

Winning the Race

2 Timothy 4:1-22 Paul finishes his final instructions to Timothy, and we all would do well to heed those instructions. Timothy was a teacher and preacher of God's Word. He had the gift of evangelism. We are all preachers, teachers and evangelists if we are true believers. Even though we may not hold the office of teacher, preacher or evangelist in the church, our lives and speech daily preach and teach what we believe to others. Anytime we share the love of Christ with another, we are an evangelist. Paul gives specific instructions about how Timothy should preach and teach. He says:

1. Be instant in season (we all must be ready to give a reason for our hope).
2. Reprove (reproof is always done with a meek spirit with the goal is to restore).
3. Rebuke (rebuke is also done in meekness to help our brothers, not hurt them).
4. Exhort (both reproof and rebuke should be couched in exhortation).
5. Be longsuffering (reproof and rebuke with exhortation should be done with a willingness to suffer long and forbear [come alongside] a brother or sister in Christ to help them eventually be restored).
6. Teach sound doctrine (we must be careful to teach truths correctly).
7. Endure (we will never win the race if we do not learn to endure to the end).
8. Prove your ministry (we prove our ministry by walking in love and righteousness).

Paul finished the course of life and ran it well. The crown of righteousness was laid up for him because he looked forward to the coming of the Lord. We too will receive such a crown if we eagerly await the Lord's return. I am challenged by Paul's and Timothy's lives to run the race of life well.

Lord, remind me daily to walk in love and in Your truth. Truth without love is cruel, and love without truth does not change lives. Help me to pass the torch of Your truths to others and to love as You love.

**READ: Jeremiah 48:1-49:22; 2 Timothy 4:1-22; Psalm 95:1-96:13;
Proverbs 26:9-12**