

How To Become A Worthwhile Witness For Christ

2 Timothy 4:1-8

INTRODUCTION

As we continue our discussion on discipleship, after a brief pause to celebrate Mother's Day, we must consider how we might become a worthwhile witness for Christ. Now many might at first think of the responsibility of becoming a world leading figure such as Billy Graham, Tim Keller, or Ravi Zacharias to fulfill this role, but each one of us has the opportunity to become a light and influence, as we have said before, to those in our circle of life. This is whom we are responsible to shed the light of Jesus upon and let God decide how broad that influence may go.

This morning I want to turn to Scripture and consider the life of Paul and his witness for Christ as he prepares for his departure to be with the Lord. He gives final words to his ministry protégé, Timothy, in preparing him to continue to be a worthwhile witness for Christ and to continue in mission after he has gone.

This reminds of the many who have come after Paul who have left a great mark for the Kingdom. One of the tasks and legacies of a great servant and witness for Christ is not only the work they do, but the preparations for their departure. Making sure the voice of the Good News continues through younger generations long after the servant has gone to be with the Lord.

This past week we received the news, as many have, that a dear saint of God, Ravi Zacharias, has terminal cancer with no more medical options left. He has been such an enormous influence on my thinking and instrumental in my life calling. He, like Paul before him, has not only fought the good fight of faith, but has invested in many young Timothy's around the world so that the ministry of persuasive "apologetic" evangelism continues long after his departure. His departure, sadly, according to latest updates seems to be at hand. I appreciate his influence on my life and the impact he has had on so many for the Kingdom of God. May his rewards from the Lord be overwhelming until we all meet together again in God's New World.

2 Timothy 4:1-8

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store 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 longed for his appearing.

I. Become Intimate with Jesus Yourself

Oswald Chambers

Solitude with God repairs the damage done by the fret and noise and clamor of the world.

Voddie Baucham Jr.

The modern church is producing passionate people filled with empty heads who love the Jesus they don't know very well.

1 John 2:6

This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

John 15:1-5

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

II. See the Responsibility of Opportunity

Philippians 1:21-27

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Ephesians 5:15-17

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

III. Complete Surrender to the Lordship & Authority of Christ

John Stott

His authority on earth allows us to dare to go to all the nations. His authority in heaven gives us our only hope of success. And His presence with us leaves us no other choice.

1 Peter 3:14-15

“Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.” But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...

IV. Grow in a Workable Knowledge of the Lord's Truth

C.S. Lewis

“He shows much more of Himself to some people than to others-not because He has favorites, but because it is impossible for Him to show Himself to a man whose whole mind and character are in the wrong condition.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

V. Be Incarnational In Your Approach

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

Timothy Keller, Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just

“We instinctively tend to limit for whom we exert ourselves. We do it for people like us, and for people whom we like. Jesus will have none of that. By depicting a Samaritan helping a Jew, Jesus could not have found a more forceful way to say that anyone at all in need - regardless of race, politics, class, and religion - is your neighbour. Not everyone is your brother or sister in faith, but everyone is your neighbour, and you must love your neighbour.”

VI. Be Humble In Your Attitude

John Dickson, Humilitas: A Lost Key to Life, Love, and Leadership

“The real power of effective leadership is maximizing other people’s potential which inevitably demands also ensuring that they get the [credit](#). When our ego won’t let us build another person up, when everything has to build us up, then the effectiveness of the organization reverts to depending instead on how good we are in the technical aspects of what we do. And we have stopped leading and inspiring others to great heights.”

Philippians 2:5-11

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

John Maxwell

The greatest day in your life and mine is when we take total responsibility for our attitudes. That's the day we truly grow up.

C.S. Lewis

Authority exercised with humility, and obedience accepted with delight are the very lines along which our spirits live.

VII. Let Love Be the Atmosphere

1 Corinthians 13:4-8,

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails

1 Corinthians 13:13

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

CONCLUSION

Our mission is to live for Christ because what comes out of this commitment is the only thing in our life that will last for eternity. Let us become effective Christian witnesses for the Lord.

Romans 16:25-27

Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him— to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.