

# Trustworthy Sayings

## Part 7 – Simple Spiritual Growth

### 1 Timothy 4.6-16

Feeding children so they learn to feed themselves

- A lot of watching, a little learning, some trial and error
- It may be inconvenient, but no healthy person rants when a child who is trying fails
- Bottom line: we need each other (ladies on retreat)

#### Have a Plan

- No one drifts into discipleship
- No one thrives by focusing on what they shouldn't do
- Nourished on the Word (v.6)
  - Have a Bible reading plan
    - But don't just read the Bible, chew it and ingest it
  - One of the best ways to ingest it is to memorize it
  - Use it to guide your prayers (keeps you focused and aligned with God)
- Practiced in the Disciplines (v.7-8)
  - In addition to Bible reading and prayer, we learn from what others did to grow spiritually
    - Fasting brings focus and freedom
      - Breaks the incessant drumbeat of the body that it must have what it wants and now
    - Giving breaks greed
      - Much needed in our suburban context where we measure so much of the worth of our life by the net worth of our life (true for adults and kids)
    - Solitude brings satisfaction
      - Setting aside time to be alone (not just for introverts)
      - We are so distracted that we rarely get glimpses of the glory surrounding us and have no room in our lives to ponder (what you behold is what you become – afraid we're become distracted and shallow with no capacity for reverence since that which is holy is not entertaining)
- Profiting in Suffering
  - There is a kind of suffering that is not profitable – the kind you endure bitterly, with no view toward God, in which you pound the “why” question without asking about what you're learning and how you will get through it
    - “Set hope on living God...”
  - Romans 5.3-5 – it's not the trial that roots the rejoicing but the hope
  - They not only profited when trials came, but sometimes chose the riskier road

## No Excuses

- “You’re not too \_\_\_\_\_”
  - For Timothy: not too young – the call is always to set an example
  - Paul - get on with the business you know you’re supposed to do
- “I don’t think I can \_\_\_\_\_”
  - For Timothy: pastor the church
  - Paul – you were given a gift, practice these things so that people see your progress

## Questions for Discussion:

1. What are three examples of “focusing on what you shouldn’t do?” How does a focus on those kinds of thing actually hinder spiritual growth?
2. How would you explain your Bible reading plan to someone over lunch if they asked? What’s something you’ve learned or been reminded of in the past week that’s fresh on your mind?
3. What experience do you have in the three disciplines mentioned in the notes (fasting, giving, solitude)? How have they proven spiritually beneficial to you? What would you say to someone getting ready to try them?
4. What hardship are you facing right now? In the midst of it, how are you setting your hope on the living God?
5. Has there ever been a time in your life when you, like Paul and company, ever chose the more difficult road? Why? Did you benefit from it spiritually? If so, how?
6. Which of the two excuses are you more prone to? How do you combat it?