



EQUIPPING U

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION/OCTOBER 2013

2 Timothy 4:1-10

[1] I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: [2] preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. [3] For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, [4] and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH

[5] As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. [6] For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. [7] I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. [8] Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing. [9] Do your best to come to me soon. [10] For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.



Finishing Well

The first time I heard of Demas was twenty years ago as a college student on a missions project. Chuck, the director of our eighty-student team, had been teaching us from the book of 2 Timothy all summer.

As he came to the small verse in chapter four about Demas, who was in love with this present world, he cautioned us that statistically half of us would not be walking with Jesus in twenty years.

His statistic shocked me. I couldn't imagine any of us not walking with the Lord in 2013. I was sobered by the thought as I learned more about Demas, the man mentioned three times in the pages of Scripture. First when Paul calls him his fellow worker in Philemon 1:24. Second, as he sends his greetings to the believers in Colossi (Colossians 4:14), and finally, as he deserts Paul in 2 Timothy 4:10 because he loved this present world.



TEACHING TIP. Not everyone will share your convictions and values. When Christians disagree on issues where God's word is silent, we must follow the outline in Romans 14 to not pass judgment and pursue "mutual upbuilding."



TEACHING TIP. "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17



TEACHING TIP. Sometimes in our desire to help people or to show them truth, we don't follow Jesus' instruction to "weep with those who weep." Some situations are simply sad and people need the time and space to grieve.

Unfortunately, his story isn't unfamiliar. Nearly every one knows an unfaithful pastor or someone who has turned from the faith they once professed.

Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me.

Paul, in his final letter to Timothy, encourages him to "be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2:1) while leaving the young pastor some examples to ponder: the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer.

The soldier, having separated himself from the entanglement of civilian pursuits, aims to please the one who enlisted him. Paul understood that he was "set apart for for the gospel of God" (Romans 1:1) and aimed to live a life that pleased his Savior, Jesus Christ. Knowing he was near death, Paul confidently asserts, "I have fought the good fight" (2 Timothy 4:7). He was a good soldier; Demas was not.

Consider an athlete. He is "not crowned unless he competes according to the rules" (2 Timothy 2:5). Many accomplished athletes in our day have had their medals confiscated and their wins stripped when the truth that they have cheated comes to light. But Paul assures Timothy, "I have finished the race." By remaining "steadfast under trial," (James 1:12) and firm until the end, Paul demonstrated the authenticity of his faith. Demas did not.

Jesus, the author and finisher of true faith, taught in the parable of the sower

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Bernice Laster

ICEA is a volunteer staffed ministry. Each month Equipping U highlights and honors one of our faithful volunteers.

(Matthew 13) that those who had a root in themselves would fall away. Paul was not one who fell away, because his faith was rooted in Jesus.

"The hard-working farmer...ought to have the first share of the crops" (2 Timothy 2:6). A good farmer is both hard-working and full of faith. For unless God provides the growth, the farmer's hard work would be fruitless. At each harvest the faith and diligence of the farmer is rewarded. "Farmer Paul" was fruitful—he kept the faith.

May it never be said of us, as it was said of Demas, that we loved this present world. May we, like Paul, be rooted in Christ and finish well.

For over 20 years Bernice has been training others through ICEA events to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with children. On the 19th, at the Equipping U conference, she'll be training teachers to weave the gospel into Bible stories. Bernice, we are grateful for your faithfulness, your prayerfulness, and your desire to see children receive the grace of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

FROM THE EDITOR

A few weeks ago I found a piece of paper dated June 30, 2004 where I jotted the following words my Grandma Cope said to me that day. "They've run the race, and they're done. We are still running it."



I cherished anew these wise words from my grandma who was losing her mind, but not her faith, to the ravages of Alzheimer's. How grateful I am for her example of finishing well.

Serving with U,

Kim
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GET EQUIPPED

Receive the training and encouragement you need at the October 19 Equipping U Church Ministries Training Conference at Ward Church in Northville, MI. Register early and save! www.iceaOnline.org.

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