

Building Hope For The Future

1Timothy 4:12-16

“Let no one despise you for your youth but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.”

(1Timothy 4:12, ESV)

Introduction

In early 2008 Pastor Bill Hybels and the Willow Creek Association published findings that indicated that participation in church activities lost their effectiveness in spiritual transformation in five years or less, and that without the development of active personal devotion to spiritual community and disciplines, even Christ-centered people expressed disappointment with the organized church. In 2010 people began to notice that in the larger churches in America there were signs of a disturbing trend that threatened their continued existence: more and more children of church-goers leaving the faith for another (*Dones*) or denying faith altogether (*Nones*), and giving patterns that indicated the financial death of those churches in 10-15 years. The topic before us is how we can build Hope for the future.

1. Becoming an example for other believers (1Ti4:12).

- a) Paul left Timothy behind in Ephesus to set an example for the new believers.
- b) While much younger (*neotes*) than Paul, Timothy was appointed to take the lead in Ephesus.

2. Paul's instruction to Timothy and our personal application (1Ti4:13-15).

- a) Paul had appointed Timothy to preach, teach and lead by example.
- c) “Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress.”

3. Building Hope for the future (1Ti4:16).

- a) Grace + truth / time = growth
- b) Expressions of grace and truth: warmth, empathy, gospel, neighbor, leadership and priority

Conclusion

Just as transition is more than just an event but rather a process that takes place along a chain of events, so discipleship is more than attendance or participation in a church event or events but a process of calling, justification and glorification (1Timothy 4:7b-10, Romans 8:28-39). To put this more simply, we could say that discipleship is the process of learning to trust God and becoming not just a servant but a friend of God. At Hope Chapel Honolulu we want to help you on this journey and equip you to help others as we have been helped!

For our prayerful study, discussion and application:

1. Read 1Timothy 4:12 again. What are the five qualifiers that Paul reminds Timothy about?
2. How should this (*grace + truth / time = growth*) shape the way you think and act about discipleship?
3. Which of the six “expressions of grace and truth” can you help with? Where do you need more growth?

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