

Series: The Essential Church; Sermon: No Shortcuts to Success;
Delivered on June 23, 2019, by Rev. Josh Stringer, pastor of discipleship

Bible text explored: 2 Timothy 2:1–7

¹You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, ²and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. ³Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. ⁵An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. ⁷Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. [ESV]

Review and application:

Paul launches this paragraph in his letter to Timothy with an emphatic “you then,” as he spells out the essentials for avoiding the fate (2 Tim. 1:15) of the many who had “turned away.”

1. If grace (v. 1) is undeserved blessing received through Christ’s sacrifice, how will feeding on this basic gospel help us be strong?
What are ways we can “eat” this “protein”?
But what activity is needed to turn it into “muscle” rather than retain it as “fat”?
2. How (2 Tim. 1:5, 14) was this gospel “deposit” passed on to Timothy?
How (v. 2) had Timothy’s faith been repeatedly bolstered by the visits of Paul to Ephesus on his missionary journeys?
3. To whom was Timothy to entrust this deposit?
What were these leaders expected to do with what they learned?
For how many generations was this passing-on or mentoring process envisioned?
What is the multiplication potential of this process?
What, over time, is essential to sustain its potential benefit?
4. For what (v. 3) was Paul preparing Timothy to endure for the gospel?

Paul used three illustrations (vv. 4-6) to show what qualities mentoring others and encouraging them in their faith would require.

5. On what must a soldier concentrate?
How must a winning athlete train and compete?
What does a farmer need to invest to reap a harvest?
6. From these examples, how (v. 7) do you think Paul expected Timothy to realistically understand . . .
. . . the costs of coming alongside others in this way?
. . . the rewards of seeing lives changed over time?