

CALL TO DUTY

VOL. 4, ISSUE 4

THIS ISSUE'S THEME:

And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

2 Timothy 2:2 (NKJV)

In one of my Army assignments my role was to train newly commissioned Infantry officers as a platoon trainer. These officers attended the Infantry Officer basic Course (IOBC) before heading off to the Army to lead platoons. The platoon trainers in IOBC were entrusted to train the new officers in basic combat skills. It was critical that the instructors were qualified and able to effectively train the new officers.

The platoon trainers first had to have successfully completed assignments in Infantry units as platoon leaders. They had to show proficiency in the skills that they would teach the new officers. They also had to successfully complete an instructor training course to hone their ability to effectively impart knowledge in combat skills. The course was a train-the-trainer program. The course included classroom time and practical exercises and culminated in a graded event. Candidates had to pass the course in order before assuming the role of platoon trainer.

In essence, Paul instructed Timothy to train-the-trainers in 2 Tim 2:2. Timothy was to teach men who would then teach others. The men first had to be faithful. In other words, they had to demonstrate through their actions that they were worthy of teaching others. Then the men had to be able to teach others. Timothy was responsible for training them so that they could teach others effectively.

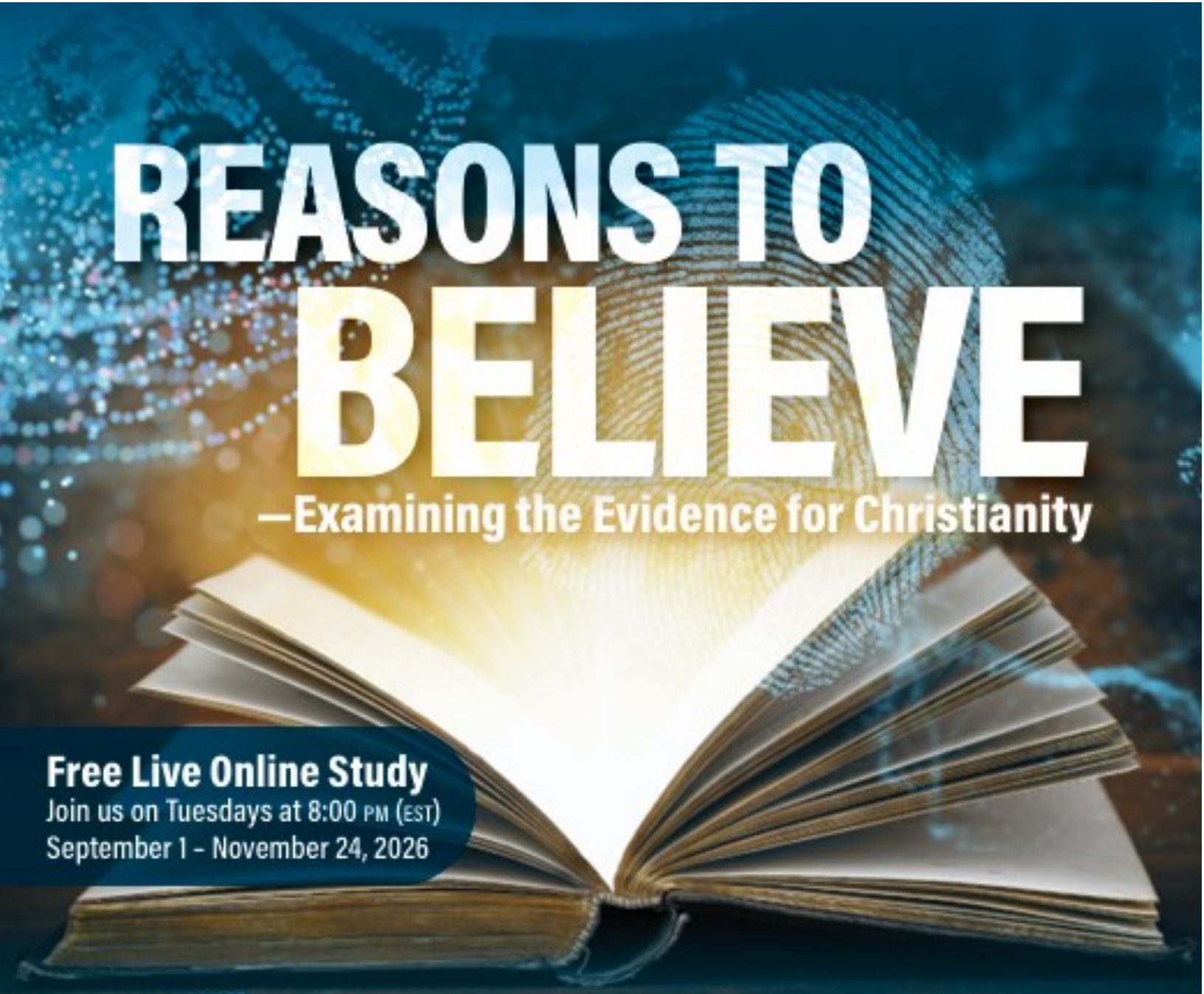
Paul's instruction to Timothy apply to us today. We must select faithful men and train them to effectively teach other others the word of God. This can be done by Christian Universities and preaching schools, but also by congregations with effective bible instruction ministries and classes.

~~ Tony

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When Our Voice Is Gone: Mentoring the Next Generation

You may or may not recognize the names Henry Clay, Colonel George Hugh Smith, and General Fox Conner. Each was accomplished in his own right, but each is also remembered for shaping someone who became a great figure in American history. Henry Clay profoundly influenced Abraham Lincoln, who called Clay his "beau ideal of a statesman." Colonel Smith, the step-grandfather of George S. Patton, filled the future general's imagination with stories of military courage and helped inspire his decision to become a soldier. General Fox Conner became Dwight D. Eisenhower's principal military mentor, teaching him military history, strategy, coalition warfare, and command. Eisenhower later called Conner "the ablest man I ever knew." Their stories remind us that no one becomes who he is entirely on his own. Behind many influential people stands someone who instructed them, encouraged them, corrected them, and gave them a compelling picture of what they might become.

Jesus understood the importance of forming others. He did not merely preach to crowds; He chose twelve men to accompany Him, observe Him, learn from Him, and eventually continue His work. He told them, "It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master" (Matthew 10:25 NASB). The goal of discipleship was not simply that they would remember His words. They were to become like their Teacher.

Paul followed this same pattern. Writing to Timothy, his child in the faith, he said, "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). A careful reader will notice four generations in that single verse: Paul taught Timothy; Timothy was to teach faithful men; and those faithful men were to teach others. The gospel was not to stop with the person who received it. Each disciple was responsible for preparing another disciple to carry it forward.

Mentoring, therefore, is more than giving occasional advice. It means allowing someone to observe how we live, work, serve, endure hardship, respond to failure, and remain faithful. It requires time, patience, honesty, and intentionality. We do not merely tell others what to do; we show them what faithfulness looks like and help prepare them to practice it themselves. How different might history have been without the people who influenced Lincoln, Patton, and Eisenhower? More importantly, how many future servants of Christ are waiting for someone to recognize their potential and invest in their growth?

We are mortal. Our strength will eventually fail, our opportunities will end, and one day our voices will fall silent. Yet our influence does not have to end with our earthly lives. When we faithfully form others—and teach them to form still others—our service continues through people whose lives we helped shape. Then, even when our voice is gone, what was said of Abel may also be said of us: "…though he is dead, he still speaks" (Hebrews 11:4).

~~Mike

Mike Green currently serves as the Dean of Students at the Southeast Institute of Biblical Studies in Knoxville, TN. He has spent the last two decades serving the church in various capacities to include church planting, preaching and youth ministry. Mike holds a B.B.S degree in Bible and an M.A in New Testament. Prior to entering ministry full-time Mike served five-years as a U.S. Army Ranger with the 75th Ranger Regiment. He and his wife Natalie have been married twenty-four years and have six children. They are members of the Karns Church of Christ in Knoxville.

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Faithful Men



Before and during WW II, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German theologian, opposed the Nazi regime and its Godless, poisonous, message. Imprisoned during the war and sentenced to death, aided by a sympathetic guard he wrote and sent letters prolifically. He also wrote out his daily devotionals. Many of his letters and devotionals survived and were published in a book, Letters and Papers From Prison. In one devotional shortly before his execution by the Nazis, he wrote, "I am lonely, but You do not leave me; I am feeble in heart, but with You there is help; I am restless, but with You there is peace."

Paul, imprisoned by the Romans and inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote to Timothy (2 Timothy) knowing he was near the end of life as his execution loomed. Rather than a lament concerning his circumstances, Paul sends encouragement and instructions to Timothy to press on. He reminds Timothy of the calling to preach the gospel and to focus on that rather than Paul's predicament or the suffering that preaching the gospel would bring.

Paul tells Timothy to " follow the pattern of sound words" that he had heard from Paul (2 Tim 1:13), Paul then instructs Timothy (2 Tim 2:2) to pass on what he had heard Paul preach time and again as they traveled. It wasn't a casual suggestion; it was a directive. He wasn't to pass it along in some off-hand manner to just anyone. He was told to entrust it to faithful men. The reason was so those faithful men would be adequately informed to teach others. As Christians, we are those faithful men today.

Our culture and world has lost its way, but that isn't new. Paul faced the same circumstances but didn't let it deter him. He preached and taught regardless of the circumstances. While in prison, Paul taught the palace guards! (Phil 1:13) Our limitations are mostly those we place on ourselves. Our impediments are mostly self-doubt: "Who am I?"; "I don't know enough"; "I'm not a teacher"; "People aren't interested", etc. We need to give others the opportunity to say "No" to having a conversation about our faith. If we decide without asking them, what are we deciding for another? None of us are guaranteed tomorrow, but we have this moment.

Whether Dietrich Bonhoeffer was conscious of the similarity of circumstances between him and Paul, I do not know. However, I do know that we are in a similar circumstance as Timothy was in receiving the letter from Paul. We live among those who are lost, and we are those faithful men today. We must be the bearers of that word, that good news, to others.

~~ Conrad



Conrad Slate enlisted in the Army Reserve while in college and later transferred to the Air National Guard. He went to Officer Training School and completed 31 years of service retiring as a colonel. He served a variety of positions starting as a Military Policeman. He served in the Security Police, in Public Affairs, in NBC warfare training, and a variety of staff positions, retiring as Deputy Chief of Staff for Support Services. He is a member of the Karns Church of Christ in Knoxville, TN where he is active in jail ministry

Invest In Others

Paul taught as Jesus taught - openly, faithfully, and in the presence of witnesses. He reminded the church in Philippi, "The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you" (Philippians 4:9). Paul instructed them to focus on those things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy (v8).

With that in mind, Christians should follow the same pattern. We are stewards of God's Word, and we must take that responsibility seriously. God's Word must be taught accurately and faithfully. We are not free to alter it, add to it, or take away from it. We must remember that those who teach will be judged more strictly.

For those of us serving in the military, this responsibility takes on an even greater significance. We frequently PCS from one location to another. We arrive at a congregation, become part of the community, build relationships, worship and serve alongside fellow Christians, and hopefully contribute to the spiritual growth of the congregation. But eventually, our orders come, and we leave.

When that happens, the work should not stop simply because we have moved to another duty station. We should leave behind faithful men and women who are committed to God, His Word, and the work of the church. We should be teaching young men and women how to serve faithfully in their congregations. We should encourage and equip young men who desire to become song leaders, preachers, deacons, and elders not according to human standards, but according to the qualifications and authority given to us in Scripture.

This is the same process we see throughout Paul's journey. Paul taught others. Those individuals learned from him. Then they carried the message forward and taught others. Timothy is a powerful example of this continuing process. Paul did not simply accomplish his own work and walk away. He invested in others who could continue teaching and serving after he was gone.

The goal is not simply to leave a congregation having done good things. The greater goal is to leave behind faithful Christians who are prepared and equipped to continue the work of teaching, serving, and leading according to the Word of God.



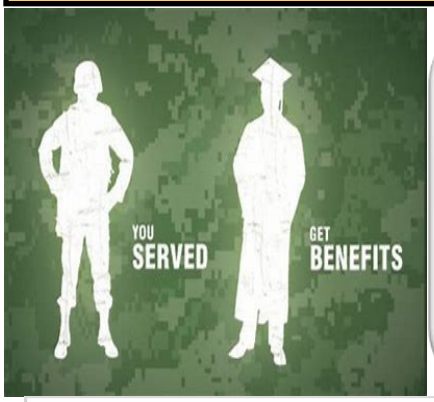
We may not know how long we will be at any one congregation. Military orders can come at any time. But while we are there, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to invest in others.

Then, when it is time to move, leave behind faithful people who are ready and able to continue the work.That is how the message continues. That is how the work continues. And that is how we fulfill the pattern Paul gave Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2. "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

~~ Greg

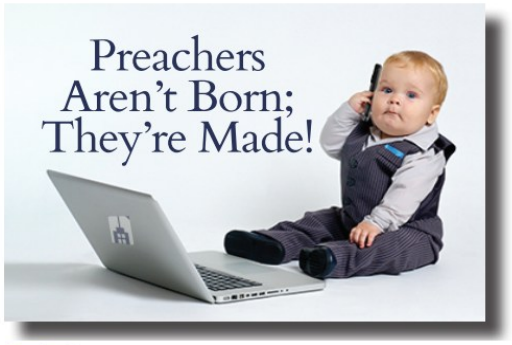
Greg James grew up in the Air Force and lived in Utah, Louisiana, and South Dakota before entering the active-duty Air Force in 1991. He transferred to the Reserves as an Air Reserve Technician in 2001. Greg was in air operations with heavy and fighter aircraft deploying to Desert Storm, Iraq, and Afghanistan among other deployments and TDY's. He met and married his wife Tammy while she was active-duty Air Force, and she got out when their son was born. Greg retired from the Air Force Reserves in 2017 after 26 years of total service and graduated from Brown Trail School of preaching in 2016. Greg served as the associate minister for the Greenmount Rd congregation in Belleville, IL and served as the pulpit minister for the Briar congregation in Briar, Texas before relocating to Jackson, Tennessee. They are members of the Crosswinds church of Christ.

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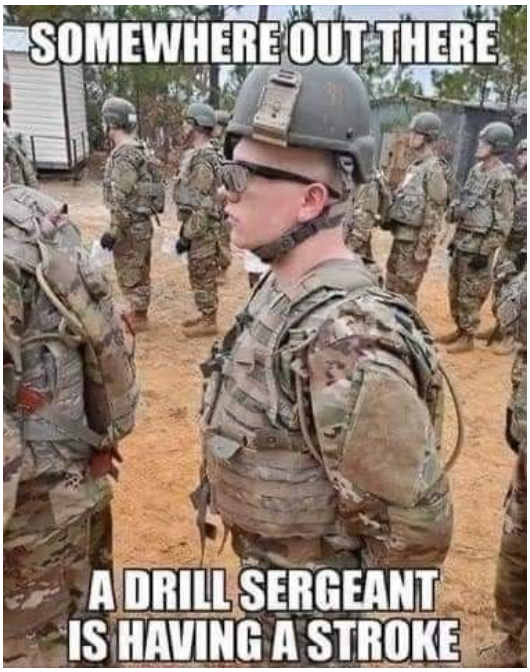
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GOD'S ARMY STRONG!



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BELIEVE ***in Jesus as Savior of world***: John 3:16; 14:6; 14:23
REPENT ***of your sins***: Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 17:30; Revelation 2:5, 16, 21,22; 3:3, 19
CONFESS ***Jesus before others***: Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:8-11
BE IMMERSED ***into Christ for forgiveness of your sins***: Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-47; 22:16; Romans 6:3-11; 1 Peter 3:18-22

CONTINUE ***to live faithful to God until you die or Christ comes again***: 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; Revelation 2:10

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CALL TO DUTY

(BASE 2 BASE, HEART 2 HEART)

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