

The Legacy of Janani Luwum in Discipleship 2016

Prayer Practicing
Living the Gospel:
[PPL] Discipleship in
the Power of the Holy
Spirit

Modicum Okello

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Discipleship In The Power Of The Holy Spirit

Paul and Timothy in Mission 2 Timothy 2:2

"And the things you have heard from me in the presence of many witness, these entrust to faithful men (and women), who will be able to teach others also."

Zealous Christians have not rightly understood how to pass on their faith to the succeeding generations. The problem is that they assume those after them will have the same zeal and understanding that they have. The problem is that they don't. That one assumption fouls their willingness to teach and train. This happens in family too. Parents expect their children to know what they want, but parents need to provide step by step instruction to help them understand the process.

Of course, if Christians could just obey the Lord's command to 'make disciples,' then the problem would be avoided. The fact is not many people including myself writing this line, pastors and teachers have thought through what it is to make disciples or why Jesus made this His Charge?

Because new Christians are baptized, but not specifically trained in what it is to be a godly Christian, many Christians stay worldly without knowing it. The fire of the first generation Christians has not been passed on. In the end, for rather than passion is passed on.

Let me explain one thing here. The fire of transformation expressed in the testimonies of Jesus' followers has died down in the main traditional lukewarm churches like the Anglicans, Roman Catholics and others. However, if you are tuned to what the Holy Spirit is saying, you will hear the Evangelicals, Reformed, and the Charismatics are on fire for mission, evangelism, and discipleship.

True discipleship, however, always passes on a heart of doing what the Lord wants. The Lord Jesus Christ touched the hearts of his first disciples, Preach, Practice, and lived what the Father commanded Him: Luke 3:22, Mark 1:11, and Matthew 3:17. They are about motivation as well as obedience. Let's look closely at our text in the passage in 2 Timothy 2:2 and try to better understand how to make disciples. This is what I call **P**reaching, **P**racticing and **L**iving the Gospel.

"And the things you have heard from me in the presence of many witness, these entrust to faithful men (and women), who will be able to teach others also." 2 Timothy 2:2.

Jesus commanded us to make disciples Matthew 28:19. "Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.". Paul has compactly given us the plan of discipleship. It is not complicated but crucial. Remember that our success or failure depends on how well we follow this pattern.

I am not devising a new method but only unfolding what has always been so clearly described in the Scriptures. Through my study, prayer and reflection, I try to keep on asking, "Why does discipleship help protect church from decay?"

We have four important parts of 2 Tim. 2:2 to properly understand it.

1. The content of the Gospel
2. Training others
3. Teachability of our Hearts
4. Reproduction of Disciples

1. The content of the Gospel: *"And the things".*

'*And the things*' sound like it violates every rule of writing good sentences. What is the Apostle Paul describing here with such a generic phrase? If anyone has read through 2 timothy, they will be very clear what 'the things' are. Paul speaks about them early in his letter to timothy.

For example 2 Timothy 1:10 says briefly that 'the things' are the gospel. In 2 Timothy 1:13,14 he says more clearly, 'Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.' Paul says it is 'the standard of sound words.' In the next verse, he goes on and tells Timothy to guard this treasure. These things were entrusted to Timothy. They are entrusted to anyone who has them passed on to them, much like a family inheritance. The phrase 'the things' summarised all of Christians teaching and its benefits toward God's people. The PPL.

Reflection.

Perhaps we need to pause here and ask, what are those things that God has passed on to us? Do we know Him? Have we been as dutiful in learning His truth as in keeping up with the movies: the Big Bags, East Enders, and Good Neighbours? Am I teachable? What have I learned? What more do I need to learn? What is He trying to teach me now?

This is a series of very loaded questions which each of us are fully accountable before God to answer. You can put off these answers, but God will finally meet up with you. We are the generation that can put God's Word on our palm pilots, in most languages, in every size Bible that you would want. Every commentary and help is at hand including a website Biblical Foundation for Freedom! But are the things in you. Are you teachable? Jesus summarised His teaching by an ultimate love for God and devoted love to those around us. Let's now look at the second phrase.

2 Training Of Others.

"Which you have heard from me in the presence of much witness".

Paul is speaking about the need for Timothy to speak only what has been spoken to him. This training has several aspects. You need to communicate the Good News. The Gospel needs to be passed on to others. The Gospel must be communicated. We can use our life testimonies, radio, television, personal conversation or even the web.

You do not need to pre-defined the Good News; no modernism.

Paul instructed Timothy not to get caught up in the recent changes of doctrines. Many false teachings were being passed around. In Africa, United Kingdom and elsewhere, especially in America and Europe too. Anybody can start a Church, Fellowship, in the name of Jesus and claims to be a disciple of the Lord! Watch and listen to what they are not saying from what they are saying. Luke 3:22, Mark 1:11, Matthew 3:17. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." The proof of the fooding is in the eating. The Holy Spirit will guide you to follow Jesus' teachings and discipleship.

Am I speaking to someone who calls himself or herself a self-declared pastor, bishop, a postal or minister? Timothy was to stay true to what Paul passed to him.

One false doctrine that seems to attract some today is the concept that God is evolving. This concept is outright pagan. Behind this heresy and insult to God is that God gets better as man's concept of God gets better. You pay God more money you are double blessed-prosperity theology? This philosophy retreats back to the old ages where there was not much difference between God and man. God was only a reflection of man's thoughts. This is a false God who blesses you when you pay the pastor, bishop, an postal or minister (church) money?

You must prove your Accountability.

Paul wasn't around to keep check on Timothy. Timothy was a pastor, minister, not *a bishop or an apostle* that spent much time under the Apostle Paul and yet was accountable to others who heard what Timothy heard. This shows how the pastor is to humbly work with *a bishop*, the elders and leaders of the Church. A good pastor must give an account of his ministry to the elders of the church in the annual reports and have a biblical vision for church growth in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul Taught Many. Paul the Apostle didn't keep all his eggs in one basket. He was wise enough to know that he needed to teach many. Timothy was not the only one listening and being trained. Behind these statements seem to be a powerful theme. "I value very much what I give to people much more than what I receive from people. I mean, our success is only as great as we faithfully pass on God's truth to those around us."

Reflection.

Perhaps we can pause hear and search our hearts. Do we pride ourselves in being free thinkers? Do we like to think more about our thoughts or God's thoughts? Are we secretly or openly ambitious to be known as; 'cool' or 'witty?' Paul is calling us to join the army of Christian soldiers where we all have to go through the same boot camp. We all need to train ourselves to regularly feed from the Word of God. We all need to thoroughly know God's Word. We also can ask, "Are you disciplining anyone?" Is your life summarised by a passion to invest what God has taught you into the lives of others? You might object that you are not like Paul the apostle, but let's look at this passage a bit clearer. Timothy wasn't born a pastor. He was brought up by a heathen father. Paul spent time with Timothy and he was changed.

Paul wasn't just teaching Timothy. We think if we have got a good pastor, all will be well. No! Paul taught others along with Timothy. He wasn't just training a pastor. He was training the flock of God. Everyone needs to know God's Word. Everyone needs to know to pass on God's truths to others.

We need to be faithful to those who are in our charge around us. Paul said his reward depended on how well he built up the people of God. For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation. Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy 1 Thess.2:19-20.

I will agree that Paul as an apostle had a special responsibility to build up those who were under his charge. He was responsible. His success depended upon the faithfulness of those under his charge. A parent, however, is responsible for their children. A husband for his wife. An elder for the flock. A house group leader for the members. Our crown and joy is the faithfulness of those under our charge. Do you sense we need to pray more for God's grace rather than treat our charge lightly? Now let's turn and look at the process of discipleship.

3. Teachability of our Hearts.

"These entrusted to faithful men (women)."

'These' refers to 'the things' referred to in point one, the truth of God. Our success in life has to do ultimately with how well we can pass on God's truth to others. Satan tries to hinder us from understanding the importance of these truths. I need to remove a few road barriers before I go on and explain this verse further. *'Men' (and women is mine).*

Women might draw the conclusion that they don't have a responsibility of discipling. This is not what Paul meant. Timothy was in fact ministering to men. The pattern goes like these: men-men, women-women. This does not mean that women were not to train. Titus 2:3-5, for example clearly speaks about how other women are to train younger women.

'Faithful'. We sometimes wonder why we are not to disciple everyone. Some are even offended. Paul tells Timothy to 'guard' the truth by finding the teachable ones and entrusting them with the Gospel. Faithful people are characterised by the way they live out their faith. We need to prioritised our training with the faithful, those who actually respond to what we are teaching.

'I am not a pastor'.

Others will excuse themselves from the responsibility to make disciples because they are not a pastor. God knows you are not a pastor. Here, Timothy is a pastor and is being charged with doing this. This was his particular role. But this responsibility was not exclusively given to a pastor. Ephesians 4 says that a pastor's/ teacher's special function is to equip God's people to do the ministry. In other words, they are to give the regular Christian what they need so that they can disciple others. This is further clarified in the Great Commission. God's Church is to be mobilised into a great disciple-making army of faithful men and women. 'Go and make disciples of all nations', Matthew 28:19.

With these things out of the way, let us positively look at what Paul is instructing Timothy. Timothy was simply to take what Paul had taught him and entrust them to others. The word entrust simply means is 'set before'. This word is used in several different ways in the scriptures. For examples in **Luke** 9:16; 1:18; **Acts** 17:3; 20:32; 1 **Col.**10:27; 1 **Tit.** 1:18; 1 and **Pet** 4:19. For example: 'And he took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and broke them, and kept giving them to the disciples to 'set before' the multitude.' Luke 9:16.

It simply means 'to set before another to use'. Depending on different settings, the word could be translated into different English words. It simply means to pass to another in such a way that when received, it is considered valuable. 1 Peter 4:19 say, 'Entrust your soul to God'. We bring our troubled states before God in such a manner that we know He is safely holding and caring for us.

Reflection

Earlier on I mentioned about receiving God's Word. For many of us, this is a very special opportunity to base your life on God's Word before entering the work force. But we also need to think about passing this baton on to others. It is imperative that we are caught up in this task of making disciples. Let me ask you this personal question here. Are you currently discipling someone? Are you taking the truths that God has given to you and passing it on to someone else that really wants to hear them? You might excuse yourself by saying, good question, but, I don't know how to do this.

Never been discipled. This is why I need to tell you, because if I don't tell you, who will tell you,.

Surprise: You would be surprised to find out how many people have never been discipled. Because of this, they have no understanding of what it means. They are afraid of talking about their faith. They have a story that they need to discover. A story that resonates with the transformative power of the Holy Spirit.

Simple:

First, don't be afraid to talk about your living faith in Jesus. Discipleship is a simple process of taking the truths of God that you have grown by and purposely sharing them with others on one to one. If you have been growing as a Christian, you have something to share with other newer or younger Christian. I discovered this transformative power of the Holy Spirit in my life in the testimony of my conversion (*My Life Testimony 11/11/ 1973*). Since then, through my prayer, study and reflections, I have some confidence to tell anyone about my objective and subjective experience of Jesus Christ in my own words. For example 'Everyday with Jesus' by Selwyn Hughes ® CWR 1956 is a very important tool in discipleship. The booklet is well known and read by millions of people around the world. I recommend it to you. Let me know if you would like to be a disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ and you would like to disciple someone.

Simulate:

I would also recommend that you find a Christian that you respect and ask him/her to disciple you. This will not only help you understand the love of Christ and the truths that are to be passed on but on how you can share them with others. In addition, you could get a few discipleship books and read through the lessons and see what is being taught.

Be careful though: Many discipleship books tend to be individualistic and self-centred. They focus individual's own Christian life rather than how they are to function in the life and body of Christ.

Be discipled. If you have been discipled, then many of your excuses for not discipling others are stripped away. I think Paul clearly saw into the problem. Many times we waste our labour by only training someone to do something. We are not training others to train others. For example, do you train a person on how to love God or on how they can teach others to love God? Unfortunately, the latter is not often done. Paul thought of it through, and it is today's last point.

5) Reproduction of Disciples. *"Who will be able to teach others also?"*

Reproduction is good! Any system of training that does not reproduce is set to die. We need to build reproduction into the system. God did this in His creation. Did you notice all the seeds in one nice juicy tomato? God also has deliberately built this into the Gospel.

The Copy of the original! Paul was clear that he wanted to start with a good image of the original—from Christ to Paul and to Timothy onto others. This standard of reproduction would be good because it started with Christ. Timothy was to find and train faithful men. They might be faithful in a very few small things like coming on time, but they are faithful.

Train to Reproduce! Timothy would instil in those he shared the Gospel a need to teach others. When we make disciples, we need to do it in such a way that we will train them to train others. Think about this in a local Church/ Fellowship context. The pastor needs to find those that are promising teachers or trainers. He has to reproduce his ability to make disciples. Behind this process is the great and Almighty power of God who converts, saves and sanctifies. Let His truth go forth, and it brings marvellous changes to the most unlikely candidates. Don't take a person on further from where he /she is. Keep with him on the most basic truths until they begin to sparkle. A *calico* is a *calico* no matter how many times you lit it. But if it starts to sparkle, then they are alive. Follow on with them.

Multiplication! The key is, as Paul had already pointed out, they are faithful. Jesus referred to them in the parable of the Sower. They receive the Word of God and reproduce some 30, 60 and 100 fold. And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man/woman who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty, Matthew 13:33.

Can you sense the excitement of multiplication? They take what is given to them and have it change their lives. These disciples and I hope you are one of them reading this line. Take what the Holy Spirit has planted into your heart and let it grow and make it your testimony as the truth of your life today. Can you not see that our success is dependent on how well we PPL these truths on to others?

Reflection Summary!

Four points from 2 Timothy 2:2. Content, Training, Teachability, and Reproduction. 1 'And the things', 2 'you have heard from me', in the presence of many witness, 3 'these entrust to faithful men (and women)', who will be able to, 4 'teach others also.'

Discipleship is not about learning a list of dos and don'ts, ticking the boxes and feeling good about it, or missing out on a few boxes and feeling guilty. That is legal County. Discipleship is moving forward a step at a time, discovering the heart of Jesus, learning to enjoy the presence of God, being helped to live from the Spirit within; and being taught from Scripture what pleases the Lord. We begin to find God's law written on our hearts and gradually flowing down the slope of personality: making mistakes, getting it wrong sometimes, but with our hand in his and surrounded by the body of Christ.

The success of our next generation, whether it be the church/ fellowship, our family or our nation Africa + Uganda, Israel, America depends on how faithful we obey our God by training others with the glorious gospel truths of Christ in such a way that they eagerly, excitedly teach others in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus commanded us to make disciples. Dare we ignore His command? When we obey Christ, the nations will be won to Him. Let us be faithful to his Charge.

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