

From Good to Godly – 2 Timothy 2:1-7

We're continuing with our Keep On series from 2 Tim; Turn there with me (2 Tim 2:1-7)

The title of the message this morning is *From Good to Godly* – talking about leadership and the practices/habits necessary to be a godly one (last week's message)

And what I want you to understand from the get-go here, is that to some extent, everyone single one of us is a leader

For some, that's *all* you do – you lead people and organizations, all the time

Like a business owner, or a corporate executive, or a foreman, or a pastor

For others, your leadership is much more fluid

Sometimes you're a leader, sometimes you're a follower

In fact, that describes most of us

Like a mom at home – sometimes she's leading her kids, sometimes she's following her husband

Or as an employee at work – sometimes you're leading others, and sometimes you're following your boss

Or a student at school – sometimes you're leading your friends/teammates, and sometimes you're following your teachers/coaches

The bottom line is – to some extent, every single one of us are leaders

- And *how* you lead makes all the difference in your effectiveness – in accomplishing all that you intend to achieve

It doesn't matter if it's baseball, business, band, or Bible Study – everything rises and falls on leadership (It's the godly ones that he uses the most)

So to that end, Paul lays out 7 very practical *habits of leadership*, intended to move us from being a good leader, to a godly leader – that's the goal

The goal is not *greatness*, at least not in the world's eyes – that'll take care of itself

The goal is godliness – b/c when it comes to eternity, that's all that matters

And what you might find surprising, is that godliness takes on a very practical look in this passage – so follow along with me as I read 2 Tim 2:1-7

If anyone ever says that the Bible isn't practical, they've never read this passage

And the first habit of godly leadership we find here, is to . . .

1. Rely on God's strength (v1)

V1 – be fortified, be built up by the blessings, the favor, the grace, that's found in a relationship with Jesus

One where you're never alone, no matter how lonely you feel as a leader . . .

And where you'll *always* have at your disposal the ability to endure, if not triumph

That's a godly leader

- By way of contrast, bad leaders think they can do it alone
They're arrogant, self-sufficient (at least they think so) . . .
And the need for help, let alone admitting it – is a sign of weakness for them
Bad leaders depend on no one – much less God

Meanwhile, good leaders *know* they need help, and even ask for it

They know their weaknesses, they know their limitations . . .

And they get help to compensate for them

- But it's *godly* leaders who understand that no matter how good they are . . .
They're less than what they could be, without the presence and power of God constantly at work within them
Godly leaders *really believe*, that apart from him, they can do nothing (Jn 15:5)

So they make it a *habit* to rely on him for everything

To draw on his goodness and comfort and peace – when times are bad . . .

To trust his sovereignty – when times are uncertain . . .

And to bask in his grace – when times are good

If you're going to move from good to godly in your leadership . . .

You must rely on God's strength, found only in Christ, for everything you do

Including the 6 other habits

In fact, this first habit is what sets you apart from everyone else

The 2nd habit of godly leadership is to . . .

2. Reproduce yourself (v2)

V2 – what you've heard from me over and over again in the presence of so many . . .

Entrust to faithful men

Paul refers only to men b/c he's talking about leading and teaching the Scriptures in the context of the local church

But the principle applies to everybody – inside these walls, *and* out

And the last word of v2 is our clue that Paul is telling Timothy to *reproduce* himself

Entrust [what I've said] *to faithful men who will be able to teach others also*

Implying that Timothy was capable and already doing it . . .

And needed to recruit others to do the same

- Which means first of all, *identifying them* . . .
Like Jethro told Moses to do in Ex 18 – he said *look for able men from all the people*
IOW identify some more leaders
If you're going to reproduce yourself, you must look around and identify some other potential leaders

And once you do – *go after them*

Figure out what you want them to do, and cast the vision to do it

And if they catch it, and agree to join you – then *train them up*

If they have the ability and potential, but lack the skill – you have to train them

Just like Paul trained Timothy by bringing him along on his church-planting journeys

Train them – and then *release them*

Release them to do the ministry / carry the responsibility for which you've trained them

Again, just like Paul did with Timothy in Ephesus

After training him, he released him to do the ministry himself

If you're going to move from good to godly in your leadership, you have to reproduce yourself by . . .

Identifying, recruiting, training, and then releasing other leaders

- I didn't get this until about 8 years ago – I was a Johnny come lately
Too proud to think there was something I needed to do that I wasn't doing already . . .
Too close-minded to think there was a better way . . .
And too egotistical to think that someone could do it as good as me
And now, it's one of my greatest joys and strongest passions as we grow our church and
look to plant others

Good leaders become godly leaders by reproducing themselves
Meanwhile, bad leaders take no risks, do it all themselves . . .
And severely limit, if not ruin, the very thing they're trying to accomplish

The 3rd habit of godly leadership is to . . .

3. Get your hands dirty (v3)

Look at v3, and remember that Paul is speaking to Timothy, the pastor and leader of the church in Ephesus, and he says . . . (v3)

Now, we don't normally think of leaders as soldiers
But the implication is clear – when it comes to the K of G, we're *all* soldiers of Christ,
leaders and followers alike
Or to put it another way – generals never stop being soldiers
Their responsibilities may change, but not their calling to serve their country

And the same is true of each of us – no matter what role we fulfill in God's kingdom,
we're all soldiers of the King
Not in a military sense with guns and bombs and dominance . . .
But in a spiritual sense with prayer and truth and sacrifice

- And good leaders, as good soldiers, aren't afraid to get their hands dirty
In fact, that's what makes them godly
They're not afraid to enter the fray and share in the suffering w/ those they lead
Just like a good lieutenant is not afraid to lead his men into battle, nor too good to get
his hands dirty

Does that mean we all do the same thing? No
As soldiers for Christ, just like soldiers in the military, we have different duties
The key, is doing whatever is necessary to fulfill them
That's how we *share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus* (3)

The 4th habit of godly leadership is to . . .

4. Stay focused (v4)

What I think is going on here in v4-6, is that having told us to share in suffering, Paul now
gives us 3 examples of what that suffering could look like
And it shows us, that suffering for Christ is *not* limited to persecution
It also includes things like the opportunity cost of remaining *focused*, like he says in v4
Of not being able to do what you want, b/c you're constrained to do what you should
That's a form of suffering for Christ – giving up what you want, to do what you should

V4 (recap v3); Continuing with the soldier analogy, Paul basically says . . .
Godly leaders don't get distracted

They don't get entangled in things that aren't their concern – things that don't help them
fulfill their purpose and calling
They stay focused

Which means saying no to good things, in order to say yes to the best ones
Saying no to temporal things, so that you can say yes to eternal ones
Saying no to frivolous pursuits, so you can say yes to important ones

- With so many worthy causes/pursuits out there, it's critical that we remain focused
An ADD leader is not a good one; Nor a godly one
Constantly bouncing around from one thing to another . . .
Never satisfied, never content, always looking for something different

Whether you're a husband, wife, businessman, SG Leader, mom, athlete, or employee . . .
If you're going to move from good to godly in your leadership . . .
You must say no to the things you're not about, so that u can say yes to the things u are
Especially kingdom things; Things with eternal impact
It's the 4th habit of godly leadership

5th is to . . .

5. Do the right thing (v5)

V5 – this is the second example of the suffering we should willingly endure as a good
soldier of Christ
When everybody else is *bending* the rules to get ahead, we can't
Which means godly leaders sometimes suffer a decided disadvantage in life

When others are taking *shortcuts* to the finish line, we have to run a *full* lap
When some are cutting *corners*, we have to walk the straight and narrow
When they act as though they're *above* the law, we have to live beneath it
Godly leaders don't have the luxury to bend the rules in order to get ahead – even when
others are

- Like Rosie Ruiz, a no-name runner back in 1980, who came out of nowhere and stunned
the world by winning the Boston Marathon
And did so w/ the third best time in history up to that point – an incredible performance
This is her crossing the finish line (**photo**); And receiving the prize (**photo**), the crown

The problem is, she didn't run the race!
It took them 8 days to figure it out, but when all the dust settled, she was exposed as a
fraud and stripped of her title
Instead of running the entire race, she cut some corners, showed up in the crowd a half
mile from the finish line, and then jumped back into the race in time to win
And before that, she cheated in the New York Marathon by riding the subway
She did the wrong thing – not good or godly

- Or how about Ben Johnson? (**photo**)
The sprinter who won the gold medal in the 100 meters at the 1988 Olympics . . .
Only to have it taken away after testing positive for performance enhancing drugs
He did the wrong thing, and compounded it later on by saying . . .
“Everybody cheats, who doesn't cheat in life?” (CBC Sports; Tuesday, July 24, 2001)

I'll tell you who doesn't – godly leaders; godly leaders don't cheat
Whether in sports or life – they follow the rules; they do the right thing . . .
Unwilling to risk their reward, or the reputation of Christ, on short-term fame or success

The 6th habit of godly leadership is to . . .

6. Work hard (v6)

V6 – who ought to enjoy the fruit of his labor; the best of what the land offers

This is the third and final example of the suffering we should expect to endure as a good soldier of Christ

That when others are hardly working, we should be working hard; toiling intensely

Believers, as godly leaders, s/b the hardest working people around

If you're a slacker at work, you're bringing shame to the name

I'm not talking about being a work-a-holic – where it consumes you to the detriment of your family and friends . . .

I'm talking about being diligent and making the *most* of the time for which you get paid

I'm talking about going the extra mile in *all* you do – not just those things you like to do

I'm talking about doing things with the *utmost* excellence, all the time

Far too often we expect the *best* from our labor, when we haven't given our best *to* it

And that's not a mark of a godly leader

Godly leaders work hard, even when others are hardly working

It's part of the suffering we should expect

- The other part is that we may *not* receive the fruit of our labor, even if we *do* work hard
I think that's why Paul uses the word *ought* here (v6)
Implying that as a hard-working soldier of Christ, it *should* happen, but it may not
And if it doesn't, it shouldn't change your work ethic

Reward or not on this side of heaven, godly leaders work hard – even if others are hardly working

Even if you have to work alone like many farmers do

Even if it means delayed gratification until the harvest – whatever that is in your line of work

Godly leaders work hard – it's part of the suffering to which we're called, as soldiers of Christ

And finally, the 7th habit necessary to go from good to godly in your leadership, is to . . .

7. Think (v7)

V7 – the word *everything* implies that he's not just talking about what he's said *here*, but *everything* he's said in his life and ministry

And if we *do* that, if we think about what he says, God will give us *understanding*

That is, we'll be able to grasp the truth of this book, and apply it in our lives

But it doesn't come without thought

- As simple as that is, I think this issue – the lack of serious thought about God's Word . .
Is the bane of our 21st century church-world existence; Not to mention our culture

We are far too willing, and even eager, to let others think for us

We are far too inclined to dwell on the insignificant instead of the important

And far too content to let somebody tell us *what* to think, even if we do think

If we're going to be effective leaders for the cause of Christ in this day and age – *godly* leaders as opposed to good ones . . .

We must *think* for ourselves, and we must think about things that *matter* . . .

Starting with the Scriptures

- Somebody said to me recently that they've had to actually *repent* over how much they listen to various preachers
Message after message, week after week, instead of opening this book and thinking it through for themselves – they'd listen to someone talk about it

Which there's obviously a place for

But if it becomes a crutch, a substitute for studying the word yourself . . .

And if it becomes your sole source of what to think, instead of searching the Scriptures and *thinking* for yourself – it's wrong

- Godly leaders *think*, and they think about godly things
They sort through and set aside all the junk that comes their way . . .
The trivial and inconsequential – and they think about what's important

You cannot expect to grasp spiritual truths, or any truths for that matter, if you don't dispense with the trivial, focus on the important, and think
It takes time, and it takes effort – and godly leaders do it

- What they *don't* do is waste time reading pathetic blogs by people who don't think twice about what they write
What they don't do is waste inordinate amounts of time watching the news or listening to talk shows
To people who tell them *what* to think, *how* to think, and *when* to think it
What they don't do is succumb to group-think mentality and waddle over the proverbial cliff like the proverbial lemming . . .
Just b/c the radio voice, or the newspaper editor, or the TV personality said so

Stop doing that, and start thinking for *yourself*, about things that *matter*

- We're all leaders to one extent or another . . .
And this is a crucial habit if you're to be a godly one – think about it