

STUDY 10

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# FIGHT, WORK, PREACH

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## OBJECTIVES

1. To describe how a local church can develop a long-term plan to sustain its leadership.
2. To be able to explain the purpose of hardships and challenges in developing a Christian leader.
3. To describe the biblical teaching on what a pastor's primary responsibilities are.
4. To be able to state why some believers do not heed the pastorally delivered Word and how this can be an encouragement to pastors.



## BACKGROUND

In the opening chapter of Second Timothy, Paul discusses two uncomfortable facts. Firstly, serving Christ often involves *hardship* and *suffering*. Secondly, some key leaders have been unwilling to endure this hardship and suffering and have thus proven themselves to be *unfaithful*. The remainder of this second epistle is Paul encouraging Timothy to *endure hardship*, and to entrust to *faithful* men the responsibility to further the cause of Christ. To achieve this multiplication of ministry Paul “charges” Timothy to preach the Word — despite the response of his audience. This would require Timothy learning how to *fight* like a soldier, *work* like a farmer!

**Objective 1 - To describe how a local church can develop a long-term plan to sustain its leadership.**

The Apostle Paul seems to have been mindful of not overwhelming Timothy with all that he was expecting of him. What he tells Timothy is also applicable to any of us who might at times also feel overwhelmed.

1. From Second Timothy 2:1, what do we learn about how the servant of God can achieve what might otherwise have seemed overwhelming?

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Paul was asking Timothy to do something that might have been intimidating because it probably involved instructing older men. In contrast to the examples that Paul mentioned in the opening chapter (of men who had been unfaithful), he now tells Timothy to look for *faithful* men (2Tim. 2:2). Interestingly, the first requirement for those that he wants Timothy to train was not their *ability* or even their spiritual gifts. It is quite common for those that God calls to serve Him in some way, that they often feel *inadequate*. It might not have been just Timothy that felt inadequate. Perhaps those that Timothy selected may have also felt inadequate.

2. Note Second Timothy 2:2, what did Paul instruct Timothy to also look for in the church's future leaders?

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3. How does the instruction to Timothy in Second Timothy 2:2 ensure that a church is able to sustain a long-term succession of leadership? Discuss.

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(Did you notice how frequently in Second Timothy Paul refers to *pairs* of leaders.)

**Objective 2 - To be able to explain the purpose of hardships and challenges in developing a Christian leader.**

Again, in contrast to the examples of Christian ministers who were not prepared to suffer for Christ (given in 2Tim 1:15), immediately after Paul has told Timothy to recruit new leader to train, he instructs Timothy to *set the example* for these emerging leaders.

4. In what way does Paul tell Timothy to set the example for these emerging leaders in Second Timothy 2:3-4?

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Paul gives a further two examples to Timothy of what great endurance looks like. Firstly, he describes the work that an athlete must endure (2Tim. 2:5). This endurance involves long hours of training and practice. There wouldn't have been many Tasmanians who didn't celebrate when local girl, Ariarne Titmus, won her first Olympic gold medal for swimming at the '2020' Tokyo Olympics. Her highly animated coach, Dean Boxhall, said immediately after her victory that she has had to work extremely hard and endure great hardships to reach the pinnacle of her sport. "I am the author of her pain" he said, "Everything I asked of her to do, she did!" In the process, Titmus had to undergo shoulder surgery and go through a painful recovery period. Secondly, he gives the example of a hard-working farmer (2Tim.2:6).

5. While two *unfaithful* Christian leaders are named in the opening chapter, who are the two *positive* examples of faithfulness mentioned in Second Timothy 2:8-10 and how should their example inspire us?

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6. Read Romans 5:3-5 and discuss what benefit God might be able to achieve in a Christian leader by allowing them to suffer for His sake?

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**Objective 3 - To describe the biblical teaching on what a pastor's primary responsibilities are.**

In Second Timothy 3:1-5, Paul paints a bleak picture of the spiritual condition of many people with the expression "in the last days". This expression should be understood as Paul referring to his time of writing as the "last days" and reasonably continues today.

7. According to Second Timothy 2:15, what is one of the main responsibilities of a pastor of a church?

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8. Based on Second Timothy 2:23-25, what is a pastor responsible to avoid, model, and focus on?

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9. Read Second Timothy 3:15 and determine when Paul suggests that the Lord started preparing Timothy for pastoral ministry? How did the Lord begin to do it? What did the Lord use to shape Timothy?

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10. How does the study and application of the Bible serve as the pastor's main pastoral tool? (2Tim. 3:16-17)

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11. What did Paul charge Timothy to do which is also applicable for pastors today? (2Tim. 4:1-2, 5)

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**Objective 4 - To be able to state why some believers do not heed the pastorally delivered Word and how this can be an encouragement to pastors.**

Faithful pastors often get frustrated when their congregants do not seem to be growing in their discipleship. Sometimes this frustration is due to church attenders living double lives. Paul seems to allude to this in Second Timothy 3:6.

12. How does Second Timothy 3:7 sum up the frustration that many church leaders feel with such people?

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13. What other reasons does Paul give for some believers not heeding the preaching of God's Word according to Second Timothy 4:3-4?

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*Inadequacy* is a common job hazard for pastors. The frustration of preaching without seeing much positive response — and often being criticised for their preaching — can all be very discouraging for a pastor. An unsuspecting pastor may well blame him or herself and his or her lack of preaching effectiveness - despite faithfully preaching sound doctrine and truthfully conveying the message of God's Word. In fact, it is the faithful and accurate preaching of God's Word that brings conviction of sin and challenges people to live more fully for Christ.

14. Therefore, why could a pastor be encouraged if they find there is resistance to their preaching by those who may be living double-lives? Discuss.

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15. Despite Paul's sufferings and imminent death, what was his attitude and great hope? (2Tim. 4:18)

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## APPLICATION

16. Many churches bemoan that they don't have enough leaders or volunteers. Drawing inspiration from Paul's exhortations to Timothy, what are three things that each local church can do, despite their congregation size, that will help them to sustain their church's leadership for generations to come? Discuss.

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17. Your employer, a rather large company, has just signed up to a *Diversity and Equality* compulsory staff training series of sessions. After completing the training sessions you will be required to wear a rainbow pin with a red enamel love-heart embossed into it. All staff will then be required to march in the Pride march on Pride Day. How would you respond to this workplace directive? Discuss.

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18. Your church is looking for a new pastor. Based on what Paul has told Timothy about what a pastor's main responsibilities are, what are the main requirements your church should expect from any candidate applying for the position?

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19. You have become aware that there are a few people in your church, some of them leaders, who are compromising their commitment to Christ through marital infidelity and fornication. The pastor is not aware of this. These same people have become increasingly critical of the pastor's preaching. The pastor has just returned to work after taking stress-leave due to the overwhelming criticism he has been receiving from his last few sermons where he called for believers to walk in holiness. What should you do? Discuss.

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Amen.

