

## 7. Learning to Be a Faithful Man of God

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn why people are so willing to follow false teachers. We saw that the real problem starts in the hearts of such people because they are looking for teachers who will tell them what they want to hear instead of telling them the truth. Such people may even have a form of religion but in their hearts they reject the power of God. In contrast to such people, in our topic today, we are going to see how to become a faithful man of God.

As we come to 2 Timothy 3:10-11 we read, “But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of *them* all the Lord delivered me.” The word that is translated “carefully followed” means *to understand and faithfully follow*. The same word is also used in 1 Timothy 4:6 where we read, “If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.” Here, we see that Timothy had come to an understanding of many things from Paul and carefully followed them.

First, Timothy came to a clear understanding of the things that Paul had taught. The word that is translated “doctrine” refers to what is taught. This would refer to the things that Paul had taught Timothy. Second, the word that is translated “manner of life” means *the way that Paul lived*. Third, Acts 11:22-23 says, “Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.” Here, we see that the word translated “purpose” speaks of purpose of heart. Paul had explained to Timothy the purpose that the Lord had given to Paul for his life.

Fourth, the word translated “faith” speaks of the relationship that people have with God through Christ. 1 Timothy 3:13 says, “For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Here, we see that the reason that deacons can have good standing and great boldness is due to the fact that their faith is in Christ. Fifth, the word that is translated “longsuffering” speaks of patience or endurance. 2 Peter 3:14-15 says, “Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you.” In addition to writing about the longsuffering of Christ, Paul also modeled that patience and endurance in his own life.

Sixth, Paul certainly both taught and provided an example of the love of Christ. 2 Corinthians 2:4 says, “For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.” Paul could show the love of Christ because he was motivated by the love of Christ for him. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for

themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” Paul had chosen to live his life for Christ and for others.

Seventh, the word that is translated “perseverance” means *to patiently endure*. In 2 Corinthians 1:6 we read, “Now if we are afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.” We see that this perseverance caused Paul to endure persecution and affliction in various cities. However, the Lord delivered him in each situation.

Paul went on to say in 2 Timothy 3:12-13, “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” Paul told Timothy that when we determine to live a godly life we can expect to suffer persecution. Paul had experienced such persecution in his own life. 2 Corinthians 4:8-10 says, “*We are* hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.” We will suffer if we live godly lives because evil men will become worse and worse. They work to deceive others but they are also deceived themselves.

As a result, Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:14-15, “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” The word that is translated “continue” means *to abide or remain in the things that he had been taught*. Timothy knew that the things that he had been taught were trustworthy. The reason that he knew that they were trustworthy was because he had faithfully been taught the Holy Scriptures so that the things he had been taught did not come from the opinions and ideas of people.

He had learned the Old Testament from his grandmother and mother and then he had learned the teachings of the New Testament from Paul. As a result, he knew that the things that He had learned had come from the Word of God. Romans 15:4 says, “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” The Word of God had given him wisdom and understanding of the salvation that he had received through faith in Christ. Here, we see the importance of helping our children to really get to know the Word of God. Then, they will immediately recognize the opinions and ideas of people that are not in agreement with the Word of God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 goes on to say, “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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” In these two verses, we see several key lessons that we want to help our children learn to know and understand. The word that is translated “Scripture” means *the Bible and everything written in it*. This includes the Old Testament as mentioned in Romans 15:4 in the previous paragraph. This also includes the New Testament. 2 Peter 3:15-16 says, “And consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation—as also our

beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures.” We can depend on all that is written in the 66 books of the Bible.

The reason that we can depend completely on the 66 books is the fact that all of the original writings are inspired or God-breathed. 2 Peter 1:19-21 says, “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.” In addition, thousands of copies of manuscripts from various parts of the world show that there have not been any major changes in the original manuscripts. Revelation 22:18-19 are some of the last verses of the last chapter of the Bible written and those verses say, “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.” Here, we see a clear warning not to add to or take away anything from the things that are written in these 66 books.

We also see that all Scripture is profitable. Scripture is profitable for doctrine (to help us know what God teaches). Scripture is profitable for reproof (to show us when we do wrong). Scripture is profitable for correction (to restore us to a right relationship with Christ). Scripture is profitable for instruction in righteousness. The word that is translated “instruction” is translated training in Ephesians 6:4 where we read, “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” Training provides an example of godly instruction and behavior along with discipline given in love when discipline is necessary.

Doctrine shows God’s ideal for our lives. Reproof shows us those areas in which we come short of that ideal. Correction shows us how to correct what we are doing wrong. Training in righteousness provides us with an example of how to become complete (more and more like God’s ideal for our lives). We provide that training by our own example. The word translated “thoroughly equipped” means *to finish so that we are equipped for every good work*. Here, we see that our goal is to help our physical and spiritual children become equipped to carry out every good work that God has for their lives. As we teach our children the Word of God, show them by example how to develop godly character in their lives and show them how to skillfully serve the Lord, we are equipping them for a very effective ministry in their lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children by your example and teaching how to become a faithful man of God.