

“WORD: Rightly Handling the Truth of God” (2 Timothy 2:8-13)
For the week of January 29, 2017

Remembering the Spiritual Disciplines

Studying God's Word is a spiritual discipline. The difference between reading the Bible and studying the Bible is taking notes of what you are reading which include your observations about the text and listing questions that come to mind. To help your study, use your cross-references in your Bible. Find a key word and use a concordance in the back of most Bibles for review. Outline a chapter, one paragraph at a time. As you become more comfortable you can branch into word studies, character studies, topical studies and book studies. If spiritual growth was measured by the quality of your hearing, reading, and studying God's Word, what would be the result?

Big Picture of the Passage

2 Timothy 2:8-13 states that there is more than enough reason for all Christians to suffer for Christ. In fact, no sacrifice – mockery, alienation, rejection, desertion, imprisonment, or even death is too high a price to pay. For further insight read what Paul wrote about 10 years earlier to the church at Rome (Romans 8:35-39).

1. How is God's love evident during suffering?
Share an experience you have had where God was clearly present when you faced suffering?

Which of these benefits have you experienced during your walk with the Lord? Is there something you have gained through suffering that could have been gained no other way?

2. There are many benefits to suffering for Christ. Here are a few (read the accompanying passage):
 - a. So that the work of God may be displayed in our lives (John 9:3).
 - b. So that our perseverance and our character may be developed (Romans 5:3-5).
 - c. So that we will not rely upon ourselves but upon God (2 Corinthians 1:9).
 - d. So that God may receive praise (1 Peter 1:6-7).
 - e. So that we may learn obedience (Hebrews 5:8).

3. Would a new or newer believer understand about suffering for Christ? If not, how would you as a more spiritually mature believer explain it to them?

Verse 8

Paul commands Timothy to “remember Jesus Christ...” The benefits of remembering Jesus are many and include: greater courage, greater boldness, and greater endurance of evil treatment and of suffering for the Lord.

4. How does remembering Jesus give us greater courage? Greater boldness? Greater endurance of suffering? Read 1 John 2:6; 1 Peter 2:20-22; and Hebrews 12:2 for further perspective.

Verse 9

Although Paul is literally chained, he proclaims that *"the Word of God is not bound."* Read another example of this during Paul's first Roman imprisonment in Philippians 1:12-14.

5. How does the gospel advance today when believers face setbacks? For example, through what means does the gospel advance in authoritative countries such as China, Russia, or Iran?
6. How can the gospel advance in the United States where persecution of Christianity is clearly increasing? What examples can you cite of the gospel advancing in the USA or in Bakersfield?
7. Spiritual maturity in a believer is directly related to embracing the spiritual disciplines. How is spiritual maturity in a believer related to advancing the gospel? What are some specific ways to advance the gospel that you have been a part of?

Verses 10-13

1. Paul concludes this passage with an easy-to-remember poem. Each stanza begins with an "if" that describes the believer's actions and is followed by a responding phrase that gives Christ's response.

a. First stanza (conversion): *"If we have died with him, we will also live with him."* Jesus Christ's resurrection gives us resurrection life right now. And resurrection is also coming! Why is this promise so important and so exciting to a believer in Christ?

b. Second stanza (perseverance): *"If we endure, we will also reign with him."* The key word is "endure." What does it mean to endure and how is endurance related to suffering?

c. Third stanza (apostasy): *"If we deny him, he also will deny us."* Read Matthew 10:32-33. Can a Christian easily deny that they are a disciple of Christ? How? How does a nonbeliever deny Christ? What are the consequences?

d. Fourth stanza (faithlessness): *"If we are faithless, he remains faithful – for he cannot deny himself."* What God is, he always is. No man is always himself, but God is always himself – he cannot be untrue to his own nature. Write a praise to God for his faithfulness!

Pray

Pray Isaiah 41: 10 which says *"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."*