

Teen Devotion

Year A – Proper 7

Holy Ministry



One truth shared: God gives us endurance to serve!

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear... But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry... Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

2 Timothy 4:1-3,5,8

Jesus, Give Us the Endurance to Serve

Are you tired? After a day of turning on the TV, or going online, or Instagram, or watching non-stop TikTok series of mountain biking or people chopping steaks, or Facebook, do you ever just *feel tired*? (Most of the time I'm watching too!)

The world you see on social media and videos can be overwhelming! That's especially true for people who love Jesus and think his Word is true—every single verse of it. Including the verses for today. It's actually kind of funny to think that these words from 2 Timothy were written almost 2,000 years ago. These verses talk about people not wanting to put up with teachings of God's Word that make sense in society and in their own lives; people gathering around them others who basically tell them "Yeah, sure, whatever *you* say man—that sounds good to me!" And follow that up with phrases like, "After all, who am I to judge (or say anything contrary to your thoughts)?" What's up with that? Ultimately, it's simple. People want control of their own lives, no matter what kind of trainwreck they might be. We want to deny the work and power and, in the very sad end, the very love shown in Jesus' life, and cross, and empty tomb—because that has everything to do with *God's* work, not ours. And that can lead to more than just a "meh" attitude—it can lead to an "attack"! That's what happened to Paul and Timothy 2,000 years ago. The result was physical suffering for God's people who put Jesus and the Word first!

In an overwhelming world, God gives us this charge today—preach the Word, keep your head, remember Jesus, all the while knowing he'll give you the gifts to do it, even in suffering, as you serve others. It won't be easy, God never promises that, but it will end with the greatest gift of all—the crown of eternity in heaven that Jesus himself will put on your head, and not just for you, for all of those who love Jesus with you and as you serve, maybe will even be led to love Jesus through you!

Throughout the last few weeks we've been talking about what it is to serve others. And that's what God calls us to. Try this now: When you're tired, spend a little more time this week serving yourself with the promises that God gives to you. Remember them. Embrace them by grace through faith. Start your day with them. And ultimately, know God will use that to lead you to share them with others—and to serve. To God be the glory!

Prayer: Jesus, you are so loving and powerful, and you used both of those things to save us. You faced the ultimate persecution to win peace for us. You faced rejection so we can be accepted. You stood up as the Word made flesh so we can stand up and share the Word with all. Help us face down the temptation to give in to the thoughts of the world and

its persecutions and celebrate when that persecution is related to us sharing your Word. Help us remember all you have done for us so that we may do for others—serving you every step of the way! Amen.

Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

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***Starting the Discussion:** This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

Share a TikTok or YouTube short that you found hilarious!

***Connecting:** This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

At the same time as these may be used for recreation, how might watching things online expose you to the pressures of the world?

***Digging In:** Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- Share some different reasons why it seems so easy to fall into the sin of giving in to the world, even though we know what God's Word has to say?
- How have you seen Christians persecuted for sharing the Word? (Even "small" things like friendships, etc.)
- Describe different ways you've seen Christians stand up for the Word—even a personal experience if you have one.
- Read 2 Timothy 4:2. Discuss why Christian teens can't treat this verse as something they can "opt out" of today.
- Think of different kinds of "endurance" (2 Timothy 4:5) and how it grows. How does God grow your spiritual endurance?

***Conclusion:** Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the "connecting question" above.*

Share some ways you can build each other up in the Word this week—specifically to find rest for your soul.