

Think about it: God has given pastors—and the churches they serve—a charge. We’re supposed to be reproducing reproducers.

I. If we are to reproduce reproducers, we must receive (1).

II. If we are to reproduce reproducers, we must pass on what we receive (2).

A. We must address the question, *what*?

B. We must address the question, *who*?

1. Look for individuals who possess character.

2. Look for individuals who possess competency.

3. Look for individuals who possess commitment.

C. We must address the question, *how*?

Take Inventory: We need to consider three vital questions...

1. Are we living dependent lives?

2. Are we passing on to others what we have received?

3. Are we making it a priority to prepare tomorrow’s church leaders today?

We find great joy in being a God-centered church. Not man-centered, but God-centered. God is the audience we seek to please, not the world, not each other. God is the owner, not those who have been here the longest, nor given the most. Who God is and what God has done is what matters most to us, and this summer we’re pondering twelve commitments that He has instilled into our DNA as a local church. These are what make us sing, as it were. We are joyfully committed to...

-Expository preaching

-Preaching the whole counsel of God

-Sovereign grace in the conversion of a sinner

-God centered evangelism

-Church membership, belonging to a local church

-Church discipline

-Biblical Church Leadership

-Growing Disciples through Progressive Sanctification

-Targeted Discipleship (Biblical Counseling)

-Trinitarian praying

-Fulfilling Our Mission, Locally and Worldwide (next week)

This morning we come to our eleventh commitment. A vital characteristic of a God-centered church is a joyful commitment to reproducing reproducers.

Scripture Reading: 2 Timothy 2:1-2

A year from now Paris will host the 2024 summer Olympic games. One of the most dramatic symbols of the Olympic spirit is the Olympic Torch. Preparation for the beginning of the games involves the passing of the torch, as hundreds of countrymen participate in a grand ceremony of running with the flame, one at a time. Each person does his or her part, and then passes the torch on to the next person. The climax comes when the final runner enters the stadium during the opening ceremony, laps the track, and then treks up scores of steps as the silent crowd watches in anticipation. Finally, he

^{**} Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For an earlier development of this text, see messages preached at WBC in 1998 and 2015.

reaches the top, stops, turns, and faces the spectators. Then, in triumphant fashion, he extends his flame and lights the Olympic torch to the applause of the jubilant crowd.

It is that image which comes to my mind as I read 2 Timothy 2:2: “The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”

The Light of the world, Jesus Christ (John 8:12), instructed His followers, “Let your light so shine before men (Matt. 5:16).” That is what the apostle Paul had done for some thirty years. He had carried the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world of his day.

But when he penned 2 Timothy, his days were numbered. He was imprisoned in Rome because of his commitment to the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Like a dangerous, wild animal, he was chained in a dungeon, awaiting execution.

During the wait, he penned his final, God-breathed letter to Timothy, his spiritual son and ministry companion for nearly two decades. Timothy was in Ephesus, hundreds of miles away from his mentor, discouraged by the difficulty of the ministry.

What final words does Paul give to motivate and mobilize his timid friend? In the midst of many stands this charge, “Timothy, my race is nearly over. I am passing on the torch of the gospel to you. Take it Timothy, and pass it on to others. Help them do the same.”

That's what 2 Timothy is all about. The question that gripped Paul's heart as he faced martyrdom was, “What will happen to the gospel after I am gone?” His final letter to Timothy spelled out what he wanted Timothy to do to ensure the future progress of the gospel. As commentator John Stott points out, Paul gives Timothy four charges relating to the gospel of Jesus Christ:

Chapter 1--The charge to *guard* the gospel (1:14).

Chapter 2--The charge to *suffer* for the gospel (2:3, 8, 9).

Chapter 3--The charge to *continue* in the gospel (3:13, 14).

Chapter 4--The charge to *proclaim* the gospel (4:1-2).

Sad to say, many church leaders fail to devote attention to the things that will matter after they are gone. Things like 2 Timothy 2:2, namely, investing time into the development of leaders.

What does it take to reproduce reproducers? In 2 Timothy 2:1-2, Paul highlights two priority responsibilities for Timothy, and us. We'll explore these two responsibilities in a moment, but first an observation. Few churches give enough attention to implementing 2 Timothy 2:2. We're too busy doing other things. We put spiritual reproduction on the back burner. We don't deny its importance, but it's one of those “we'll get around to it if we have time” jobs. And we never seem to have the time.

In his commentary on 2 Timothy, John MacArthur observes: “In the great majority of cases, weak churches are the result of weak leadership, especially weak pastoral leadership. Spiritual weakness makes both leaders and congregations subject to almost every religious fad, no matter how frivolous.”²

God has given pastors—and the churches they serve—a charge. We're supposed to be reproducing reproducers, and to accomplish this, we must give attention to the two responsibilities Paul gave to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:1-2.

²John MacArthur, Jr., The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 2 Timothy, Chicago: Moody Press, 1995, p. 36.

I. If we are to reproduce reproducers, we must receive (1).

Notice verse 1, “You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” In the NIV it says, “You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” The “you” is emphatic. As for YOU, Timothy! In contrast to those mentioned in 1:15 who deserted Paul, including Phygelus and Hermogenes, *you* be different!

You, Timothy, are “my child”, a term of affection which speaks of an intimate relationship. Paul addresses Timothy just like a father on his deathbed would speak to his son, with warmth, and admonition.

What did Paul want Timothy to do? “Be strong,” says the NIV. But it’s a passive verb, so it’s literally, “Be empowered,” or “Be strengthened,” as the ESV puts it.

Timothy, this is no time to retreat and hide, but to be strong. Paul is not telling Timothy to pull up his boot straps, nor to look deep within himself and find strength for facing the pressures of life.

What he needs is *not* within himself. It’s external. Therefore, it must be received. “Timothy, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”

What does that mean, to “be strengthened by grace”? Let’s start here. What is grace? Grace is God’s unmerited favor. Grace is God giving us what we don’t have and don’t deserve. Grace is God’s provision, God’s supply for our need.

What does it mean to be strengthened by grace? Consider the opposite. The opposite of being strengthened by grace is to be what? Strengthened by *works*. This happens when I live my life depending on my own merit, my own ability, my own productivity.³

Grace living is just the opposite. When we live by grace, we’re admitting our own inadequacy and weakness and need.

Friends, we’ll make it without grace. We need grace for salvation (Eph 2:8). God will save any sinner here this morning, including you my friend. But you must first acknowledge you need to be saved, and can contribute nothing to your salvation. Then, through simple faith in Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice, God will save you, by His grace.

But our dependence on grace doesn’t stop there. We need grace for **sanctification** day by day, as 2 Peter 3:18 says, “But grow in grace...” And we need grace for **suffering**, as Jesus told Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9, “My grace is sufficient for you.” And we need grace for **service** too, as Hebrews 12:28 indicates, “Let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably.”

God is so generous. He gives us what we don’t deserve, yet desperately need, for salvation, for sanctification, suffering, and service.

But where? Where do we find this grace? “That is in Christ Jesus,” says Paul. This is critical. Paul is reminding Timothy of one of the most important realities regarding the Christian life. It is a *received life*.

Paul says in Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

³ I listened to a tape years ago by David Hocking who made this observation.

In Philippians 4:13, Paul says plainly, “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” Then he adds in Philippians 4:19, “But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

This is so basic, friends, but it’s something we tend to forget. When God saves us, He intends for us to live a dependent life. We must *receive*.

That’s Paul’s first plea to Timothy. “Timothy, my son, I’ll soon be gone. If you’re going to flourish in life and ministry, you must *depend on the Lord*. Day by day. Moment by moment. Tap into His grace Timothy! Be empowered by His grace!”

Is that happening in your life, my friend? Are you experiencing the power of God in your daily life? Or are you running on empty, with your soul barren and dry?

Do you make it a daily practice to tap into the grace that is in Christ Jesus? You say, “How do I do it?” It’s not complicated. The Bible teaches us that there are some vital *means of grace* that we must utilize, and here are three.

1. Prayer. Hebrews 4:16 tells us, “Let us then with confidence draw near to the **throne of grace**, that we may receive mercy and **find grace to help** in time of need.”

2. God’s Word. We read in Acts 14:3, “So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to **the word of his grace**...”

3. Church. Galatians 1:2-3 says, “To the churches in Galatia: Grace and peace to you.” We read in Revelation 1:4, “To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come.”

So to receive grace, we must prioritize into our schedule prayer, the study of God’s Word, and the fellowship of the local church. As we do this, we will be “strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”

Here’s the question again. What does it take to reproduce reproducers? And the first answer is, if we are to reproduce reproducers, we must *receive*. We cannot give what we do not possess. But if we are receiving, we cannot hoard.

II. If we are to reproduce reproducers, we must pass on what we receive (2).

Notice verse 2, “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.”⁴

Three decades ago I read this observation by author, Myron Rush:

Ever since I can remember, the Christian community has been complaining about the shortage of leaders in its ranks, and in recent years the complaints have turned into cries of alarm. It is the opinion of this writer that we are headed for even greater leadership shortages in Christendom unless we redefine the functions and purpose of leadership. A shortage of leaders tends to produce a more serious leadership shortage. *A shortage of leaders creates a shortage of followers. And a shortage of followers produces a shortage of future leaders.*⁵

How do we explain the prevailing lack of leaders in the church? There is no simple answer to that question, but I would suggest a key factor is our failure to give serious attention to the practicality of 2 Timothy 2:2.

To fulfill this “torch-passing” admonition, there are three critical issues for us to address. The first is *what* (what are “the things you have heard me say”, as the NIV puts

⁴ In the NIV, “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”

⁵ Myron Rush, The New Leader, Wheaton: Victor Books, 1987, p. 7.

it). The second is *who* (who are the "reliable men"). And the third is *how* (how are "these things" passed on to reliable men, particularly so that they in turn will pass them on to others)?

A. We must address the question, *what*? What did Paul mean by "what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses"? Or as the KJV puts it, "And the things that thou hast heard from me among many witnesses." What things? That's the question.

Here's where the first stage of the spiritual relay begins. We must answer this question. Paul had handed to Timothy something that Timothy was responsible to hand to others, who in turn would pass it along to still others.

What was that *something*? Notice carefully. Paul says, "The things you have heard me say." But in their times together for over fifteen years, Timothy had heard Paul say a lot of things. So which of those spoken words he have in mind?

He tells us. He says (ESV), "What you have heard from me *in the presence of many witnesses*." What authoritative message did Paul preach (and Timothy hear) over and over again? He didn't preach in a corner, and he didn't change his message. Timothy, the truths that you (and many others) have heard me proclaim are what I want you to pass on to others.

A key to understanding what Paul meant by "these things" in chapter two is what he just said in chapter one. So look back. In 2 Timothy 1:13, Paul says, "Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus." Then in 1:14, Paul reminds Timothy to "guard the good deposit entrusted to you" (AV, "That good thing which was committed unto thee").

What is this *good deposit*? It's the revelation of God concerning the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ. It is the "gospel" by which people are saved (1:8-9), which abolishes death and brings people to live (1:10), which Paul was called to preach (1:11), and for which he suffered (1:12).

This "has been entrusted to me", says Paul in verse 12. And it's been "entrusted to you", Timothy (1:14). So guard it.

But don't just guard it. Yes, guard it, that's chapter one. But also do this. Entrust it to faithful men. That's chapter two. Notice the repetition of entrust. God entrusted it to me. God entrusted it to you. Now you entrust it to faithful men. Entrust. Entrust. Entrust.

This background is vital if we're to rightly understand 2 Timothy 2:2. Listen to a comment by John MacArthur. "The truth Paul is talking about here is beyond the basic gospel message of salvation, which is to be preached to all who will hear. He is rather talking about the careful, systematic training of church leaders who will teach and disciple other believers in the fullness of God's Word."⁶

Churches in general, and church leaders like Timothy in specific, have a deposit, a glorious revelation from God. What are we supposed to do with this truth?

First, we're to "guard" it. This again is the thrust of 2 Timothy chapter one (1:14). A church leader must take steps to protect the doctrinal purity of this deposit from the onslaught of false teachers. He must hold fast the message he has received (1:13).

⁶John MacArthur, Jr., The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 2 Timothy, Chicago: Moody Press, 1995, p. 41.

Yet we have a second task with the deposit, according to 2 Timothy chapter two. Paul told Timothy to devote himself to helping the church pass on the deposit (2:2). Timothy was to do more than preserve the truth. He was also to entrust this deposit to other men within the church who in turn could pass it on to still others. Paul wanted Timothy to make arrangements to insure that the truth of the gospel would be intact as it was handed on to the next generation, and beyond.⁷

This brings us to the second question.

B. We must address the question, *who*? Who are the “faithful men” who will be able to teach others? Who was Timothy to target? Who are we to target? Who are the individuals to whom we should pass the gospel baton? Who can become a reproducing reproducer?

Though brief, the verse possesses several key words dealing with qualifications. The second part of verse 2 reads, “Entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

The main verb in verse two is “entrust” (*parathou*). It is an aorist, middle imperative which means “to place beside,” or “to set before.” The Authorized Version translates it as “commit.” The word is used in another context of setting food before a guest who is being entertained.⁸ In the LXX the word appears in Exodus 19:7 (italics added), “So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and *set before them* all the words the LORD had commanded him to speak.”

The Exodus 19 text is helpful for our consideration. God gave Moses His holy Law. What did Moses do with what he had received? He did not add to it, nor subtract from it. Rather, he passed it on to the elders just as he had received it from God.

Timothy, likewise, had received a divine deposit. It was as if Paul was saying to him, “Timothy, I am not going to be around forever so I am passing the gospel torch to you. Timothy, you are not going to be around forever, either, so here is your task. Find people to whom you can pass on the gospel torch, then develop them.”

Who are these individuals that can receive (and then give away) the torch of the gospel? Contrary to common perspectives on leadership in the world, biblically-qualified leaders are not necessarily the most talented people, nor the most educated. They may or may not be the individuals with the most charisma, charm, or influence. What type of people did Paul tell Timothy to recruit and train? According to verse two, Timothy was to identify individuals who possessed three qualifications: *character*, *competency*, and *commitment*.

1. *Look for individuals who possess character.* Timothy was to look for individuals who were “reliable” (*pistoi*). The term speaks of those who are dependable, trustworthy, steady, and faithful (as the Greek term is often translated). Here is where to begin in identifying potential leaders. Timothy was to find *faithful* men, individuals with proven character, and develop them.

This observation leads to an essential question. How do you test a person’s character to find out if he possesses faithfulness? The answer, according to the background given in 2 Timothy 1, is to observe how a person handles adversity. Phygelus and Hermogenes did not respond well to opposition, but deserted the ministry.

⁷John R. W. Stott, *The Message of 2 Timothy* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1973), pp. 50-51.

⁸William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, Second Edition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 622.

They were *not* faithful. On the other hand, Onesiphorus risked his life to help Paul, not just once either, but over and over again (“You know very well in how *many ways* he helped me in Ephesus” (1:18; italics added). He was *faithful*.

Faithfulness is a revealer of character. To find faithfulness one must look for how a person responds to opposition, criticism, difficulties, and conflict. Does he keep his commitments or not? We cannot force faithfulness. We cannot make someone be faithful. Therefore, in the search for potential leaders, we must seek for individuals who have a solid track-record. Jesus put it this way in the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:23), “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.”

2. *Look for individuals who possess competency.* The text again states, “Entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.” The word translated “qualified” (Greek *hikanoi*) carries the idea of sufficient, fit, or competent. It appears in a related text, 2 Corinthians 3:5, “Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.”

Timothy was to locate individuals who were not only faithful, but who also possessed a certain aptitude (though undeveloped) for being able to teach the Word of God. He was to identify a group of individuals who eventually (it takes time to develop this) would be able to engage in a teaching ministry with others (as described in Titus 1:9).

Emphasis on *others*. “Who will be able to teach *others* also.” There are some who know the Bible, but struggle to teach the Bible because they don’t know people.

When I was in college and thinking about becoming a pastor, I went to hear Warren Wiersbe do a workshop with pastors on the subject of preaching. I remember him saying, “Before a man becomes a pastor, he ought to work a blue collar job first.”

I found that to be a helpful piece of advice, and spent some time during my college and seminary days working construction, as well as in a couple of factories.

There’s a difference between studying the Bible so that *you* know what it says, and teaching *others* what it says. The first is vital, yes, and must happen first. But it’s no guarantee that the second can occur.

To teach others, you must know how to communicate. With real people. You must know how to talk, sure, but first, how to listen. And the listening must happen before the talking, and after it too. There must be humility, and a genuine love for others.

You must be willing to get to know people, to find out what they know, and don’t know. You must be a learner, of the Scriptures and theology, for sure, but also of the communication process. You must know how to put sentences together, how to capture attention, and hold it.

Look for those kinds of men, says Paul to Timothy, and to us. Look for individuals who possess character (first and foremost), but also competency. Is this potential teacher of others *teachable*? Is he willing to learn, to study, to take classes, to receive criticism when needed, to be a lifelong learner of God’s Word *and* God’s image-bearers?

3. *Look for individuals who possess commitment.* What kind of commitment? The kind Paul identifies in the next five verses.

He must be like a **soldier** who is willing to suffer and deny himself, because he’s consumed with the ambition of pleasing his commanding officer (verses 3-4). He must

be like an **athlete** who refuses to cut corners and thus disqualify himself (verse 5). He must be like a **farmer**, who is willing to work hard, and wait, and wait, and wait, until the Lord sends the harvest (verse 6). What's true of a good soldier, athlete, and farmer? They're *committed*. They're not living for the moment, but for something in the future.

These are the qualifying marks for potential, reproducing-leaders, according to 2 Timothy 2:2. Look for *character, competence, and commitment*.

This brings us to our third question. What? Who? And *how*?

C. We must address the question, *how*? How are “these things” passed on to faithful men, so that they in turn will pass them on to others? This task of passing on the faith involved four stages, says Paul. Christ to Paul, Paul to Timothy, Timothy to faithful men, faithful men to others also.⁹ And the “to others also” indicates it should still be happening. And it is.

How? How, in practical terms, does 2 Timothy 2:2 happen? When we look at the book of Acts, we find the answer in living color. We see what Paul did, and what he is now asking Timothy to do, and what we must do. Training reproducing reproducers requires **time, modeling, strategic delegation, and creative involvement**.

First, it takes **time**. John Stott offers this vivid description of the exposure Timothy enjoyed into the life of his mentor:

For over 15 years, since he had first been recruited in his home town of Lystra, Timothy had been Paul's faithful missionary companion. He had traveled with him throughout most of the second and third missionary journeys and had been sent during them as a trusted apostolic delegate on several special missions, *e.g.* to Thessalonica and Corinth (1 Thes. 3:1 ff.; 1 Cor. 4:17). He had then accompanied Paul to Jerusalem (Acts 20:1-5) and may have been with him on the perilous voyage to Rome. At all events, he was certainly at Rome during the first imprisonment, for the apostle bracketed Timothy's name with his own when he wrote the prison Epistles to Philemon, the Philippians and the Colossians....¹⁰

Second, it takes **modeling**. By the time Timothy received the 2 Timothy 2:2 charge, he'd already seen Paul model the admonition in his own life many times. Timothy was well aware of the numerous people Paul had recruited and trained for service (when you count them, the list tops forty). More importantly, he had vivid memories of the model of Paul's investment in his own life. No doubt, he would seek to do with others as had been done with him.

Third, it takes **strategic delegation**. Prior to the 2 Timothy 2:2 admonition, Paul had already delegated a variety of ministry tasks to Timothy which had been successfully completed. Here are seven examples:

1. Timothy assisted Paul in delivering the Jerusalem council report to the churches (Acts 16:4).
2. Timothy assumed a support role in Corinth so Paul could devote his attention to preaching (Acts 18:5).
3. Timothy did advance work for Paul in Macedonia, along with Erastus (Acts 19:22).

⁹ The faith was entrusted by Christ to Paul (1:12). Then, the second leg, what Christ entrusted to Paul, the apostle entrusted to Timothy (1:14). Third, what Paul entrusted to Timothy, Timothy was to entrust to faithful men (2:2). And fourth, what Timothy entrusted to faithful men, these men were to teach to others.

¹⁰ John R. W. Stott, The Message of 2 Timothy, Downers Grove: IVP, 1973, p. 18.

4. Timothy represented Paul in Corinth with the responsibility of helping the divided church work through its problems (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10-11).
5. Paul apparently sent Timothy to Philippi to serve in his absence during his imprisonment (Phil. 2:19).
6. Paul sent Timothy to Thessalonica to help the newly established church during a time of intense persecution (1 Thes. 3:2, 6).
7. Timothy was sent to Ephesus by Paul to help establish the church and take it to the next level of spiritual maturity (1 Tim. 3:14-15).

The point is, if we're going to train reproducers, we must engage in strategic delegation, as did Paul with Timothy. In a sense, the 2 Timothy 2:2 admonition builds on all of Timothy's previous assignments and is the culmination.

Fourth, it takes **creative involvement**. Paul used a variety of means in his interaction with Timothy. He wrote him personal letters. They took missionary trips together. They worked on ministry projects together, ate and traveled together, and undoubtedly over the years they engaged in countless personal conversations together.

Reproducing the next generation of reproducers doesn't just happen. By his example, Paul shows us that it requires time, modeling, strategic delegation, and creative (intentional) involvement.

Think of Paul's three missionary journeys. There's a different focus in each. On his first journey, he spends a couple of years doing evangelism, leading people to Christ, discipling them, and organizing local churches. On his second journey, he returns to some of the same places, seeks to strengthen those churches before moving to some new ground. On his third, he basically goes back to the same places where he served on his first two journeys, and spends four years.

Why? Why go back to the same places? To strengthen the churches, yes, to help them live out their faith in light of God's Word. But also, to invest in the leaders of the churches, so that the churches would function in the future without him.

This is why we are joyfully committed to reproducing reproducers at WBC. It's why we support missionaries like Steve and Vicky Stairs, and Paul and Kathy Holritz, who are training church leaders in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. As we did with the Storms, and Dernelans, and continue to do with others.

It's why we invest in our pastoral internship program, to train church leaders from within. It's why we support schools like TSBC and Cedarville, to assist us in the task of equipping the next generation. It's why you are sending me once again, the Lord willing, to train church leaders in Nepal in November.

At WBC, we do not believe that 2 Timothy 2:2 is merely good advice. We believe it's the authoritative Word of God, and we joyfully embrace the admonition.¹¹ We believe that the future of the church depends upon spiritual reproduction. This is the Lord's plan for building His church. And so, we don't just do ministry. We find great joy in giving away what we have.

¹¹ Granted, the command we've studied this morning in 2 Timothy 2:2 has a specific context. It was from an apostle (Paul) to an apostolic representative (Timothy) during a time prior to the completion of the New Testament canon. So this admonition was given first to Timothy, but it possesses tremendous implications for us.

This is why we developed the Two:Two program for men, and the Titus 2 program for women, back in the 90s. It's a three year intensive, where a trainer meets monthly with two or three trainees, and seeks to do with them precisely what Paul exhorted Timothy to do. If you'd like to know more, there are some handouts on the connect table in the back. If you're interested in participating this fall, there's a sign up.

Many of us in this room are faithful followers of Jesus. Who did the Lord use to disciple you? Think back. It was a team effort. Perhaps your parents, some Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, camp counselors, pastors, a neighbor, etc. Thank the Lord for them! And now, more than ever, do what they did. Resolve to be a reproducer! Spiritual reproduction. We must receive. We must pass on what we receive.

Take Inventory: We need to consider three vital questions...

1. *Are we living dependent lives?* Are we taking steps to grow? Are we in the Word in our homes and with our families, and under the Word when it's opened by gifted teachers in our church family? Why not take a class at TSBC this fall?

Perhaps you've never expressed the most important demonstration of dependence. You've never repented and asked Jesus Christ to save you. Why not today?

2. *Are we passing on to others what we have received?* My friend, I hope you have a vital ministry for Christ, but that's not today's message. This is today's message. I hope you also are experiencing the joy that comes from preparing others to do what you do, from being a reproducer of reproducers.

It starts at home. Parents, and grandparents, I encourage you, become even more intentional about discipling your young ones this year. Sports, music, they have their place. But let's make sure we're passing on to our children and grandchildren the things we've received from Him.

What about doing a Bible study with a younger believer? How about taking your neighbor to lunch this week to talk with him about the Lord? There's a need for people (especially men) to help with our kids ministry on Wednesday evenings this fall. Are you interested?

3. *Are we making it a priority to prepare tomorrow's church leaders today?* Who are the servants that God intends to be the next generation in passing the torch at WBC? Specifically, who are the men of character, competency, and commitment that God is calling to be pastors, and church leaders? And what can we do to foster their development?

Closing Song: #455 "*Come, All Christians, Be Committed*" (all four verses)

August Benediction: Romans 11:36 (NIV84)