

# **Reformed University Fellowship**

## **Training Disciples Conference**

### *Session 1: Faithful to the Gospel*

- I. Introduction to Training. (8:00 - 8:10)
  - A. Training is the process of equipping someone with the beliefs, knowledge, skills, experiences, and character necessary to fulfil a specific responsibility.
    - 1. Training is useful for all sorts of human endeavors: baseball, writing, sales, leading Bible studies, evangelism, etc.
    - 2. In the church the need for training is not limited to evangelism or preaching – every role in the church is fulfilled better when people are trained to do them well.
  - B. Forms of ministry of the word.
    - 1. Teaching.
      - a. Imparting knowledge of the faith.
      - b. Focus on the mind.
    - 2. Preaching.
      - a. Imparting conviction of the faith.
      - b. Focus on the heart and will.
    - 3. Counseling: application of the word to specific problems.
    - 4. Training: focus on developing skills for specific service.

- II. Experiences of Training. (8:10 - 8:20)  
*Several people share from the precourse questionnaire.*

- III. Faithful People. (8:20 - 8:35)

- A. Called to Serve.

Christians are called to serve, not to be served – and this is especially true of leaders. The essence of Christian leadership is to offer oneself as a sacrifice for the people. Jesus is only sufficient model in this.

The Christian leader is not directing the work from the sidelines, but is out in front, paving the way, removing obstacles, setting an example, and calling others to follow.

Since training is a form of leadership, we are going to begin tonight by looking at several Biblical examples of godly leaders – men who served by leading.

- B. Moses.

Even though Moses was reared in the luxury and sophistication of the Egyptian court, he turned his back on that to defend his people. Moses had his problems, but he always turned to God, even during the argument at the burning bush. Perhaps we would have walked away! His faithfulness is demonstrated in his writing of the first five books of the Bible, including God's law for Israel – and in leading Israel in their 40 year death march. In repeated incidents of rebellion against God, Moses always led them back to God.

Moses didn't stop with leading the people to Canaan. He knew he would die someday, so he prepared someone to take his place. Let's get a glimpse of how Moses trained Joshua to carry on the work of leading Israel.

- Ex. 17:9 – Joshua fought Amalek
- 24:13 – went to Horeb with Moses
- 33:11 – prayed in Moses' tent
- Deut. 3:21 – remained to kill enemies
- 31:23 – commissioned

- C. Jesus.  
Jesus is our ultimate example of faithfulness. He faithfully preached the gospel, healed the sick and possessed, and died to save us. But even *his* ministry on earth didn't last forever. In God's wisdom, He chose to pass on the ministry to other men, so Jesus trained 12 apostles to lead the church. He even prepared them to do greater works than he did.
  - D. Paul.  
Paul set out on his first missionary journey under the leadership of Barnabas. They established numerous churches on that first trip. On the second trip Paul took Silas with him. Later he added Timothy, Titus, and Luke. They served as a team, and at the end of his life, Paul explicitly passed on the ministry to these men whom he had trained.
  - E. Students.  
Ever since Paul, Timothy, Titus, and Luke, godly men and women all over the world have recognized their great responsibility to teach others to carry on the work of the Kingdom, the spreading of the gospel. Even among students this has been true. We are here because students in Cambridge University, England, had a vision for sending men out to teach others what God had taught them about reaching other students with the gospel.
  - F. Focus on Paul.  
Now we're going to break up into our small groups to study more closely the qualities that made Paul such an exceptional trainer.
- IV. Paul the Trainer. (8:35 - 9:10)  
Small Group Bible study (page 4).

V. The Indispensable Requirement. (9:10 - 9:20)

Timothy was suffering persecution, harassed by false teachers, lonely for Paul, and seems to be buckling under to a timid approach (7) to the ministry. In such a situation we might expect Paul to be sympathetic, and perhaps to recommend that Timothy not be so burdened. Instead he fixes Timothy's burdens more firmly on his back! Why would Paul act this way? It's not that Paul is a workaholic. The issue is the gospel (8). The gospel is the thing in this life most worth suffering for (8, 12). And since the gospel is the only source of life for the world, it *must* be preserved (13,14). Paul trained Timothy to guard and propagate the gospel, and he has no intention of allowing a few miserable heretics to derail Timothy's ministry.

This intense concern for gospel is not unique to an apostle, It is the normal attitude of any Christian who has understood the joy of the Lord, the beauty of the gospel, and the damnation of mankind.

This must be our attitude as well. We must be driven by the power of the Holy Spirit to put the gospel first in our lives, and therefore, to be diligent in training others to continue our ministry – especially as leaders. Do we see our followers as Paul did – as indispensable building stones in the temple of the Spirit? Do we seek to train others to serve with excellence because that is how Christ builds His church?

Jesus said that to seek Him is to seek the gospel. (Mark 8:35) To love Him is to love His words. To follow Him is to guard the gospel. We can't separate Jesus from His words or His work. But even to begin following, and even to walk with Him at all, He calls us to denial of self (Mark 8:34-38).

Death is the only way to enter the Kingdom and to follow Jesus. As we die to self we are raised to new life of joy and sacrifice for Jesus and his gospel.

Is the gospel first in your life? Are you putting the gospel before your grade, or career, car, boyfriend/girlfriend, "free time", family?

1 John 5:21 warns against idols. "Little children, guard yourselves from idols."

You cannot train others if you are going to make a half-hearted attempt. God will not honor your work if you harbor sin (idols) in your life. *Unreserved commitment to Christ is the indispensable requirement to training laborers for the Kingdom of God.*

I urge you, and beg of you, to repent now and ask Jesus to kill those poor, miserable idols in your life. Be filled in the Holy Spirit and abide in Christ. Let him crucify your idols.

VI. Prayer.  
Small Groups (9:20 - 9:30)

VII. Announcements.

***Bible Study: Paul and Timothy***

Have brief introductions if there are people who do not know each other in your group.

1. We just took a whirlwind tour of some leaders in the Bible. Now we're going to look more closely at Paul's relationship with Timothy, whom he trained to be a minister of the gospel.
2. Read 1 Timothy 1:3-11.
3. Why did Paul leave Timothy in Ephesus? (v. 3)
4. Why does Paul use such a strong word as "charge" (command) in verse 3. Isn't he a bit overbearing?
5. How does Paul contrast true teaching and false? What terms does he use? (vv. 3, 4, 10, 11)
6. How does Paul describe his responsibility for the gospel? (v. 11)
  - a. What does he mean by saying the gospel is "entrusted" to him?
7. In the two short books of 1 & 2 Timothy,  
Paul mentions teaching, preaching, or instructing 15 times.  
He mentions gospel, doctrine, truth, or scripture 25 times.  
He refers to the entrusting or guarding of the gospel 7 times. (1 Tim. 1:11,18; 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:13,14; 2:2; 4:15)
8. Why was Paul so consumed with the importance of teaching sound doctrine?
9. Let's look at Isaiah 55:10-11 and Romans 1:16. What do they tell us about the gospel?  
– full of power
10. In 2 Corinthians Paul calls the gospel a treasure. Let's read chapter 4:7-12.
11. Where is this treasure located? (v. 7)
12. What earthen vessels is Paul talking about?
13. Why does Paul call us earthen vessels?
14. What is the contrast between the gospel and its containers?  
– power of the gospel vs. weakness of the vessels
15. What does this difference mean?
16. What effect does the gospel have? (v. 12)
17. Going back to 1 Timothy again, why was Paul so consumed with the importance of teaching sound doctrine? What are the consequences of false teaching getting a foothold in the church?
18. If the gospel is entrusted to Paul, does that mean he is responsible for the future of the church?
  - a. Isn't Christ responsible for the church?
19. In his dying days Paul is completely preoccupied with his concern for the gospel. A lot could go wrong. The men Paul trained could fail.

20. Second Timothy was written near the end of Paul's life. Let's read chapter 1:3-14.
21. Paul had trained Timothy to carry on his work, particularly in Ephesus. How does Timothy seem to be doing now? (vv. 4, 7)
22. How does Paul comfort Timothy in his suffering?
23. Isn't Paul sadistic to demand that Timothy suffer with him? (v. 8) What sort of consolation is that?
24. According to Paul, what is worth suffering for? (v. 8)
25. What is the thrust of verses 13-14?
26. What have you learned about Paul as a trainer?
  - a. What things did Paul do to help Timothy succeed in his ministry?
27. How do you compare to Paul in the way you interact with people?