

## II.I. WHY WE TRAIN MEN: 2 Timothy 2:1-7

### INTRODUCTION.

**Q.** Why do we train men? **A.** These are 30,000 foot view answers.

I) **As the pastors go, so go the men** ("set an example").

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II) **As the men go, so go the women** ("head" "is she desires to learn anything, let her ask her husband at home").

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III) **As the men go, so goes the home** ("teach children diligently").

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IV) **As the home goes, so goes the Church** ("stones stacked together").

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V) **As the church goes, so goes society** ("pillar and buttress of truth").

**BIG IDEA.** Why are we doing Shepherd School? Let me give you eight reasons from 2 Timothy 2:1-7, and these are ground level answers.

Why Shepherd School?

**I. So that you would be strengthened by grace** (2 Timothy 2:1).

**2 Timothy 2:1** "You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus,"

- **MATTHEW POOLE:** "[Paul is saying] Be strong through the gracious influence of Christ Jesus, without which you can do nothing."

### LET ME MAKE TWO CLARIFICATIONS

**I) Grace is not just for pardon from sin, but also for power over sin.**

- **Hebrews 13:9** "It is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace..."
  - **Titus 2:12-14** "12 [Grace is] training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works."

**II) Grace is not just a power, it is a Person.**

- **Titus 2:11** "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,"

***Your strength will not do, men. You must get strength from Christ.***

- **In 2 Samuel 30:6, God says,** "David strengthened himself in the LORD his God."
- **Paul says to the Ephesians,** "Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might" (Eph. 6:10).

***The way to get strength from Christ is by asking God's help for power, believing His happy promises, and trusting His hand of providence.***

- **There is a never ending supply of strength in the person of Christ, flowing from the piercings of Christ, ready to empower the people of Christ. All you need to do is ask your Father in prayer through faith in Christ.**

***Christ was pierced for your transgressions so that you would be forgiven as well as empowered to live a new life for Him!***

- "You do not have because you do not ask; you ask and do not receive because you ask wrongly to spend on your lusts" (**James 4**).
- **Shepherd School will provide with even more exposure to God's ordinary means of empowering grace—namely preaching, prayer, discussion (which can be a form of meditation), and praise.**

(Repeat point)

Why Shepherd School?

**II. So that you would be taught the truth (2 Timothy 2:2a).**

**2 Timothy 2:2a** "and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men,"

- **I) It is one of the duties of pastors to give instruction in sound doctrine and rebuke those who contradict it—the pastors are seeking to do just that in Shepherd School.**
  - **Titus 1:9** "He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it."
- **II) You need to constantly feed on the truth to live the Christian life—the pastors of Ekklesia Muskogee are devoted to constantly feeding you the truth of the Scriptures.**
  - **Deuteronomy 8:3** "Man does not live by bread alone."
  - **You need Jeremiah's appetite where he says,** "Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the

delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O Lord, God of hosts" (**Jer. 15:16**).

**Our aim is to teach you not the opinions of men, but the very words of the Lord.**

All the books we are reading have been chosen because they are chalked full of Scripture and the writers labored to help you and I better understand and apply the Teaching and the Testimony.

Why Shepherd School?

### **III. So that you would be equipped to teach others (2 Timothy 2:2b).**

**2 Timothy 2:2b** "who will be able to teach others also."

- **ALL of you need to teach** your wife, your children, and your neighbors as you take part in discipling the nations. In addition, some of you need to teach Christ's church.
  - **I) You need to teach your wife** (Eph. 5:25-27).
    - **Ephesians 5:25-27** "25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish."
      - **It is not as if the pastors of the church are indifferent toward the wife's theological and practical training in righteousness**, but it is true that the primary responsibility for her learning and growing falls on the husband.
        - **This is one of the reasons Paul said what he did in 1 Corinthians 14:35:** "If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home."
  - **II) You need to teach your children** (Eph. 6:4; Deut. 6:5-6).
    - **Ephesians 6:4** "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."
      - **In Deuteronomy 6, Moses did *not* say,** "Bring the children to me for their natural and spiritual education." **No, he said,** "And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise" (**Deut. 6:6-7**).
  - **III) You need to teach your neighbors as you take part in discipling the nations** (Matt. 28:28-20).

- **Matthew 28:18-20** "18 And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"
- **IV) Some of you will need to teach the Church** (Ti. 1:9; 2 Timothy 2:2).
  - If you would be Pastors, you will need to teach the saints regularly, as well as train the next generation of Pastors and Shepherd School men.
    - **Titus 1:9** "[Elders] must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it."
    - **2 Timothy 2:2** "What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also."
      - **In addition to these**, I still think that those of you who complete Shepherd School would be most useful to the men in the church by leading *Act Like Men Bible Studies* throughout the year. My desire is to run them at the same time as Shepherd School, to continually pour into the men who lead their wives and children and serve Christ everyday in their vocations.
- **Because it is your duty to teach at least someone in some way, I exhort you to listen with both of your ears, men.** *With one of your ears you should be listening to learn and grow yourself. With your other ear you should be listening to learn how to teach others.*

Why Shepherd School?

#### **IV. So that you would be faithful to Christ in the midst of suffering for His sake (2 Timothy 2:3a).**

**2 Timothy 2:3a** "Share in suffering. . ."

- **MATTHEW POOLE:** "In the Greek it is, *suffer evils*, that is evils of affliction, expect them, and encounter and patiently endure them."
- **2 Timothy 3:12** "Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,"
  - **If you are going to live a godly life in Christ Jesus, you will have a target on your back.** The wicked will aim the arrows of both their evil words and works at you simply because you belong to and speak up for Jesus, seeking to live a godly life in Him.

### ***But think how Christ is worth it, men!***

- **Lord, give us your empowering grace to respond to persecution like the Apostles in Acts 5:40-42:** “40 and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. 42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.”
  - **God, give us the grace to say with Paul,** “For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ” (**Phil. 3:8**).
  - **NATHANIEL VINCENT:** “It is nothing to have tribulation for several days — and then to triumph in the presence of God, and of the Lamb forever!”

Why Shepherd School?

## **V. So that you would be a good soldier of Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:3b).**

**2 Timothy 2:3b** “. . . as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”

- **This is not peacetime. The Christian life is war. You are not a civilian. You are an enlisted man.**

***You need to be ready to suffer for Christ and serve Christ in the midst of that suffering as a good soldier.***

*Embrace the fight, brothers. God has providentially placed you in your city, state, and nation for such a time as this.*

***Armor up. Sharpen the sword. Hold the shield high. Take the field.***

- **JOHN TRAPP:** “Christ saith to us ‘Either vanquish or die’; as the Prince of Orange said to his soldiers at the battle of Newport, when they had the sea on the one side, and the Spaniards on the other, If you will live, you must either eat up these Spaniards or drink up this sea.”
- **In 1 Timothy 2, Christ’s field general, Paul, is saying,** “report for duty, being ready to suffer and serve as a good soldier of Christ Jesus!”
  - **JOHN TRAPP:** “Never dream of a delicacy; think not to find God in the gardens of Egypt, whom Moses found not but in the burning bush. Many love Canaan, but loathe the wilderness; commend the country, but look upon the conquest as impossible; would sit in the seat of honour with Zebedee’s children, but not drink the cup of affliction. These deceive themselves.”
- **You and I must fight for the truths of the Law and the Gospel—“wage the good warfare.” You and I must also “Share in suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”**

Why Shepherd School?

## **VI. So that you would please your King, Christ (2 Timothy 2:4)**

**2 Timothy 2:4** "No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him."

- **Though most of your life will be spent either sleeping or in your vocation in the world, you must never be spiritually asleep nor have your mind fixed on worldly things.**
- **Whatever your vocation is, you need to work hard in it in order to please your King, for the glory of Christ and the good of your neighbor!**
- **Colossians 3:23-24** "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ."

**Q. Who do you want to please?**

**Shepherd School is for men who want more than anything to hear "Well done good and faithful servant" from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Why Shepherd School?

## **VII. So that you would live your life according to God's standard and so be rewarded (2 Timothy 2:5).**

**2 Timothy 2:5** "An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules."

- **JOHN TRAPP:** "[It is] not he that had a strong body, but he that ran well who got the crown in the Olympic games; it was not he that had an athletic ability, but he that wrestled best, that got the garland!"
- **1 Corinthians 9:24-27** "24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. 25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I [buffet my body and make it my slave], lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified."

Why Shepherd School?

## **VIII. So that you would exhaust yourselves in planting and watering, and therefore most enjoy the fruit that God grows (2 Timothy 2:6).**

**2 Timothy 2:6** "It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops."

- **JOHN TRAPP:** "They are utterly out, that think to have the pleasure of sloth and the reward of goodness."

## **CONCLUSION.**

**Verse 7.**

- I) **As the pastors go, so go the men** ("set an example").
- II) **As the men go, so go the women** ("head").
- III) **As the men go, so goes the home** ("teach children diligently").
- IV) **As the home goes, so goes the Church** ("stones stacked together").
- V) **As the church goes, so goes society** ("pillar and buttress of truth").

## **TEXT WORK**

2 Timothy 2:1-6

→ vv. 13-14

1 You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus,

present (passive) imperative  
2nd person, singular  
Yield yourself to divine power  
Receive power

by means of  
"charis"  
prep. definite definite prep.

2 and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses

Relative pronoun  
"the things"  
aorist, active, indicative  
2nd person, plural

prep- adjective  
"Fit" "Competent"  
"Sufficient"

entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

aorist, middle, imperative  
deposit  
like treasure

future, middle, indicative

aorist, active, infinitive  
adjective, conj.

3 Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

aorist, active, imperative  
2nd person, singular  
2 Tim 1:8  
Be a partaker in afflictions

NASB "Affairs of everyday life"

4 No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits,

"no one soldiering"  
Soldier in active duty  
present, middle, indicative  
gets intertwined  
gets involved with

since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.

conj.

aorist, active, subjunctive  
3rd person, singular

definite

V-AAP-DSM

Find approval from  
make happy Gal 1:10

5 An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.

"if anyone competes as an athlete!"  
same verbas

adverb  
crowned as the prizewinner

conj.

same verbas

Lawfully

6 It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.

definite

V-PAP-ASM

N-PAI-3S

adjective

V-PAN

definite

Exhausted

Wearied

1 Timothy 4:10

"To this end we TOIL and strive...!"  
(godliness)

"Fruit"

OVERVIEW

# SHEPHERD SCHOOL SEASON TWO OVERVIEW



## *Practical Purposes of Shepherd School*

*The first practical purpose* of Shepherd School is to help every man lead his family. *The second practical purpose* is to help him lead his small group, if and when he has one. *The third practical purpose* is to train up a would-be pastor who “aspires to the office of overseer” so that he may lead Jesus’ church in faithfulness. This is truly “a noble task” (1 Timothy 3:1) and requires that one meet the qualifications laid out in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

*In everything we want to be as practical and as helpful as possible.* Therefore you will be in class once per week, and in that class you will be taught the Scriptures as well as the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith. In addition, you will read helpful books throughout the week and then discuss in person with the Pastors. Finally, for those in the certificate path, you will be examined and equipped with proper instructive and corrective training as you write theological essays and biblical expositions. This will all be done so that each man may be “a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:1-3) to the glory of God.

*This is not an average Bible study or small group setting. This is training for war.* We believe this will be intensely challenging and, by God’s grace, extremely edifying for all involved. At the outset, you need to decide that you are going to finish this season and be here every week unless severe sickness or something else serious prevents you. Godly men do not put their hands to the plow and then turn back because things get hard. Commit to sticking it out for the good of your soul, the well-being of your family, the overall health of Christ’s church, and most importantly for the glory of God.

## *Overview of Season Two*

In Season One we study *Theology Proper* (God), *Christology* (Christ), and *Pneumatology* (The Holy Spirit). In Season Three we study *Ecclesiology* (Church) and *Practical Godliness* (Man). In Season Four we study *Baptist Covenant Theology*, *Church History*, and *Eschatology*. However in Season Two we will be studying *the Word of God*, *the Law of God*, and *the Gospel of God*. As we do you will read from *Reformed Systematic Theology (vol. 1)* by Joel Beeke, *The Law of God Made Easy* by Kenneth Gentry, as well as both *A Body of Divinity* and *The Ten Commandments* by Thomas Watson.

## *Practical Goals*

We pray that through our efforts God would equip you with *sound doctrine*, *the capability to clearly and plainly teach or preach the word of God*, as well as *a desire to be a doer of the word*. We pray for and labor towards these ends so that the triune God would be most glorified in *you*, *your family*, *your small group*, *Christ’s church*, *your vocation*, in the *civil government*, and *among the nations*, for ever and ever. Amen.

## Introduction

Turn with me to 2 Timothy chapter 2. We will consider verses 1 through 7. For those who have joined us for multiple seasons of Shepherd School, you will recognize this text and these main points. This marks our tenth season of Shepherd School. It is therefore the tenth time that some of you have heard this same text expounded in this same way. We continue to do so because this passage in 2 Timothy chapter 2 remains the seminal text that establishes the biblical conviction for why we conduct what we call Shepherd School. What does God command through Paul? What does Paul instruct Timothy to do? What lessons may we draw from it? And what would purposeful, diligent obedience to this command look like in our local church? This text compelled us to establish Shepherd School.

By way of introduction, allow me to offer several answers for why we conduct Shepherd School. We begin from thirty thousand feet with the broad, foundational reasons. Then we will descend to five feet and examine the text itself. At that level we see with clarity that God has spoken explicitly. One passage in 2 Timothy 2 supplies the direct reason. Yet we may also zoom out and ask why any church should undertake such training. The answer is this: we train men so that they would be faithful in their homes, faithful in their vocations, faithful in the church, and faithful in public life, in all of life.

## The Foundational Reasons We Train Men

We must grasp this foundational truth: *as the pastors of a local church go, so go the men*. With exceptions, men in a local church will not advance beyond their undershepherds. Of course godly men may flourish even in unhealthy churches with weak pastors, progressing in sanctification and obedience to Christ. Yet ordinarily the men rise only to the standard set by their pastors, for pastors are charged to set an example to the flock. The apostle Peter writes, "Do not domineer over those in your charge, but set an example to the flock" (1 Peter 5:3). Elders, pastors, and overseers, the terms are used interchangeably in the New Testament, are to declare, "Follow me as I follow Christ." Shepherd School is one way we gather with the men and say, "This is what God says. Follow me as I follow Christ. Let us go together." We do not stand back and command, "You go that way." We press forward and invite, "Come with me."

A second foundational truth follows: *as the men go, so go the women*. Women will not ordinarily outshine their husbands, for the husband is the head of his wife and her spiritual authority. He is charged to lead, guide, protect, and teach her. As the men go, so go the women because the husband is the covenant head of his wife. It is his duty to protect her, to provide for her, and, as Ephesians 5 declares, to wash his wife with the water of the word. This is why Paul instructs the church at Corinth that women should be silent in the churches and, if they have questions, ask their husbands at home. It is the husband's responsibility as covenant head to teach his wife. Pastors certainly labor to teach, yet the primary duty falls to the husband. Therefore, as the men go, so go the women.

That is one reason we do not conduct a parallel Shepherd School for women. It is the pastors' task to equip the men, and the men's task to lead their wives and children. If the men are healthy and discharge their duties for the glory of God, their wives and children will be as healthy as divine providence permits. If a wife is a poor theologian, the fault lies first with her husband. If weeds overrun the garden of the home, the husband must uproot them. Pastors therefore equip men to be faithful covenant heads. The question is never whether a man leads his wife; the question is how he leads her, faithfully and diligently, or poorly and apathetically.

*As the men go, so goes the entire home.* Husbands and fathers are charged not only to teach their wives but also their children. In the next chapter of Ephesians the command comes first to children: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1). Then it turns to fathers: "Fathers, bring up your children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). The buck stops with the father. He bears ultimate accountability before God for the natural and spiritual education of the children. Wives educate with delegated authority under the spiritual headship of the husband. Therefore the health of the home is determined by the health of the man. Show me an unhealthy wife or unruly children, and the responsibility remains with the husband and father.

*As the homes go, so goes the local church.* The church is composed of households. If unhealthy households abound, households lacking strong men, submissive wives, and children trained in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, the church itself will be unhealthy. The apostle Peter describes the church as living stones built up into a spiritual house for the glory of God (1 Peter 2:5). If those stones are dysfunctional, the structure will be unsound. A collection of dysfunctional families cannot produce a healthy local church.

*Finally, as the church goes, so goes society.* The church is "a pillar and buttress of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). If that pillar and buttress is weak, nothing else will stand. Regenerate believers indwelt by the Spirit of God possess the word of God and the mind of Christ. If we fail to bear faithful witness and to shape culture for the glory of Christ, society descends into chaos. The church has led the way in nearly every lasting good the world has known. Consider adoption. In the ancient world, adoption served selfish ends: to secure an heir. Abraham adopted Eliezer of Damascus for that reason alone. In the first century, Christians began rescuing discarded infants and adopting them into their families because every child bears the image of God and because God the Father has adopted us. Today even unbelievers regard adoption as good. That transformation occurred because the church led. Society flows downstream from the church. When the church plays the harlot, society suffers corruption.

Thus the progression stands: *as the pastors go, so go the men; as the men go, so go the women; as the men go, so goes the home; as the homes go, so goes the church; and as the church goes, so goes society.* At the center of it all are godly, faithful, disciplined, obedient men who strive to fulfill their ordinary duties in the home, in their vocations, and in the local church. Without healthy, strong men there will be neither healthy homes nor healthy women, neither healthy churches

nor healthy societies. We therefore want you, the men, to be strong. We want you to grow in sanctification through Shepherd School so that your wives are strengthened, your children flourish, and the ripple extends to the church and to society. We do not conduct a children's school in this manner because that responsibility belongs to you and your wife under your headship. Shepherd School exists to strengthen the leaders, leaders of homes, leaders of the church, and leaders in society, so that health trickles downward from them.

## **The Text and Its Five Reasons**

We now turn from the broad view to the text itself. What we have already considered would suffice to show that we must train men. Yet Scripture supplies even clearer warrant in 2 Timothy 2:1–7.

This is God's word:

"You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. It is the hardworking farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything" (2 Timothy 2:1–7).

What do we learn from this passage, and how does it apply to the conviction that your elders hold for Shepherd School?

*First, we conduct Shepherd School so that you would be strengthened by grace.* Paul writes, "You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 2:1). The verb means to draw strength from the grace that is in Christ Jesus. This is the first explicit reason: we gather so that you would be continually strengthened by the grace of God in Christ alone. Apart from the constant strengthening grace that comes through faith in Christ Jesus, you will not endure. You will waste your life in disorder, pursuing your own glory rather than the glory of God. God strengthens us through the ordinary means of grace: prayer, the preached word, Christian fellowship, and meditation upon Scripture. Each week in Shepherd School we begin with prayer, an ordinary means of God's strengthening grace. We hear the word of God preached and applied because the preached word is a powerful means of grace. We sing praises to God, another ordinary means of grace. We study the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith. We do so not because confessions rival Scripture but because they summarize in clear, bite-sized statements what the Bible teaches on each subject, helping us understand the Bible more deeply. We discuss the books assigned for reading, which is a form of Christian meditation. Every book is chosen to help you understand the Bible more clearly, whether *God's Law Made Easy*, the section on the doctrine of Scripture in Joel R. Beeke and Paul M. Smalley's *Reformed Systematic Theology*,

Thomas Watson's *A Body of Divinity*, or Watson's *The Ten Commandments*. All of these are ordinary means of grace. Shepherd School is not required for strength in Christ. Yet it supplies concentrated doses of these means. It is like spiritual steroids so that you become robust in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

*Second, we conduct Shepherd School so that you would be taught the truth.* Paul continues, "What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men" (2 Timothy 2:2). Paul, writing his final letter before martyrdom, charges Timothy, the young pastor at Ephesus, to take what he has heard publicly and entrust it to faithful men. Your pastors therefore entrust the truths of Scripture to you. We want you to become masters of the truth. The fruit is evident: visitors and other pastors frequently remark on the biblical solidity of the men in this church. We take seriously the pastoral duty to give instruction in sound doctrine and to rebuke those who contradict it. We do not teach the opinions of men but the word of the Lord, rightly understood and applied.

*Third, we conduct Shepherd School so that you would be equipped to teach others.* Paul does not stop at entrusting the truth to faithful men; he specifies "who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). We want you taught so that you may teach. You are charged first to teach your wife, washing her with the water of the word that she may be sanctified (Ephesians 5:25–27). You are charged to teach your children, bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). Moses did not centralize the education of Israel's children in himself; he commanded parents, especially fathers, to teach God's words diligently in every sphere of life (Deuteronomy 6:6–7). You are also charged to teach your neighbors and to participate in discipling the nations, teaching them to observe all that Christ has commanded (Matthew 28:18–20). Some of you will be called to pastoral ministry; you must be equipped to teach the church and to train the next generation. In every case, it is your duty to teach someone in some way. Therefore we labor both to learn ourselves and to learn how to teach clearly and faithfully.

*Fourth, we conduct Shepherd School so that you would share in suffering.* Paul writes, "Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 2:3). All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (2 Timothy 3:12). If you speak the truth boldly and apply it consistently, the world will hate you. The recent example of abolitionists in Iowa illustrates the point: simply wearing a shirt that identified them with the cause of ending abortion provoked public vitriol. The world hates the truth because its conscience condemns it. We therefore prepare you to share in suffering and, when persecuted for righteousness' sake, to rejoice as Christ commands in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:11–12).

*Fifth, we conduct Shepherd School so that you would serve as a good soldier, compete as an athlete according to the rules, and labor as a hardworking farmer.* Paul employs three metaphors. First, the soldier: no soldier entangles himself in civilian pursuits, for his aim is to please the one who enlisted him (2 Timothy 2:4). You are not a civilian; you are enlisted in the army of Christ the King. This is wartime, not peacetime. You were born in this place, in this time, for these battles.

Embrace them. Second, the athlete: "An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules" (2 Timothy 2:5). You must live according to God's standard revealed in Scripture. We study the moral law, the Ten Commandments summarily comprehended, so that you may compete according to the rules and receive the reward laid up in heaven. Third, the farmer: "It is the hardworking farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops" (2 Timothy 2:6). The word translated "hardworking" means the exhausted farmer, the man who expends himself fully in planting and watering. We want you to exhaust yourself in your ordinary duties so that you may enjoy the first share of the fruit God grows in your wife, your children, your neighbors, your vocation, and society.

Finally, Paul concludes, "Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything" (2 Timothy 2:7). Meditate upon these things. The Lord will grant understanding.

## **Conclusion**

As the pastors go, so go the men. As the men go, so go the women. As the men go, so goes the home. As the homes go, so goes the church. As the church goes, so goes society. Christ is worthy to be lifted up not only in our private lives, not only in our homes, not only in the church, but in the whole world. Let us therefore labor for his glory.

## **Notes**

1. All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version.
2. Joel R. Beeke and Paul M. Smalley, *Reformed Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, *Revelation and God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019).
3. Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity* (London: n.p., 1692; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2015).
4. Thomas Watson, *The Ten Commandments* (London: n.p., 1692; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2015).