give us an insight into the kind of lifestyle that God is expecting a Christian, the child of God and a man that God uses, the kind of life that he should adopt; it is a life of discipline, a life that lives on basic necessities, a life that has counted the cost, a life that is on duty and is so conscious that "I am here representing my King!" And he subjects himself unto strict disciplines just as you see a soldier-man that subjects himself to strict

discipline in order to keep himself fit and in order to keep himself at alert, combat ready. The kind of life that God is expecting you to live as a believer is the life of a soldier not entangled with civilian affairs.

And what are the affairs, the civilian affairs that can easily entangle a believer and a servant of God for that matter that will make it so difficult and impossible for you to run your race to the end? When you look at Hebrews chapter 12 it tells us how we need to run the race now. It says

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight... Heb 12:1

Every weight, every encumbrance everything that tries to tie you down, everything that diverts your attention, everything that brings depression to your life,

...Let us lay aside every weight... Heb 12:1

In order not to be entangled with civilian affairs, every weight that is tied around us - it may be the weight of the cares of this life, it may be the weight that has come upon your life because of some certain ambitions, it could be some weight out of some certain relationships, as a man in God's service - all this has to be shed off! Shed off in order to travel light even in the Kingdom of God. The Bible continues and says

...and the sin which doth so easily beset us... Heb 12:1

Now one of the things that civilian affairs, civilian life is known about is careless living, loose living and all kinds of loose talk, and God is saying as a soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ you must not be entangled!

Is there any weight, is there any sin that easily besets you, that easily entangles you, that easily rolls you up? What are you supposed to do? You lay them aside!

The Bible says

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. 2Ti 2:4

If you are going to actually please the Lord who has given us this privilege of serving Him, there is a deep need and a deep necessity in our hearts to release all entanglements, to be sure that we are free from all entanglements, to be sure that we are free to walk with Jesus, that we are free to walk with Him and are free to serve Him, we are free to learn of Him, we are free to go with Him, we are free to obey Him. There is no other consideration - there is nothing else - that could hold us now! As a soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ, every relationship we enter into must be compatible with your calling, must be compatible with your life, any partnership that you enter into that is an hindrance to your obedience unto your

Commanding Officer even our Lord Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, such partnership has to be put aside because it is an entanglement!

Are you in any kind of business and that business is always an hindrance between you and the Saviour - it entangles you - it doesn't allow you a free hand, a free neck to do what God has told you to do, you don't have a free mind and a free head to obey the Lord? That is an entanglement - it has to be undone, it has to be removed! And I want you to see what else could be an entanglement in the life of a man that God has planned to use. I want you to look at the book of Luke chapter 8 where the Lord Jesus Christ gave a parable, of a seed that fell among thorns and why it did not produce. Let me quickly read Luke chapter 8 and verse 14 for you.

And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. Luk 8:14

And so while we are talking about not getting entangled with the affairs of this life - the affairs of the civilian life, we are noting here that this one was choked with cares! Cares!! In order for you to really serve the Lord, He does not want you to bear any unnecessary care on your life, rather He says "cast your care upon Him for He cares for you" And if you look at the life of a soldier man, he goes out without any care - he knows that the government is going to take care of his family, the government is going to take care of his life and his death, his mother and everybody, so he goes all the way to throw his life into 'the service.' He goes without looking back continually, he doesn't run away because the battle has become very, very fierce.

So we are saying one of the things that make men to strangulate in the call of God on their lives is cares, cares! They are choked with cares!! I do know that there are several responsibilities that may confront you today, but God is saying - don't be choked with cares! He said "Be careful for nothing but by prayers supplications with thanksgiving make your request known unto God." And God is very faithful, He says "No man goes into the battle at his own expense" God is not expecting that as you obey Him, as you throw your life into Him, as you release all your cares, then He will make you a careless man. No! He actually

will take care of all your cares. The Lord will handle all your cares so that you can care for the things of the Lord without distraction.

So we notice in that Luke 8 Scripture that they are choked with cares.. ...and riches.. ...and pleasures of this life - these are things that could entangle your life! Cares, riches and pleasures of this life! Desires and deceitfulness of riches are the things that tie men down, if you want to go far with God, you need to realise that most of those gadgets you are putting around yourself, they only make your journey towards the Lord and towards His will and towards the fulfillment of God's call on your life only more cumbersome!! But when you surrender your heart and you let the Lord meet your need, He may not meet your need one year at a time, He wants to meet your need day by day!

And so those things that render men useless, Timothy was instructed to do away with it! Timothy was instructed not to be bothered with the cares of this life!

What else could be an entanglement in the life of a man that wants to serve God?

I want you to look at First Corinthians chapter 7, there are still some other things that could be an entanglement in the life of a man that wants to serve God. And I want you to look at this very carefully so that as the Lord helps us you might understand what God is saying. I want you to look at that Scripture - First Corinthians chapter 7 and I want you to look at verse 25

1Co 7:25 Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. 26 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be. 27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. 28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. 29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; 30 And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; 31 And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away. 32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: 33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.

Now you see the more we read that Scripture, we are discovering other things that could become an entanglement - one of it is marriage! Marriage can become an entanglement especially when you did not take time to be led properly unto the right marriage! Several people wanted to serve God but they have become entangled in so many things, so many want to serve the Lord yet they have too many children in the house that they cannot be able to focus on what God has called them to do.

Now, the instruction was coming to Timothy as a good soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ: it is not necessary for you to entangle yourself with the affairs of this life. Whereas I am not saying that you should not get married - I believe that marriage is good for you - and I believe that if God has not told you not to marry, he has a plan for your home, but then your home can come to a level where it has become an entanglement. Your wife could be an entanglement, your husband can become an entanglement especially when all your cares, when all your desires is only for that, when marriage becomes an end in itself rather than a means of serving the Lord.

So going back to the instructions for Timothy, he was told "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." I want you to think now, is there any entanglement in your own life? Is there anything that is not allowing you to serve the Lord as a good soldier of Jesus Christ? Is there anything that is hindering you from being where God wants you to be and serving appropriately as the Lord wants you to serve?

Now I want you to note that no man can serve two masters at the same time, he just must let go - if you are going to be a useful vessel in the hand of God you just must let go several entanglement several things that occupy your life, several occupations in your heart must have to be removed: all things that are not basic necessities to your life must have to go! As a child of God you need to ask yourself "What am I doing with piling up too many clothes?"

Can you look into your wardrobe today and ask yourself "what am I doing with

all of this?" This insatiable desire to keep buying clothes, buying clothes, buying clothes and it is becoming an entanglement to you! Are you getting into debt simply because you want to maintain a particular uniform? Now I want you to note some of the issues that has hindered many men and what will you do about it? Are you already entangled? You need to begin to pray. Are you in a business that will not allow you to even spend enough time in quiet time to pray or to study the word of God and you go from morning only to return at night? It is affecting your family, it is affecting your personal prayer life, it is affecting your service and God had no opportunity to instruct you the way He should have - I want to tell you, you are getting entangled? No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life - and yet you are in a warfare, yet we are engaged in a battle! The Bible said "The weapon of our warfare are not carnal because we are not fighting against flesh and blood - we are up against spiritual wickedness in high places! If that is it: that we are in a battle, everyday of our lives we are in a warfare, then you cannot allow your life to be entangled! To be in a situation where you are not sensitive to what the Spirit of God is saying will not be correct, to be in a position where the power of God cannot break forth in your life would not be right.

Let's look at verses 5 and 6 before we stop here

And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. 2Ti 2:5

Even as you begin to walk with God you must walk according to God's own rule - you must walk according to God's own standard otherwise your labour may not bring any result!. You see, Timothy was being instructed that it was not just serving God that matters much, it is not just running around, except you do it the way it should be done. Paul said "Follow the Lord's rules for doing His work, just as an athlete either follows the rules or is disqualified and wins no price! Follow the Lord's rules for doing His work." In order to serve God adequately, this personal instruction must come, you have need to answer this question: "What is the Lord's rule for doing His work?" There are many people today in ministry, there are many people today who are serving God anyhow, they have not taken the time to find out what is the Lord's rule for doing His work. People think that anything you do no matter what you do no matter the method, no matter where you got the resources - once it produces a result, God will accept it. I want to tell you - that is not how it's done!! The fact that somebody ran in an athletic race and he came first does not mean he is going to win the price, when he has broken some o the rules of the game, when he has jumped lane!

And I want to tell you as you continue to labour, Timothy was informed, was instructed "Follow the Lord's rules for doing His work just like an athlete either follows the rules or he is disqualified and wins no prize. You may have run in vain if all you are doing is only what is convenient or you see what all others are doing and you are involved in such activities simply because you tell yourself "Well, that is all others are doing!" Before you can win the prize, before you can get to the position where God has placed you, the Bible says you need to strive lawfully, you need to strive according to rules, you need to do the work of God the way it should be done! Are you a Pastor? Are you following God's pattern for doing His work? You need not say "Well, I am ignorant of that!" I want to say to you that ignorance in doing the work of God unlawfully is not an excuse - you will still lose your reward!

Before I close, remember David - he wanted to bring back the Ark, but the Ark was supposed to be carried on the shoulder of the Levites, he went and put it on a wheel-barrow! Did God approve him? No! God will not approve any work you do for Him except you do it according to the rule of doing His work!

Action Point:

And as we stop here today, one of the instructions that has come that we are ending up with is whether you are serving the Lord in whatever capacity, in whichever way you must know that i.) you are a soldier and you should be ready to endure hardship ii.) you must not entangle yourself with the affairs of this life if you want to please the Lord who has chosen you to be a soldier and then you must follow the Lord through in doing His work. May the Lord grant you wisdom, may the Lord grant you grace as you go on with Him in the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Concluding Prayer:

Our Lord we thank You so much for bringing us back to your feet, thank You for the instructions you are giving to our life. We ask O God that as many as have got themselves entangled in several things and are not running according to rule today as they come back to You praying, we ask that You will arise in their hearts:

bleſs them and help them for we have prayed in Jeſus Name. Amen.

THE MAN GOD USES 10

This message was published for the 7th – 13th March 2011

TEXT: 2 Timothy 2:8-26

Opening Prayer:

Our Father we thank You for this opportunity again to look together with my brethren into the Word of Life. We are asking Father that You will raise Your countenance upon us and You will grant unto us entrance into Your Word, let it bring Life and bring Light unto our lives. Thank You Lord for hearing us, we know that You will assist us and show us Your mercy even today, in Jesus Christ's Name we have prayed. Amen.

Review:

We want to praise the Lord for yet another opportunity He has given us to meet with you on this series. We have been looking at the personal instructions to The Man God Uses - a case study of Timothy and we have been using the Second Epistle of Paul to Timothy to look at these few instructions. In this series we have been able to go through Second Timothy chapter 2 up to verse 7.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS TO THE MAN GOD USES 5

Today we will like to go on quickly from verse 8 and I think we should study up to verse 26 as the Lord will grant us opportunity.

2Ti 2:8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: 9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. 10 Therefore I endure all things

for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. 11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: 12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: 13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. 14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. 15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. 19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. 20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. 22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. 24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose

themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

May God bless His Word to our hearts as we study in Jesus Name. Amen.

Today there are several issues that this particular passage we have read is going to raise for us but I want us to note some of the instructions that are necessary for our own lives.

From our discussion last week we found out that every soldier of Jesus Christ, every ambassador of Jesus Christ, every man that had been appointed to serve the Lord or to speak for the Lord or to represent the Lord in this present age must be well armed with a readiness to suffer and to endure hardness.

The reason is because we are in a warfare. We are in warfare!

The Christian life itself is a warfare. And we are called to establish His Kingdom even in the midst of His enemy.

The Lord Jesus said "Behold, I send you forth as sheep among wolves." That's the nature of our calling and that's the nature of our commission. And because of that; suffering, conflict, contradiction, hardships are part and parcel of our call! You cannot actually go forward with God on the narrow path if you are not ready to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. But from verse 8 all through to verse 13, brother Paul again giving this instruction to Timothy was also referring to the example of his own life which was one thing that is so enriching in having an instructor over your life - to have a man that has experienced God, he has walked with God; such a man does not only talk theory, He speaks about what he himself has gone through! And that lends credence unto the message.

So we notice that from verse 8 up to verse 13, Paul was expatiating on the fact that as a good soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ we need to endure hardness. And he said

Remember... 2Ti 2:8

Please take note of the word "remember" here. Paul is calling to remembrance - reminding Timothy saying "Timothy you were there, you saw the kind of things that I went through according to the Gospel that was preached."

...that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer... 2Ti 2:8-9

There are times that because of the gospel, because of the word of God that we must stand for and preach, we might be maltreated, mal-handled. We might be brought into some certain difficulties as if we did something evil. There are

places where when you stand up to declare the standard of the Word of God, everybody will hiss at you, and it would look as if you did something wrong for trying to be righteous! All these are parts and parcels of what lies ahead of everyone of us who wants to walk with God. And this instruction coming to us must be understood carefully and taken with all of our hearts. Paul said

Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. 2Ti 2:9

Down through the ages we have had men who had to lay down their lives, who have been made martyrs, because of the Gospel, because of the Word of God. So many were incarcerated, kept behind bars - they couldn't move - some their tongues were cut! Some were amputated - only so that they could not preach the gospel again. Some were roasted alive, some were fed to hungry lions, just to discourage their stand for the Lord Jesus! But all those soldiers, they died gloriously, they were ready for hardness, they were ready to serve the Lord even with their blood! Now I would like to remind you that we are going to the same heaven! God has told all those men to wait until we come, because our reward - our placement when we get into His presence, into the Kingdom will be done by

the same yardstick, on the same basis.

I now want to ask you, how do you expect to stand among these over comers? How do you expect to stand among these conquerors while you keep on rising and falling and compromising and twisting and short-measuring the standard of the Word of God? If a man wants to escape suffering, all he needs to do is to compromise; if you don't want contradiction all you need to do is to succumb to people's opinion and put aside what the Word of God has said! But if you must stand true to the message and must stand true to what God has said - if you must defend the truth, sometime the defence of the truth may be with your blood, the defence of the truth may be that you will lose your job.. ... yet the Word of God said "do not bother about that!"

The Scripture says

It is a faithful saying... 2Ti 2:11

I want you to know that

...For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him... 2Ti 2:11-12

Take note of that!!!

But just before we go on to verse 11 down to verse 13 I want to briefly point your attention to something in verse 10 where Paul says

Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes... 2Ti 2:10

As a servant of God, as a man that God is calling to bear a responsibility, even if it be over two or three people, there are times you have to go through some hardships some difficulties some problem not just for yourself but for the sake of the believers! For the sake of those that are hearing you, for the sake of those that

God is asking you to lead. And there is no man who can actually serve God effectively, who will not first of all be ready to lay down his own life, his own convenience as a ransom even for others. So we notice that brother Paul was given a person testimony and he said

Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. 2Ti 2:10

“I endure all things!!” There are several things that if you held on to, it was your right! But then as a servant of God, as a child of God who wants to glorify God, who wants to make room for others to have a chance of hearing the Gospel, you may need to do without some of your rights and endure some sufferings and some hardship!

Concluding, the Scripture now says

It is a faithful saying... 2Ti 2:11

I want you to note that it is a faithful saying, this thing that we are saying is faithful - it is trustworthy, it is dependable, that...

...if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him... 2Ti 2:11

Even if we die standing for the truth, I want to assure you we are going to live with Him! Whatever you lose in order to stand for Jesus, whatever you lose in order to be faithful to the Gospel, whatever you lose, whatever was taken away from your life in order for you to be what God wants you to be, the Bible said

...we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: 2Ti 2:11-12

This is what we are talking about -should you decide to deny the Lord Jesus, should you decide to join the company of deserters - those that deserted the way of truth - the Word of God is clear that it is a faithful saying that He also will deny us!!!

If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. 2Ti 2:13

Now let's note that - I want you to note these conclusions between verses 11 and 13: it's as if you decide to suffer with Him, you will reign with Him! Even if you decide and you go with Him till the going causes your death, you will live with Him. But if you deny Him - if we decide to abandon the narrow way, if we decide to live the way we find convenient at the expense of God's way for our lives: the Bible says

...if we deny him, he also will deny us. If we believe not... 2Ti 2:12-13

As to commit ourselves to Him, yet He cannot change, He cannot be unlike Himself

...yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. 2Ti 2:13

Lets conclude this with you that whatsoever way and whichever way you decide to live - we thank God for you - but mark that it will never affect the position of the Lord Jesus! Even if all of us decide that we are not going to follow the Bible the way God put it down, it does not affect God's position. It does not affect God's integrity! It does not affect God's wisdom, neither does it affect God's standard - God must remain faithful to Himself and will remain faithful to His word! All we are saying is this: you are the one to conform, you are the one to take cue with the way the elders went, don't ever think you can impress God to change His mind over what He has written! Don't you ever imagine that it is possible for you either by whatever means, to make God lower His standard

...if we deny him, he also will deny us. If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. 2Ti 2:12-13

Timothy was being told to keep these important instructions in remembrance and to pass it on to even those that God has placed under him, those that God has allowed him to minister to, those that God has allowed him to stand with even in life and in ministry! Timothy was being enjoined to stand for these things and teach them. To pass it on, that men should not strive about words to no profit, words that only subvert the hearers...

Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. 2Ti 2:14

From verse 15 down to verse 22, we are going to again look at some major instructions that God passes unto His servants, unto a man that God wants to use.

Now look at verse 15

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be

ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2Ti 2:15

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Now, that is an instruction that we must not rush over even today. I want us to check the word 'study.' When you look at the word 'study' there, it might look as if God is saying you should read: it might appear as if the Lord is saying 'read.' Whereas we can use the word 'study' to mean 'read,' but in the context of which this word is coming to us the word 'study' there does not only mean to 'read', It means to be diligent. Let's confirm that as we read from Revised Standard Version

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. (2Ti 2:15 RSV)

"Do your best to present yourself to God"

If you look at it from the New English Bible, it says

Try hard to show yourself worthy of God's approval. 2Ti 2:15

The Living Bible uses the phrase "to work hard" in the place of "study."

Phillips Modern English says

For yourself, concentrate on winning God's approval...2Ti 2:15

"For yourself, concentrate on winning God's approval..."

So when King James says " Study to shew thyself approved unto God" we notice that the word 'study' there is rendered as 'Do your best,' 'Work hard,' 'Try hard.'

Good News Bible also says 'Do your best,' New International Version says 'Do your best.' So all we are saying is that God is expecting you to do your best to win His approval. So now let's look at that verse 15 more closely. From Phillips Modern English, the Bible says

For yourself, concentrate on winning God's approval...2Ti 2:15

Concentrate on winning God's approval and on being a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, who knows how to use the Word of truth to the best advantage.

Let's look at this now: as a man that God must use, as a woman that God must use, as a brother in the fellowship, as a sister in the church and you desire that God should make profit also with your own life, look at what God is saying - the Bible says "Concentrate on winning God's approval over your own life!"

Now! What does this mean? As a servant of God, the first thing you need to do in your life, the first thing you need to concentrate upon is winning God's approval! No man can just jump into God's work anyhow - that person must get God's own recommendation, he must get God's own approval over his life. The Bible says – ‘Concentrate!’ as if to say leave every other thing, drop every other concern, drop every other matter and concentrate on this one thing! Concentrate on getting God to approve your life! Concentrate on getting God to want to identify with your life! Concentrate on winning God's approval over your life. Concentrate on being a workman with nothing to be ashamed of.

As a preacher, as a brother in the fellowship, as a man of God; the first thing, the instruction that is coming to you at this hour is concentrate - stop dissipating your life, stop scattering your interest! Concentrate on winning God's approval!!! Rather than go about with public-relation activities, rather than going about to introduce yourself and beg for your support from people or whatever, concentrate on winning God's approval! When God's approval has been granted over your life, He will make a way for you! When God's approval has been

granted upon your life, your ministry will take a new turn! When God's approval has come on your life much of what you are struggling for you will not struggle again, the Lord Himself will bring them into your life.

So as a man of God, as sister, as a leader - whatever leadership role you are aspiring God to place you, the first thing first: win God's approval over your life. Come to a position where God can stand and say "This man, I AM the one who sent Him, this brother I AM behind him!" You need to come to a stage where God can give you opportunity to handle divine oracles, a stage where God can allow you to handle some of His children, some of His choice saints that you should watch over them and bring them up. You need to c-o-n-c-e-n-t-r-a-t-e on winning God's approval! Instead of running around, instead of seeking help here and there, instead of trying to break fellowship into pieces because you think people ought to be listening to you now and you say they are not recognizing you. No! That's not how!!!

What you need to do, the instruction coming to you at this hour says you should do what? Concentrate on winning God's approval on your life, concentrate on

being a workman that has nothing to be ashamed of!

Look at your life now, is there anything - is there any secret, is there any habit - is there anything that you are secretly involved in that should it be discovered you will be ashamed? As a man that wants to last in the hand of God, the first thing you need to do ever before you struggle for the pulpit, ever before you struggle to sing in the choir, ever before you struggle to present a special number or to wax an album or to do one thing or the other, concentrate to win God's approval!

Don't play with this matter of winning God's approval - God's approval on a man's life is the basis of all that God will give him to do!!! God's approval on a man's life is the ground on which God relates with him. God's approval on a man's life is the matter that God focuses upon in placing His ministry in that man's hand.

I want to draw your attention to this again - the Scripture says "a workman that

needs not be ashamed of anything." Is there anything that causes shame in your life - is there any practise that if people were to know you will be ashamed? Is there anything you do secretly in your bedroom that if people were to know that you are the one practising such - Oh you will be ashamed? You will not want them to know about it! These are the things you should concentrate on dealing with in your life in order to last in God's program, in order to last in the ministry. You don't have to sweep these kinds of things under the carpet. The more you grow, the more those habits will grow with you. The more you pamper yourself the more you stand the danger of falling out of God's service at the crucial point!

Are you a man listening to me - you have a problem - you have a particular problem of sin in your life! Now that nobody has known you the first thing to do is to concentrate on winning God's approval in getting rid of those loop-holes of your life so that when God is willing to raise you up, there will be nothing to be ashamed of - you would be a man that can handle the word of truth, that can rightly use the word of truth to the best of advantage!

Just before I leave that Scripture, it says concentrate: and the word 'concentrate'

brings this words to mind - "work hard," "be diligent," "focus": I mean focus your mind, focus your strength, focus your attention on winning God's approval, on becoming the kind of man that God wants you to be. This is a matter I want you to leave this message with.

I want you check your life right now, are you concentrating on God approving your life? Can you crawl out of the crowd and get alone with God and say, "Lord, I need Your approval?" Can you wait on God until He approves your life? Instead of struggling to go with people, instead of struggling to maintain your position right in the midst of the congregation, can you take a decision and say to God "Look Lord, I need a personal approval from Your presence, I need You to approve my life, I need You to lead me, I need You to place Your hand on me!"

And what does God look for before He approves a man? Ask the Lord to check you out, ask the Lord to look into your heart - what are the things that will make God to push you aside even when anointing is being considered to be poured on a man? Now! You need to concentrate on that rather than keep dreaming of how you are going to be here and there? The first thing first - let God put His hand on

your life! God's hand on a man's life will make a way for him. Once God has approved you, once God is ready to identify with you and accept you, He will surely carry you through - all through the stages of your experience in His service.

Action Point:

Right now as we ask you to pray, are you approved of God? Is there anything in your life that you can be ashamed of? As we pray with you will you take a step before the Lord today? As you go back into your inner closet - stop meddling around with people - go and face God and let God face the situation of your life!!! If you need to take a decision on this matter, don't hesitate - do it right now and God will have mercy on you in Jesus Name.

Concluding Prayer: Our Father, we thank You for what decisions you are leading your people into. We ask that Lord you will grant them courage, that from today these men will arise from before you into doing your bidding and win your

approval - whatever it may cost. For in Jesus Name we have prayed. Amen.

THE MAN GOD USES 11

This message was published for the 14th – 20th March 2011

TEXT: 2 Timothy 2:15-22 & 2 Peter 1:5-11

Opening Prayer:

Our Father we thank You for bringing us back here today again even to look into Your Word. Our Lord we want to ask that You will open our eyes of understanding, grant unto us entrance into your truth such that it will mix with faith in all of us and Your people will be edified, they will be brought to grow as a result of this series. For whatever need and problem in the life of any man, we ask that this hour You will intervene for them on their behalf. Thank You Father for hearing us for we have prayed in Jesus Name. Amen.

Review:

Last week we went as far as chapter 2 of Second Timothy as we have been meditating on the theme - The Man God Uses, we stopped then in verse 15. Today we want to press on this matter: the matter of winning God's approval upon your life as a personal instruction to the man that would be used of God.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS TO THE MAN GOD USES 6

Please open your Bibles and follow us back to the book of Second Timothy chapter 2, we would like to read from verse 15 down to verse 22.

2Ti 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 17 And their word will

eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. 19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. 20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. 22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Let's stop there meanwhile trusting God to bless His Word into our hearts as we study in the Name of Jesus Christ. Amen

Now while we were looking at the personal instructions unto the Man God Uses, we noted in verse 15 when the Word of God says "Do your best, try hard to show yourself worthy of God's approval as a labourer who need not be ashamed. Be straightforward in your proclamation of the truth." We noted with you as we

were concluding in the last edition of this program that the most important, primary thing that every man that wants to walk with God or serve the Lord in His life must concentrate upon is God's backing upon His life. So many things may look necessary for your walk with God - some time you may think you need money so much, at some other time you may think that you need many more people around you but I would like to say to you that the first and the most important matter that a man must get before he launches out into any work for God is to win God's approval upon his life.

And so the instruction to Timothy was "Look, concentrate - concentrate yourself on winning God's approval for your own life." And I began by saying that a man that has won God's approval on His life is a man that God is ready to defend at any point. When God has approved your life, He causes what you say to take such a magnitude, that it affects people. When God has approved a man, God allows His power to be placed in that man's hand. And onlookers will be wondering "What has this man done that God has decided to favour him so much?" It is simply because God has approved him.

And so the instruction is this: in all your activities, in all your running around,

concentrate yourself on winning God's approval! So we are going to quickly check what are the things we need to concentrate upon in order to win God's approval for our own lives? What are the issues that we need to emphasise if we are going to win God's approval for our own lives if we are going to be a workman that has nothing to be ashamed of, and a man who knows how to use the word of truth to the best advantage. Whereas in the public there will be a lot of activities, there will be a lot of preaching on the pulpit but that should not be your first choice! Your first choice and your first place of primary call is to report at the feet of the Lord until you win His approval, until you are sure that God is willing to go with you, until you are sure that God is willing to back you up!

Now there are few things that God looks for in men that He approves and as we take the Scriptures right now, you will see what you need to concentrate on in order to become a man that God has approved. Now in verse 19 the Scripture says

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. 2Ti 2:19

One thing that is very, very paramount before God will place His approval on your life is that God cannot walk with a man that is living in sin! God cannot walk with a man that is practising iniquity, God cannot back up a man who is living disorderly as far the will of God for his life is concerned! This is not something we can debate! This is not something we can review: there is no need for our personal opinion on the matter of whether you should depart from iniquity or not! The Bible said the foundation of God concerning this matter standeth sure: this foundation has a seal - the Lord knoweth them that are His and let everyone that name the Name of Christ depart from iniquity. Everyone that name the Name of Christ, let them do what? Depart from iniquity!

Now if you want God to approve your life, if you want God to be attracted to your life, if you want God to walk very closely with your life, I want you to note the following things: right from now you need to depart from iniquity! You need to be a man that loved righteousness and hated iniquity. It was David that asked in the book of Psalms, he said O Lord who will ascend to Your holy hill? And if you look at what David said in Psalm 15, let's quickly check what he said in

Psalm 15 because since the word of God is bringing us this instruction that you need to concentrate on winning God's approval which is the greatest thing you need.

As a pastor I want to say to you, even though your theological certificate is very good, it is not what will give you the ministry, it is the approval of God on your life that will certify you! Even though you have a very beautiful degree and you can speak good English and you have a lot of connections, there are so many people you know in your public relations activity, yet that will not carry you far! If God is not with a man, I want to tell you - there is nothing that is with you!! When God is not going with a man, even though ten thousands are going with him, nothing is going with him! But when God goes with a man even though it is a minority that goes with him - the common saying is "One with God is a majority." We realise that when a man asks God to stand by his side, when a man has God walking with him, when a man has the Lord to back him up, there is no battle he will not win. There is no battle he will not conquer! There is no enemy that can stand a man with whom God is standing! There is no man that can slap a man that is going with God and he will go scot-free.

So the first thing you need to do in your life as you concentrate in order to become useful is to win this approval. I want you to win God's friendship over your life. I want you to endear yourself to God by living right, by living in holiness! Look at it

LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved. Psa 15:1-5

If God must approve your life, these are things you need to pursue - you need to walk uprightly, you need to seek righteousness right from your own heart because they that name the Name of Christ must do what? Depart from iniquity! That is very basic! You are listening to me today, you want God to approve you,

you don't have to go about playing around with an habit of sin - you need to ask the Lord to set you free, you need to cry to heaven right now for a definite intervention. And I know that God is rich unto all that call upon Him! As many as call upon the Name of the Lord, they shall be saved. The Bible made us to know when it said "Sanctify them by thy Truth, thy Word is truth." If you want God to actually put His signature on your life, put His signature on what you are doing then you need to depart from every form of iniquity. Even when iniquity is looking acceptable in the midst of men, even when iniquity is looking innocent in the midst of men, as far as God is concerned - iniquity will cut you short from His presence! God is very judicious on men He approves, that He approves for ministry.

Do your best, concentrate, on winning God's approval!

Now let's see yet what else to do in order to win God's approval - what else are we supposed to do in order to win God's approval? I want you to refer to Second Peter and chapter 1 and I want us to read from verse 5.

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2Pe 1:5 -11

I want you to note this very, very simple but yet very, very important issue of winning God's approval, of securing an open door, of securing a permanent confirmed position in God's service. Now it says "Give all diligence.." Once again that Scripture also started by talking about diligence, diligence! As if to really win God's approval, you cannot be lazy about it! You cannot take it as if "if it comes, if God wants to use me, let Him use me." That is not the way to commend yourself to God! You need to be diligent - diligent at what? Diligent at your spiritual growth, diligent at your own personal development - diligent at

your own personal growth in the things of God!

Look at what God is expecting you to add to your faith, the Bible says:

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue...2Pe 1:5

Add virtue to your faith! Now the word virtue here has to do with character, it has to do with good kind-of-living. It said

For this very reason do your best to add goodness to your faith; (Good News Bible) 2Pe 1:5

When we talk of virtue we are talking of character, we are talking of a Godly and a goodly character. Now! Some of you are born again quite alright, but you don't have a correct character you don't have any virtue and if God were to identify with you, your character will be something of an embarrassment to God! Even

though you are so energetic, you are so zealous, you really, really want to serve God but you have a deficiency in character!! You have a deficiency in virtue. Now when a man lacks virtue it is difficult for God to confirm His grace, His anointing, His call upon that man's life.

So the Bible says "For this very reason do your best to add virtue to your faith" ...Make every effort to add to your faith goodness that is how the Good News Bible put it!

Jerusalem Bible put it like this "To attain this you will have to do the utmost yourself adding goodness to the faith you have, understanding to your goodness, self control to your understanding, patience to your self control, true devotion to your patience."

God expects that in order to become a man that He can use - He wants you to be diligent at growing spiritual virtue, at growing some spiritual traits that will make your life commendable to Him and commendable unto men. This matter

cannot be handled carelessly, the Bible talks about being diligent with it, it talks about doing your utmost. Doing our u-t-m-o-s-t!! So I want to look at what is to be added - add virtue to your faith!

And you add knowledge to virtue! Some people are very good and just want to be at ease with everybody, yet they are ignorant of the Word of God, they are ignorant of the will of God! That is not going to help you, it is a deficiency that does not allow you to bear fruit in the Kingdom of God.

So when Timothy was instructed to do His best to win God's approval, we are talking of himself concentrating on his own personal growth, concentrating on building his own character, moving from one level of grace to another. Expanding and enlarging and gathering much more into his own life in terms of becoming more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; 2Pe 1:5 -6

We know that when someone is full of knowledge, he is normally puffed up: the Bible says knowledge normally puffs up. Some people become arrogant and cannot tolerate others because of what they know. Once you know so much you are not able to tolerate people that don't seem to know as much as you do: you either want to boss them around or you want to emphasise their weakness and ignorance. When God notices that about your life, He cannot approve you, He cannot identify with you, He cannot place Himself and place His glory and place His work in your hand and say you should handle it because there is a deficiency there is a lack in your character. So the Bible said "And to knowledge add temperance - add temperance." Add ability to reason with men, ability to become temperate, to be disciplined - you are not addicted to anything, you are temperate. The Lord said

And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you... 2Pe 1:6-7

The Good News Bible puts it like this

These are the qualities you need, and if you have them in abundance, they will make you active and effective in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if you do not have them, you are so shortsighted that you cannot see and have forgotten that you have been purified from your past sins. So then, my friends, try even harder to make God's call and his choice of you a permanent experience; if you do so, you will never abandon your faith. In this way you will be given the full right to enter the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2Pe 1:8-11

Now! You must concentrate on this. When we talk of concentrating on God's approval, we mean that you must add character, you must add knowledge, you must add temperance (you must add several of these virtues that God is pointing to us here) to your faith. And as they increase, as they abound - as they become abundant in your life, the Bible said your call will be confirmed, your call will be made permanent and an open door, a full right, an entrance to the Kingdom and to all the Kingdom realities shall be opened unto you!

Now let's quickly conclude as we look at further instruction to Timothy in Second to Timothy chapter 2 that we have been reading. It now says

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, 2Ti 2:20-21

You see that now: to become a vessel unto honour in the hand of God you need to purge yourself from everything that makes your life ignoble, you must purge yourself from everything that makes your life dishonourable! These are instructions that Paul was giving to Timothy and he said to him "Timothy! There is no magic to becoming a man that God can use, there is no short cut about it, you just have to win God's approval, you just have to concentrate, others may run left and right, others may be involved in different kinds of activities, but for your own life you need to concentrate, you have to concentrate on winning God's approval, and on becoming what God ordained your life to be!"

Now if you want to be a vessel of honor not just a vessel unto dishonour, if you

want to be a vessel that is meet for the Master's use, a vessel that is unto honour, sanctified unto every good work, then you need to purge yourself! You need to purge yourself!!

I want you to look deep down now, are there areas of your life that need purging? For God to approve you, you need to quickly check - are there relationship you need to cut away? Are there business lines that you need to remove so that God can approve you, so that the Holy Spirit can settle on you on a permanent basis. I do know that occasionally you may have some excited moments when you see the Spirit of God doing something, but that happens once in a long while. But for God to stand with you, for God to back you up as the Bible said concerning Samuel that the Lord began to reveal himself to him in those days and whatsoever Samuel said, God did not allow it to fall to the ground - I do believe today that if you will allow God to seat over your life, if you allow God to walk with you and you become diligent in winning this approval, you will become a vessel in His hand, a vessel unto honour meet for the Master's use.

Finally the Word of God said

Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2Ti 2:22

Flee also - flee also - flee also youthful lusts, but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Action Point:

Now! these are issues that you need to consider, you must run away from youthful lusts - all the lusts of the youth i.e. lust for fame, lust for money, lust for power, lust for sex; all those things that hinder a man from becoming useful. Run away from them!!!

What do you do instead? ...follow righteousness, follow faith, follow charity, follow peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Of course there are many people today that call on the Lord but not out of a pure heart but out of

a different motive. There are so many! And yet God is saying "Look for them that are serving Me with a purity of heart, those that are serving Me without hypocrisy, they are the ones you should keep company with, they are the ones you should fellowship with, they are the ones you should emulate in your life!"

Today as we sign off, I want you to bow your head in prayer and I want you to say "Lord! this matter of winning your approval that has come on me again, I want to deal with it, I want to purge my life from every iniquity, I want to grow from here to the glory of Your Name. In the Name of Jesus."

Concluding Prayer:

Our Father we thank You for concentrating upon our lives, we ask You that You will not give up on us. As many as are knowing that they have gone wrong with You and are praying, we ask that today O Lord they will purge their lives and they will grow in You. Thank You that You will do this for we have prayed in Jesus Name. Amen.

THE MAN GOD USES 12

This message was published for the 21st – 27th March 2011

TEXT:2 Timothy 2:16-26

Opening Prayer:

Father we ask You to take all the glory today and to take all the honour for the privilege, for the opportunity and for the chance you have given us to look into the Word of Life.

Father we want to ask that as this Word comes to us again, it will do us good, it

will establish your counsel in our lives, it will bring us into the fullness of Your purpose and make us to be ready even for Your service.

Father we are trusting that You will help us as we run through this series in the Name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Review/Introduction:

We praise the Lord for each one of you that have been with us since we started this particular series on the Personal Instructions to the Man God Uses, and we have been progressing, dealing with these instructions using Timothy as a case study, and studying the Book of Second Timothy. In the course of our study, we were able to deal with chapter 1 and chapter 2 of that book and today we are going to be moving towards the end of chapter 2, and then we will introduce ourselves to chapter 3, these being definite instructions we need to note!

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS TO THE MAN GOD USES 7

So in Second Timothy chapter 2, I would like to read verses 16 to 18 and then I would you to read down and look from verse 22 down to verse 26.

But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. 2Ti 2:16-26

May God bless His Word in Jesus Name. Amen.

Last week as we looked at this personal instructions you would have noticed that I jumped verses 16 to 18 in our study and that was because I wanted us to look at a personal instruction God was giving that whatever may be happening to your left and to your right, you must concentrate your own life on winning God's approval. A man that wanted God to walk with him cannot afford to keep pace with everybody, he cannot afford to dissipate himself and get himself distracted! You must concentrate on winning God's approval.

So last week we dealt with various things that God wanted you to build, how he wants you to be diligent at spiritual growth, at adding virtue to your faith, knowledge to your virtue, temperance to your knowledge, and patience, longsuffering, love unto all your life that this thing may abound, then God can open an eternal door unto your life. We noticed that you need to flee, you need to run away from youthful lusts and you need to follow righteousness, you need to follow faith, you need to follow love, you need to follow peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Yet there is something again that a man that wants to be great in the hand of God must take note. And that is what I want to focus upon at this particular time.

Now when you look at verse 16 of the Scripture we read, it is a follow-up of verse 15 and verse 16 says

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. That is what you should focus on, you should concentrate on!!! And the Scripture continues and says But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 2Ti 2:15-16

Now, why is this instruction necessary for us to consider? Several times as a man begins to walk with God, in your bid to want to serve God, in your bid in wanting to get to know God and get to have his grace and power in your life, you encounter other things that want to try to distract your attention. And one of it is what we want to deal with here, The Bible says

But shun profane... 2Ti 2:16

That is, resist, detest - that is what the word 'shun' means here. The Bible says - shun or avoid. Avoid! Avoid, empty and worldly chatter, those who indulge in it will stray further and further into Godless causes and the infection of their teaching will spread like a gangrene.

Now! When God begins to lay hand on you there are certain things you need to avoid, there are certain places you need to run away from, there are certain teachings you need not to open your heart to at all, there are certain instructions that must not be allowed into your bosom otherwise it will bring infection unto your life. There are so many infected Christians today - there are so many Christians whose faith has been infected, the viruses that destroy Christian life, that destroy Christian faith and your profession in the presence of God are as dangerous as the viruses that we are crying about like the AIDS virus! But I want to say to you, in order for your life not to be spoilt, in order for the call of God on your life not to be thwarted, in order for you not to end in a pit, you need to avoid certain things. And that is what we want to deal with now.

The Bible says

But shun profane and vain babblings: 2Ti 2:16

Vain babblings, profane and vain babblings... what is the meaning of that? Things that have no co-ordination! Words that have no particular benefit, ...just that some people desired to engage you in endless chatter. Avoid such godless chatter.

...for it will lead to more and more ungodliness 2Ti 2:16

That is the way the New English Bible has put it. That version says

Avoid, empty and worldly chatter, those who indulge in it will stray further and

further into godless causes and the infection of their teaching will spread like a gangrene 2Ti 2:16.

There are certain things that are not wholesome to your Christian life. There are certain things that only excite your head, excite you but they do not deal with your heart! There are certain instructions that you occupy your heart with, that do not make you to be conformed more and more to the image and to the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ! Such chatter when you first look at it may have a show of Godliness, but in the real sense of it, it does not impact the life of Jesus Christ, it does not bring you into a live encounter with the love of God and with the truth of God, and with the grace of God. Now! The Bible says - avoid such.

Avoid such.

Don't open your heart to everything that is going on in town! Don't open your heart to every doctrine that men are peddling all around us. The Word of God says very clearly

But steer clear of these unchristian babblings, which in practice lead further and further away from Christian living. False teachings are as dangerous as blood-poisoning to the body, and spread like sepsis from a wound. Hymenaeus and Philetus are responsible for this sort of thing, and they are men who are palpable traitors to the truth, for they say that the resurrection has already occurred and, of course, badly upset some people's faith. 2Ti 2:16-18 (Phillips Modern English Bible)

There are so many doctrines that are passing by in our time, there are so many things that people emphasise - when you let your life be contaminated by such the result is that you are infected. And look at the way the Scripture is pointing Timothy to the situation in his own time, and even as I talk right now, there are several things that are going on in our nation, going on in our generation in the various groups - different people stand up with various ideas! The first thing you need to check is: how much of Jesus does this idea show you? How much of Jesus and how much of the grace of God does this impact to your life? How much of the power of God do you personally get, how much closer to Jesus does this thing bring you?

Now! Ever before you turn your heart unto such chatter, unto such teachings, you need to find out, you need to check!!! For Timothy, he was told to steer clear and I want to emphasise the word 'avoid,' to steer clear, to shun profane and vain babblings. They only increase unto more and more ungodliness.

Look at this now, the Bible says their teachings

...are as dangerous as blood-poisoning to the body... 2Ti 2:17

If as you are listening to me today - I wouldn't have the time to explore the various false doctrines that are being peddled all around us, there won't be time for such. But I believe that if you are bent on following Jesus, if you are bent on the path that God has shown to you in the word of God, God himself will keep you from falling! But the first thing the Bible said concerning these false teachings is - avoid it! Avoid anything that does not emphasise personal holiness, personal victory in the presence of God! Avoid every teaching that does not

continue to help your heart to live like Jesus Christ will want you to live - no matter how bogus, no matter how wonderfully it has been packaged and presented! Any such teaching at all - wherever, whichever church, whosoever is peddling it, whosoever is the leader of that church, once the emphasis is no more dealing with the issues that Jesus emphasised as matters of the Kingdom, once they are bringing in new, new ideas, new doctrines things that you find strange and you did not find Jesus Christ practise it neither did He give it to us as a command. And yet men are adding it to the faith.

It is so infectious - and the Bible says you should steer clear of such, don't meddle with it - don't play around with it, it could be the infection that could turn your life down! The way the word of God speaks about it is

And their word will eat as doth a canker... 2Ti 2:17 (KJV)

False teachings are as dangerous as blood-poisoning to the body, and spread like sepsis from a wound... 2Ti 2:17(Phillips Modern English)

It spreads like sepsis! You know when a wound has been infected with gangrene or when it has grown tetanus, you know how dangerous it is - it can kill! And that is what the Word of God is saying about every wrong doctrine that is flying around you! You see people right now carrying amulets, carrying bottles of oil here and there and are telling you "Yes! Just drink it," things that we don't find in the word of God! If you want to last in the hand of God, the Bible says you should do what? Steer clear of such! Steer clear of such!! Follow the word of God, follow the truth with those that call on God with a pure heart! With a pure heart!

If you are attending a church and you know that your heart is not right and yet they are pampering you - they are making you an elder, they are making you chairman of building committee - and yet you know that you are not right with God, steer clear of such. They only want to kill you: they are not planning for your progress, they only want to use you, exploit you, collect your money and when they have finished with you they will throw you into the dustbin! I pray that doesn't happen to your life. But you need to take a step right now, you need to check!

I want to tell you something - God has not stopped frowning at sin! And the only trouble that will throw men to hell is their sin, no matter what you are doing - whether you are giving all your money to God inside the church and you are living in sin, that same sin will carry you to hell!!! So any teaching that leads you further and further from personal consecration to God, from personal victory over self, over sin, over the flesh, over those lusts that war inside your members, any teaching that does not emphasise your walking in righteousness with God, steer clear of it! It would carry you nowhere, it would only waste your time and waste your opportunity of becoming something in the hand of God.

And the Bible continues and says Hymenaeus and Philetus are responsible for this sort of thing. I wouldn't be standing here to mention who are the Philetus, who are the Hymenaeus of our own time but surely we have so many Philetuses, we have so many Hymanaeuses: they are great men, they are popular - whatsoever they are - yet they are introducing infections! Infections unto the body of Christ, infections unto the church, they are bringing in teachings that are not wholesome to the Word of God.

But you as a man that doesn't want to die young, the Bible says - steer clear of it!
And pursue righteousness, pursue faith, pursue charity, pursue peace with all
them that call upon the Lord with a pure heart. But let me say this - no matter the
Philetus, no matter the Hymanaeus, no matter their positions, no matter their
influence the Bible says the foundation of God does what? Stands sure!

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord
knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ
depart from iniquity. 2Ti 2:19

When you now go forward, I want you to move down to verse 23, what is the
next instruction I want you to take note even along the path of steering clear of
babblings, from empty chatter, from any teaching that does not emphasise the
Lordship of Jesus and does not emphasise holiness of life, personal victory over
sin because these are the fundamental principles that will make God to approve
your life! Anything that does not emphasise that- any relationship, any

fellowship, I say any fellowship at all that does not help your heart to get close unto the truth of the Scripture. Anything at all, any man at all that has placed himself as an idol in your heart rather than point you to the Saviour - steer clear from that place.

Now verse 23 said

But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. 2Ti 2:23

Several people's faith have been overthrown because of arbitrary questions - questions that are senseless. Senseless, stupid controversies: that is not what you should occupy your life with! I want to tell you: you don't become a great man in the hand of God because you have a great head. You don't become a great man in the hand of God simply because you know how to analyse and explain all difficult theories that arise around you. No! Avoid foolish stupid quarrelsome questions! Senseless controversies only bring quarrels - know that they only

gender strifes! And yet the Bible has said the servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome.

And the servant of the Lord must not strive 2Ti 2:24

Anything that would occupy you in arguments and struggling with men - put it aside, that is not important for you! You go quietly serving the Lord, go quietly seeking the face of the Lord for your life, go quietly seeking God's approval on your life, go quietly pursuing those qualities on your life that you will never be ashamed of no matter where you are examined!

The Scripture says

And the servant of the Lord must not strive... 2Ti 2:24

So anything that can bring strife, anything that will engage your life in undue argument, senseless controversies, avoid! Put it aside! Don't have anything to do with it!!...but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 2Ti 2:24

That is what we are looking for in the life of a servant of God - developing in gentleness, being able to appreciate, tolerate and yet teach men on the path of righteousness. Look at verse 25

In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves;

In meekness instructing those that are confused, correcting his opponents with gentleness, God may perhaps grant that they may repent and come to know the truth! 2Ti 2:25

There are times in your pursuit of God, in your pursuit of His love, in your

pursuit of His power you will meet men - you will meet dropouts, you will meet those people that didn't want to follow God correctly and they have become frustrated. Therefore they have propounded a theory. There are so many you now see in some certain cults and in some syncretic society and some groups that look spiritual, but yet they are practising a kind of false doctrine; when you go down to check the lives of the founders you will find that some of them have been people who I will rather call "attempted-Christians:" Christians who never touched the reality of God, they have failed they have dropped out and instead of facing the challenge that is facing them and facing it squarely crying to God for help, crying to God for deliverance they decided to twist the word of God and to twist the doctrine and to propound a doctrine that fits into their own personal convenience. Now! The Bible says don't enter into controversy with such men with patience and...

In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. 2Ti 2:25-26

Look at this! There are many people walking up and down on our street, many many people that you will encounter in your life who are already ensnared by the devil, whom the devil has already thrown a bait at their lives, and they are taking it! The devil has already thrown a bait of sin and they have already fallen and have been held captive and he is driving them up and down now at his will - you will encounter such men. And all that God wants you to do is not to company with them, is not to go down with them, is not to compromise with them but to teach the truth, to insist on the path of righteousness that God has shown you.

Now, here were instructions that Paul was passing on to Timothy in his time, and what touched my mind in this particular chapter before we go to chapter 3 in the course of our study is that Paul realised that ever before a man can become a vessel for God, a mouthpiece for God, his own personal life had to be dealt with first and that was why he kept talking about Timothy not getting entangled in civilian affairs! He told Timothy to study, s-t-u-d-y, to work hard to win God's approval; to make sure that there is no iniquity, there is no hypocrisy, there is nothing that is contrary to the will of God going on in his own personal life

As we bring this study to this particular conclusion because the set of instruction that is being passed to Timothy are meant as instructions to guide him in ministry, instructions to show him how to move on, how to actualise the call and the grace of God on his life and how to stand against the spirit of the end-time. I want to ask you before we begin to deal with such issues: what about your own personal life? Before you can stand and speak for God, your own life must be correct, before you can represent God anywhere, your own personal life must stand straight in the presence of God! Before you can actually accomplish anything for God, your inner life - your personal relationship with God - must be correct! And we cannot overemphasise this!!

We cannot be asking you to talk about many people that are misbehaving here and there when your own inner man is not right.

Can I ask you right now, how is it with you and God? What position are you with God right now? What exactly can God say about you? Can God approve you?

Can God say "Yes! This man I am well pleased in him, I am satisfied with his life" Is God satisfied with you? Your private life - is God satisfied with it? Your secret dealings, is God satisfied with it?

I am asking you this question before I ask you to bow your head right now.

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 2Ti 2:20

Which vessel do you want to be? The choice is yours! You can choose to be a man of ignoble use. You can choose to be careless so you are used for careless things. But if you want to be a choice person in the hand of God, you can purge your life, you can look at your way and look at all the Guideposts that God has set, and choose for yourself the way you want to go.

The Bible says

But foolish and unlearned questions avoid... 2Ti 2:23

Action Point:

Put away all of those things shun profane and vain babblings - they are not going to help your life! Look for those things that will contribute to your progress and to the growth of your life in Christ Jesus.

As we ask you to bow your head in prayer, I just ask you to be open and be honest, be sincere - tell the Lord the need of your heart today and God will help you in Jesus Name. Amen.

Concluding Prayer:

As many hearts as are open to you O God and are confessing and telling you what their need is for help, we ask that you help them. There are many that are crying and repenting over the way they have gone; Father we ask that you will stand up and break whatever has held them in captive and you will set them free to serve you in holiness and righteousness. In Jesus name. Amen

THE MAN GOD USES 13

This message was published for the 28th March – 3rd April 2011

TEXT: 2 Timothy 3:1-9

Opening Prayer:

Father we want to bless You for this privilege once more even to come together at Your feet and to study Your Word and especially to receive personal instructions for our own lives as men and women who seek to be useful in your hand. Our Father as we look into Your Word, it is our prayer this day that You will open the eyes of our understanding and that You would speak to us in definite ways preparing us and dealing with our own hearts that we might

become vessels that are prepared and fit for Your use. Thank You Lord for hearing our prayers for we have prayed together in Jesus Name. Amen.

Review/Introduction:

I would like to praise the Lord for yet another privilege that God is granting us to come Your way today with this weekly teaching and weekly instruction in the Word of God. And as our brother has already introduced we shall continue with our series on personal instructions on the Man God Uses, a case study of Timothy: our text has been the book of Second Timothy and if you followed us till the last edition we have come as far as Second Timothy chapter 2 and verse 26.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS TO THE MAN GOD USES 8

This week we are going to begin by looking at Second Timothy chapter 3, we

are still looking at personal instructions that had been given to a man that God desires to use. And even as you listen along and as you study, my cry and my desire is that those things that were said to Timothy in his own time and which is so much relevant in our own age might mix with faith in your own heart and prepare you for a special service even in the Kingdom of God at a time like this.

I would like you to turn your Bibles with us to Second Timothy and chapter 3 and today we are going to study from verse 1 down quickly to verse 9

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these

also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was. 2Ti 3:1-9

I would like us to stop there. May God bless His word in Jesus Name. Amen.

Now! We have been looking at personal instructions that was given to Timothy in preparation for his ministry and we have seen several things that the Holy Spirit has given unto that young man in his own time during his own tutelage under brother Paul. Here we are today, we have gone through several aspects of instructions yet we are coming into another set of very, very crucial instructions that God was passing to Timothy in this chapter. We are trusting that as we again look at that, my prayer is that if in those days Paul was seeing the urgency of instructing Timothy about the perilous times that shall come; I believe that much more than then, even now, we need to instruct ourselves and we need to take heed unto the kind of time and the kind of days we are living in, for these are the last days.

Now I would like you to begin by looking at the way that chapter was introduced because some of the issues we are going to raise are very, very important and are hinging on the beginning of that chapter. Now it said

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2Ti 3:1

Now when the Bible says "This know also" it is as if "Yes! with many other things you have been instructed in, with many other things you have been told, with many other things you have been asked to run away from and to shun, with several other instructions that has been passed to your life, there is this also that you need to know! That you need not to be ignorant about and that you need not to take for granted."

Other versions of the Bible like the New American Version put it like this

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2Ti 3:1

The New International Version put it like this

But mark this... 2Ti 3:1

That is to say "Don't ever forget this, don't be surprised when they begin to happen, don't get confused when you begin to see it happening around you - Mark This!" You know when as a college student you go for a lecture, and your lecturer says 'Mark this,' you know that that is an important issue, you know that that is something that may come out in your exams, and because the teacher says 'mark this,' what do you do? You quickly take out your red pen, you quickly mark it or asterisk it so that anytime you are now beginning to study for the last time you quickly pick out those important sections that you have been told to mark out!

And I found the word of God say again, "Mark This!" It is as if - don't ever forget this, do not ever lose sight of this issue.

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2Ti 3:1

And if you look at that same Scripture as it is rendered in the Living Bible

You may as well know this Timothy that in the last days it is going to be very difficult to be a Christian. 2Ti 3:1

You, listening to us also, might as well notice this that in the last days it is going to be very, very difficult to be a Christian.

When I look at this particular verse in the present circumstances we find ourselves, you will be wondering what does the Scripture mean and what was Paul saying by inspiration? Especially when you consider the time we live in when it seems as if it is very, very easy nowadays to be Christian, when it seems in our country several people are trooping into the church, several people are trooping into any place you call a place of worship. And you see everybody with badges and bumper stickers on their cars with messages such as "This is my year of miracle," and all of those things! You might then wonder how could Paul say "In the last days it will be very, very difficult to be a Christian?"

While I want you to consider this kind of current background picture of things where I am speaking from - a background where now you see so many things professing Godliness. Now what is the difficult thing that Paul is speaking about the last days? If you go outside Nigeria and you go into some developed countries - the reality of this Scripture will start dawning on you because actually in these days in which we are talking, several people have turned away from the faith and it looks as if it is something terrible, something ridiculous to stand out boldly and declare that you are a child of God. But I want us to see what are the parameters – the matters being weighed, what are the characteristic features that

Paul is talking about concerning the end time! Let me finish reading the Living Bible translation that I started reading from - we will refer to several versions in the course of our study today as the Lord will help us

You may as well know this Timothy that in the last days it is going to be very very difficult to be a Christian. For people will love only themselves and their money, they will be proud and boastful, sneering at God, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful to them and thoroughly bad. They will be hardheaded, never give in to others; they will be constant liars and trouble makers and they will think nothing of immorality. They will be rough and cruel and sneer at those who try to be good. They will betray their friends, they will be hotheaded, puffed up with pride and prefer good times to worshipping God. They will go to church, yes, but they won't really believe anything they hear. Don't be taken in by people like that. 2Ti 3:1-5

I want us to stop in that verse 5 meanwhile.

Now! When the Bible says you must as well know this, and that you should mark this, it means that it is a sincere thing and a sure thing that will take place - it is a certainty; there is nothing you can do about it! They are the signs of the end times and I would like to study with you very quickly to see and to explore how some of those things are already happening even in our time and in our midst and in our churches and in our congregation so that if you desire actually to succeed in your Christian pilgrimage, and you want to be a man that God will use - I am not just talking about hi-jacking a title for yourself and creating a pulpit anyhow, and doing any kind of thing you would like to do - but if you truly want to serve God in a manner that when He appears you are sure to receive a crown from His hand, if you want to serve God in a manner that what you are doing will not get burnt on the day of reckoning, then you need to mark this!

You need to note this.

Maybe you are listening to this message in an unknown corner of the world and you yourself are unknown to anyone - and you have been striving to follow God, but when you lift up your eyes and you look at your environment, and you look

at people that claim to be Christians or even claim to be preachers, there is a lot of incongruencies, there is a lot of inconsistencies, there is a lot of conflict in their lives, in what they say in how they behave and in their general outlook! The Bible says "Don't be confused, mark this!"

Mark this - that in the last days, it would be quite, quite difficult - in fact very difficult to be a Christian! I remember that in the book of Luke chapter 18, the Lord Jesus Christ said, "When the Son of Man comes back will He find faith in the heart?" And you would be wondering why is Jesus asking such a question? It is because He saw the kind of apostasy, the kind of backsliding, the kind of compromise, the kind of contradiction and contamination, that will come into the doctrine of the Word of God in our time which is already here.

Now let's look at what the Word of God is saying, but ever before I go ahead, I want you to be aware that you might mistakenly think that what the Word of God is warning us about is going to be happening among those that never even profess Christianity! You might think that it is happening among those that never go to church, you might be thinking that it will be happening among those that

never spoke in tongues! But I want you to know that what will make this thing a very serious matter is because you will find each of these things among those who are professing themselves to be Christians!!! You will find these kinds of things going on again and again on our pulpits, on our platforms, in our churches, among the Pentecostals, the Charismatics, the Evangelicals and the Orthodox alike. And this is why you need to mark it: some people are already getting confused about their faith - I have seen some brothers who repented several years back who have been following the narrow path, I see them now changing! I see some of you abandoning the ancient landmarks because you have seen so many, many people broadening the narrow way and trying to make Christianity something of their own personal dream contrary to what the Word of God actually teaches, trying to undermine the basic issues of our faith and emphasising the peripheral issues - things that were never the emphasis or the focus of the men of old, men that went before us, men that fought the battle unto a finish! Some of you may be confused because you are not 'marking this' and that these are the signs of the end-times.

Now let's look at what the Holy Spirit is saying would be the sign, the marks, the features of the end-times: what are the kinds of things you are going to be seeing as days go by so that those of you that want to walk with God even though

you feel lonely - even though you feel as though you are being sidelined, it seems as if your own emphasis, your own Christian experience is looking outdated and outmoded and old-fashioned in the light of contemporary Christianity that brothers and sisters seem to be practising now. I want you to mark this so that your heart will not be confused, so that you will not be discouraged in the path that God has set for your feet.

Now! The Bible says

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2Ti 3:1

When we talk about perilous times - whereas you could think about it in terms of tribulation, in terms of persecution, in terms of difficulties - but I see serious perils, p-e-r-i-l-s! Considering what the Bible refers to here as perilous times, I want us to understand that when God sees contradictions coming from the pulpit, He regards it as a perilous experience! When men of God are beginning to tell lies on the pulpit, He regards it as a perilous time already! Some of you are not

understanding that we are already in a perilous situation where men can get on the pulpit and handle the word of God for personal gain. Men could tell lies just to collect money from your pockets! As far as heaven is concerned, God sees these things as perilous! He sees these things as terrible as far as following Jesus is concerned.

And it says 'because...' If you look at that verse 2

For men shall be lovers of their own selves... 2Ti 3:2

One of the very, very serious features of the last days which you need to mark is that men will become lovers of self, they will become utterly self-centred! Lovers of their own selves! And that is the first thing you notice - you notice that right in the Christian circle, the kind of selfless sacrificial service which we knew when we first believed - the kind of service that the Lord Jesus Christ showed us an example that we ought to lay down our lives for the benefit, for the progress, for the blessing of our fellow brethren is no more found now. We find

that everybody is struggling to project themselves, everybody is struggling to make it at the expense of the other person! These are the signs of the end-times.

The Bible says

For men shall be lovers of their own selves... 2Ti 3:2

You can imagine what I am talking about - when a pastor sees another pastor's church coming up and he decides right on the floor above that same church (say they are in the same building of many floors) - he targets that floor, pays the rent for it and places a very big loudspeaker outside his own church just to disturb and to attract and to even collect the members of the other brother's church! Why would you do that if not because you have become 'lovers' of yourself! You just felt that once yourself is succeeding, it doesn't matter what the other brother is going through! We have seen cases when members of a local church were snatched from another church and placed in the other church as leaders even without consulting with the other (now former) pastor!

Men shall be lovers of themselves!

There are several of you already in ministry now and you are feeling so bad, you are feeling so very bad, about the way you have been treated by your fellow brethren, even by fellow preachers and by fellow ministers. Some of you have been jilted and you are feeling that Oh! you have been cheated. Nowadays it looks difficult to do business even with somebody that professes to be born again than with a stark unbeliever because this so called born-again person is finding a way to cheat you - he only loves himself - he never thinks about how you are feeling!!!

Nowadays I hear people praying prayers and in their prayers they are executing people and killing them, simply because those people have offended them! And they are asking God to send fire and brimstone on their enemies. Now when the Scripture said - the Lord Jesus Christ particularly taught saying – “Love your enemies, do good to those who spitefully use you” and yet we see meetings, we see churches, we see ministries, we see pastors, we see preachers now are teaching and preaching on how to execute your enemies.

Now! These are all signs of the end times - men shall only love themselves!

For men shall be lovers of their own selves... 2Ti 3:2

Listen to me! Maybe you are aspiring to serve the Lord: this is an instruction the word of God says you should mark! That one of the things that would be happening in the end time, even the messages that come from the pulpit will only be messages that pamper self. Messages that promote self-pleasure, messages that make people feel comfortable in themselves - those are the kinds of things you will hear. And if you don't mark this, you may likely lose your ground, you may likely lose where God is sending you.

The word of God says..covetous..

Men will be covetous! They will be lovers of their money...2Ti 3:2

For people will love only themselves and their money... 2Ti 3:1 (The Living Bible)

They will be covetous!

There will be a very strong desire for acquisition - men will want to acquire properties upon properties upon properties! And these were things we associated with unbelievers in times past!! They are things we now find among Christians, things that we find among tongue talking believers. Lovers of money! Lovers of money!! They will be covetous, they will be desiring to amass wealth! Now! right from the rank and file of the church members, right to the rank and file of leaders they will find desire to make money. And it's like this will dominate the pulpit, this will dominate the preachings, this will dominate the activities. And so you see right now sometime you go for a crusade as a young man of God - one of the first matters that bother your heart is how to collect offering even before you preach to the unbelievers! You seem to love money more than the souls of men!!

You seem to regard the silver from their pockets more than their souls being surrendered to God.

And at this point I want to ask you - the Bible says if you want to be a man that God will use, you need to mark this! You need to mark that the desire for covetousness - a desire to amass wealth will be one of the signs of the end times. And so we see it everywhere now!! We see several things happening, we see churches becoming materialistic, we see desires to make money and to get a lot of things and so you see preachers dressing bogusly, they seem to have an unquenchable appetite for clothes and for material things. Some are beginning to wear bangles on their necks - and I am not talking of women - I am talking of men that are servants of God! They go all the way to love themselves and to pamper themselves - to spend so much on their physical appearance than what matters to God most: the condition of their hearts!

The Bible says in the end times men shall be. . .

...boasters.. 2Ti 3:1

I don't know how to put this to you my brother, but I want you to note that these are things that will be happening in the end times and it is already happening! In those days and even from Scriptures what you noticed was that all the men that served the Lord spoke less about themselves, they spoke less about what God was going to do through them and they spoke less about what God was doing through them - they pointed everybody, every audience, everyone that came to them to JESUS! You saw how John the Baptist said "Look! I must decrease, He must increase." You remember how Barnabas and Paul tore their clothes - they would not allow anybody to worship them, they would never allow anybody to put appellation on their necks!

But here in our generation we find boasters, b-o-a-s-t-e-r-s!! Men say big, big things about themselves! You only need to go and read posters that are written about preachers, you just need to go and read handbills that have been produced - you would think that somebody wrote it about these brothers. No! They are boasters - boasting about themselves, boasting about what they can do, boasting

about what they have done in times past! And the Bible said when a man boasts about a gift that is not there, he is like a cloud without rain - he gives false hopes and false impressions. Several men have been deceived, several such members have been dashed because their hopes were raised upon nothing. They are boasters now on the pulpit, men that speak so bogusly! This now looks like the mark of spirituality in our time, but I want to tell you that when God looks at that

He says "This is perilous!"

This is perilous!

And my friend if you desire actually for God to use you, look at the perilous thing that is going on in your life, look at the perilous things that are coming out of your mouth; see yourself boasting, boasting about yourself of things that you have not even done yet! See yourself speaking so big, so bogusly about yourself!

Now! As I bring this message to a stop for today, I want you to note that I have dealt with few things here as I looked at the fact that God says you should mark this - don't be surprised that in the end time you will see all these things! In the last days you will meet all these things, in the end time what we will discover is this kind of thing and it will not be happening in the market, it will not be happening among the complete unbelievers - it will be happening with those that claim to be Christians!

Men will be lovers of themselves...

They won't care even if they take another person to court in the name of Jesus, they won't care even if they execute somebody in their prayers because they have done something they don't like - these are all marks of the end-time and the Bible says these are the perilous times. God regards it as perilous! You may be regarding it as a normal thing, but heaven says these are the perilous times. It is a peril for a man of God to be boasting about himself, about the gifts of God in his

life, about the grace of God in his life, it is a perilous thing for a man to be covetous, for a preacher to come on the pulpit only for the money that he will collect, for a preacher to subjugate the word of God only to raise offering. Brother! It is perilous.

Action Point:

And I want to say to you - are you planning for God to use you in this end time? Are you planning for your head to wear the crown? Are you desiring that the spirit of God will see you through to the end and are you hoping to receive a welcome and a well-done from our Master Jesus? Then you need to mark this!

Or are you already fallen into some of this perilous things? Are you already following such kinds of men? The word of God says turn away from such. Turn away from such and bow your heart today and say "Lord! I don't want to be lost with the spirit of the end-time, I don't want to be carried away with what is happening in the end-time!" Many, m-a-n-y, that are first shall be last and those

that we never even recognise now, those that we have pushed backwards because we think that they are fake and old-fashioned, God is going to bring them up at the end of time.

I pray with you and I challenge you - Mark This!

Paul said to Timothy - Mark This! I also say to you - my friend, Mark This! Know this as well - upon all that you are knowing take note of this! If ever you fail in marking this, it will bring your downfall.

May God help you to take a definite step to run away from the spirit of the end time. God bless you.

Concluding Prayer:

Our Father we thank You for as many as You have touched this day and are coming back to you running from the perilous things that had trapped them we ask Lord that You will grant them grace this day - grace unto total repentance. Thank You that this You will do for we have prayed together in Jesus Name. Amen.

THE MAN GOD USES 14

This message was published for the 4th – 10th April 2011

TEXT: 2 Timothy 3:1-9

Opening Prayer:

Father we bless You once more, Father we give You all the praise we give you all honour and adoration; we thank You for the privilege You have given to us to look into the Living Oracles, Lord we ask that as we look into this Word let it mix with faith within us, and let it cause our hearts to draw closer to You in preparation for Your service even in this end-time.

Thank You Father for hearing us for in Jesus name we have prayed. Amen.

Review/Introduction:

Once more I want to give God the praise for the privilege He has given us to meet together on this broadcast, Living Seed. We thank God for how He has led us in the past several weeks looking at personal instructions unto The Man God Uses using the case of Timothy as an example. By our last discussion, we were looking at what Paul asked Timothy to mark and to take note of in his own life and in his own pilgrimage. As we studied we went through Second Timothy chapter 3 and we were only able to go half-way of verse 2.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS TO THE MAN GOD USES 9

Today again we would like to go on looking at what all servants of God must mark especially at this end-time - what any man any woman who wants to succeed in the work of ministry any man who wants to run the race unto a glorious end, anyone who does not desire to make a shipwreck in the middle of his or her journey, and in his life and in his service to the Kingdom of God, things that needed to be marked and to take note of! My prayer is that as this word comes to us and to you particularly today, you would take heed and actually take a step to mark these things in your life; and if you find any of it creeping into your character, you have to uproot them before they uproot you from the Kingdom of God.

Let's open our Bibles today as we look at Second Timothy chapter 3, I would still look at verse 1 quickly to verse 9

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of

godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was. 2Ti 3:1-9

Let's stop there, may The Lord bless His word into our hearts in Jesus Name.
Amen.

As we were looking at his passage in our last discussion, I pointed your attention to the first line of verse 1 that says

This know also O Timothy 2Ti 3:1

Another Bible version says

But mark this O Timothy there would be terrible times in the last days.. 2Ti 3:1

(NIV)

And I said to you that when God says something is perilous, when God says something is terrible for some of us we always thought of physical difficulty, we always thought in terms of physical persecution, but what I saw the Holy, Spirit pointing out as a difficulty of being a Christian is first of all conceptual - a doctrinal erosion that would creep into the work of God and into the church and would make genuine Christian living and faithful Christian living very very difficult and hard especially in our age.

And we began to see some of the parameters and features of the end-time i.) we

found out that most of the end-time believers would be lovers of themselves and if it is happening already in the church you can then imagine what would be happening in the world system: when men on the pulpit, men on the pews, men inside the sanctuary become lovers of their own selves, when they don't care what happened to the next brother - when they don't care that the ministry of another denomination, or church or brother breaks as long as their own is succeeding, when they don't care where they get their members even if you invite a brother to come and preach on your pulpit he doesn't care even if he takes half of your members away to start his own church next door to you.

Lovers of their own selves

We also note that one of the marks of the end-time Christian will be that they will be covetous, they will be lovers of money - they will be desirous of what they can make from the church, what they can make out of God's people. And so we notice that already we see these things coming into God's work, we see more emphasis on money - on what the man of God eats, what he wears and how bogus he appears, and all that you are seeing in recent times, the Bible says mark

them! Don't be surprised when they come your way, they are the parameters of the last days.

Men shall be boasters in these last days! A boaster you remember we said is a man that speaks louder than his life: a man who speaks louder than what God has done in his life!! Sometimes we call it faith confession, sometimes we refer to it as being very positive in our thinking but I would like you to note that when you go through Scriptures, men of faith - men who walked with God, men who believed God, men who trusted God - spoke less of themselves, spoke less of what God was going to do! They only believed God!! It was their works that God confirmed - the Bible says God confirmed their word with signs and wonders follow-i-n-g them, they never pursued it, they never advertised it, they never ran around and cajoled people, all they simply did was believe God - they were not boasters!! But nowadays we have a lot of men - boasters on the posters: we have a lot of men nowadays, a lot of young men, a lot of young women who appear so bogus, boasting about a gift that we actually don't find there!

So much has been done in our time that men are getting so disillusioned when

we lay claim about what God is saying unto us, some men prophesy as if they had sat with God to decide what God was going to do and yet all it is is an ordinary boast - boasting in the flesh. I want us to still go in that verse 2

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters... 2Ti 3:2

Now he went on to deal with

...proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy...2Ti 3:2

Again these are signs, these are parameters, these are features that you are going to see more and more in the end-time and if you want to serve God acceptably, if you want to follow after the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ, you just must mark this!!! You just must note this in your growth. That you will see many men who are proud - and I would like to spend just a little time on what it means to be proud. Apart from pride manifesting in physical exaggeration of one's sense of

importance, apart from pride manifesting in the way of outlook, pride also manifests in a spirit of un-teachability. Proud men are unteachable! Proud men can never seat under the teaching of any other! Again and again as we go into our churches, as we go into what we call the 'end-time move' which actually if you are tracking the Scriptures you will begin to discover that these are the end-time features - features of the perilous time God is talking about, we see these things. God regards it as perilous when the servant of God begins to be proud: when a servant of God can no longer seat down and receive a message for himself! You could see what is happening among the rank and file of our present day preachers, pride of life - pride of life!

Preachers making bogus statements without remembering that it is by the grace of God that we are what we are. Go into an average church - you will never see the pastor seating down under the instructions of anybody, he doesn't participate in the Sunday School anymore, actually he could seat down right in his office drinking tea waiting only for the time when the Sunday Service has gone half-way just to bounce on the pulpit and begin to preach. This is an element of arrogance that is coming in the end-time: it looks as if it is a sign of more confidence and boldness in the anointing, but Heaven only regards it and refers to it as pride of life! A proud man walks into the presence of God based on his

merit, thinking about what he has done in times past and how God must honour whatever he does. Now! I discover that this would more and more be the mark of the end-time church and which those of you that want to serve God in these days, those of you that want God to use you and want to last in the anointing, those of you that don't want to appear and disappear like the flower of the grass, you need to mark this: you need to mark pride coming into your life, you need to mark pride coming into your work, you need to mark pride coming into your ministry.

Are you a singer and God has blessed you with a good voice? The last time you sang you saw how God blessed people, but what are you trying to do now? You are adding a kind of element of arrogance, see how you are beginning to carry yourself, see the kind of statement you are making on the pulpit just before you give your special number: what is leading you to that? You seem to be saying so much beyond the grace of God in your life. Now mark this, if you want God to use you, if you want God to walk with you! God cannot walk with the proud and the scornful, there is this rule that every day of your life you must follow - humble yourself! Only those that humble themselves under the mighty hand of God will he lift up and exalt in due time, in due season.

But in the end-time, men will be proud - they will be proud of their work, they will be proud of their ministry, they will be proud of their exploits, they will be proud of even their church: we have met people that boast about the calibre of people that come to their church! Somehow they feel that because they are pulling crowd in the city that their church or their work or their ministry is actually better than those that God had particularly located and posted into the bush, into the villages, into the rural areas to go and labour for God among the people. Now! Men are migrating from their place of primary assignment into different places today because others are vaunting themselves, others are displaying themselves, others are exhibiting themselves as if there is something beyond the grace of God in their lives.

But the Bible says "Mark this!" Paul had to tell Timothy and he said "mark this:" whenever you see pride manifesting around you or manifesting in your heart, mark it - these are the perilous things that will begin to come in the end-time.

...proud, blasphemers... 2Ti 3:2

Men will be blasphemers. Now what do we mean by blasphemers? Men who speak words unadvisedly. Men who make statements, statements and more statements: they place themselves almost in the place of God!!! They say things that are unthinkable, things that men of old will never attempt to say! They say things usually just to promote themselves and make themselves look more important than God intended them to be!

Blasphemers!

People make great statements on the pulpit nowadays and because majority of their listeners don't read their Scriptures - majority of our people are lazy when it comes to searching Scriptures - they still hail you while you are saying blasphemous things, while you are saying things that are not congruent with the doctrine of the word of God! We still see people clapping for you when you are speaking blasphemies. Some years ago a man of God stood up and was trying to defend a narrow position that he was standing upon, instead of humbling himself,

he stood up and said "Well, when Jesus said if anybody should slap you on the right cheek you should turn your left, that He said that when He was a junior prophet!" That was a blasphemy and yet you see human beings, our church members, they take that as a bold statement of faith! Are you noting yourself saying things that are not in the Scriptures? Are you beginning to make bold statements that are contrary to the will of God? Are you becoming a blasphemer? These are the marks of the end-time, these are the features of the last days!

Now! Look at the next thing the Bible talks about there

...disobedient to parents... 2Ti 3:2

And I want to look at it in various ways. Apart from in the world system when we see so many children nowadays walking out on their parents refusing the instruction and the admonition of their parents, also you come into the church and you find spiritual parenting is being flouted! Several people have no reverence for their disciplers - men that God used to raise them up! They walk out on their leaders. Some have broken away simply because they are refusing to

abide by the discipline of their spiritual parents. Maybe you are listening to me today - you ran away from where God has placed you, you have disobeyed your spiritual parents, men that brought you up in the Lord, men that brought you unto the level of understanding of where you have now reached, you have rebelled against them. You are disobedient to them - they have told you not to do something and you went ahead and did it! They have told you to soft-pedal on certain aspects of life and you are still going strong on that same thing! These are the marks of the end-time! I know that you are pulling a crowd, I know you are drawing a crowd (of ignorant people) but as far as God is concerned, He looks at you as a perilous fellow! God looks at what you are doing as very, very perilous.

...unthankful... 2Ti 3:2

These are men that take the grace of God for granted and in the last days we would see more of that, we would see men that their appetite is so large that nothing can easily satisfy them: they are not appreciative of little, little mercies that God has sent into their lives!

And I am asking you a question today, are you thinking so bogusly and so big about yourself that even little helps that God sends into your life never meets any appreciation in your heart anymore? The Bible says men will be unthankful - they will think it is their rights. Unthankful! And this is what we find nowadays - we find men becoming quite, quite unthankful - unthankful to God. Even unthankful to men, unthankful to brethren! They take things for granted.

..unholy... 2Ti 3:2

One of the marks of the end-time is un-holiness: men will become unholy! Whereas the Scripture that we all learnt says "As many as name the Name of Christ, let them depart from iniquity." but you see the message about sin, about sanctification, about living in holiness will continue to grow more and more scarce in the end-time because men can no longer endure sound doctrine! Their desire is actually for self pleasure and any church, any congregation where sin is not a matter to preach against, where you can live carelessly, you can dress

anyhow, you can talk anyhow, you can live anyhow and nobody confronts you with the matter of sin and with the matter of holiness - you find thousands trooping there! You find several lives enjoying that place once you can put in disco music in the name of worship and once there is nothing that curbs a man from living in fornication!

The Bible says one of the marks you will notice in the end-times is un-holiness: men shall be unholy! Pastors living and sleeping with church members! Some have impregnated members of their choir, some have impregnated their church secretaries! They have even sponsored their members to go and abort and yet they will come up and preach very boldly, they will preach very powerfully, you will seem to see a kind of anointing flowing: these are the things that will mark the end-time, these are the things you need to mark! Maybe as a young man or as a preacher, you are saying "Well, you see Reverend So-and-So is doing this kind of thing and power is still moving with him." The Bible says 'Mark This!' - these are things that will make Christianity perilous in the end-time, these are the kinds of things that will make it more difficult for you to stand on the narrow path. When you see un-holiness in men's lives and yet they are thriving on the pulpit, you see un-holiness and yet these are deacons and elders in the church; you see un-holiness and these are men and women that are holding strong positions right in the sanctuary.

But the Bible says "Mark This!" Verse 3 says

Without natural affection... 2Ti 3:3

That is they don't have any feeling, you see

They will be without natural human affection, callous and inhuman version? 2Ti
3:3

You see this very much in the world system yet you come to see it also right in the church. People break their engagements, they break their covenants, without thinking of what they are doing to the heart of the other person.

Without natural affection... 2Ti 3:3

Men never think again about how does Jesus feel and how does that brother or that sister feel: this action I am taking - this thing I am doing, how I am behaving - how does the other person feel? These are things you will see more and more as you get into churches, as you get into congregations, you will see these kinds of things. You will see men struggling - there are times even on the prayer line, on the anointing line - you see men pushing other men, stampeding others, pushing them out just because they are without natural affection! The things that Jesus Christ taught us, the issues that Jesus Christ raised in the attitude of being a Christian are things that are no more regarded - things that are no more given attention even in the sanctuary!!!

...truce breakers... 2Ti 3:3

Covenant breakers - you can't rely on their "Yes!" They say Yes today and by tomorrow they say "Well, that's not what I mean, it depends on the context of my Yes." And yet we know that if a man is walking with Jesus his Yes must be Yes and his No must be No! But in the end-time you have truce-breakers, men that you cannot depend upon! You can't take them for their word, you can't depend upon their promises; very soon they break it! They tell you we are going to do this, we are going to work like this but they break their promises! They break their promises, they break it between themselves and their wives, they break their promises to the people that work with them, and even in church - even in ministry, Christian ministry!! Truce breakers. You that say I am going to serve God under this man of God and your senior pastor has sponsored you somewhere and as soon as the church begins to succeed or seem to have a breakthrough - what did you do? You broke away, you broke your covenant, you broke your agreement! You are doing something else now. Even though people may be singing about you, they may be regarding you as a man of God the Bible looks at what you are doing as a peril, the Holy Spirit regards what you are doing as a peril: one of the perils of the end time - that a man of God cannot be trusted, a man of God cannot be taken for his word!! There are some of you listening to me here, parents have entrusted their daughters into your hand as a man of God, you have impregnated them! And instead of coming out to confess, to tell the truth, what are you doing? I see you telling lies, I see you hiding away and going

further and running away, and doing something else! And you are still preaching!! You are a truce breaker, you are no more a trust-worthy person.

Now! These are the things you are going to find in the end-time. I have met people that are wearing the collar of a man of God, and yet they do terrible things. Some of them are pushing drugs! And so you get to the borders, you get to the embassies, and you are embarrassed if you say you are a man of God they say "Check him very well!" Why? Because men of God are become truce-breakers.

These are the marks of the end-time. And the Bible says "O Timothy, mark this!" I don't know your name as you are listening to this message but if you are going to make it in the end-time, if you want to be a man that God will depend upon, if you are a man that God would use - you need to mark this! You need to mark these issues that you will see more and more around you.

..false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good...2Ti 3:3

Now! These are the issues. Even those that are trying to follow the narrow way you constitute yourself into men that make jest of those that are walking in righteousness, of those that are living and trying to follow the pattern of Jesus. You now make them look outdated, you make them look old fashioned. These are the things that will happen in the end-time! Those that decide to be humble, never to speak of themselves, are easily taken for granted and are regarded as weaklings - they are regarded as men that don't know what to do!

These are the things!

And as a young man who wants to serve God, even as an old man who has been serving God maybe you are contemplating backsliding, I want you to mark this! I want you to note that in the end-time these are issues you are going to find. We are told of

Traitors, heady, highminded...2Ti 3:4

They are always thinking high. High-minded

...lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 2Ti 3:4

Yet these men

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: 2Ti 3:5

They have a form of godliness - they speak good things, they speak bogusly,

they speak powerfully! But yet when you get into their lives, there is nothing there! There is no power of righteousness - the force of righteousness has been denied. Now listen! The Bible says "Mark This!!!"

Action Point:

If you have been caught up in the spirit of the end-time, what do I say to you? You need to repent. You need to bow your head right now and say "Jesus, don't let the spirit of the end-time sweep me away, don't let me be carried away, don't let me run in vain." And I believe that as you bow your head today either you are fallen or you are about to fall or you are just a man that God is instructing in the path of righteousness - mark this!

Bow your head and make a covenant with God and say "Lord, while others are swept away, I will not give up my faith, I will not allow myself to be swept out, I will not allow myself to be contaminated with the spirit of the end-time!" And as you pray, I know God will stand by you - there are still men that are following this narrow path, if you look for them you will find them. And I know that the

Holy Spirit will sustain you as you pray and as you take a decision even now in
Jesus Name. Amen

Concluding Prayer:

Our Father we thank You greatly for pointing out these things in our own lives,
there are many out there O Lord who are repenting and coming back to you, we
ask that Lord the spirit of the end-time will not sweep them but they will stand
today in the Name of Jesus. Amen

THE MAN GOD USES 15

This message was published for the 11th – 17th April 2011

TEXT: 2 Timothy 3:4-9

Opening Prayer:

Father we want to give you praise once more for your faithfulness, thank You for how you have been giving us opportunity and privilege even to look into Your word together with our brothers and sisters, our friends and listeners everywhere. God we ask even today again that You will open Your word unto us and cause it to mix with faith in our hearts preparing us for the Master's use.

Thank You Father for we have prayed together in Jesus Name. Amen.

Review/Introduction:

We want to praise God once more for the privilege of studying the Word of God together on this program Living Seed. We have been on Second Timothy chapter 3 in continuation of our study on the personal instructions unto the man God uses.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS TO THE MAN GOD USES 10

Today we are going to look specifically at Second Timothy chapter 3 and we will

read verses 5 to 9,

that would help us to end the issue that God says we should mark if we want to succeed in the matter of our walk with God and in the matter of ministry. Let me read from verse 4 of that Scripture so that we could have a link

Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was. 2Ti 3:4 -9

May God bless His word into our hearts in Jesus Name. Amen.

While we kept looking unto the personal instructions that God was passing unto us using the letter that was written to Timothy by our brother Paul as issues that each one of us has to pay close attention to in preparation for God's use, we are confronted with things that those of us that are already serving God or those of us that are listening to me and are desiring to find a place in the Kingdom of God and in the service of God, things the word of God says we should mark! And as a continuation of where we stopped in our last discussion on this matter, I would ask us now to look at what God says in verse 5. I would like to read that verse from different versions very quickly.

They will go to church, yes, but they won't believe anything they hear. Don't be taken in by people like that! 2Ti 3:5 (The Living Bible)

They will maintain a facade of "religion", but their conduct will deny its validity.

You must keep clear of people like this. 2Ti 3:5 (Phillips Modern English)

For [although] they hold a form of piety (true religion), they deny and reject and

are strangers to the power of it [their conduct belies the genuineness of their profession]. Avoid [all] such people [turn away from them]. 2Ti 3:5 (Amplified Bible)

Now! When the word of God was saying to Timothy that he must mark these things that will come in the end time, the Holy Spirit wanted us to remember that while we talk about all that will be happening, most of it will be happening under the facade of religion. The Bible says they will have a form of Godliness but they will deny the power thereof - their lives, their conducts will deny the power of godliness.

We know that the end of the faith is to make men live righteous, is to make men live above sin, is to make men exhibit a character that befit those that call on the Name of the Lord! But the Bible says one of the things that we will see in the end time is that we will have men holding a form of Godliness, men holding a facade of religion - very active, very zealous - but the only thing by which you will know that their life is not correct is that when you go close to them, when you check their conduct, when you check their lifestyle, you will find they deny the

power of the gospel, they deny the authority of the word of God! Their lives deny what the word of God was actually meant to achieve in the lives of those that have listened to the message. The Bible said they will come to church quite alright, they will listen to the message of the word of God quite alright, but they won't really believe anything they hear! They will just take it for granted, they will take church as a social service. There are so many people in our congregations today, in all our churches, several people that only go there for social reasons. They only attend church just to fulfill all righteousness, others go in there just to catch a girl that they want to marry, others join the choir because they have seen a man that they are pursuing - all of these will be progressing in the end time! But look at what the word of God now says,

...from such turn away. 2Ti 3:5

I would like to stay on this matter with you now! I want to say that if you are ever going to succeed in your faith, if you are ever going to accomplish the purpose of God for your life, if you are ever going to make a full-proof of your ministry and of your call, you must stay away from men who profess Godliness

but their lives is a complete denial of it! You must stay away from hypocrites - those who pray, who shout but their character is far from that which Jesus Christ has shown us to live by, with His own example.

The Bible said these kind of men, if you go on to verse 6, let's look at verse 6

For among them are those who worm their way into homes and captivate silly and weak-natured and spiritually dwarfed women, loaded down with [the burden of their] sins [and easily] swayed and led away by various evil desires and seductive impulses. 2Ti 3:6

These weak women will listen to anybody who will teach them]; they are forever inquiring and getting information, but are never able to arrive at a recognition and knowledge of the Truth. 2Ti 3:7 [(Amplified Bible)

I thank God for the way the Holy Spirit is bringing these Scriptures out! It says when we talk of these men that creep into houses, they creep into communities, they creep into church organisations - how do they go in? The Bible says they lead captive silly women, people that are weak natured, people that are spiritually dwarfed, those that are loaded down with the burden of their past sins, those that are easily swayed and led away by various evil desires and seductive impulses. It is not as if the word of God is trying to look down upon women, but you will notice that when you look at the trend of things in the end-time, most of the people that are swept away by people with sweet tongues are women and they are led captive by these men that have very wonderful and powerful language. They know how to speak - they are orators - they know how to propagate their things because they are like sales-men - businessmen - who know how to speak wonderful things! When you look at their advertisement; it is so wonderful, you will think that they are selling a kind of soap not knowing that it is the gospel that they are trying to preach!

Now! If you look at the word of God very closely, it says these are men who worm their way, who creep into houses, who creep into homes, who creep into families! And as I am preaching now, there are so many men who have lost their

wives to so called prophets, there are so many women who have lost their husbands to so many prophetesses, who crept into your houses. There are even prophets that told your wife that if they don't help you sleep with your wife, you will not have a baby boy! And your wife has already fallen into that trick - the man of God is now sleeping freely with your wife!!

These are issues the Bible says you should mark: they are all issues of the end time! The Bible says these are men that are ever learning, but they are never able to come to the knowledge of the truth!!

2Ti 3:8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

These are men whose conscience have been seared with hot iron and it looks as if they don't ever read Scriptures: actually it is not as if they don't read, they read it but with a corrupt mind! Their minds are already corrupted, their minds are

already dwarfed - their mind is already swerved to one side! They can't see the word of God objectively again - they open Scriptures and once it is money they are looking for, there is no passage they cannot convert to raise money from your pocket! Now the Bible says "From such turn away"

..from such turn away. 2Ti 3:5 .

Any man, any woman whose life's conduct is not congruent with the Word of God, turn away from him! Stop clapping for him, run away with your life so that you don't get trapped in their sugar-coated arrangement, so that you don't become their captive!

While we talk about all the issue that will come in the end time, I want you to note particularly what verse 9 says

But they shall proceed no further... 2Ti 3:9

They shall proceed no further! It might appear as if these people are making waves, it might appear as if O! they are pulling crowds, it might appear as if Yes, they are the ones that are becoming popular, I want you to hear the word of God: it says

But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men...2Ti 3:9

Some of you are not too old, you have already seen churches that sprang up from the blue - from nowhere - and they became the talk of the town! And in less than five years you don't hear anything about them again because you see whatsoever is started without the foundation of the Word of God and not on the

principles of the truth of the word of God - it shall not last. The Bible says

But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men...2Ti 3:9

Their successes will be short-lived. Some of you are shivering because you think they are going somewhere but the Bible says "they shall proceed no further." Are you a pastor and you are beginning to consider compromising the correct stand God has given you in the word of God because it looks as if your progress is quite slow, because it appears as if your church is not fast growing as you see other churches around you and you are beginning to want to import some of those things they say? Listen to the word of God

But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men...
2Ti 3:9

The emptiness, the deceit will soon be made manifest. I just want you to watch it, give it a little more time, you will soon hear such voices no more. You will soon discover that Yes, all the façade; God is going to tear it open! Several men that you thought were moving under the power of God, you won't know that some of them are using juju power somewhere - all these the Bible says shall not proceed any further. And if you are here as a young man, why must you go down with those that are going into destruction? Why must you fall out with those that are falling out? Your life is still so young, why won't you invest it in the things that are eternal? Why wouldn't you settle down very quickly to study the word of God and find out what the will of God for your life is? Find out what the Lord will have you do in your life time and see the pattern and the instruction that the Holy Spirit has given to every man that ever walked with God - yours cannot be different! I want you to know that we are serving the same Lord - the same God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of Elijah, the God of Elisha, the God of Daniel is still the same God we serve. The Lord that Peter served, the God that Paul served is the same God that you have come to serve, why do you think God will change His own standard?

I want to put it to you today- don't be confused! The Bible says from such men turn away, from such loud-mouthed man, turn away! Because they shall proceed no further; please take note of this instruction today, they shall proceed no further! There is no-way wickedness, lies, hypocrisy and falsehood will proceed, the truth of the Word of God must prevail: the Bible says heaven and earth will pass away but not a jot, not a tittle of God's Word will go unfulfilled. And I want you to mark this. Mark this! The Holy Spirit was instructing Timothy and said "Timothy, mark this: they shall proceed no further!" Jannes and Jambres didnt go far even though they withstood Moses, they died and perished in the wilderness: they pulled a lot of crowd - I remember that they pulled a lot crowd, I remember that they got some people behind themselves and they withstood Moses and they said "Yes! We are going back to Egypt" but none of them survived the wilderness. All of them actually perished, all of them were buried alive.

And I want to say to you today - even in our time, error will not prevail! Error will not proceed. It pains me that some of you that are genuine, several of you that have been labouring and serving God in sincerity, you have suffered, you have persevered for the faith, why would you drop your crown? Why would you drop that which God has placed in your hand because you see men and women around you deviating into error and it seems as if they are making it? You see

them riding their big, big cars and you are saying "O, this God I am serving - has he not forgotten me?" I want to say to you "He has not forgotten you!" Those men that you thought were going somewhere are actually going nowhere

But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men...2Ti 3:9

And friend, before I leave that verse, I would like you to look at that Scripture very very closely: the foolishness of Jannes and Jambres was actually made known to all men - soon the people that they were deceiving saw the emptiness, they saw the deceit in their lives and in their behavior!! I want to say to you - you cannot deceive the congregation for long, my friend! You cannot live under a facade forever, it will soon be exposed, your deed will soon be made manifest!

Are you the one deceiving young women, young sisters in your fellowship? You have deceived them you have cajoled them and you are seating on their lives.

You are not allowing them to be exposed to the truth of the Word of God, you bind them from hearing any other thing apart from your narrow doctrines! The word of God says your folly shall be made manifest. Your foolishness shall soon come out! You can't hide it for long! The only thing I say to you is this - you have an opportunity to repent, you have an opportunity to turn away, you have an opportunity to turn around and make your life right with God: you don't need to be disgraced before God would have mercy on you! You don't have to lose all the grace of God because you are living in hypocrisy before you can repent.

The Bible says just as the foolishness of Jannes and Jambres were made manifest so also will the foolishness and the misbehaviors of these men also shall be made manifest. Now before I conclude here today because I want us to stop in verse 9 trusting God that we will come back in the next episode to discuss what must we focus upon if we want to succeed in ministry, if we want to succeed in what God is telling us. I want to remind you as I conclude today that even though you have men left and right holding a form of Godliness and when you come close to their lives you can't see any reality, the Bible says from such turn away because bad company spoils good character!

And I want to say to you my friend - the man you move with, the man you fellowship with is going to affect your life! Are you moving with men of dubious character? Are you ranking your life with men who don't have integrity? Are you walking with men who are double tongued who say something on the pulpit and they do something-else in their bedrooms? The Bible says, from such turn away! If you want to succeed in your life-time and if you want God to walk with you, if you want the glory of God to bust forth on your life - mark those men that you company with! Mark those men that you listen to! Mark those men that you have made your mentors! If a wrong man mentors your life, if a wrong man monitors your life, if a wrong man is the one that you have made your role model, you will soon become wrong in your own life as well. And for those of you that are feverish, thinking that if you don't follow their path you are not going to make it, the Bible says "they shall proceed no further."

This is a very, very strong word - they shall proceed no further!

And I also say to you boldly today every man that is living wrong, every man that is thwarting the word of God, every man that is living a double life and

keeping double standard - a different life on the pulpit, a different life in the family; a different life in the community and a different life in the business office - such men the Word of God says shall not proceed any further. The Bible said righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach to any man, if you are here listening to me and you find yourself living dubiously, the truth of the Word of God is that you are not going to progress, you are not going to proceed; whatever you are putting together; even if you are beginning to build very powerful and wonderful cathedrals, that doesn't mean you will last - the truth of the matter is that that thing can become empty tomorrow. We have heard and we have known of people that shook our country many years back, they are not yet dead but they have become unknown today; it's not because they are dead but you see the things that they secretly practised have been made manifest, the men that they have deceived can no longer be deceived because they have seen the truth!

And I say to you: how long will you deceive men? Are you a prophet, God has not spoken to you at all and you are simply using common sense and psychology to confuse men - your foolishness will soon be made manifest my friend! Are you a preacher, are you an evangelist, you go about making bogus statements - what is not true, you claim they happened; little things that happened, you exaggerate them. Your foolishness will soon be made manifest! Why can't you

come down to the word of God, why can't you come down on your knees and say "Father, I don't want to go in this wrong path anymore."

And maybe you are a young man - young in ministry - you have just entered into the work of God, and the people you are patterning your life after are these men that tell lies, you know it's a lie! When you move close to them, they say "If we don't tell the church like that, they will not give - they will not give!" and that is why you are also beginning to learn how to tell lies, how to exaggerate, how to take photographs in the market and sending it abroad to go and raise money - fictitious money! O you go and impose your picture on a picture of a large crowd - a crowd that you have never seen in your lifetime - and yet you go and present it so that people may think that that is how big your work is! It will soon be made manifest: you can deceive men for a time but it can't be forever.

And brother I want to ask you, my sister I want to ask you - have you been led captive? Come out. Come out!! The Bible says "From such turn away." From such do what? Turn away! Turn away!! You cannot live like that, you cannot walk like that, you cannot company with wrong men and hope to arrive at a

correct place in eternity!

The Bible says

But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men...2Ti 3:9

This message is quite a very serious message to our hearts - that these men shall proceed no further! Unrighteousness will not proceed any further! Falsehood may not proceed any longer, compromise will not proceed any longer! The truth of the word of God will prevail: it has always prevailed and it will still prevail even in our generation.

As I begin to ask you to consider in your heart and to spend some definite time this hour to pray, I want you to check. Check your life right now - the things that

were told Timothy to mark, could you mark them in your life? Are you beginning to become lovers of yourself? Are you beginning to be lovers of money - are you covetous? Are you already in the ministry for what you will get? Are you overexcited when big people come to the church, that is when your eyes open because you are only looking at how you are going to hook what is in their pockets and not necessarily to hook their hearts unto repentance from sin?

This moment I want to challenge you - you will not proceed any further than that. Return back to your God at this moment - bow your head and bow your knees and say "Lord, help me - don't let me go in this way, this was the way that Balaam went, Balaam died a soothsayer, this was the way Gehazi went and he collected the leprosy of the leper, this was the way that Esau went, this was the way that Judas Iscariot went, they are all living in regret today!" I say to you today - God is giving you another chance, God is saying mark this! This is a personal instruction to you if you want to succeed, this is a personal instruction to you if you want to serve God and if you want to be a man that God can depend upon, you must mark this.

Action Point:

As our brother prays with you and as he brings you to God, don't hide anything! If you have already fallen just confess and God will have mercy on you. And if you are about to follow a wrong man why don't you stop it, the Bible says "From such men, turn away!" And I also say to you - from such men, from such preachers, from such compromisers, turn away!

And God will help you in the Name of Jesus.

Concluding Prayer:

Our Father we thank You again for being so clear to us, we want to ask O God for as many of Your people as are bowing to You and crying, praying that You forgive their wrong past and all that they have done wrong in the name of the gospel, we ask that today O Lord You will forgive them and strengthen them again and help them to plant their feet on the old path. Thank You that this You would do for we have prayed together in Jesus Name. Amen.

THE MAN GOD USES 16

This message was published for the 18th – 24th April 2011

TEXT: 2 Timothy 3:10-13 & Philippians 4:11-13

Opening Prayer:

Almighty God we bless You, we worship You for this privilege and the opportunity we have to look into Your word, and to enter into the living oracles.

Our Father as we gather around this message together with all our listeners, we pray Lord that You will speak to us, and we pray Lord that Your word will come forth with grace, and that this Word will mix with faith in our hearts and help us to grow thereby becoming a man that is thoroughly furnished even for every good work and in your hand.

Thank You Father for hearing us, in Jesus Christ's Name we have prayed.
Amen.

Review/Introduction:

I want to thank you once more and thank God with you for the privilege He has granted you to be with us on this program again. Living Seed. And as our brother has already mentioned, today again we shall continue with our studies on personal instructions to the Man God Uses. We have used the example of the man Timothy and the Second Letter of Paul unto Timothy as our basic text.

Today we shall continue as we turn our Bibles to Second Timothy chapter 3, and we are going to read quickly today from verse 10 to verse 13. You will recall that in our last study where we are told that no matter the progress we have seen about foolishness, about compromise, about careless and loose living and double-tongue of the men of our day that they shall proceed no further.

THINGS TO CONCENTRATE UPON IN ORDER TO SUCCEED IN THE DAYS OF APOSTASY 1

Today we want to consider what must we concentrate on, what are the things that Timothy was exhorted to concentrate upon in order to succeed in the days of apostasy, in the face of mass compromise in the day he was to develop. And as we study these things, it is my prayer that the Holy Spirit will illuminate each one of us, and give you light and direction for your own personal life and for your ministries and whatsoever God is calling you to do in His church.

Can we please read from verse 10?

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. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. 2Ti 3:10-13

I would like us to stop there, may the Lord bless His Word into our hearts in the Name of Jesus Christ.

Today I have identified as we look at verse 10, verse 11 and verse 12 what God expects each one of us to focus and concentrate our lives upon even as we desire to seek to be used of God in our generation. And I discover that some of the issues the Holy Spirit is pointing out in these few verses are becoming more and more obscure in our age but they are issues that God is recommending to any

man who will survive in these days of apostasy, in these days of mass backsliding - in these days which the Bible refers to as perilous times.

Would you please walk with me as we go back to that verse 10? Let's look at it very closely as we progress. The first thing that I would like to again draw your attention to is the first 2 words in verse 10, it says

But thou... 2Ti 3:10

Again as we kept looking at the book of Second Timothy, I've always noticed that at every point, God kept reminding Timothy that he is a personality! That he has a unique identity and he cannot afford to get it lost in the midst of the multitude. And also I want to point to you my brother and my sister as you listen to me today, for you to become something in the hand of God, you have to distinguish yourself from the multitude: you have to be different! You must learn to mark out a path for your feet; it may not be popular, it might not be the

majority, it might not be the popular side but you must be able to identify the way of Jesus Christ and deliberately and with boldness take a step to walk on it.

So I notice in verse 10, he said "But thou..." just like he had said "Thou therefore my son..." He kept saying that all through Scripture - if you look at Second Timothy chapter 2 verse 15 he said "Study to show your own self..." As if to say to Timothy "others can go wrong, others can compromise -- others can do such - but you cannot!" And so the first challenge is that in the midst of general backsliding, can you be a separate man? Can you stand to be counted for Jesus? Can you dare to stand alone? Can you dare to stand almost in the minority and identify with the word of God and identify with the narrow path? Can you dare to be a different fellow? When they describe "the Jannes" and "the Jambres" and all the men of our time that have compromised, can they say "Ah! ...but.. This brother ...but.. This pastor ...but.. this evangelist, ...but.. this preacher, ...but.. this elder, ...but.. this deacon, ...but.. that sister?" Can they say you are different?

The Bible says

But thou.. 2Ti 3:10

So let's look at a few things that the Holy Spirit would want us to focus our lives on in order to survive and in order to progress with God even in the days of compromise in which we are living in. The number 1 thing is that Paul said

But thou hast fully known my doctrine... 2Ti 3:10

This is a very, very essential matter if you want to be a man that can become dependable in our generation. The Bible says "But thou hast fully known my doctrine..." Now, when we talk about doctrine we are talking about the complete counsel of God, the complete teaching of the Word of God. One of the things that will cause you to stand, and stand well and stand uncontaminated in the end time

as a young man that would like God to use you - or as a brother in the Lord or as a pastor - you need to fully know and understand what is the Lord's doctrine: what does Jesus Christ stand for!

I discover one terrible thing in our generation especially in this end time church, one of the things I found is that many of us are so allergic unto doctrine. Once anybody is talking about doctrine I hear you say "No, No, No don't bring any doctrine here, we don't preach doctrine!" And yet when you go through the Scriptures and you go to study the Acts of the Apostles from chapter 2, one of the clear things we noticed is that as soon as the converts were brought to the Lord, the Bible said that they stood in the Apostles doctrine! They came and learnt and sat and studied the Apostle's doctrine!

Church can never be built on sporadic preachings!! Church can never be built on extemporaneous or extemporaneous preaching - preachings that are not organised! Church can never be built on preachings that are not based on the solid doctrines of the Word of God! There are so many churches today when you ask them what is your doctrine you find out that actually they don't have any! The man of God just stands up and he takes half of a Bible verse and he preaches over and over and over again. I have seen young men say Yes! God has anointed them to go and preach one Bible verse!!! Now, if you don't want to be swept away in

these days in which we are living, you must also fully know and understand what is the doctrine of Jesus, what is the doctrine of the Apostles, what is the doctrine of our Elders - what is the doctrine on which the church was founded and founded!

He said

But thou hast fully known my doctrine... 2Ti 3:11

How will you understand what we mean when we are talking about doctrine? One of the things I need to say to you is that a doctrinal study is not necessarily an excitement! I discover that one of the problems we have faced in our present day church is that the only thing we seek is to meet the temporary needs of our church members - we are only looking for something that can excite them, excite their faith - for them to seek healing, for them to seek prosperity, or to seek break-through, or to seek victory over one demon or the other. And so most of what we preach whether on Sunday, on Wednesday, on Saturday, on Friday are

all exhortation. They are all simple, simple challenges! Nobody is giving attention again to doctrinal study. A doctrinal study doesn't have to be exciting. A doctrinal study most of the time is a study of Biblical facts - sequentially ordered - truth that will need to be discovered even if it is not immediately applicable to our situation!

Now! The Bible says when the Jesus Christ was sending His disciples He said "Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you." That is what we call the doctrine. Now! In order to be a versatile man in the hand of God, you must fully understand, you must fully recognise, you must fully know the doctrine! Paul said to Timothy

But thou hast fully known my doctrine... 2Ti 3:10

My brother, my sister: how much of the doctrine of Christ do you know? How much of the doctrine of the New Testament church have you understood? How much of the doctrine of the Word of God have you, yourself, personally sat down

to study and to grasp? What the Bible says about the judgment of God, about the holiness of God and about God's own demand on the believer - how much of it have you known? Unfortunately today we have so many novices in the church, so many novices that are already pastoring and leading but who have not studied the word of God for themselves - there are some passages, there are some books of the Bible's 66 books that they have not known about and they don't know where it is. And they are already on the pulpit! They are already leading, they are already founders and presidents of ministries!

Some have only one testimony - a testimony of how they were delivered from the power of darkness and from demons and that is all they are preaching about! That is the only basis, the only reason why they have started their church or their ministry! How could you survive when you yourself don't understand what is the Biblical doctrine? The Bible says one of the things Timothy was instructed to pursue is the knowledge of the doctrine, if you remember in First Timothy chapter 4 when Paul was first of all instructing Timothy, he said to him and I want you to read now from verse 13

Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. 1Ti 4:13

Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. In order to be a man that God can use, a man that is not ashamed of God's work, a man that rightly divides the word of truth, you must fully know, you must fully understand, you must have been able to fully grasp what is the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, what is the doctrine of the Apostles, what is the doctrine of the elders, what are the foundation pillars on which the body of Christ, the church of Jesus Christ was built, what are the issues that are central to our faith! These are the doctrinal studies.

I have gone through several church's and denomination's books and I found that once we start talking about doctrine, a lot of our young men, a lot of our recent preachers just become apathetic - you just notice that they have lost interest; they say "No, No, No we don't like doctrine here! Just give us a message that can stir up the people!" But all those stirrings that have no foundation upon the Word of God cannot last! Emotionalism as good as it is in religion, in Christian faith, is not the basis on which the church can be built. If you are listening to me today and all that you have built your work upon is excitement, you have built your

church on music, on dancing; you have built your work on mere prophecy – extemporaneous and extemporaneous prophecies, you have built the work of God that you are doing on feelings, on visions, on dreams that some people keep bringing Sunday service after Sunday service, and you govern the work of God on all such kinds of things that are not founded on the strong word of God, on the doctrine of the word of God, I want to say to you - that work cannot stand! When storms come, when rain descends, when the winds blow - surely it will blow it off! And that is maybe why several people are being blown about with every wind of doctrine.

Several times I listen to people - wonderful preachers - I see them mixing the covenants! I see them mixing the word of God: sometime you see some new, new things that people are bringing on our platform, on our altars today and nobody is there to challenge it because they have also not fully known the doctrine! Paul said

But thou hast fully known my doctrine... 2Ti 3:10

You see many people emphasise the issue of doctrine at the expense of life! But here you see the balance in this verse of Scripture where Paul said

But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life...2Ti 3:10

And that is the second thing that every man of God, every servant of God, every preacher must study and fully know- what is that? The manner of life.

The manner of life: the manner of life of the Lord Jesus Christ, the manner of life of the Apostles, the manner of life of our patriarchs, the manner of life of the elders that have gone ahead of us. Now! If only we will seat down, and study the doctrine, and study the manner of life - the conduct of life - the way they conducted their lives, the way they went about their lives, the way they went

about living the life they lived, our own lives will not be different! Our own conducts will not be so different!! But what I discover several of us do nowadays is we just pick words from the mouth of the Apostles, and we decidedly ignore their lives!! We decide to ignore the way they lived!

I have listened to so many men who will quote from Philippians - they will quote what Philippians chapter 4 says - they will like to quote Philippians chapter 4 and verse 19. I hope you can see it. This is where the Bible says "But my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" but they will never remember to quote from the Scripture that that same passage did not start in that verse 19, let's look at what that Scripture says from verse 11

Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Php 4:11-13

We like to take the confession of men, we like to take statement from their mouth, but we don't want to look at their manner of life. Several of you are saying what you are saying today and you are pursuing the kind of thing you are pursuing today because you never take time to look at the manner of life that Jesus Christ lived! You never take time to study the manner of life that the Apostles lived! You never take time to study the manner of life that the elders lived! You never take time to study the manner of life that the prophets and the men of old lived and they were commended to God! .If. you are going to succeed even in your pursuit of wanting to serve God, apart from fully understanding the doctrine of Scripture, the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ and the doctrine of the Apostles, you also .need. to seat down and examine their manner of life - the way they lived.

The w-a-y they lived!!!

Look at Jesus Christ, he was a man that can call coin out of fish that would pay the tax of everybody that was with him and yet he said "the Son of man has nowhere to lay His head" Why? Why did He live so frugally? Why did He so live like that? Is it because He could not make money - a man that could break five loaves of bread and feed thousands - can you imagine that if He wanted to become producer of bread and become a millionaire, he could not become that? That is the way of life He lived!!

Some of you I see you, you want to use faith, you want to use anointing to claim many many, wonderful things for yourself because all you are doing is catching statements from the mouth of the Lord and you are not looking at His manner of life! Paul here says - thou Timothy, you have fully known my doctrine: you have known my manner of life. This matter of "manner of life" is something you must concentrate upon if you don't want to make a shipwreck!

What is the third thing you must focus your effort on?

But thou hast fully known my doctrine , manner of life, purpose... 2Ti 3:10

The third thing is "my purpose in life." You see it is very, very necessary if you are going to serve God appropriately in our age that you don't only need to know the doctrine, that you not only need to know the manner of life of our Master, you must know His purpose also! What is the purpose of Jesus? What is the purpose of the gospel? What is the purpose of Pentecost and what is the purpose of the Holy Ghost? What is the purpose of the anointing? Men of old had received power, they have received unction, they have great utterances but what is the purpose of those utterance? What is the purpose of the anointing?

I see some of you who think you have received the anointing to push men down! Some say "Yes! when the anointing came upon me I just started dancing and dancing until the soles of my shoes wore out!" And that is the manifestation of the power of God to you? And I keep wondering - is that the purpose why the Holy Spirit comes? Does the Holy Spirit come to make people to dance? Does

the Holy Spirit come particularly to make people 'catapult' on the ground? Did the Holy Spirit come and did God anoint you so as to just ride expensive cars and boast about it?

Some of the things that God was instructing Timothy to know is i. the doctrine ii. the manner of life that Jesus lived and then the Apostles lived iii. and he needed to know the purpose, the purpose for which Jesus came, the purpose for which the apostles lived and the purpose for which they were anointed. If you saw the life of Paul, he never forgot to remind Timothy of his purpose in life. Every time. He said for this cause was I anointed a teacher and an apostle to the Gentiles, that I may turn many out of darkness into light!

And I want to ask you - Sir, what is the purpose of the power of God in your life? What is the purpose of the message you have preached? What are you going to make of the thousands of people that are seating before you? When you gather people in thousands, in hundreds; what is your purpose? What do you want to make out of their lives? One of the things that Timothy was instructed on is that he ought to know his purpose: the purpose of God for his life, the purpose of the

elders, the purpose of the anointing and the purpose of the message that God has placed in his mouth!

But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith... 2Ti 3:10

He said you had known my faith - my confidence in the ability of God, my complete reliance in the provision of God. My faith! You see these are issues that any man that wants God to use him must concentrate upon: the purpose of God and the faith. You see, each time you want to live a correct life - just look at the faith of the elders! Look at the catalogue of faith in the book of Hebrews chapter 11, you will see the kind of faith they exercised. Whereas I see you exercise faith to catch clothes, those men exercised their faith to subdue kingdoms! Whereas you are jumping up and down because your faith has been able to push your enemies out of his chair, and you are now seating on the chair of that man because you pushed him down with your (what I call) "pentecostal witchcraft!"

But you need to see today what is the purpose of their faith? Several of them in the exercise of their faith left their positions, by faith they left wonderful things in the world because they wanted to preach Christ, they were looking for a kingdom and a city whose Builder and Architect was God Himself!

But thou hast fully known my doctrine , manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity...2Ti 3:10

He said "You know my longsuffering, you know my love - you know my charity!" These are things that God was instructing Timothy to pay close attention to. We have said faith is one thing now we are seeing that even the longsuffering of our elders is yet another. Some of us we are so impatient, we cannot suffer a little even for the sake of Jesus Christ! Some of you have abandoned your faith because things are a little difficult. And this is because you never study the longsuffering of men that went ahead of us! You forgot that men like Paul that we read about - we quote his messages and we use his messages as our basis of preaching the message of faith today - was carried in a basket and dropped from a window at night to escape death from the city of Damascus!

These were men that went fasting not because they chose to - they could say up till now I still suffer hunger, yet they were men that stood and preached faith - great faith; they had great confidence in the power of God. Their difficulty never, never dissuaded them. He said you know my longsuffering, you know my love: you know my commitment to the body of Christ

But thou hast fully known my doctrine , manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience...2Ti 3:10

Action Point:

He said you know my patience. Brother! if you want to succeed, these are things you must consider! Even as I bring this message to a close today again, I want you to note things that God was expecting us to focus upon, what are those things?

i. The doctrine! The doctrine: You must fully know the doctrine!! You must not be a novice in the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ.

ii. The manner of life. Apart from all your bogus study, can you take time to look at the manner of life the elders - how did Daniel live his life? How did Moses live his life? How did men like Joseph live their life? Are you hearing me? You need to seat down and look at how did Peter and the Apostles live: what is their manner of life? If you look into the Scriptures you would see that their lives were not hidden! You will see that God paid close attention to their life-style!

iii. He said, you must know my purpose: the purpose of the grace of God on your life, the purpose of the anointing and the purpose of the power of God coming upon you.

As we pray with you, what are the things you are concentrating on? The message we have heard today are instructions that will make you great in the purpose of God and I wish, and pray with you also, that you will pay close attention to these issues - God will help you, you will never make a ship wreck if

you will focus upon the things that men of old focused upon.

God bless you.

Concluding Prayer:

Thank You Lord Jesus for turning our attention again today to the men of old and our Lord Jesus Christ, we ask that O Lord our hearts will be turned to this, that we will follow their lives as we will follow their teachings. We ask that You will help us even today for we have prayed in Jesus Name. Amen.

The Man God Uses 17

TEXT:2 Timothy 3:14-17 & John 5:39-40 by Gbile Akanni

This message was published for the 25th April – 1st May 2011

Opening Prayer:

Almighty God we give You praise, we give You honour, we give you adoration for yet another opportunity to study Your word. We are asking that You will grant us open eye that we might see beyond the black and white of Scriptures and that as you send instructions unto us, may these instructions prepare us for an eternal service even in Your Kingdom.

Thank you father for hearing us for we have prayed together again in Jesus name. Amen

Review/Introduction:

We want to praise the Lord for the opportunity He has given us once more to study together with you on this program - Living Seed. We have been looking at personal instructions God gives to the Man He Uses using the case of Timothy as our case study as we have been studying from the book of Second Timothy. By last week, we had come as far as Second Timothy chapter 3 and studied from verse 10 down to verse 13. We placed most of our emphases on the things that the Man God Uses must concentrate upon even in these days of mass and massive backsliding.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS TO THE MAN GOD USES 12

Today, I would still want us to continue from the book of Second Timothy chapter 3 and we would read from verse 14

But 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. 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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2Ti 3:14-17

May God bless His word into our hearts in Jesus Name. Amen.

Last week I was concentrating on verse 10 that says "But thou hast fully known my doctrine..." and I said that despite what your classmates your colleagues, your friends and your contemporaries are doing, you must be distinguished; you must be able to take your stand, you must be able to present an alternative unto what majority of men are doing - you don't have to follow the multitude to do

evil if you want to amount to something in the hand of God! Most men that shook their generation as at their time were standing lonely and alone - they were almost minorities in their own generation - but because they took their stand, God identified with them and they became what they became and that's why we read about them today: they have become a blessing to us and to many other generations because of the stand they took.

And here again we see another personal instruction that God is sending to our lives and we will look at it from verse 14 very closely, as the Lord helps us we will look all through to verse 17 today.

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them... 2Ti 3:14

Whereas we have been talking about the attitude or the stand a child of God or a man that will matter in God's hands, the kind of stand he ought to take, the kind

of lifestyle he ought to embrace, today we are going to look at some other emphasis that the Holy Spirit is drawing. Where as we have said that you should turn away from men that hold a form of godliness but deny the power thereof, we have been told to stand away from men of corrupt mind, men that have become reprobate concerning the faith, men that twist and thwart the doctrine of our God just to suit their own self-pleasure - God has instructed you to turn away from them and stand away.

Now in verse 10 God had instructed that there are certain things that you need to get to know very well

The doctrine: The doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ and what the Apostles stood for.

The manner of life, the way they lived. It is not just enough to know their doctrine; we need to know their manner of life,

We need to know their purpose in life,

We need to know their faith,

Their longsuffering

Their charity, their love

And their patience

We need to also know

Their persecutions and

Their afflictions

All these are the things that combine together to raise a man and make him sober even as he is growing. As many of us threw away what was the biography of the men that God ever used, some of us are veering into the bush at tangents because we only want to claim bold declarations that these men made without looking at the context of their own lifestyle.

Apart from all this, God now comes to us in verse 14

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of... 2Ti 3:14

Now let's pick that from some other versions as quickly as we can, I would like to read that from Phillips Modern English

Yet you must go on steadily in all those things that you have learned and which you know are true... 2Ti 3:14

Now! Brother if God is going to use you there is a need for you to continue in the things which you have learned and the things which you have been assured of. A man who is going to make a mark for God is not a man that is flying at every wind of doctrine, is not a man that is turning after every new, new thing that people talk about! The first thing that God is saying that you must continue in are the things which you have learned, things you have proved, things that you are assured of; things that we can prove in the lives of men that went ahead of us, things that are authentic, instructions that we could see practised by the Lord Jesus Christ and by the men that He directly raised and the men that have proved ministry with a good life. Instead of abandoning the ancient landmark the Bible

says

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned... 2Ti 3:14

My brother, my sister; what are the things that God has taught you in times past? What are the things you learned when you first believed? What are the things the Lord told you never to do again when you first repented? The Bible says there is a need for you to continue in those things which thou hast learned and those things that you have been assured of - things that you know are true, things that you know are dependable, things that you know are authentic, things that you know that no matter the storm, no matter the waves no matter the environment, they stand unchangeable! Because the truth of the word of God is constant: it doesn't change with mood, it doesn't change with emotion, it doesn't change with age! It is constant. Whatsoever Jesus said 2,000 years ago is the same thing He says today and it is the same thing He would ever say: the Bible says He is the same yesterday today and forever. His word is constant and eternal - He doesn't keep changing! He is permanent.

The Bible says - continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and has been assured of! One of the marks of a man God uses is his ability to continue with the truth, his ability to hold on unto the word of God! There are some of you that God raised you in a correct Biblical atmosphere, you are taught things that if you hold on to, you will never make a ship-wreck! Maybe you suddenly travelled abroad or you met some new preachers and they are saying something else - twisting the word of God which you have been properly taught and you are really, really assured of, you will be foolish to drop what God has shown you - what you have proved - for a new idea that someone is bringing whom you don't know his life!

Some of us we just pick books from anywhere, you don't know the lives of the authors; some people have written wonderful things but they don't have a home, they don't have a base! Some persons that have propounded false doctrines in our generation - by the time you come to meet them you realise that actually their words are bigger than their lives! And the true test of a man of God is that out of the abundance of his heart (life), his mouth speaketh! A man whose heart does not have enough abundance out of which the mouth speaks, a man who speaks louder and bigger than the abundance of his heart actually is an hypocrite!!

And I want to tell you: that Scripture says

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of,
knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 2Ti 3:14

Now! one of the things that would keep

you from failing and from error is actually to localise what you have learnt to the man that taught it. If you are learning a thing from a life, and that life is a failure - what is the need for you to hold on unto what he says? If you are following a man who speaks wonderfully and he preaches powerfully but his life is a denial of the truth which he preaches, his life is not congruent with what he talks about; you need to be assured of whom you are learning from, what kind of life is he living because a life actually speaks louder than the mouth! That is what the English proverb says, it says "action speaks louder than voice."

Now I want to say again to you that in order not to make a shipwreck, the instruction God is bringing to you is this: despite all the backslidings, despite all the compromise, despite all the twist in the standard of the word of God, despite all the different, different versions in which people seem now to be practising ministry in our time - "You! Continue thou in the things which thou hast learnt." Those instructions God gave you when you were still in secondary school, those instructions you learnt when you were yet in the Scripture Union fellowship, those things that God taught you when you were yet growing in the word of God, those things that God instructed you when you were still facing the raw Scriptures without any hypocrisy - the Bible says "Continue in those things that you have learned, those things that you are assured of - those things which have been proved to you by a life back-up! Things that you have seen practised in the lives of the men of old - those are the things to hold tightly to.

...knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 2Ti 3:14

This is the last injunction I want to draw your attention to in that verse 14. From whom did you learn what you are doing now? From whom did you learn what you are practising now, my friend? Who taught you, who is the man and what is his standing in the rank of men that God has used in our age? Some of you just copy men that would become drop-outs when we get to the shores of heaven? Some of you, your leaders, your mentors have no standing in the Presence of God! Some of the people you are copying are divorcees, some of the people you are patterning your life after, their homes have scattered long ago! Of whom have you learnt the things what you are talking about? Some of you - you are patterning your church, you are patterning your ministry after men that actually have no integrity! Men that have no reputation, men that have nothing to write home about when you go into their records!

Of whom are you patterning your life? My friend, whom are you forming clique with? Of whom have you learnt these things? The Bible says

...knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 2Ti 3:14

Can I ask you - who is your teacher? Who is your discipler? from whom did you learn what you are doing? Some of you, you just saw some people on the telly and the way they were dangling their hands and throwing their coats about and calling it mantle and next time you get on your pulpit, I see you practising the same thing! Of whom did you learn that?

Now! Paul was talking of the Ephesian church and he said "We have not so learned Christ!" And I wonder of whom have you learnt what you are doing? Paul always laid claim saying "These things that I am teaching, I learnt it of Jesus Christ!" Peter said "Yes! These things that we are telling you are not fables - these are things we learnt of Him!" John the Beloved said "The things that our eyes have seen, things that our hands have handled, concerning the word of life, for we beheld Him" Of whom have you learnt what you are doing my brother? Of whom did you learn what you are practising my brother? Evangelist, where did you learn what you are practising? The way you are raising money now, who taught you my friend? Whom did you copy in the word of God? What particular life did you pattern your life after? That thing you are practising, from where did you learn it? Is it from the Lord Jesus Christ? Or from the pit of hell?

All the kinds of things you are doing now and you have brought into the body of Christ, excuse me sir - who taught you? Some say "Yes! As I was sleeping I fell into a trance..." The Bible says we should test all spirits! We should test every spirit if it is of the Lord!! Don't terrify us and intimidate us with your visions and your trances! Any trance, any vision that we cannot trace to the personality of Jesus Christ, that we cannot trace unto the authentic testimony of the life of the men of God in Scripture - I want to tell you, it cannot stand the test of time.

And I want to say to you whosoever you are - no matter how bogus, how big your name is called - that thing that you are practising that we cannot trace to Jesus Christ, I challenge you boldly today to tell us: who taught you? From where did you learn it? Whose pattern are you following?

The word of God continues to instruct, the Bible says to Moses "See to it that you build the tabernacle according to the pattern that was shown you on the

mount!" And even when David was to build the temple, there was a pattern that was shown him; also when Noah was to build the ark, there was a pattern that was shown him! God said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," He is the One that God has chosen! He is the pattern - He is the pattern Son, He is the pattern Servant of God - and every man, every servant who wants to serve God, you can only pattern after that Man Jesus Christ!

And I am asking you, from where did you learn what you are doing - who taught you? Who showed you the life-style that you are living now? The way you are carrying yourself, the way people are carrying you now, the way you are amassing titles upon titles on your life, let me ask you from where did you learn it? Did you see that kind of thing in Christ Jesus? And I want to say to you sir - every tree that was not planted by my Father, the word of God says: The axe has been laid on the root of it! Every tradition in the work of God that you did not learn from the Lord Jesus Christ shall surely be cut! It will surely be uprooted! But not only that your work will be uprooted, several lives that you have deceived, several lives that you have confused, several lives that you have led into the bush, several lives that you have influenced wrongly, you will also give account of them!

While we were reading the other time we saw that Philetus and Hymenaeus are the ones known for this sort of thing, some of the traditions that some of you have introduced to the body of Christ which is alien to the lifestyle of Jesus which is strange to the total and the whole counsel of God, I tell you - you will give account of it.

Now Timothy was instructed - and I believe God is instructing me and you today - we must know of whom we learn what we are doing. Did you learn it from Jesus, did you learn it from the elders? It was Paul that said "imitate me as I imitate Christ," it was Peter that said "look at me as I look at Jesus." I want to say to you - all the men of old they never showed us a different pattern apart from Christ Jesus: they knew that Jesus Christ laid down His life that we may walk in His own steps! And I want to ask you - in whose steps are you walking? Of whom have you learnt what you are practising now?

And the Word of God said in further instruction to Timothy

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. 2Ti 3:15

Let me say to you: The Scriptures that God has been continuing to teach you since you were young, since you first gave your life to Christ and you were a young convert, those are the Scriptures the Bible says you should continue with! They are the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise unto salvation! Some of you are becoming foolish, some of you are beginning to ignore the issues that matter most in the heart of God as far as your salvation and your deliverance is concerned. And the Word of God is instructing you saying "Those things which you have learned since you were a child, those things that God began to bring to you when you were a young convert, when your heart was still tender, when you were seeking the face of God, when you wanted to be correct, continue in them!"

In those days you knew that it was not correct for you to divorce your wife but I

see several of you right now putting away your wives, and you will find one Bible verse or the other to support yourself: I want to ask you, who taught you that? From where did you learn it? Which of the leaders, which of the elders, which of the apostles, which of the men of old will you quote that you are following? Which of the men are you saying is your role model? If Jesus Christ never said it, if Jesus Christ never practised it, if Jesus Christ never taught it, I wonder whom you will say you followed to do such terrible things. Even if the multitude were doing it, who is your own leader, whom are you following into error?

The Bible said "those things are able to make you wise.." and I want to spend a little time on that. When a man gives Himself to the study of the Word of God and he begins to practise the Word of God, let me tell you - the Scriptures can never make you foolish. Every time you obey the Word of God no matter how raw it appears, no matter how it appears it is making you to be outmoded, you can never be foolish for it! Every time a man obeys the Word of God, he becomes wise for it!! E-v-e-r-y instruction of the Word of God will actually make you wise unto deliverance, wise unto salvation: it will bring you unto security! God would not allow your life to suffer damage!

And brother, rather than twist the word of God, rather than tailor the word of God to suit your narrow pleasures, will you please seat down and lay down your life for the word of God? Engraft the word of God on your heart, on your life, on your tradition, on your personal pleasure and you would be wise for it! The Bible says, the Scripture is a resource that will make you wise unto salvation. Every time you disobey the word of God, you are foolish! The Lord Jesus said at the end of Sermon on the mount in Matthew chapter 7 that "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, I liken him to a foolish man." When you take the word of God for granted you are not wise, you are foolish because you are building your life without a foundation, you are building your destiny without a foundation, and yet storms will come, temptation will come, trials will come, winds will blow, the devil will come to shake you one of these days, except you stand on the truth of the word of God, I want to say to you, you are a foolish man.

If you are building your ministry, if you are building your work on human ideas rather than on what Jesus says, no matter how bogus it appears, let me say again to you that you are a foolish man because it will soon collapse - you are not wise unto salvation! You are not wise unto deliverance, you are not wise unto the

things that will last!

The Bible says

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 2Ti 3:16

All Scripture! Not just part of the Scripture. I know some of you that are specialist in some few parts of Scripture, I know some of you that the only passage that you read are the promises of the word of God - you are specialist in promises. Some of you say "Well, my own is to preach faith and to teach faith" and you are ignorant about anything outside faith! I want to say to you that the Bible says "All Scripture..." - all Scripture, all Scripture - not some of the Scripture, not most of the Scripture, not many of the Scripture but "All Scripture.. is given by the inspiration of God."

I want you to notice the word "is". Do you know why they used the word "is"? That word "is" used because the Scripture cannot be broken - you can't take Scripture strand by strand, hold on to one strand and neglect the other! All Scripture "is": not All Scripture "are"; if "are" was used it means it will be pluralised and it means you can pick one and drop another one: pick Genesis and avoid Exodus, pick Malachi and forget about Matthew. No! You can't do that!! All Scripture is one. They speak of one person!

Jesus said

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. Joh 5:39

And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. Joh 5:40

I am sure by God's grace I will need to come back on this matter before we conclude this chapter. But now I just want you to know that if you want to succeed, if you want to be a man that God can use, you must begin to see the Scripture as one! You must be committed to every part of the Scripture because it cannot be broken. You cannot elevate one part of the Scripture at the expense of the other - you cannot preach holiness at the expense of prosperity neither can you over-expand prosperity at the expense of sanctification! They go together and they must be treated together!!

Action Point:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable - all Scripture is profitable. All Scripture is profitable - please note the word "is." That's all I want to stop with here today: That if you are going to be a man that God will use, you must accept the authority of all Scripture, every Scripture, upon your life! You must accept the authority of every Scripture upon your action, every Scripture must be brought to bear on your life, you can't hide under one Bible verse at the expense of another Bible verse because they are not just verses - they are all one thing, inspired by one God and speaking for only one purpose, introducing and

speaking about only one Man! You can't say "O Yes! I believe in Genesis and you deny Romans," it is not possible. All Scripture must be taken together!

And as I pray with you here today, I just want to say – “Continue in the things which you have learned and are sure of knowing of whom thou hast learned them.” Everything you cannot trace to Jesus as your Teacher, as your Master, can you please drop it today otherwise you may wake up in eternity unto a life of regret. My prayer for you is this - the things that God is teaching you, hold it tightly, don't let anybody take it from you, otherwise you would have missed your crown!

May God help you to take the right decision and to become obedient unto every Scripture in the Name of the Lord Jesus. Amen

Conclusion Prayer:

Lord Jesus we thank You for lifting up Your countenance again unto us, we want to pray for as many of your people as are patterning their lives after something else, we want to ask O God that today they will receive grace and courage to drop all else and come back to You. Thank You for this You would do for us for we have prayed in Jesus Name. Amen

THE MAN GOD USES 18

This message was published for the 9th – 15th May 2011

TEXT:2 Timothy 3:16-17

Opening Prayer:

Our Father and our God we bow before You, we worship You because we know You are our God. Thank You for your willingness to give us instructions that will make us useful in Your hands. Here we are today and as we look at what you said to Timothy that made Timothy a notable fellow in Your hand, we are asking that you will do the same to our own lives, and that as you speak to us once more today, cause a definite response from our hearts unto Your instructions. Thank You Father for hearing us, we know you will do this since we have asked in Jesus Name. Amen.

Review/Introduction:

We want to praise the Lord for bringing us your way again today on this program Living Seed and we thank God for the continual privilege God has given to us to bring His Word to you in this continuous systematic study in the Word of God.

THE PURPOSE OF SCRIPTURE IN MAKING AND FASHIONING A MAN FOR GOD

Today we will continue as our brother has already informed you with our series of study on personal instructions God gives to the man He uses. Today we are going to conclude our study in Second Timothy chapter 3 and we will be looking at the last two verses - verse 16 and verse 17. We are going to be looking at the purpose of Scripture in making and fashioning a man for God: we shall be looking at what instructions was being passed to Timothy about his personal attitude unto the word of God in order for him to become a man thoroughly furnished unto all good works. And I would like to begin to read that Scripture from verse 16 and verse 17.

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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2Ti 3:16-17

Now while we are looking at the instructions God wants to give to a man He wants to use, it was appropriate for us to consider the place of Scripture in the fashioning and in the making of a man for God. And if Timothy was going to become anything, Paul had to instruct him that one principal equipment or one principal instrument God uses to fashion His man and to make His man thoroughly furnished for every good work is this instrumentality of His word even the Scriptures.

And so today, I would like us to examine how to relate with the Scripture, how to engrave the Scripture in our lives if we are going to become anything in the hand of God. As I was concluding our discussion last week we notice that I was drawing emphasis on the matter of 'all,' the 'all' that is in verse 16 - "All Scripture..."

And I want to say to you that if you are ever going to matter in the program of God, you must be ready to embrace all Scripture! You must be ready to allow all Scripture to have effect in your life because the Bible says that "All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God"

Last week I kept saying to you that the Bible uses the term "All Scripture is.." and you might be imagining that that doesn't look grammatical, but there is no grammatical mistake in that Scripture.

All scripture... 2Ti 3:16

That is to say to you that the totality of Scripture is one, the inspiration of Scripture is from one source - it is from God. The purpose of Scripture is one and the message of Scripture is one. So it is not possible at all to divide or to break the Scripture! In fact one verse says, the Scripture cannot be broken. The book of second Peter was saying that the Scripture cannot be broken and nobody can bring any private, personal or personalised interpretation into Scripture because every Scripture is given by the inspiration of God, it is not by any person's will that the Scripture has been written! And we want to see how to approach the Scripture in order to benefit thereby and in order for the purpose of Scripture to

be accomplished in our lives as men and women that are desiring to serve God even in this generation.

Let's look at that verse 16 again and I would like to read it from several versions so that we could get some more clarity

All scripture is given by inspiration of God.. 2Ti 3:16(KJV)

That shows that there is not one aspect of Scripture that was there by mistake or that was there by decoration or that was added in order to paint a picture or in order to conceal a fact, every Scripture was given by inspiration of God and we need to agree with that! For any man to progress with God he must agree with the inspiration of Scripture, he must know that the Scripture is given by the inspiration of God. Now let's try to understand the meaning of that as we try to study. I would like you to check that from New International Version

All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching...2Ti 3:16

I would come back to that

All Scripture is God breathed...2Ti 3:16

Maybe I should read that from the Amplified Version

Every Scripture is God breathed, given by His inspiration...2Ti 3:16

Let's check what Phillip's Modern English has to say

All Scripture is inspired by God...2Ti 3:16

Jerusalem Bible says

All Scripture is inspired by God.. 2Ti 3:16.

And the New English Bible says

Every inspired Scripture has its use for teaching the truth...2Ti 3:16

All Scripture is inspired by God. I want you to note that every Scripture carries the breath of God. The way I look at Scripture is just as when God formed Adam: the Bible said God made him and formed him and he was still down there, a mere corpse! But God breathed into his nostril a breath of life!! So the Bible says every Scripture carries the breath of God, that is to say every Scripture carries a definite quantity of the life of God. That was why Jesus said "The Words that I speak unto you they are spirit, and they are life" He further said "It is the Spirit that quickens, it is the Spirit that makes alive, the flesh profiteth nothing!" That is to say that every Scripture carries the breath of God, it carries the life of God! Each time you encounter the Word of God properly, each time you approach the Word of God and you touch the breath of God on the Scripture, what it does is that it transfuses into your life the very life of God! The creative power of God comes into a man's life as he comes into contact with the Word of God in the Scripture. Are you understanding what I am talking about there?

Now! If a man has not encountered the breath that has rested upon every

Scripture, he may just be reading it as ordinary letter, he may just be encountering it as a means of communication. And yet the Word of God is not just a means of communication, it's not just a prose-writing or a fiction or a story! It might appear as if it is telling a story, or it may appear as a prophetic utterance, or it may appear as a report! But the truth of the matter is that whether in historical form or in prophetic form or in a prosaic form or in an oratory form, it carries the breath of God. And any man that God will use must come into contact with the Word of God searching the breath of God on the Scripture! This is because, you see, it was when the breathe of God came on Adam that he became alive!!! So also your life can never change except the Scripture has come with the breath and the life of God and it transfuses into your life into your system, quickening you, setting you on your feet! It makes you to enter into a new experience of the power and of the life of God.

Now! Every man that God uses has to encounter the Scriptures at that level! Every man that would become a mouth-piece for God, every man that would speak for God in his or her generation must encounter the word of God at that level! If the breathe that has settled upon every Scripture has not come upon your life, there is no way you can actually become anything in God's hand. So let's note that: Ev-e-ry Scripture carries that inspiration! And I want you to know it - whether you are reading the genealogies in Genesis or you are talking about the

Psalms and the poetical writings, if you are knocking on the Scriptures correctly and you are saying "God, please; the breathe that is attached unto this verse, let it come unto me, let it jump into my life, just as you breathed into the nostrils of Adam in those days, breathe again from this Scripture into my life," you will discover something - you will discover a quickening, you will discover an enabling power that the Word of God brings unto a man who is looking into it with an open heart!

Now let me read forward in that verse so that we could study it much more!

Every Scripture... 2Ti 3:16

So I want you to now look at it as I read from the Amplified Bible meanwhile

Every Scripture is God-breathed (given by His inspiration) and profitable for instruction... 2Ti 3:16

That is the first thing I want to say - Every Scripture is profitable for instruction.

Let me check that from Phillip's Modern English, how did it put it? It says

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the faith...2Ti 3:16

It is profitable for instruction. You see when God sent His word - every one of it is profitable for instruction. That is to say that you can take instruction from every Scripture! When you read a Scripture and you see that what that Scripture is saying is contrary to what you are doing, what God is expecting you to do as a man that wants to be useful in God's hands is to take instruction from that Scripture! I imagine that some of you have read your Bibles several times and you have discovered what God has said in His word, but instead of taking instruction from what God said, I see you going from one place to another and you are looking for somebody to counsel you, you are looking for somebody to offer another opinion, you are looking for a pastor who will take that Scripture and give you an opinion that fits your desire!

The Bible says every Scripture is profitable and I just want to praise God for that! The Scripture is profitable for instruction, when you take instruction from

the word of God, you are going to make profit! If you have ever seen any man that is not suffering loss in his life, that's a man that is taking day-to-day instruction from the Word of God! When you are doing something and you read Scripture and you find Scriptures that says "No, a child of God must not do like this" or you saw what another person did in Scripture that was contrary to the Word of God and what repercussion came to his life and you because of that pick instruction and you say "Ah, I will not go the way of Ahab, I will not go the way of Balaam, I will not go the way of Gehazi, I will not go the way of Rehoboam, I will not go the way of Cain, I will not go the way of Esau, I will not go the way of the harlots" you see as you take instruction you will find that you have made profit!

When the Bible says "Do not be unequally yoked together with an unbeliever" and you are already in a courtship with somebody who is not born again. And as you read that Scripture you just don't wave the Bible and say "Well, I am too far into this courtship" but rather you allow that Scripture to instruct you, and you take instruction and you write a letter to that unbelieving boyfriend and you say "I am sorry, the Word of God says I must not be unequally yoked together with an unbeliever!" For the time being you may cry, it may pain you but I tell you - IT is profitable; years after you will see the profit of obeying the Word of God.

So the Bible says "Every Scripture is profitable for instruction." ...Profitable for instruction!!

It is also profitable for reproof and conviction of sin. You see, if you don't teach the word of God, how will men be reprov'd? How will men be convicted of their sin? The truth is that no man can become something in the hand of God if the Scripture has not worked in his life! This is one of the reasons why revival tarries! You go into so many congregations, the pastor will just open the Scriptures and read something and then he goes on to tell the story of spider and cobweb! Telling the story of how the tortoise has developed a bald head! I am asking you the question - how does the story of tortoise save a soul? How does all the fictitious story of spider and mosquito change a man's life? You see the Scripture is what must bring the conviction of sin! If revival is going to come and it is going to stay for long, the Word of God has to be taught! There must be an undiluted teaching of the Scripture! Continuous teaching of the Word of God is what will change men's life. The heart of man is desperately wicked and deceitful, only the Word of God can try the intent of the man's heart because the Word of God is sharper than any double-edged sword; when it goes in, it reprov's, it convicts man of sin, it shows him where he is wrong. And that is why any man that wants to be a vessel in the hand of God must not hide his heart from the operation of the Word of God! This is because it is the operation of the Word

of God that reproves a man, that convicts him of sin, that shows him what is wrong in his life!

Now the Bible says

Every Scripture is God-breathed (given by His inspiration) and profitable for instruction, for reproof and conviction of sin, for correction of error and discipline in obedience... 2Ti 3:16 (Amplified Bible)

O look at that Scripture very well: correction of error. It is as you look into the Word of God that you will see the error that is in your life! You see many of us have chosen to be ignorant of God's word, there are some people that even as I am preaching here now who are saying "No No No I don't want to listen to that man, he always pierces my conscience every time I listen to him, I don't like him!" You don't need to like me neither do you need to support what we are doing, I only want you to know that there is no other way for you to be ready for eternity except you listen to the truth of the word of God. I don't care about those that cajole you to collect money from your pocket, but if you love your soul you need to seat down to hear the Word of God! It is the Word of God that will show you what is the error in your life! You might think you are doing so well and that

you are a great man and the whole church is clapping for you until you come to the Word of God.

There are some of you, I see you go about with big titles, they call you 'Papa,' they call you 'father' and this in the church! When you come now to the Scripture and you come to Matthew where the Word of God said "Call no man your father for we have only one Father in heaven." When you get to that Scripture the next thing to do is to correct yourself and you will then stop calling yourself 'father,' you will then stop people calling you 'Papa!' You are not a 'Papa,' you are a brother, you are a child of God, no matter how God is using you! No matter the anointing on your life - anointing should not become a status. You are a servant of God, and you should remain like that!

When you begin to study the Word of God, it corrects the error in your life. There are so many errors in the church today because you will never allow the Scripture to speak for itself! You are always trying to tailor the Word of God to speak for all. No! But I want to say to you, there is a voice of Scripture - this is the voice of the living God!! Some of you say "But the spirit spoke to me, the spirit spoke to me," but let me tell you, the voice and the language of the Spirit is the Word of God. If any man says he is hearing God and if you tell me you are hearing God very well and the Spirit is not speaking the Word of God to you, I

tell you it is a lie! There is no other vocabulary that the Holy Spirit uses except the word of God! And there is no sword the Holy Spirit can use to pierce a man except the sword of the spirit which is the Word of God!

Here we see the Bible saying

Every Scripture is God-breathed (given by His inspiration) and profitable for instruction, for reproof and conviction of sin, for correction of error and discipline in obedience 2Ti 3:16 (Amplified Bible)

Let me tell you, there is no man that gives himself to the study of the Word of God that will become undisciplined. When you see undiscipline in people's life, when you see carelessness the first thing I know is that such a person has already omitted a consistent study of the word of God. You cannot see a husband that is studying the Word of God and is beating his wife, it won't happen! You can't see a man that is obeying the word of God and a woman that is obeying the word of God and the woman is insubordinate to her husband! You can't see a man that is studying the Word of God and walking with the Word of God and he will be cheating in his office, it is not possible! The decay we find in people's life today is actually because of the omission of a consistent commitment unto the

Word of God.

Now the Bible says

...[and] for training in righteousness (in holy living, in conformity to God's will in thought, purpose, and action)... 2Ti 3:16

You see when a man submits himself to the Word of God, listen, the Word of God will train you in righteousness! You see, I discover that nobody is born righteous! There is no human being that is perfected in righteousness, you have to be trained in righteousness! Actually we are all born and shaped in iniquity, the only language we have all known is the language of sin. The image we bore as soon as we are born is the image of sin and iniquity but when a man has to be righteous, he has to be trained in righteousness.

Righteousness just doesn't come to you just like you just don't become an engineer overnight by wishful thinking! You have to be trained in engineering and there are courses you take - you read mathematics, you read physics, you read chemistry and then when you get to the University you start taking

engineering courses, you do some practicals and then go for some few trainings and after some years you become an engineer isn't it? The same way you can never become righteous except you are trained in it! But the thing that trains a man in righteousness is the Word of God! Righteousness is not something you can stumble at! The word of God has to train you in righteousness.

Whereas I want you to spend time in praying but I want to tell you - prayer alone does not train a man in righteousness! I have seen people that can stay on mountains praying, praying, making noise, shouting; but when it comes to the Word of God they are empty! When it comes to the study of the Word of God, they don't have space for that! Some just come to church and say "let the man of God pray for us." And that church is the same place you impregnate somebody in adulterous affairs and in fornication!! In that same church and under the guise of prayer, all kinds of terrible things take place!! They tell you there "Come under protection - protection of prayer - the man of God will pray for you for 21 days," and some of you have lost your wife to the prophet! Do you know why? The Word of God is not taught! Where the Word of God is not taught, the heart of men will grow weak, where the Word of God is not continuously exposed and taught and firmly practised, men will misbehave!

And as you see churches nowadays spending more hours singing, shouting,

telling stories, sharing testimonies - vain testimonies, bogus testimonies - and then when it comes to the Word of God, half of the church is already sleeping!!! Or the man of God just comes around and does some few babblings shouting and greeting everybody and telling stories of the last time he was in the US and all of that. Let me tell you: t-h-a-t can never produce men in righteousness! That is why right in the church you find terrible things going on. That is why we are beginning now to have problem in getting correct people to fill our leadership positions! That is where you see elders beginning to embezzle church money! The issue is because the matter of training in righteousness which only the Word of God can bring - consistent study of the Word of God - has been omitted!!!

Now the Bible says

... [And] for training in righteousness (in holy living, in conformity to God's will in thought, purpose, and action)... 2Ti 3:16

Only the word of God does that! And when a man has submitted himself to the Word of God, there is a result! And so verse 17 says

So that the man of God may be complete and proficient... 2Ti 3:17 (Amplified Bible)

Brother, do you want to be complete and proficient? Do you want to be well seated and thoroughly equipped for every good work? Do you want to be a first class man that God can present without any shame? Then you need to bend down to study the Word of God!

Now you could omit the Word of God but when you omit the Word of God you can never balance - you can never become anything in the hand of God.

Now let me read finally what Phillip's Modern English says about that Scripture

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the faith and correcting error, for re-setting the direction of a man's life and training him in good living.

2Ti 3:16

Do you see that?

The scriptures are the comprehensive equipment of the man of God and fit him fully for all branches of his work. 2Ti 3:17

Action Point:

Now brother, sister as I live you at this point - Timothy was instructed to continue, that the Holy Scriptures he has learnt from childhood he must not leave it because it is the Scripture that will fit him for the work ahead. I can see that some of you are hoping that God will make you a worldwide evangelist, that God will make you a teacher of the Scriptures, and that God is going to use you to bring revival. What are you doing about your training? What are you doing about your personal preparation? The only way to be trained is to give yourself to the consistent study of the Word of God. Not only to study for your head but to study for your heart: not only to study for mere empty knowledge but to study for an action, the Word of God is useless until you act on it! The Word of God has not fulfilled its purpose until it has changed your life!

And I want to say, just as Timothy was instructed, God again is instructing you

today! Every Scripture must have a place in your life, if you have not studied your Bible or you are lazy in studying the Word of God I then don't know how you plan to become anything in the hand of God except you just want to be a gambler! You see gamblers may seem to have a place now but the Bible says they will proceed no further! There is no progress for the man that is not deeply rooted in the Word of God.

As we pray with you, this equipment, this instrument by which God makes His men is available to you. You can settle down now and give yourself to its continuous study. Settle down now and look at what God wants to say to you and as you discover the truth in Scripture let it instruct you, let it change your life, let it turn your life around and you will be blessed! You will profit by obeying it. God bless you.

Concluding Prayer:

Our Father we just want to ask today: turn us back to the Scriptures. Let the study that men have been studying wrongly handle them, let it handle and correct them in their secret lives and in the church. In Jesus Name. Amen.

THE MAN GOD USES 19

This message was published for the 16th – 22nd May 2011

TEXT: 2 Timothy 4:1-5 & Acts 1:1

Opening Prayer:

Our Father and our God we return praise to You for yet another opportunity You have given us to come to Your presence to study and to learn of Your wisdom. In times past You spoke in diverse ways unto men that became great in Your hands and we have come to know that except You speak to our own lives, there is no

hope for us. Today Lord we ask that as many as many as are waiting eagerly to share your Word with us, release it to our lives. Where-ever they are, wherever we are all scattered all over this nation and outside this nation, let your face affect our lives positively preparing us for our Master's use. Thank you Father for hearing us once more, In Jesus Christ's Name we have prayed. Amen.

Review/Introduction:

We want to give God praise for how far He has led us in our series of study in the book of Second Timothy as we look at personal instruction to the Man God Uses - the case study of Timothy. Whereas we have looked at various issues that God particularly focussed upon in instructing Timothy and as a learning for our own personal lives. We have come to the end of chapter 3, and we now want to look at the chapter 4 of that letter unto Timothy; this new chapter we are studying looks like instruction concerning the service that God calls His servant unto.

INSTRUCTION CONCERNING THE SERVICE THAT GOD CALLS HIS SERVANT UNTO 1

As we commence study in this chapter, my prayer is that God again will begin to open your understanding particularly if He has ever commissioned you to preach the gospel so that your own practice might again tally with God's overall purpose for calling you. Today, we will turn our Bibles to the book of Second Timothy chapter 4 and we would like to study from verse 1 to verse 5 as much as the Lord will enable us today. Let us read from the word of God

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; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. 2Ti 4:1-5

Let's stop there. May God bless His word to our hearts in the Name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Right from the beginning of this particular book, this particular letter to Timothy - the Second letter of Paul to Timothy, we saw that he began to remind him of the gift of God that was in his life and that he needed to stir it up. As we could see from this study we found that God's emphasis first and foremost to any man He wants to use is first of all the condition of his own life! Ever before God began to give you instruction about ministry, He first-of-all focusses on your life. And so you will notice that out of a 4-chapter book, 3 chapters were completely dedicated unto personal instructions that would affect the life of a man! And what am I seeing here, it looks to me as if 75 percent of instructions you need to succeed in ministry are instructions that have to do with your own personal life!!!

Some of us would like to know the 7 steps unto a successful ministry and would

like to know all the formulas of anointing, we go from one meeting to another learning how to preach all the homiletics! Whereas what matters most to God in instructing any man He wants to use is instruction that affects his life directly! What I want to now emphasise even as we get into this chapter 4 that seems to be dealing with the technicality of ministry, I want you again to note that the background on which this chapter is anchored is correct lifestyle, correct lifestyle, that God had expected that Timothy would have acted upon!

In this chapter 4 we see God now talking to him about preaching and about fulfilling his ministry.

In case in the course of all our study you have continually allowed instruction that could affect your life to elude you, you cannot follow us into this chapter 4 at all! Chapter 4 is only tips on the issues that were raised in chapter 1, chapter 2 and chapter 3 which deals with the personal life of the man of God!!!

Brother and sister, as we go into this Scripture today, I want to say to you: if

your life negates the standard of God's word you cannot have a mouth to preach the word of God! If your life does not agree with the Principles of Scripture, there is nothing you can stand up to preach! You will only be making noise - your word will have no power to influence, to convict or to convert any other soul!

Once more we are going unto the study of this chapter 4 today, because we believe as we studied chronologically (almost verse by verse) the past 3 chapters, we trusted that God has helped you to come along. And even if today is the first time of tuning in and it is your first time of listening to Living Seed, I still want to say to you that the major instruction that is coming again first of all has to do with your own life! My prayer is that as you look at the technicality of ministry as the Holy Spirit is bringing instruction to us in the life of Timothy, may God find your lives trustworthy - a life He can use even to speak to others in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I would like you to see the beginning of that chapter and it comes with a very strong word - it starts with a 'therefore.' I would like you to look at it, it says

I charge thee therefore... 2Ti 4:1

"I charge you therefore." You see ever before that charge could come, there is a 'therefore' and the word 'therefore' means 'consequent upon all that we have discussed,' 'consequent upon all that I have told you,' 'consequent on all the instruction of life I have given you.' Excuse me brother, if there is no 'therefore' on which your ministry is based, I want to say to you that you are just an empty noisy gong, you are not supposed to be in ministry! If your ministry has no 'therefore,' and that 'therefore' is not based on your life, is not based on your personal walk with God, then you have no mouth, you have no ground to do anything in the family of God!

"I charge you therefore..." What is the therefore on which your ministry is based? What is the therefore on which your utterance is based? What is the therefore on which your secret life is based? What is the 'therefore' of your life, what is the 'therefore' of your calling, what is the 'therefore' of your ministry?

What is the 'therefore' of the way you are preaching now? Is there anything that God can base your ministry upon?

So Paul is now instructing Timothy in chapter 4 - we have seen all of chapter 3 and some of you will be surprised that the practical, technical instructions they were given him about ministry is so short! This is in fact a very critical matter we need to note - once a man's life is correct, the little instruction he needs for ministry is just a matter of practical orientation!!

These ideas and emphasis I want to drop with you, there are some of you listening to me today who are undergoing theological training, you are a theological trainer i.e. you are in the department of the church that trains ministers and that train pastors, can I ask you what are the core curriculum of your theological training? A lot of us are just focussing on philosophy, you are focusing on sociology and psychology; you are focusing on even African Traditional Religion! And you spend a little on the life of the man - that may be where the problem started from. When theological training focusses on academics rather than on the life of man, you are making a mistake!

You will notice that all the men that Jesus trained and raised, he focussed more and more on their lives! I have been looking at all the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ where He sat down and taught His disciples particularly how to teach, how to preach and how to prepare a sermon, and I found that such chapters are very, very few! Jesus spent very brief time to speak about that! Most of the time, He concentrated on their lives: He knew that when they would be converted, they would strengthen their brethren. Jesus knew that life is the best instructor for the work of ministry!

The Bible said to us in the book of Acts chapter 1 verse 1

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Act 1:1

It is life that matters most in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ! And here again I see Paul, following the same pattern: he spent 3 chapters out of the 4 chapters and even this 4th chapter you will notice that most of the aspects of this chapter that talks about practical instruction for ministry is just between verse 1 and verse 2 - the rest of it is personal instructions and doctrine and other things which you are going to see their relevance in the ministry of a young man.

I want you to note where he said "I charge you therefore..." And the first emphasis I have drawn today is that your ministry must have a 'therefore' so must your essence, your commissioning - all of these must have a 'therefore' and that 'therefore' must be based on your personal life - your personal relationship with God.

If your ministry has no 'therefore,' there is nothing your ministry is based upon! If your ministry is not based on your life, there is nothing behind it - it is based on nothing. If it is based on your theological certificate, or it is based on official appointment, I want to ask you - What are you doing in the pulpit? What are you doing on the pulpit preaching what has not happened in your life? Do you want to

be an hypocrite? The strongest weapons you have in preaching the word of God is men's life, men's heart and your own life! Your own personal experience with God is what gives you authority and audacity to preach unto others!

So I want you to note that 'therefore' - the Bible says

I charge thee therefore before God, 2Ti 4:1

But I would now like you to return again and look at the word 'charge' and let's define what is the meaning of the word 'charge'? That verse says "I solemnly charge you from the presence of God." The word 'charge' means 'command,' it is not an advice! It is not an exhortation, it is a charge, and that is where to begin.

Every man that God uses and every man that God will work with must see the

work of God as a charge! A charge! You see several times in the legal circle when they use the word 'charge' it's almost like a summon - it is a command: when they charge you it means that if you don't behave well or if you don't fulfill your charge you will then actually be condemned! And that is the first thing I want to draw your attention to now: before your ministry must succeed, you must receive it as a charge!!!

Ministry is not something you do if you like, or if it is possible, or if it is convenient - it is a charge!

All the men that served God received the work of God as a charge! That hymn-writer says

A charge to keep I have,

A God to glorify,

A never dying-soul to save,

And fit it for the sky.

Before you can fulfill the call of God on your life, you must see it as a charge! You must see it as a commission! You must see it as something that God has particularly charged you with! Several of you are on the pulpit and it looks as if you don't understand that being a servant of God is a charge - you are under a charge to serve God and to preach the gospel! You are not there as an entertainer my brother, you are not there on the pulpit as a man that is just finding something to do, you are not on the pulpit because you have dropped out from somewhere else! You are not doing the work of God because you are looking for somewhere to practice. It's a charge!

If you don't see the call of God upon your life as a charge, if you don't see your ministry as a charge, I wonder how you will handle it! I wonder how you will approach it! But I want to say to you, there is a charge - and I see the way brother

Paul is saying it to Timothy when he said

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; 2Ti 4:1

Again I want you to note that the charge you have as a man of God, the charge you have as a servant of God: and when I say a charge, whether you are a Sunday School teacher in your church, it is a charge; whether you are a choir-member or a song-leader who is charged with the responsibility of leading worship and bringing men into the presence of God, it is a charge! Whether you are an usher in the work of God in your local church, it's a charge! Whatever God has given you to do in the vineyard I want you to know that it's a charge! And you are going to be charged in the presence of God if you do not fulfill it! It is a charge.

The Bible says

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; 2Ti 4:1

Now what is the meaning of that? It means that whatever you are doing in the work of God don't forget, there is a Judge and you are going to give account before Him! Whether you are living or you are dead at the time He appears, you will give account! Whether you are still on the surface of the earth when Jesus appears or you are in the grave you will arise and give account of how you handled your charge!

That is the first issue you must consider in this chapter. Ministry is a charge, standing for the Kingdom of God is a charge - it's not an advice, it's not an exhortation, it's not something you are doing because you like to do it! There are some of you that are handling the word of God with a lax attitude, the Bible says woe to him that does the work of God deceitfully, that does the work of God with a slack hand. Woe unto him! Woe unto the man that God has put in His ministry

and he does it as if he is serving a mere man! For you to succeed in the call of God on your life, you must accept it as a charge and every aspect of the work that God allows you to partake of, no matter how minute it appears, no matter how menial or insignificant people may rate it, I want you to know that that is your charge!

And it is according to the scope of your calling that God will charge you! God will charge you and charge you as to give account of your life and of how you discharged your charge.

So listen carefully to me; A charge is what God has placed on your life to discharge! And my question is how do you discharge the charge that God has placed on your life? How do you discharge the call of God on your life? Don't forget that it is a call and a charge that you must discharge! And you are doing it not before human beings, you are doing it before God and the Lord Jesus Christ Who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing!!!

One thing again about verse 1 I would like you to note is that you are going to discharge this charge before God!

Before God!!!

Listen! Several times you forgot that your service actually is before God! And He just doesn't judge your physical action, He judges the motive of your heart, he judges the secret of your intent! He judges the reason why you are doing what you are doing! And I want to ask you today - what do you think God sees about your activity? What do you think God sees about your ministry? What do you think God notices about how you are serving Him?

Are you serving because you want to win human approval? Are you always doing ministry as a man pleaser? What you will never do in secret, once you

notice that some brethren are coming - O, what do you do? You jump around, you do many things, you sweat and people say "Thank God for this man, thank God for this brother, thank God for this sister!"

Listen carefully - it is not before men that we discharge our charge! It is before God!! It is before the Lord Jesus Christ with Whom nothing can be hidden! He sees the intent and the secret of your heart! And so I found that for you to be a successful servant in the household of faith you must remember that your ministry is first of all a charge to you.

No 2. You must also remember that it is a charge you are discharging before God! Before God!! In case there are things you are hiding in your cupboard, know that it is before God! In case there are double standards you are paying in your ministry - it is before God! In case you are using some different means and you are claiming that it is the power of God you are using - it is before God! And the Bible says "God will judge both the quick and the dead as His appearing and His Kingdom"

Brother, when you say Jesus is coming soon, at His appearing all servants of God, all Christians those that have been given a talent, those that have been endowed with a spiritual gift, they will be brought to His presence at the Judgment Seat, where we will give account of our lives, where you will give account of how you live and what you did! All the works you did shall be judged, in fact, the Bible says it shall be tested and shall be tried by fire - if any man's work will survive fire, the test of His fire, then you will receive a reward! But if your work shall be burnt, then you will suffer loss!

Brother! it is a charge. And as brother Paul put it to Timothy he said,

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, Who will judge the living and the dead, and in the view of His appearing and His kingdom: I give you this charge.

2Ti 4:1

And I also want to give you this charge this hour - it is a charge! And so what is

that charge? Let's read on to verse 2 and let's introduce it

Preach the word... 2Ti 4:2

Listen brother, as a preacher on the pulpit our charge is to preach the word! Can you hear that?

Preach the word; 2Ti 4:2

Please note it again!

Preach the word... 2Ti 4:2

Listen, He didn't ask you to preach yourself! Brother, pastor, teacher, man of God, Prophet, what do you preach? Yourself? In a 30 minute sermon or in a one hour sermon, you take about 20, 30 minutes to tell stories about yourself, to bring attention to the way you dress. Brother, is that the charge God gave you? Are you discharging your charge correctly in the presence of God? Your charge is to preach the word! Even when the word is not palatable to your taste, you still have the charge to preach it! Even when the word of God is dealing with your own heart and is revealing your own error and your mistakes, you still have a charge to preach it! Preach the Word.

Preach the Word!

The Bible did not ask you to tell stories, he didn't ask you to greet men on the pulpit! It bothers me nowadays how I see brothers, fellow preachers, wasting

precious hours that God has given you on the pulpit to change people's eternity and to change people's destiny, you use it to joke away, you while away time greeting people and gisting on the pulpit. Well I am asking you a question, is that your charge?

Is that your charge? Your charge is to preach the word!

I see some of you, you use 5 minutes to preach and use 20 minutes to raise money and then you use 15 minutes to tell stories - is that your charge? Has God given you a charge to just go about collecting money from people's pockets? I see some of you say God has anointed you to raise money, I wonder where you find that in the Bible! I wonder who commissioned you to do that kind of thing!

This is because the Bible said "Preach the Word!"

Our charge is to preach the Word! Your charge is to preach the word and the Bible continues

...be instant in season, out of season 2Ti 4:2

Be instant in season and out of season. Be prepared in season and out of season!

...reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 2Ti 4:2

I will need to stop at verse 2! Your charge is to preach the Word, I would like us to read it from the Living Bible very quickly, verse 2 says

To preach the Word of God urgently at all times, whenever you get the chance in season and out, when it is convenient and when it is not. Correct, rebuke your people when they need it, encourage them to do right, and all the time be feeding them patiently with God's word. 2Ti 4:2

Are you hearing? That is your charge! Your charge is to preach the word whether it is convenient or it is not convenient! Convenience is never a prerequisite for a preacher! Having a good accommodation is not a prerequisite for you to preach the Word of God! The Bible says whether it is convenient or not, at every occasion you have a charge to discharge and what is that charge?

Preach the Word!

As I leave this message at this point hoping to come back to it in our next meeting by the grace of God, I want to ask you, this charge that God has given you how do you discharge it? As a man of God in the ministry for the past 25

years, how much of the word of God do you preach? Are you known to be a preacher of the Word of God or are you getting to be known as a politician? If you want to be a P.R.O, a Public Relations Officer, you better go and join a company!

Action Point:

How do you discharge this your charge, the charge to preach the Word? The charge to rebuke to exhort with all longsuffering and you know with doctrine. I pray that God will guide you!

We are coming back on this matter when next we meet on this program, but I want you to pray right now, knowing that it is a charge and ask God "Lord, do not let me die without discharging my charge, don't let this charge be charged against me when I meet you in eternity!"

Say to God "Lord, don't ever have to charge me for the blood of my members" if you are a pastor, if you are a Sunday School teacher, if you are a leader even if you are a parent! You have a charge to discharge. And what is that charge? The charge is "Preach the Word" whether it is convenient or it is not convenient!

May God help you and me to fulfill our charge in our lifetime in Jesus Name.

Concluding Prayer:

Father we thank You for Your people that are coming back to You, hear them as they pray and let them understand that ministry is not before life. We want to ask You Lord that as many as have discovered this, You will order their priority, You will make them to be complete in their lives and You will give them ministry. Thank You for You will do this for we have prayed together in Jesus Name. Amen.

THE MAN GOD USES 20

This message was published for the 23rd – 29th May 2011

TEXT: 2 Timothy 4:1-5

Opening Prayer:

Father we give You praise for one more opportunity you are giving to us to study Your Word and to listen to instruction you pass unto us as Your servant. At this particular hour we ask that You open Your Word to us in a definite way, speak to us Lord in a way that we can understand, and mobilise us to get into Your service

in a more definite way. Thank You for hearing us for we have prayed in Jesus Name. Amen.

Review/Introduction:

I would like to praise the Lord together with each one of you who have had this privilege of being with us over this several weeks in our study of the Second book of Timothy in a series of personal instruction to the Man that God Uses. By last week and in our last episode, we already started looking at chapter 4 of that particular book and we were able to go as far as verse 2.

INSTRUCTION CONCERNING THE SERVICE THAT GOD CALLS HIS
SERVANT UNTO 2

Today again I would like us to revisit that chapter as we press on looking unto God for instruction for ministry that God will pass to several of us as He prepares us for His service. I would like us to read from verse 1 of that chapter down to verse 5

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; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. 2Ti 4:1-5

I want us to stop there trusting God to bless His word into our hearts as we study. In our last introduction to this chapter 4, I reminded you that ministry must have a therefore and that therefore must be based on your own life. The man whose life cannot provide a therefore - a platform, a reason - for his utterance, for his

ministry cannot accomplish much in God's service. Actually your life is the first credential you have to show before you can enter the work of the Lord.

We also noticed that it is a charge: our call, our ministry is a charge we have to discharge in our lifetime. And it is a charge we will have to discharge before God and before the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the living and the dead at His appearing and in His Kingdom.

Now, we also saw what that charge is, that our charge is to preach the Word. And so today I would like you study with me particularly from verse 2

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears... 2Ti 4:2-3

Therefore I would like you to note that the charge that God gives to us as servants of the Lord in whatever capacity you find yourself is to preach the Word. And I began to draw an emphasis on the fact that the Scripture says "Preach the Word," don't preach yourself, don't preach your denomination, don't preach your constitution, don't preach your personal idea, don't preach what is convenient to you and don't preach your personal experience! Your charge actually is to preach the Word!

And the Bible says

...Be urgent in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke and exhort with unfading patience and in teaching. 2Ti 4:2

Now you can see the word of God saying, your charge as a servant of God and as a man that actually desires to bring profit to the Kingdom of God by your life and by your service is to preach the Word. I don't know how to express that more firmly than I am putting it: your charge is to preach the Word! God is not expecting you to waste every opportunity He gives you to be on the pulpit or to encounter men, every time you encounter men, your charge unto that life is to preach the Word.

Let me again share with you, it is only the Word of God that carries the breath of God! Every other story, every other testimony, every other idea, every other philosophy no matter how wonderful they look don't carry the life that can convict men. You may actually frame a good story, maybe it can attract the attention of men and that may want to make people want to listen to you, but until you preach the Word, you have not yet discharged your charge! You may speak about politics and may talk about politicians, you may talk about business, about geography, history and physics but I want to say to you - the only thing that has power to change men is the Word of God. And until you have preached the Word, actually you have not preached; until you have preached the Word you have actually not discharged your charge!

Look at the Word of God, it said "be urgent in season and out of season." Preach it urgently! Now what does that mean? It means be urgent about it. Don't be sluggish! Sometimes, you know, the way you present the Word of God proves to the man that is hearing you that you are not serious about it! If you believe in the authority of the Word of God and if you believe in the implication and the demand that the Word of God is placing on the lives of men, if you believe on the conclusion of Scripture about a sinner, you will not be complacent at presenting it!

Now, the Bible says 'be urgent whether it is convenient or it is not convenient, make the most of every opportunity you have..'

...To preach the Word of God urgently at all times, whenever you get the chance in season and out, when it is convenient and when it is not. Correct, rebuke your people when they need it, encourage them to do right, and all the time be feeding them patiently with God's word. (Living Bible) 2Ti 4:2

That is your charge! Brother, I want you to consider this before I go from that verse.

...never lose your urgency in season and out of season. Reprove, correct, encourage using the utmost patience in your teaching. 2Ti 4:2 (Phillips Modern English)

As you preach the Word of God, the Bible says do it "with all longsuffering." That is, the preacher should not easily give up, the reaction of your audience does not matter.

Sometimes they may behave as if they are not interested in what you are saying. What did the Bible say you should still do? Preach the Word! Even when it looks

as if 'Oh, they are not understanding,' what did the Bible still say you must still do? With all longsuffering, with all patience - Preach the Word! Insist on preaching it. Continue to preach it and use all occasion, press it home on every occasion whether it is convenient or inconvenient! Use arguments, rebuke, appeal with all the weight that the work of preaching requires. That is the charge!

And you see, I see the way Paul was pressing this personal instruction to Timothy. There is a reason why you have to be urgent in preaching the Word! The Bible says

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine... 2Ti 4:3

Now! Listen brother - you don't have the everlasting time to preach the Word. Listen carefully to me, the time that people give you - every time they come to church, every Sunday, they give you 2 solid hours of their lives; and if 200 hundred people have come to your church, it would appear to me as if you have

400 man-hours to use to affect their eternity! What do you do with those hours? When all of them have contributed 2 hours each, for you to do something in their lives, what do you do with those hours? The Bible says you will not always have that time for "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine."

It looks to me as if there is a time limit for every man to discharge his charge! And that is why you need to be urgent about what God has called you to do! You need to do it with every sense of urgency and you need to use every means - every occasion - to press it home! Every time you have opportunity, preach the Word! Use every means, either by argument, by appeal, by rebuke, by teaching, by correction; everything you have at your disposal, employ it to discharge your charge. And your charge is to preach the Word!

Now look at how the Word of God put it here, it says

Herald and preach the Word! Keep your sense of urgency [stand by, be at hand

and ready], whether the opportunity seems to be favorable or unfavorable.

[Whether it is convenient or inconvenient, whether it is welcome or unwelcome, you as preacher of the Word are to show people in what way their lives are wrong]

And convince them, rebuking and correcting, warning and urging and encouraging them, being unflagging and inexhaustible in patience and teaching.

2Ti 4:2 (Amplified Bible)

May God grant you understanding.

For you to fulfill the call of God on your life, I want you again to listen to this charge. The Bible here says

Herald and preach the Word! Keep your sense of urgency [stand by, be at hand and ready], whether the opportunity seems to be favorable or unfavorable.

[Whether it is convenient or inconvenient, whether it is welcome or unwelcome, you as preacher of the Word are to show people in what way their lives are wrong]

And convince them, rebuking and correcting, warning and urging and encouraging them, being unflagging and inexhaustible in patience and teaching.

2Ti 4:2

You see, the charge on your life demands that you become inexhaustible in patience - you can't give up on any man, until the man gives up the ghost, you can't ever give up on any man! The charge God has placed on your hand is until death closes the eyes of men; as long as a man is living, he has a chance to hear you preach again and again. That is the charge! The Bible says you can't postpone it because the time will come,

...when [people] will not tolerate (endure) sound and wholesome instruction, but, having ears itching [for something pleasing and gratifying], they will gather to themselves one teacher after another to a considerable number, chosen to satisfy their own liking and to foster the errors they hold, 2Tim 4:2 (Amplified Bible)

You see that already happening in our time. You see men already drifting, looking for teachers - they can pay and sustain and support them! You see men that are not saying anything serious - such are the men that people are willing to support. They carry them shoulder high because they are now beginning to develop itching ears. They are now seeking to hear what they want to hear: not what God is seeking to say to them! Anybody that pampers their soul, anybody that pampers their flesh, anybody that gives them what they are itching to hear, that is the person they crowd!!! People are itching to hear how to have breakthrough, they are itching to hear someone who will tell them how to become prosperous how to become millionaires and they flock there!

Men are looking for what suits them, they are looking for what will not touch their souls - they are not interested in where they talk about sin and about repentance! O but men rush to where they are talking about principles of breakthrough - breakthrough in business, breakthrough in politics - these are the kinds of things they are itching to hear. And you see the way the church is preaching, the way things are going - if you call night vigil and all you are doing is how to deal with your enemy, you see thousands and thousands of men going there!

And you as a preacher are you only telling them what they want to hear? Are you only carried away by seeking to give them miracles, by labouring for the bread, the bread that perisheth? The things that actually though you bring it down for them by the anointing and by the power of God, it will end here: it does not pass this place, it is only for the earth and it will perish with the earth?

Brother, sister, I want to tell you - men will not listen to you forever! A time will come when their hearts will turn away from the truth! Look at what the word of God says

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. 2Ti 4:3-4

They shall be turned unto stories! Let's see how the Amplified Bible puts that

And will turn aside from hearing the truth and wander off into myths and man-made fictions. 2Ti 4:4

Let me read that Scripture with you from Phillips Modern English,

I urge you, Timothy, as we live in the sight of God and of Christ Jesus (whose coming in power will judge the living and the dead), to preach the Word of God. Never lose your sense of urgency, in season or out of season. Prove, correct, and encourage, using the utmost patience in your teaching. 2Ti 4:1

For the time is coming when men will not tolerate wholesome teaching. They will want something to tickle their own fancies, and they will collect teachers who will pander to their own desires. They will no longer listen to the truth, but will wander off after man-made fictions. For yourself, stand fast in all that you are doing, meeting whatever suffering this may involve. Go on steadily preaching the Gospel and carry out to the full the commission that God gave you.

2Ti 4:3

My brother even as I look at this as personal instruction to your life as a man of God and as a man God wants to use, I want to say to you that we are already in an age where men are gathering teachers unto themselves, they are sponsoring anyone who can stand up and say 'well, I have a ministry, I have a message.' You can see everywhere: under the tree, under the bridge - anywhere at all; in a house, in a parlour, men are willing to gather as long as there is somebody willing to tell them what they want to hear! But you see, if you are a man that God has sent to preach righteousness, if you are such a man that God has raised to instruct men on the way to life, then you must be urgent about it! You n-e-e-d to use every available means to teach, to preach, to rebuke and to correct.

Pastor! God has given you a chance to influence 3,000 people under you, what are you doing with them Sunday after Sunday? Now listen carefully to me, when you travel abroad and you travel into nations where revival has been before and the glory has departed, you will see very big cathedrals with nobody inside. And the few people you see - 20, 30 or 40 people - are all aged men and women, who

are just planning and preparing for the grave! Where are the young people, they are no more interested in hearing the truth. They have set up itching ears and teachers unto themselves, they now gather around foolish things and that is what they want to hear!

Brother! we don't have all the time for ever to keep preaching. Even if Jesus didn't come to stop us, men will stop you! Your audience will stop you, your congregation will stop you. And so I want to ask you at this moment: What are you doing about your opportunity? You are a man in charge of a very big congregation what are you doing about your church? Are you just rejoicing and saying 'Yes, they are paying my salary?' Are you just bragging around because they are singing around you and you are not striking them with the Word of Life? Very soon they will look for teachers who can tell them what they want to hear! And unfortunately I found those teachers also becoming soothsayers - and why? Because they are afraid of losing their members who are no longer having ears to hear the truth! They are now only turning unto fables.

Are you allowing your congregation to change your message? Are you allowing

your men, your people to change what God has commissioned you to preach?

And I wonder how will you appear before the Lord Jesus Christ.

Brother I charge you this hour, sister I charge you - discharge the charge that God has placed on your life! Preach the Word! This is the time to do so! This is the time to do so. As we travel around the continent of Africa we find God causing our people all over Africa, yearning to hear the truth, yearning to hear the Word of God undiluted! This is our age of opportunity, the time to teach and to preach with all strength, with all seriousness in order to harness the revival that God is bringing to our people! I want to ask you, do you want to waste your day of opportunity? Do you want to waste what God is planning to do for you? Are you planning to lose what God has brought on your way?

What should you do in order to maximise the opportunity to discharge your charge? The Bible now says

But watch thou in all things... 2Ti 4:5

Be vigilant in all things and the number one thing to watch is your life! Watch everything around you, don't allow your mouth to be shut with your character. Are you hearing me? Don't allow somebody to mortgage your mouth with a little money that he will bring, don't allow any church financier to rob you of the utterance, of the weapon of ministry that God has given you even the Word of God!

Watch thou in all things.

And let me tell you the truth as the Word of God is breaking forth here: a preacher of righteousness is never the friend of the majority. Listen carefully - any man who is insisting on the truth many times, if you look at Scripture, each time God raises a man who will not pamper men, who does not care about the way people feel when it comes to the matter of the truth and of the standard of

God's Word, most of the time they are stoned. You remember that even though Jesus Christ had performed miracles, he raised the dead and he healed the sick, several cripples were raised in His ministry but each time He came forward and pressed the Word of God and the demand of God on the lives of men the Bible said several times they gnash their teeth against Him and they plan to cast Him to death! Sometimes they lead Him to the crest of a hill trying to throw him down to his death but by the grace of God He walked through them alive! God will normally deliver us from them all.

But the matter I am putting before you is this: there is an affliction you need to endure if you are going to serve God effectively!

Pastor! If you start speaking the truth, that man that is having two to three wives in your church may no longer be comfortable, he may decide not to pay his tithes anymore. he may decide and say "well, if this Pastor does not know how to preach in order to encourage someone and pamper somebody, let's see how he will feed without me!" But I want to tell you brother, even if people roll off their mat from under your feet, God is going to spread another carpet before you! Are you hearing what I am saying? Even if men, notable men, big men - big

financiers - decided to withdraw their support because you are telling the truth, I tell you, you will be better for it! Because then God will stand up to meet your needs.

Don't be afraid of that big man in your church – do not be afraid! If you see the chairman of your building committee and his life is not right, tell him the truth. Tell him the truth! Let him go away with his money, the Lord will open a door for you and meet your need.

Now! What I am saying is this - as you watch in all things, endure affliction. End-ure affliction! When you stand and preach the truth, several times you will receive opposition, several times you will receive blackmail but that should never be enough to dissuade you from discharging your charge! It is God who has commissioned you, it is not a man; it is God that has called you, it is not a man neither is it your congregation that has employed you. It was God that called you, and you dare not fear men and disobey God!

The Bible says - endure affliction!

2Ti 4:5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

Men of old who preached the truth - ask Peter when you get to heaven, you will see the scars - many of them were sent to prison, beaten, simply because they would not compromise the truth.

You, do the work of an evangelist! Do the work of a preacher, the preacher of the good news.

Never you allow the gospel to become obsolete on your lips! Brother, you have not been called to be a Public Relations Officer, you are a preacher! You are a

preacher. The way I see you now going about just trying to meddle with the politics in your church, trying to play double game - I don't think that is what God has called you to do. Preach the word.

Preach the word brother, don't be afraid to declare the truth!

...do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. 2Ti 4:5

Make sure that you discharge the charge God gave you fully, that's what the Word of God is saying! As I draw the conclusion on this verse right now, I want to say to you my brother - these are personal instruction to a man that God uses! A man that fears God even in the face of the opposition of man is a man that would succeed even in the charge that God has placed upon his life!

As we call on God at this point, I want to urge you, I want to charge you - take your stand, take your stand! Don't allow men to intimidate you to become a soothsayer; you don't have to say things that sooth men! You don't have to say things that men are willing to hear all the time! Be faithful to God who has called you: do not short-measure the Word of God! Do not dilute the Word of Life, do not preach it for gain! Preach the Word of God, preach it as it has been given to you. Stand up and contend for the faith that was delivered unto the elders and I know that God is going to bless you.

Action Point:

As we come on this passage next week, I am trusting that the Lord will show us the personal testimony of brother Paul because I found that ministry is a warfare, ministry is a battle and for you to win, you must be consistent. Be ready to endure affliction even as a good soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Lord Almighty will bless you and support you as you take these instructions seriously. God bless you.

Concluding Prayer:

Our Father we thank You for your equipment for our life to serve You. We ask that as many O God that You are calling into ministry, You will give them boldness to stand in Your Word without compromise. Thank You that this You will do for we have prayed in Jesus Name. Amen.

THE MAN GOD USES 21

This message was published for the 30th May – 5th June 2011

TEXT: 2 Timothy 4:6-18

Opening Prayer:

Father we want to bless You, we want to honour You, we want to exalt You for Your faithfulness. Thank You Lord for how You carried us in the past several weeks, several months looking at personal instructions that You give unto the man You want to use. As we are gradually coming to the close, the conclusion

of this book, we are praying Lord that You will tie everything together and help each one of your people to remember all that You have said to us and cause us to grow to become the kind of men, the kind of women you want to use in our generation. Lord we have heard testimony of men whom You used and they ran the race to the end. Lord! cause us also to finish our course gloriously to the glory of Your Name. Lord thank You. In Jesus Christ's Name we have prayed. Amen.

Introduction:

Once more I want to give God the praise for how far He has led us in our series of study on personal instructions that God gives to the man He uses especially as we take the book of Second Timothy for study in the past in the past few months. Today we would like to continue as we gradually try to conclude our study in this book of Second Timothy.

INSTRUCTION CONCERNING THE SERVICE THAT GOD CALLS HIS SERVANT UNTO 3

We have studied up to chapter 4 verse 5 and today we would like to go forward and look at Second Timothy chapter 4 from verses 6 to 8, and from verses 13 to 18 trusting God to grant us some further insight.

Now verses 6 to 8 says

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. 2Ti 4:6-8

Please follow to verse 13

2Ti 4:13-18 The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments. Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words. At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I just desire that you will once again look at the journey and the conclusion of this man of God who has been instructing His son in the Lord, his son in the faith even brother Timothy. Now! I would like you to look at what Paul had to say

about himself. We have talked about personal instructions that God has used him to pass unto a younger man in ministry even Timothy. But you see like I kept saying to you - the testimony of your life, the victory of your life, the end of your life is what will put a cap on your ministry. Listen carefully to me: no matter how great you have served God, no matter how much labour you have done for the Lord, if your life does not end in the faith, if your life does not end according to the word of God that you have preached, you will still suffer loss! There are great men that have served God by their preachings, by their ministries - many people were saved and brought to the faith but towards the end of their life, they went into error; towards the end of their lives they went into sin, towards the end of their ministry they became a non entity, they became a ridicule, they became an object of shame and people tossed them to and fro!!! What has happened is that men have forgotten what they did, people have forgotten how they laboured and they are regarded as non-entity in their lifetime.

Let me again say - when we said your life is the 'therefore' and is the platform on which ministry can be based, I also want to conclude again that your life- your personal life, your personal testimony, how you ended is also the 'cap' that can be placed on the ministry, is also the conclusion that will make your ministry to be properly packaged. A man that has a good beginning that does not have a

correct ending is like an open sepulchre! What men see at the end of your life ... and you see the last impression is what men go home with: your last word, your last deed, your last action is actually much more important than your beginning. The Bible says the end of a matter is much more desirable than the beginning thereof, is of greater weight than its beginning.

Now! One of the things that gives me joy is to see Paul concluding this chapter with his own personal victorious testimony.

How will your own chapter end? That is the big question I want to leave with you today. Oh you say "I have been in the ministry for 30 years and I have been serving God before some of you were born, I have been preaching even in the early 1960s!" Praise the Lord for your preaching sir! My question to you is - how will you end and where will you end? How many of you listening to me today, you have preached the gospel before but you are now a drunkard? How many of you, you've fought against demons, you fought against idol worship, you shook the land, you preached righteousness, now what are you preaching? You are preaching money.

How will you end?

The end of a man is more desirable than his beginning, your end is what God has His eyes on. The question I want you to look at even as we complete the study in the book of Timothy is "how will I end?" What will be the end of your life, what will be the end of your testimony? In fact the Word of God instructs in the book of Hebrews that we should watch the end of our lives, we should watch the end of the lives of those who have instructed us. And my greatest concern is how will I end? It is not a matter of people saying "Oh! that man used to preach for many years on radio," it is not the question of "Oh! he has written so many books," it is not the matter of "Oh! he has preached here, he has preached there, he has gone here, he has gone there," the main question that must be on your lips even as you pray with me today is to ask yourself "how will I end and where will I end?"

And let me tell you - until you have ended well, you have not ended well!! Until your life has ended well, gloriously, then sorry for you! You have run in vain! For the Bible says "only those that endure to the end shall be saved." Not those that have tried at a point and have dropped out of the way. Maybe you are listening to me and you are an old preacher, you are an old soldier - you are wounded; and all you are talking about is 'when I used to be strong, when I used to be a preacher, when God used to move with me, when anointing was flowing!' What are you now? Are you now a husband of three wives? Pastor I want you to stand up and repent! You are an elder indeed and the Bible says we should not rebuke an elder but I challenge you as a servant of the Lord - Where you are lying down now is not your position! Your eyes are already waxing dim, the way you are now sharing your life in between two and three women is not correct! You still have a chance to repent even today, you don't have to end like that.

You do not have to end like this!!

Look at great works that God used you to start in the early 1970s, what are you doing about it now? What are you talking about now? Where are you standing

now? You are supposed to be a man of honour, you know gray here is supposed to be the glory of an old man but your own gray here is bringing you shame because of where you are staying, because of what you are doing! I charge you this moment as long as the Lord is still lending you life, you can stand up and repent. You remember Samson, his story would have been terrible except that towards the end of his life, he repented, he turned around, he cried to God!!! You can also do that.

I want to praise the Lord for this man of God particularly today, brother Paul.

He said

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 2Ti 4:6

How many of us are actually ready at the time the Lord will come for us, how many of us even preachers are ready at the time the Lord will call us? Several of us are living as if we have all the time to live, not knowing that the Lord is going

to call you soon. Some die at the point when they are still dreaming big dreams!
But this man of God said "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my
departure is at hand." And he continued by saying to Timothy

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 2Ti
4:7

Look at those 3 issues that he has raised in verse 7: i.) I have fought a good fight.
Let me ask you, did you fight a good fight and are you fighting a good fight? I
see you quarrelling and fighting but it is not a good fight, I see you quarrelling
for position, I see you quarrelling for landed property, I see some of you now
quarrelling over your Certificate of Incorporation because now you want to
change the Board of Trustees of your congregation to only reflect you and your
wife and your children! Is that a good fight my brother? Pastor, is that a good
fight? General Overseer is that a good fight?

I see some of you now beginning to go to court over properties and materials that resulted out of your ministry, is that a good fight? God has ordained you to fight for the gospel, he has ordained you to fight for the faith that was delivered unto the elders, and I am asking you - what are you fighting for now? Some of you are fighting for salary, some you are meeting day and night and holding night vigil on how to overthrow the current President of your ministry. Is that a good fight? Man of God, is that a good fight?

This brother said,

I have fought a good fight... 2Ti 4:7

I have fought a good fight... and I want to say to you: any fight that does not establish the Kingdom of God is not a good fight! Any labour, any struggle that does not establish Jesus in the hearts of men, any struggle that does not bring about revival to the souls of men is not a good fight!

Even if you fought and won a house, even if you fought and won property; even if you fight and your name is now inscribed as the Founder and the President of that ministry, of that church and of that denomination and it is not for Jesus' sake, I tell you brother - it is not a good fight!

It is not a good fight!!!

And you see one of the troubles I see is men of God at their old age and their ageing years, is the matter of abandoning the good fight and fighting for little things. Some are now fighting to possess Secondary Schools, some are now fighting to immortalise their names, some are just fighting now to bring in their children and their grandchildren to inherit the ministry! Sir, is that a good fight? Is that what you started with? I remember when you started serving the Lord, you threw everything away, you didn't care, you told God and you told us that God was going to meet your need! Why are you now fighting for crumbs and running around for little-little, petty-petty things? Has God decided not to take care of

you anymore? Has God abandoned you? Is God now unfaithful to you? Has God broken His covenant over your life?

This man said "I have fought a good fight." What fight are you fighting sir? What battle are you involved in? Is it the battle for the Kingdom or is the battle for yourself? Is it the battle for Jesus Christ to be brought to His throne as the King and as the Lord of all? Or are you struggling to make a name now? Are you now struggling to make a name, that is not a good fight!

...I have finished my course... 2Ti 4:7

Oh! what a wonderful thing: I have finished my course!! Will you be able to say at the end of your race "I have finished my course"? Every course that God has set before you, every assignment that God has set before you by grace and by mercy - are you trying to finish it? All that God has set ahead of you that you should do, are you running to finish it? That man said "I have finished my

course!"

And not only that I have finished my course,

...I have kept the faith: 2Ti 4:7

“I have held tenaciously to the faith, I did not allow the faith that was once delivered to the elders to slip out of my own hands!”

Brother! Are you still keeping the faith? Are you still maintaining the gospel?
Are you still maintaining the purity of the message, the one you started with or
have you brought in strange things, strange practise into the message of the word
of God? Have you kept the faith?

Pastor, have you kept the faith? Senior men of God are you still keeping the faith? This is the challenge: how will you end? Today I ask you, how will you end? And as a young man - Listen! how will you end? How will you end? I see you very zealous now but you see, the end is the matter - where will you end is the matter. I have known people that were Presidents and General Secretaries of Christian Union in the University, they are now drunkards today! I have known people that were powerful Sisters, wonderful singers, Oh! they are now married to three, four husbands: they got pregnant for this one, they got pregnant for that one!

How will you end? That is the matter.

There are so many of my colleagues whom we started the faith together, they are nowhere to be found today! How will you end my friend? Where will you end? What will be your final testimony? And yet your life testimony is the only

'cap' with which we can complete your ministry. A man's life, a man's ministry is not complete except the story of his life comes to a conclusion. I have seen some of you writing powerful biographies about yourself when you are still alive - I thank God for your story. But the question is: how will you end? Your biography doesn't have a concluding chapter yet until we see the end of your life! It is your end that tells us where you are going, it is your end that will tell us.

And you know of great prophets, great preachers, great revivalists in their time how did they end? Some ended preaching false doctrine, some ended denying the faith, some ended back in witchcraft, do you remember Balaam? You know Balaam started the ministry powerfully - Balaam had an anointing that he could fall into a trance with his eyes open! But how did he end, he ended as a soothsayer. And how are you ending your life sir? Pastor how are you ending your life? Mummy, how are you ending your life? You were a great woman of God before but I am asking you - how are you ending your life? You are now a soothsayer, you are now beginning to catch witches and wizards instead of preaching the gospel. You are now beginning to prophesy to rich men to collect more money from their hands instead of instructing the unconverted and raising alarm for sinners.

Now! Brother Paul said

...I have kept the faith: 2Ti 4:7

Have you kept the faith? He said

2Ti 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Can you say that henceforth there is a crown laid ahead of you? My brother my sister, are you labouring for that crown? Are you running for that crown? Are

you looking for that honour where honour is actually honourable? Or all you are grabbing now is honorary title, honorary titles that human beings are giving you? Is that what you are now running around? Are you now excited that people are giving you honorary titles, titles that you never really merited, the one that you bribed to get? Is that what you are running after?

There is a crown, a crown that never fades away, a crown that the righteous Judge is going to give us on that day. Not only brother Paul but to all them who love His appearing. Are you eagerly looking for His appearing?

Now! While I was looking at the story and the conclusion of brother Paul, looking at his own life before we finish with the challenge unto Timothy and to several of us, I want you to note some of the things Paul talked about in verses 13, 14, 15 and 18. You know he was still asking our brother Timothy to bring for him even his book! I found that men that really, really became something for God never stopped learning! Paul was still reading books, Paul was still writing by the time he was still about to be offered.

2Ti 4:13-15,18 The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments. Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Sir, I want to ask you: are you tired of learning? Are you become an expert that nobody can instruct you?

Paul still read books, even at the point of his old age - he was still reading books! And he never could part with those materials that were keeping his heart fresh to the knowledge of God.

You see, in the course of ministry, you will meet opposition and brother Paul met opposition. Alexander was a brother who backslid; he was a man who got to know the truth but jilted the truth!

Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: 2Ti 4:14

Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words. 2Ti 4:15

It is not that men that overcome don't have opposition, it's not that they don't have men that attack them - attack is part of our calling if you really want to serve God! There are people that will just stand up and cook up stories against you but that is not enough for you to abandon the correct fight and be fighting human beings. Have you stopped preaching the gospel and you are now fighting

back? You are now using the gospel to answer those who have been challenging you. You are now raising newspapers, you are now writing journals and magazines to attack men! Is that your calling?

Is that your fight?

Even if there was Alexander who was always criticising our brother Paul, who was always fighting against him, who was always resisting his words, he never deviated, he never changed his fight; he never ceased from expanding the frontiers of the gospel (the good fight), he never sought to revenge - he only committed the man to the Lord!

Now! I want you to note that

At my first answer no man stood with me 2Ti 4:16

Oh! can you imagine the temptation and trial at the end of this man's life? After labouring, after planting several churches - no man stood with him! Pastor, I can identify with your situation, I can identify with the fact that after labouring for years, it looks as if men have abandoned you. Now let me say this to you - Paul experienced the same thing, yet he never abandoned the Lord! He never abandoned his commission. He never left his calling. He never sought sympathy. He said

...no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. 2Ti 4:16

Oh! Can you see the character of Paul, he never started accosting them! He prayed for them and said "God, do not lay it to their charge, don't require it from their hands!" And you remember how Jesus Christ our Master prayed for this

who crucified him, he said "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." You remember how brother Stephen prayed for those that were throwing stones at him, he said "Lord, do not lay it to their charge." Here again Paul was following the lifestyle of those that have gone ahead of him! Sir, have you now become a man of God that curses men because of what they did to you? Are you now threatening people with your anointing saying "I will curse you, I will curse you?" No. You don't have to end like that! Brother, you do not have to end with a sour spirit! You don't have to end with bitterness in your heart!

Though all men forsook Paul, he never, never bore a grudge! Though all men left him; though people, converts, the churches he raised never cared for him anymore and forgot to even support him at old age which some of you are facing; some of you are close today to your retirement time, some of you are now beginning to cut corners, you are beginning now to amass some wealth because you are saying "Well, when I retire the church may not remember me!" Is that why you are deviating? Why don't you leave your future and let's see how God will handle it!

Here we see brother Paul saying

Notwithstanding... 2Ti 4:17

The support of human being not withstanding; their way of doing things and the way they forsook him notwithstanding,

...the Lord stood with me 2Ti 4:17

That is the greatest thing you need, the support of the Lord is better than the support of thousands and thousands of men, he said

Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 2Ti 4:17

You know I just keep seeing in Paul a man who will never abandon his call even at the point of opposition, even at the point of abandonment, even at the point of incarceration - he never stopped preaching the gospel! He said

...that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: 2Ti 4:17

And I just pray for myself that the call of God on my life I may never abandon it at any point, not even at my old age! As I continue to serve the Lord I want to serve Him to the end, no matter what happens, even when situation turns around, even if men, brothers, sisters, whom we have laboured together even if they desert me, I dare not desert my Lord! He has never failed me once and I pray

never to fail Him.

I saw a challenge in the life and ministry especially in the conclusion of this man of God, And he said

And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. 2Ti 4:18

Now! Even at a point when Paul began to realise that his time was up, he was still praying, he was still desiring, he knew that he had not won the battle until he has won the battle! The battle is not over until it is over! And I found that great men, they never became overconfident! Even at the end of his life he said "The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work." He was still believing God so that the enemy may not double-cross him at the dying minute!

Action Point:

What are you doing about your own life? What are you doing about your own testimony?

Brother, as I conclude with you today on the testimony of brother Paul, I want to request of you today - what will be the conclusion of your own life? Are you preparing for your eternity? Are you planning for your end and are you planning to end well or do you just want to end anyhow? And it might seem as if I am preaching to elderly men, men that have served God in our age, men that are in their retiring age: I want to charge you - don't spoil your years with the little that remains, don't spoil your testimony with your little remaining time! Please steer clear of every wrong thing! Don't allow young men to lure you into error at this stage! Stand your ground, don't be afraid that you will be abandoned! Even if you are abandoned, the Lord will never abandon you! He never abandons His servants - it is the government of this world that fails to pay the gratuity for their workers, for their servants! The pensioners, I see them dying while they are queueing up for their little-little stipends, our God is not like that!

If you serve Him all your life, even at old age, you will still flourish, I promise you that because the Lord will never fail. Even at their old age they will still be flourishing says the word of God in Psalms 92: 12-14.

May God keep you; may He grant you a cap to put on this your labour. A ministry that does not have a 'cap' has not ended well - and that cap is the cap of your life testimony! How will you end? May the Lord cap your effort, may the Lord end your life with a testimony, with a sweet savour. And when your eyes close in death, may we gather around your grave to give praise to the Lord, may there be no stinking smell around your calling after you have gone.

God bless you as we pray with you in the Name of Jesus.

Concluding Prayer:

Our Father we thank You so much for today, thank You O Lord for as many as You are touching especially with this message. Their discouragement and hardship and all manner of things have caused them to deviate, Lord we ask that today as they have heard You again, they will come back and take up the old good fight: the fight unto grace, the fight unto righteousness. And Lord encourage them as they come back to you. Thank You that You will do this for we have prayed together in Jesus Name. Amen.

THE MAN GOD USES 22

This message was published for the 6th – 12th June 2011

TEXT: 2 Timothy 4:9-22

Opening Prayer:

Gracious Lord we bless You and we honour You for the power that is in Your Word, thank You for lending us Your truth and for allowing us to look into it freely and even today as we conclude this series that we have run on personal instruction to the Man You use using the Second Epistle of Paul to Timothy as our text and the life of Timothy as our case study. Lord we want to pray that as we conclude, let Your Word mix with faith within us, let us never be only hearers

but please Lord make us doers of Your Word. After all that You have said to us, help us Lord to walk in the light of Your truth, let this series of messages be a contribution unto our preparation for Your use and for service in the Kingdom of God. Thank You Father that as many as are partaking out of this series may they never be cast out on the day of reckoning, thank You for in Jesus Name we have prayed. Amen

Review/Introduction:

While we rejoice and praise the Lord for the way He has brought us all through in the past 22 weeks that we have studied and looked at the life of Timothy and the instruction that brother Paul his discipler passed to him in order to prepare him for the work ahead of his life, we are happy as we come to the conclusion of this book today. We will be concluding by looking at some little-little things: things that you might not regard which also add to the beauty of the personal instruction for the Man God Uses.

SOME LITTLE THINGS WHICH ADD TO THE BEAUTY OF THE PERSONAL INSTRUCTION FOR THE MAN GOD USES

I have decided this day under the leading of the Holy Spirit for us to look at those little-little things and what lessons could we glean even from them. And for our text we will just look at these verses: Second Timothy chapter 4, I would like us to read verses 9, 10, 11 and up to verse 13 and then we will read verses 19, 20 and 21. It says

Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments. Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I

left at Miletum sick. Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren. The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen. 2Ti 4:9-13, 19-22

Now! You will wonder what is the particular importance of putting this end credits in a book like this. First and foremost I want you to know that these men that we are talking about, they lived among men: these men that we are talking about worked in a team. I have been talking about Timothy and we have talked about Paul and there are several others that are not mentioned in this chapter that you may never get to know about, they all laboured with God, they all served the Lord in their life-time. Though they didn't write a book and it was not recorded for us that certain books and Epistles were written unto them, and the work they did were not particularly published but I want you to rejoice with me that we could see the Biblical pattern, even, in the work of ministry. One of the things I can notice here as we are drawing the conclusion was that Paul was not a lone ranger neither was the ministry in which God helped him to labour a personal venture, neither did he struggle to hand it over to his junior brother or to his uncle or to his son.

What did we discover here? We saw that he laboured among men, and you could see the different names of members of the team that he laboured with. It was a particular blessing to my heart to see that the pattern of Scripture is still clear, we can follow it today: they were not struggling for position, they were not struggling for hierarchy! For example, we did not hear that Demas was the Vice-President. No! No! No! They were all brethren. And see the way their names were mentioned one after the other, see the closeness of a relationship, a closeness of team spirit.

Let's go over it now. You see a brother like Demas that the Bible says backslid, Paul says 'he has forsaken me, having loved this present world, he has gone to Thessalonica.' I wonder whether Thessalonica would be like Lagos, Abuja and the London of our generation, where men run to when they want to make money, where men run to - they go away from the village and from the rural location of their ministry, they are now running to where there is money. I can see you running to Lagos, brother! And I wonder why you are going there, maybe the spirit of Demas has also caught you! You love this present world! You love soft-soft things, some of you are moving to New York not because God has particularly called you but because I think you love Dollars. I think you are just

running to make some money, now that you hear that the value of the Naira has fallen; you want to make some money! I perceive you are running to quickly go and catch some things.

That is how Demas left, Demas has been a man that was going about with Paul for years, towards the end, he left. Sir, I don't know when you will leave and I don't know what you will say you are leaving for. I could see a relationship in the lives of these men in the Scripture, they laboured as a team. They grew as a team. One thing that touched my heart was to see Timothy when he started with Paul, he was quite a young man, it was Paul that circumcised him - he was quite, quite a young man. But look at Timothy at this point - he could be recommended as a man of God, a fellow-servant, a true yoke-fellow. And yet for all the years of ministry because I could see that Paul picked him just few years after he started, maybe it was not up to 2 years that he went into the apostolic ministry that he called Timothy to come along with him. I don't know for how many years - maybe 20 years maybe 25 years just to remain by his side, he never thought of going to set up his own.

This is a lesson for you young man - you are so ambitious, you could never work with a leader for 5 years, you are already planning to run and start something, even as I am talking now you are saying to yourself "I am going to start my ministry next month." And where will you start your ministry? You are trying to launch it in an hotel! Things that we never found in Scripture. But we saw Timothy here all through and until Paul the man of God came to his death bed, Timothy was still a faithful son! He was still a faithful servant. Look at the kind of instruction they were giving to him!

But before I come back to Timothy, I just want you to note that there were men like Crescens that could be sent to Galatia, men like Titus that could be sent to Dalmatia. None of these men said "No, this is my own, this is my own ministry, you can't send me anywhere, you can't transfer me anywhere, I am already in Crete, I can't go to any Galatia, I can't go to any Dalmatia now! I am sorry you can't move me!" And I am seeing some of you - why did you break away from where you were serving before in ministry? It is because you were transferred, because your master decided that you should move from where you are to another place. Even if he did it out of an 'ulterior motive', I wonder why you are reacting! I wonder why you think you can cast out a devil with another devil! Some of you are thinking that you can use rebellion to settle and resolve a

mistake that maybe your master made.

Listen carefully to me right now, here were men, they laboured for years! I was touched, you know, Paul said "only Luke is with me." Do you know this brother Luke? He was a medical doctor, highly qualified, yet he was just a recorder, he just served as secretary to brother Paul's team! He was the one recording and writing things, he was helping Paul to write letters! He pocketed his medical degree to come and be doing this in the ministry.

I found that when you look at the people that fulfilled the purpose of God in those days, they were highly educated people, they were highly professional people who left all and they went about with the servant of God! None of them was 'shooting-out' for notice, none of them was trying to start their own ministry, none of them was trying to put their name on whatever they did. Sometimes it was Timothy that would write a whole letter for brother Paul, and yet that epistle would just bear the name of Paul. At the end of the letter Paul may say "Ok, you wrote it, you should also greet them and tell them that you are the one who helped me to write this letter!" That was when we saw Timothy's name in a little

way (and same for Titus and for Luke) in any of the Epistles.

Young man, are you not struggling to write your own book now? You have not actually involved any message that you can say it is God that brought it out of your life; but what am I see you doing in that book you are writing? You are plagiarising messages around: you just say "Let me quickly publish this, before my Oga (master) will write anything" Brother! God saw your heart, and I wonder how far you can go with this. But, you see, when we study Bible we can see the Biblical pattern by which ministry are set, the Biblical pattern by which teams are raised in Scripture. I have not really seen the kind of thing I see nowadays in the word of God: I can't see President and Founders that is so common place in our time., I can't see all these kind of individual ministry that we are building now.

And I want to challenge you as I conclude this book: allow the life of elderly men to speak to you, allow the Scripture to instruct you. Are you struggling to set up your own? The terrible thing I found nowadays is that you are even naming churches after yourself, you are even naming God's work after your own name! I

see you now imprinting your own name and your personal identity on the church of God, on the heritage of the Lord. I wonder where you are going with this idea and I wonder from where you learnt it!!

Now, what I am saying may not look popular, what I am saying may look contradictory to what many of you are practising, but I do not bear any apology for that! I want to stand and share with you the word of God. I have seen that the word of God is true and it can be practised even in our time, we can raise teams of men who are quietly labouring together, serving the Lord in their own age and contributing their quota, quietly, in the presence of God.

We were talking about brother Mark earlier in this broadcast; Paul said "Take Mark.." And I just imagine Mark, if you remember his story - Mark started following Paul when Paul was under Barnabas, you remember that the quarrel between Barnabas and brother Paul was because of John Mark, because he went home to go and meet his mother. Now! the same Mark is serving under brother Paul without any grudge, without any problem. How many of you will return to your master because, well, some years ago, he maltreated you? Since then you

have decided to attack him?

Anywhere you see him you say "Well, don't mind him, he is not serious." Is that why you are preaching against the man of God because he offended you one time? You can see Mark - the gracious fellow! He was a gracious fellow. He never reacted against discipline. When they rebuked him that the way you went home was not correct: Barnabas brought him up again and corrected him and sent him back to Paul to go and serve! Do you know that it was Mark that wrote the gospel of Mark? And yet he was still a servant under brother Paul?

You can see what I am talking about, a Timothy could be told to bring Mark: Mark could be willing to submit to the leadership of Timothy even though Mark and Timothy were contemporaries in age. If you look at the time they joined this ministry team - they should be contemporaries! There was no struggle: none of them said "Who are you to come and be talking to me, to say that that you can pick me somewhere?" This is what I am talking about - leadership among them is not by official appointment. And I am praying that God will restore the Biblical pattern of ministry unto His church in our generation. Especially in our land. All this monopolistic idea that have been imported into the church and into our land

has to stop.

And I challenge you today if you are listening to the Word of God, if you are running away from where God has placed you, you cannot be part of a team, you are always struggling to start your own. What is challenging is because maybe one day you saw the way your master was using the church fund and he was using without control and you say "Wow, when I become President and Founder, then I would have a right to the church fund like this! Is that what is pushing you? Is that what is pushing you to break the team spirit? Is that what is pushing you to misbehave?"

Brother! I want you to look at this men: brother Luke was a doctor, you are not a doctor yet, you are just a secondary school drop-out and you are too arrogant to submit to anyone!! These are men that are notable, they were called Physicians, Beloved Physicians, people respected them because of the medical practice they had done for years! But Timothy left it and went about with Paul; he left it, he served the Lord. Now I can see some of you that just because you are a medical doctor your must start your own, you want to be a "Reverend Doctor" by all

means: brother Luke was always referred to as “Brother Luke.”

“Only Luke," not "Doctor Luke," not "Reverend Doctor Luke," not "Apostle Doctor Luke," not "Evangelist Doctor Luke."

Only Luke is with me... 2Ti 4:11

Brother! Can't you see what I am talking about?

As I conclude this story, I just want you to see that they laboured among men, what we are talking about is not abstract, and I am praying and desiring that even in our age God will raise teams of men, men who could complement each other, not men who are competitors and rivals - No! But men who labour with one another, men who submit one to another: Mark can submit to a Timothy, Luke

can submit to a Titus and Epaphras will not argue with brother Tychicus when it comes to instructions. And brother Silas will not worry to take instruction from brother Apollos, Apollos will not worry to take instruction from Aquilla and Priscilla. This was the thing we noticed, we saw that these men related one with another, not because one is higher than the other! It was you that now says "Timothy was a bishop." We never heard that, the Bible never ascribed that to him! You will hear the Bible say "O Timothy my son." As old as he was and as matured as he was in the work of God, he was still happy to be called a son!

Sir, can I ask you a question - how old have you grown? How big is the work of God on your hand? Yet here you see Timothy has grown to a point where he could appoint and set elders over townships, he was even ordaining bishops, yet you can see the instruction they were giving him here - "Do your diligence to come shortly unto me." This was a man that would never be glued to what he was doing as to become immovable, when Paul said "Do your best, do your diligence to please come shortly unto me, under short notice - please come down." Are you still under control? Can you still be sent here and there? Can you still be asked to go and suspend what you are calling your ministry just to go and serve your elder and your discipler? Can you still carry their bag just to go around?

I see that some of you now, if they don't bribe you with a preaching engagement, you will never go and serve your elder! If they don't invite you to go and preach, what are you going to go and do there when you tell yourself you are already a big man of God? Maybe that is why you may never hit the destiny that God has set for your life! Maybe that is why the devil is going to double-cross you. You are always sticking out your neck for notice, you don't want to stay under the cover that God has provided for you!

I am just seeing the beauty when they said

The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee...

2Ti 4:13

Can you imagine? He was sent to do menial things, he was sent to bring clothes! He was sent to bring books! He was sent to even bring papers, to bring the files, the manuscripts that the man of God is still trying to write!

Now can I ask you, how long will you be willing to serve under a leader? Timothy served all along and all through the lifetime of Paul, he was always serving. You see, what touched my mind as I kept reading this Scripture was the fact that Timothy remained submissive all through! At the end Paul said,

Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick. Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren. 2Ti 4:19

Can I say to you again: Even at the end when brother Paul was going, the ministry didn't scatter!! The work was still intact, each one of them were relating together! Each one of them was manning the different posting that God has placed them in and yet no one was struggling for succession!!.

What is happening sir? I can see some of you already now scheming around and doing politics because the outgoing President of your ministry is on the sick bed, you are like that man the servant of the King, Mr Jehu? As soon as we hear that your master is on the death-bed, in fact you are the one who went to get blanket to finish him. You say "how did I get a blanket?" Those blankets of confusion that you are bringing around the man, those bad news, those kind of blackmail that you are bringing around him, is that not the blanket you are putting around his neck to kill him quickly so that you can take over?

Brother, watch your life! God is talking to you - if you want to make heaven, you need to repent now! I don't care who you are Sir and I don't care what you are talking about, I am confronting you with the Word of God: the things we did not see in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ I challenge you - stop doing it! Stop doing it!! Those 'blankets' you are now using to suffocate your master, to send them to their early grave: you are the one that is causing their high blood-pressure! Do you know that you are the one causing confusion? Instead of being a comfort, you are causing confusion; you are stirring trouble for them.

This hour I want to ask you, we have studied all through the book of Second Timothy and this is our last conclusion, I want you to just ponder a while, in case you didn't start with us from the very beginning but at this point God is causing you to join us in this series - I want to ask you : what have you gained in this study of the Second letter of Paul to Timothy? What have you gained looking at the life of Timothy? What have you gained and what struck you looking at the life and ministry of brother Paul? I want to ask you today - what will you do? Only a foolish man will not seat down to watch men who dance on stage before he comes on stage. When a man takes time to watch men that have gone ahead, we are expecting that you will not mis-take a step, you will not miss the proper and correct steps.

And today as we conclude, I want you to take an ample time at this time to pray. I want you to bow your head, I want you to bow your heart, I want you to meditate - what aspect of your life is contrary to the word of God? What aspect of your personal life is not yet in order: is it in the matter of "study to show yourself a man that is approved unto God, a man who needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth?" Is there a quiet ambition in your heart that is tearing your life apart, that is not allowing God to throw His weight behind you and to use you? Are you always running around? The ministry that you have

started now, the way you have called it a bogus name, is it not a sign of rebellion? Won't you please close that ministry and return to your duty post? God has called you to be a part-taker of a work, you are not supposed to be the President at all, God just wanted you to serve. Why can't you escort this men and support the work of God in the hands of your leaders until their hoar hairs and unto their grave and see what God will do? Why can't you be faithful to your master? Why did you abandon them at their old age?

Look at you - they have trained you, they have spent all their years to help you, now that you are supposed to be a support to their lives, now that you are supposed to bring comfort to their ministry, now that you are supposed give them some relief so that they can rest and say "Yes, I have a son there, I have a man there, I have someone that will represent me without twisting the message," that's the time you say you want to go and start your own; that is the time your desire for money, like Demas, is making you to move to Thessalonica! And the Thessalonica of our day, you know it! In every country there are still Thessalonicas where there is plenty money, plenty pleasure, great things, you are just looking for flashy things - that is why you are moving away, from your master, for money. Are you not callous?

Action Point:

And I want to say to you: what a man sows that shall he reap! As you abandon your master in their old age, expect your children to abandon you at your own old age. When you sow a seed of guinea corn, it doesn't come out and come back to you as one seed - you get it in hundreds, in multiples! The things you have done to your master, when it comes back to you - surely it will come to you in multiples!

Will you bow your head now and pray? Whatever the Holy Spirit has said to you in the course of study, do it! Whatever you have seen that is wrong in your life, stand up and obey the Word of God! Whatever the Holy Spirit has challenged you with, I also say to you - you don't need to keep checking here and there: the Word of God is profitable for instruction, rise up and obey it! It is in obedience that your life will be blessed. And if you listen to this message and you do not do it, I say to you: the Bible says you are just a fool! And I don't know where you are going.

As we pray together with you, bow your head and open your heart to God and say "Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus! This thing that they have showed me from the life of Timothy, help me Lord even to obey You so that my life may also have a 'cap' at the end of it." God bless you as our brother leads you in this crucial prayer.

Concluding Prayer:

Our Father we thank You so much for bringing us to this very crucial point, thank You for Your people that are bowing before You, several are asking You to help them to return from their rebellion. Lord those who have not been touched, we pray Lord that you will touch their hearts. Those who want to obey you help them and encourage their hearts. Thank You O Lord as you help your people to obey you and do Your instruction for we have prayed together in Jesus Name. Amen.