

Entrust the truth!

(2 Timothy 2:2; reading 1:13–2:13)

Paul pictured the Christian life and his ministry as a race (2 Tim 2:5; 4:7). But the Christian life and ministry is a race which we run together like a team. We finish well, if we have not “dropped” the truth, like the baton in a relay race, and when we have passed it on to others. Paul was concerned that the truth be passed on in light of those who had deserted him (2 Tim 1:15) and his coming death (2 Tim 4:6–8), so he charged Timothy to entrust it to others also (2 Tim 2:2). The text offers four guidelines for this spiritual relay race.

I. Prepare well – grow strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

1. In the context Paul explained the reasons for this proper preparation. Timothy needed to endure in light of others having deserted. They would be hardship. It is a spiritual battle. A relay runner is not done until the baton is passed.
2. In the context of 2:1–2 we can also learn how to be strong or to grow strong in grace. Trust God to accomplish what He has promised (cf. 1 Timothy in 1:7–8). Observe examples (1:15–18). Put aside unnecessary activities (2:3–4). Look to the prize and keep the rules (2:5). Anticipate the harvest (2:6). Remember Jesus Christ, who He is and what He has done (2:8f).

II. Choose the right team – entrust the truth to faithful men.

1. The primary characteristic which Paul looked for in team members was reliability (2:2). You deposit valuables to someone you trust. Cf. 1 Corinthians 4:1–2. This had been Paul’s practice with Timothy (Acts 16:2) and the apostles practice in getting assistance (Acts 6). Paul had rejected Mark for a second missionary journey because he had been unreliable (Acts 15:38).
2. Paul does not appear to limited “entrusting” to males, though teaching in general in the church is restricted to men (1 Timothy 2:12). Never-the-less older women were to teach younger women (Titus 2:3–4).
3. Entrusting means more than teaching, since Timothy was to teach some who were not qualified to be entrusted with the truth (e.g., 2 Timothy 2:24–26). To entrust the truth includes the expectation that it will be kept safe and requires more time and more effort.

You should ask yourself, if you are reliable. Would someone entrust you with the “good deposit”?

III. Pass the baton on rightly – teach the truth and model the truth.

1. Verse 2 implies that the primary way to entrust others with the truth is through teaching, i.e., pass on what he had heard Paul say to men who would also teach. Teaching involves explaining what the Bible means and how the Bible is to be applied. Older women were to teach a godly lifestyle (Titus 2:3–4). Timothy had heard the truth from his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14–15).
2. Verbal teaching is not the only way in which we pass on the truth. See 2 Timothy 3:10. Timothy had observed Paul’s way of life, his purpose, faith, patience and endurance. He had followed it all very closely. Timothy followed what Paul taught and what Paul lived. This is what Paul encouraged in other letters (1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:9; Philippians 3:9).

How you live is as important as what you say. Paul taught Timothy but also pointed to his own life.

IV. Look to the goal.

Paul was faithful with the truth for specific purposes.

1. Paul ran well in order to please Jesus Christ (2:4).
2. Paul also ran to receive the reward (2:5–6).
3. Paul endured everything for the sake of the elect that they too could obtain the salvation which is in Jesus Christ (2:10; cf. 4:17).
4. Paul endured to reign with Christ (2:12). Cf. Romans 8:17; Luke 19:11–27.
5. Paul endured and entrusted the truth to others for the sake of the church (2:17) because the truth is necessary for the health of the church.
6. Paul endured for the sake of those who were trapped by the devil (2:24–26).

Paul was totally committed to the Word of God. He had entrusted the Word to Timothy who was to entrust it to others. Prepare well. Choose the right team. Correctly pass on the truth. Look to the goal.

God’s Word is important because it defines our relationship to Christ. God has entrusted us with His Word. Guard it and entrust it to others for the glory of Jesus Christ.