

It's a familiar story. The son of a famous actor is found dead on the floor of his 2 million dollar Hollywood Hills home surrounded by pills, booze and cigarette butts. The father grieves publicly alongside his latest wife. He was always a peripheral figure but his son was never able to step out of the shadow of his famous father. He died at 36. Friends say the young man was upset when his dad even ignored phone calls from him to wish him a happy 66th birthday. Now the son is all but forgotten but the father is still famous. Once again we are reminded of the unintended consequences of seeking fame and fortune for ourselves without regard for others. Sometimes the bigger you get the smaller you make those around you. At some point we choose - live to be a legend or live to leave a legacy. Our passage today tells us how we can leave a legacy of faith that will outlive us. By God's grace we pass on the faith that has been entrusted to us. So...

**1. Get grace. ...v. 1.** Grace distinguishes Christianity from every other religion. Grace is not God filling in the gap between His standard and the best I can do. Grace is God's divine enablement that not only guarantees Heaven but also makes it possible to accomplish our mission on earth. By grace we are saved and by grace we serve. Jesus said, "Apart from me (His grace) you can do nothing." Here is the reality of the gospel - there is only one kind of Christian; messed up, falling down, failing constantly, but clinging desperately to God's amazing grace. I have nothing to offer, God has everything I need. The source of our strength is the grace of God. One of the biggest challenges for any follower of Christ is to accept our limitations and to learn to rely on God's strength. It is crucial that we preach the gospel to ourselves first before we try to preach to others.

Timothy felt inadequate for the task. He felt like you on your first day on the new job. Remember? Those around you knew everything and you knew nothing? You may have even thought, "This is too hard, I can't do this. They are going to discover that I'm a fraud." That's when we rely on God's grace.

How can I get God's grace? Peter tells us. **1 Pe. 5:5-6**, "You younger men, likewise, be subject to *your* elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time." Get grace.

**2. Reproduce your life in others...v. 2.** Jesus showed His disciples how to change the world. He didn't wear a hat that said, "Make Israel Great Again," He never "schmoozed" with the rich and powerful. He never held political rallies or called for protests against the Romans. He focused on a few people and empowered them to faithfully transfer the faith from generation to generation. This verse is worth digging into. Pay close attention to the progression of the verse.

"The things you heard from me" implies a learning environment. Information is exchanged, wisdom is imparted, truth is discussed.

"In the presence of many witnesses" tells us this was done in a group setting. We make disciples in circles not in rows. ***"Let's say that something happens to me, all the staff, and all the buildings simultaneously explode. Let's make it worst case scenario. There's no staff. There's no buildings. And there's no me. Here's what would happen. On Monday, Tuesday and Thursday of the following week, thousands and thousands of adults would gather in homes all over the city and pray together, and do Bible study together and take care***

*of whatever family members are left over and the church is going to go on. Because at the end of the day, circles are better than rows. And from day one, we've been committed to creating a culture that's all about circles and not rows. We are famous for our rows. But the strength of our churches is what happens in circles." Andy Stanley*

Let's be a church known for our circles and not our rows. What do we do in those circles?

"These things entrust" ("place on deposit") to faithful men. This verse is more controversial than you might think. Paul employed the same tactic Jesus did - the principle of selectivity. He took time to preach to the masses but He was always on the lookout for those who were faithful. How can you spot the faithful? They keep showing up. They are consistent in their participation.

One last quality - "who will be ABLE to teach others." This is a quality that is sorely lacking in our churches today. It's all one-way communication. That is why we do sermon-aligned curriculum in our groups. Once you've heard the sermon, can you restate the truths that were presented? Can you apply it? Most sermons are quickly forgotten and rarely passed on. Chris Shechner group...put the sermon on refreshing others like Onesiphorus to work...

**3. Avoid excessive entanglements with the world...vv. 3-4.** A soldier's life is a hard life...2:3 (cf. 1:8, 12). A soldier is not free to do anything and go anywhere he or she wants. There is a war going on, a war for the souls of men and women taken captive by an unseen enemy. Broken families, financial chaos, substance abuse, are just visible societal symptoms of an unseen war. Desperate times call for a wartime mentality like our nation experienced during WWII. Everybody did something for the cause. We gladly rationed gas, sugar, meat, coffee. Victory Gardens were planted. Pleasure driving was prohibited. Americans did without so our soldiers overseas had what they needed to fight a war. What are you doing to promote the work of making disciples? A wartime mentality asks, "What can I do to advance the cause of Christ?"

The enemy of a wartime mentality is "affluenza." In Dallas, the pressure is intense to have what other successful young couples have. We need a new house, a new car, a new wardrobe that signals our success. Before you know it the American Dream becomes an American Nightmare as I get deeper in debt and completely distracted from Christ.

**4. Commit to sound doctrine...v. 5.** Another of Paul's frequent word pictures comes from the world of athletics. An athlete plays by the rules. I don't think Paul means, "obey the Bible." I think his thoughts here are broader than that. We might translate his words, "accept God's governing principles." There are God-ordained rules that govern the universe. God's rules are inescapable and when we disdain them or ignore them – somebody gets hurt. Some of you might be writing your own rules to the game and you can't figure out why your life is so chaotic. It's like beating your head against a wall and wondering why you have a headache. Paul is saying, "Timothy you can make up your own rules but if you do you will be disqualified."

There are a few of us who remember the tragic 1972 Olympics in Munich where eleven Israeli athletes and coaches were killed by Palestinian terrorists. "Die Heiteren Spiele" (the happy games) was transformed into "the Munich massacre." The tragic events of those summer Olympics overshadowed another lesser crime in the marathon event. American runner Frank

Shorter led the race and was cruising toward a gold medal when he looked up to see someone ahead of him. He was an imposter. In the race God has set before us there are posers and there are players. Posers expect to get the gold even though they don't play by the rules.

Paul reminds young Timothy that we are not called to write our own rules. Success has been defined as finding out how things work and getting on the right side of them. God blesses those who obey Him even when they don't understand His rules.

**5. Expect a reward...v. 6.** There are three rewards mentioned in these verses. The first is a soldier's reward - to please his commanding officer. Our ultimate goal is "the joy of the Master."

The second reward is an athlete's reward in v. 5. An athlete competes for a prize (v.5). The Bible teaches that there is a prize waiting those who do the will of God. "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done." Rev. 22:12. There is a difference between a gift and a prize. Salvation is a gift. It cannot be earned or deserved. It can only be received. A prize is earned by those who labor for the sake of the gospel.

The third reward is the reward of the farmer. (v. 6). The harvest is his reward so the farmer sows patiently in hope of a harvest. Farming is hard work but the hardest work is the work of waiting. The farmer has to THINK LONG TERM. We live in a short-term culture but you can't microwave maturity. God uses time to develop character and prepare you for your God-given calling in Christ.

"Have you ever stopped to think that maybe God established time as a platform so HE could communicate something so complex that it needed to be presented strategically over time? Why didn't God send Jesus as soon as Adam and Eve ate the fruit? He could have resolved the issue then and there. But He waited... He used time. He gave Abraham a son. He let Joseph sit in jail. He sent Moses to deliver a nation. He let a nation wander in the desert for decades. Have you ever thought about why? It was as if God decided, I can help you understand something with time that you could never understand in a moment." Reggie Joiner

The success of the farmer cannot be determined in a moment. It takes an entire season to see and enjoy the fruit of his labor. Today's culture emphasizes instant fame. Kids want to be twitter famous or Facebook famous with an impressive number of "friends." They want to make a quick video that goes viral in no time. But a legacy isn't made that way. Do you know any famous farmers? Their work is often unseen but where would we be without that life-sustaining work?

So how do I leave a legacy? By grace so...**Get grace. Reproduce yourself in others. Avoid excessive entanglements with the world. Commit to sound doctrine. Expect a reward.** You may not receive it now, you may not even receive it in your lifetime, but you can be sure that the seeds you plant today will result in an eternal harvest tomorrow. You may have heard the question asked, "When is the best time to plant a tree?" Answer: 20 years ago. "When is the second best time to plant a tree?" Answer: Today! So let's get busy planting trees under whose shade we may never sit. Finally, Paul says, "Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything." 2 Tim. 2:7. Let's take a moment and do just that.