

2 Timothy 2:14-16

Instructions to Timothy
Guiding, Growing, Guarding!



A Workman Unashamed



HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!!

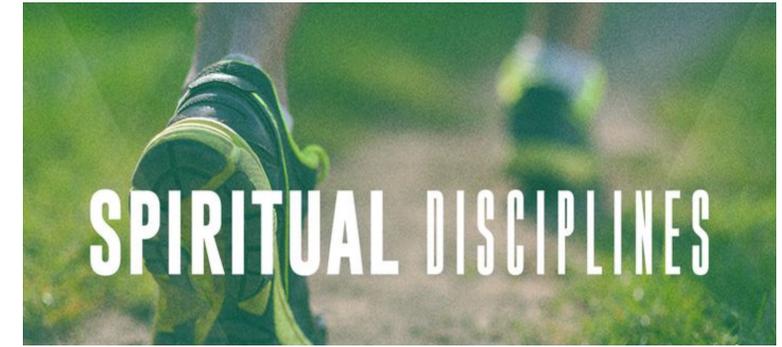
All of life is about doing the right thing, or the wrong thing! All of life is filled with benefits or repercussions that spring from our right or wrong choice of action. We know we've done the right thing because good things result from what we have said or done **correctly, justly, accurately, wisely, validly**, and so on. If we have done the wrong thing by doing or saying it **poorly, improperly, incorrectly, imprudently, dishonestly, and so on** – why then, we will *suffer* in some way because of it. There are short term exceptions. Sometimes doing the right thing hurts – at least right at the start. But in the long term it usually evens out, and we are the better person for it. Also, sometimes the right thing is the hardest thing. You know you should do it, or do it in a particular way - but maybe it's more work, or increases your risk, or it puts you in a more vulnerable position, or costs you more financially, or exposes you to being misunderstood, or leaves you open to criticism from those who disagree! But despite what could go wrong with doing the right thing, at the end of it all – you still possess the peace of mind of knowing that you did the right thing, and in the long term it will come back to you in the form of a rewarding and favorable result! Your life is enriched by doing the right thing. Conversely with every **wrong choice** there is an immediate payoff followed by the corresponding impoverishment! *Let me use money for a basic example. **Saving money** is difficult to do because it requires **delayed gratification** – in other words, you are **waiting** to receive the benefits of what that money can purchase for your needs or for your pleasure, right now! But if you keep saving – continuing to exercising self-discipline, and just stowing that money away, and not frittering it away – why then, at some point in the future, **because of** your self-restraint, you will have a nice stack of money waiting for you at the bank, or in the coffee can, and you can perhaps go on an exotic vacation, or buy a car, or furnish your living room, or even have a nice down-payment on a house. There is a long-term reward for saving your money each paycheck! But some people take their money each payday and spend it on whims, from dining out to going out and buying something they saw at Walmart, from clothes to sunglasses to electronic games. And then it is squandered, - until it comes time to squander the next paycheck! The problem really comes into play when people that do this this don't ever have enough money left over to purchase the bigger things they need or want. So they begin buying on credit! Now when they get their next paycheck, an ever-increasing part of it has to go to pay off the credit cards! This is really the difference of those who have money and those that do not – between poverty and prosperity. And it all stems from doing the right thing, or the wrong thing! And so – it is a truism that all of life follows this samw pattern. ²



As Christians, there is also a right way to be a Christian, and a wrong way. For instance, when you first come to faith in Christ, you know virtually nothing about the Bible except that Christ died for you, rose from the grave, and that He loves you. That is at the core of the scriptures and therefore at the core of your newfound faith. But anything **before** that and **after** that, is a true blank! Or at best, a very spotty picture.

*Do babies know things? Yes they actually do. But not much! When a person first comes to Christ in faith, they are a newborn, and like a newborn, there is so much to learn in the days and years ahead. *It can be compared to putting together a puzzle - right at the beginning. You get the edges done and maybe a key image or two in the middle. But the middle you haven't yet put enough of the picture together to really see what it will turn out to be. In the Christian life, it is imperative that you do **the right things** that will cause you to grow in Christ!

~These will make all the difference in the world! What are these? Well, these are the basics – **the disciplines**, they are called. **1** - Start **reading** your Bible. Christianity is a very specific body of knowledge. You will need to extract that from the pages of the Bible and imbed it in your mind - until you can start really making sense of it! **2** - Take time each day to **pray**. Through faith in Christ, you now have access to your Creator, and praying is the conversational part of a personal relationship. How can you say you have a relationship with anyone unless you talk to them – unless you communicate? The more you communicate, the more that relationship develops and deepens! **3** - you practice **humility through daily admission**, otherwise known as **confession**. Making a practice of looking at your words, your conversations, or your behavior through the eyes of God! It is a humbling daily exercise but extremely important and good for the soul. It is both sad and freeing – sad because we have to admit the wrongness of what we just said or did – and freeing because we have identified with our state of forgiveness through faith in Christ! We are not forsaken by what we did wrong, but forgiven and still loved by God! We may have shamed ourselves, but we are not hopeless! Confession before God actually recharges us – we are emptied of self, and **refilled** with hope! We have to confess **the things we did** that we shouldn't have done – those are called sins of **commission**. We have to confess the things we **should have done** but didn't – or, sins of **omission**.



4 - We do **Church** - a good, Bible-believing church where we meet with people of similar faith – and we **join it!** It is vital that we connect – and up close. It is the right thing for us! We are **told by God** to connect! In the book of Acts, after literally thousands of people were giving their lives to Christ on a daily basis, they were automatically being added to the church! It was not something they had to think about. It just **was** the way it was! It is a given in the New Testament! Why?! Well, at church we learn to love people who are different from us! Here we are perfecting **patience** with people who can try our patience, or **gentleness** when we want to go ballistic! Here we are learning to “flesh out” the Biblical concepts. Here, **what is on the page is converted to substance**, real physical manifestations of love – all the various fruits of the Spirit – the essential nature of Jesus being practiced and on display – **going from the conceptual to the actual!** Here at church we are also **observing others** and how they follow Christ – and they are observing us. That is why last week I said that we are examples for each other – either showing each other how to follow Christ by good example, or how NOT to follow Christ by bad example! That is a big part of “church”. When we gather together, we need to be very conscious of that! We need a missional concept of church, when we’re at church - or actually, in all areas of our life! All of life is “church”! We are on a mission to accurately portray Christ to others – at **work**, in the **neighborhood**, in the **restaurant**, in the **church**, in the **home**. Our whole life is identified with Christ - with living out His life by displaying His character and especially His love! If we are **not** known by our **agape love**, how do we know that we are saved at all? **[James 2:17,18]** – “Prove it! **‘Show me’**”, says James, “and THEN maybe you have genuine faith”!

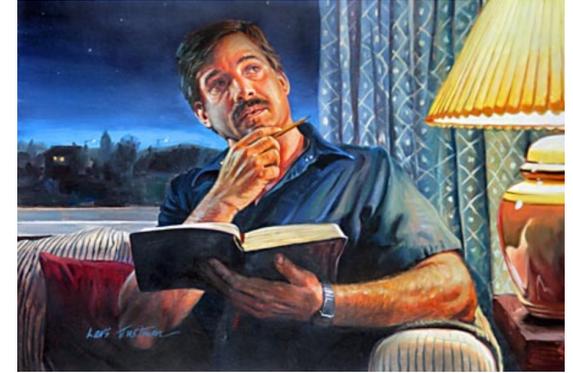
At church, faith takes on a joyful face, not because we feel we must fake it, but because we cannot help it! Joy – a key fruit of the Spirit, literally leaks out of us through our faces because that is the nature of joy! It is a **reflected emotion!** **It literally convulses the face into a smile!** It causes us to physically react, like when the Packers score a touchdown in the last 30 seconds of the game for the win! Who experiences that without expression?! No one!

Of course, it is a lot more than just emotions! It is substance – like how the character of Christ takes on a tongue at church - and arms and legs! Every week **in church**, we **practice** the very fruit of the Spirit. It happens as we work together in committee, or at gatherings, and what we learn we are to take with us **out of church** and into our homes, and into the unbelieving world! Jesus Christ is leading us into a new creation – and we are leaving behind us the foolish, careless, destructive, unwise, mentality of the fallen and sorry old creation! **[Romans 12:2; Joshua 1:8]**



But Paul is emphasizing one New Testament sub-theme here over the others. He has emphasized all of these qualities and characteristics of Christ-following character in various other places throughout His New Test.

Testament writings. But here he focuses on **the handling of the scriptures**. He is reminding us to get on it and stay on it! Know the scriptures! They are the knowledge of God and the knowledge of His wisdom. In studying them, His wisdom becomes the basis of our own! We become wise in the ways of God and what His will is for us. In studying the scriptures, we focus on finding and mastering the answers to our questions. Now we are prepared to give an answer to those who ask of us. BTW - who asks more questions than the most important people in our life – our children? And as they age, of course the questions will get harder. Are you preparing to answer them? Father's – on Father's Day – this is my message to you specifically. You are supposed to be the spiritual head of the home! Is it possible that you have abrogated that responsibility to your wife, as so many have? I hope not. If you are not concerned for the state of your own mind and soul, then read and study the



word of God diligently for the state of your children's mind and soul! To the degree that you personally benefit (and you will benefit greatly), your entire family, and your entire circle of friends and extended family, will also benefit greatly because you have the vital information about God at your recall! As you gain this information, you become responsible for what you know, which gently **forces** you to grow in Christ. Your perspective changes. Your mind is being stocked with new and vital information is refashioning your truth filter, and packing it with discernment and wisdom! I mean, who wouldn't like to have that happening to them?! Yet, it takes strength, endurance; determination; it takes a workman-like approach! You have to do the right things to get it done, in the same way that you couldn't pass your classes at school without studying. And you learned back then that the harder you studied, the higher your grade, and the more you learned and retained!

~So Dad's/Granddads – I suggest you go to work at this! The only thing God provides us with when we come to Christ in faith is **a spirit of "yes"** instead of a spirit of the usual spirit of "no", **and the scriptures** through which God's Spirit works! This info doesn't magically appear inside our heads! We don't benefit from it if it is on an end table collecting dust! We have to pick it up, read it, read it again, and read it again, and again, and again – front to back! Then it starts getting into our mind, saturating our psyche, our will, our preferences, and turning our actions and reactions so that they mirror those of Jesus our leader! You don't do it all in a week, a month or a year! It's a lifetime of learning, of accumulating information and understanding. So do the right things - **read, pray, confess, connect (to perfect), and then go out and represent!** Would you be willing to do that for yourself, your spouse, your children – for Jesus? I hope so. In a world where everything is in **freefall** – where the bizarre is being normalized,.. and societal and personal problems are becoming more and more pronounced and much more complicated,.. and institutions that we have relied upon for stability are no longer reliable,.. and the world just keeps on getting meaner and more poisonous – in that environment, **the scriptures will not change** and will not fail us or betray us! While everything and everyone around us **devolves** into chaos, we won't and don't! So Dads, get in the word. **Get you some of that solid rock from God** - get it into your heart and mind so that you can be a rock for your family and an immovable force for Christ in this world, and for good and for sanity!