

# John 1:6-9

Sunday 10/4/2020

SEC: The Unbroken Chain of Investing in People

Last week, we looked at John chapter 1, verses 6-9. We really just kind of camped on verse 6, and we're going to basically stay with that today, moving a little farther. We looked at a couple of verses that should impact all of us.

*John 1:6-9*

*There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.*

*The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.*

*He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.*

*That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

I talked about taking that verse, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John," and how God puts a man or a woman in your life to help you in your early years. Then, in time, you grow to the point in your life to become that person in somebody else's life, and how absolutely important that is. We talk about it all the time, but it's so true: the unbroken chain of investing in people God will put into your life. It's one of the fundamental aspects of New Testament Christianity.

The opportunities really are all around us. It never ceases to amaze me how God's people come to church, they have the right Bible, and they claim to believe all the things that are taught. You find this across all Christianity, but they're so out of touch with all the opportunities that God will put into their life. Part of the ministry here is what I want to do when I teach and preach to you: always, and I've made no secret of this, have you looking for the opportunities.

Unfortunately, Paul said it last week in Philippians chapter 2, verse 21, and here's the real issue in many, many cases.

*Philippians 2:21*

*For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.*

That's what Christianity is today. Christianity is a bunch of people who took the free gift of God's salvation, probably, and yet have done nothing with it. They're great that God saved them; they're happy about that. They could give a testimony all day long, but there's no passion. There's no desire to take what God has given them and invest it in the life of somebody else. When it comes to most Christians today, across the board, nothing could be truer than what Paul said in Philippians chapter 2.

SEC: Adapting to New Ministry Opportunities

Here's the deal: as far as our outreach is concerned, the door has been slammed in our face. There's no question about that. We can't operate the way that we used to operate. We don't go out on the streets anymore. I don't know if we ever will. Restart is off the table. That's not going to be the jail ministry. I talked to Ray Stewart this week, and they got that completely shut down. In almost every aspect, our softball got canceled. Volleyball isn't looking too good; somebody stole the nets. We are in a place that we have to think outside the box, and God's people aren't good at doing that.

God's people are like old dogs. They just follow the routine when they get the dog biscuit. They know that if they jump through the hoop, they get the biscuit. If they don't, they know they don't. You train a dog that way, and God's people are the same way. They come to the place where we get so used to just doing what we do to get the little biscuit that when everything changes, and suddenly we have to think completely outside the box or just shut down, they don't have the ability to do that.

As far as our outreach is concerned, I say that, but in the last four weeks, seven new people have walked through those doors. Ninety-nine percent of God's people miss them as an opportunity. Why do you think I take the time to introduce new people that show up for church? To you, or to God's people, it's just an introduction. "Hi, nice to see you." What do you see on Sunday morning when you come to church here? Somebody new shows up, and are you aware that they are even here?

I thought that we all understood the great truth that if you're here this morning, it's no accident that you're here. You just didn't come by fate or by whim or by whatever finds your way into this dungeon. God's hand, in its most basic format, is obviously in your life because nobody is here this morning by accident. When a person finds his way here, when a person comes in here, it's obvious God has brought them here for whatever they're looking for in their life.

I watch some of you, I really do. I watch you meet them. I watch you engage with them. You find out about who they are, how they got here, and extend yourself to them. A couple of weeks ago, there was a young couple that came here to visit. After church, as I was walking out, there were four or five of you young couples that had them circled, kind of like the Indians in a wagon train. You're just loving on them. You're just talking to them. You're having fellowship with them. You're finding out who they are and their like-mindedness and how they love the Bible.

Last Sunday, after I preached on the man God puts in your life and mentoring somebody, I had a young man come up and say, "Hey, I want to get that in my life." I hooked him up just like that. Thursday night, another kid came and said, "Hey, I want that too." The opportunities are all around us. I've watched some of you build a whole activity at your home with food and people. You paid the cost for it. You made it happen just because there's a couple of new people that you want to get introduced to this church. I don't understand. I mean, it's incredible.

For others, Philippians chapter 2 is so true: you're just seeking your own. All you want is what you can get out of this for you, and people will walk through that door. I get it all the time. People complain, "Well, I don't have anybody to work with." Are you kidding me? In the last

three weeks, seven people walked through that door right under your nose, and today somebody's working with them. Why isn't it you?

I mean, I get it. You come in here, and you want to talk. You want to catch up with this person. You want to talk about that. The Bible says in Proverbs chapter 18, verse 24:

*Proverbs 18:24*

*A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*

Second Corinthians chapter 8, verse 5, in that great chapter on ministry, Paul talked about a group of people that gave of themselves first to other people. I said it last week, you've got to work the crowd, man. You've got to be aware who walks in that door. We used to do it at volleyball. You'd bring people over, and you'd invite them to play, and we'd get to know them. We'd go out to Jason's Deli afterwards, and they'd hang out, and you got to build a relationship. We used to do that through softball. We don't have that anymore.

We get so stuck in the one way we do things. When God throws us another situation, and the world throws us a curveball, we as God's people just can't think outside the box. So we don't see the very people walking in those doors that God is still bringing, no matter who wants to stay home and feel like they can't be here. There are people out there who need what we have. Whether you want to work with them and be part of it or not, God is going to continue to bring us, and those are the opportunities.

You know what Paul said in Colossians chapter 4, verses 3-6:

*Colossians 4:3-6*

*Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:*

*That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.*

*Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.*

*Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.*

Praying for a door of utterance. I don't know what you pray for before you come to church. I really don't. But I'm telling you right now, doors in the Bible represent opportunities. If you think that the world is just going to fall at your feet and say, "Teach me the Bible," that's not going to happen. Waiting around for somebody to drop into your world isn't going to take place. You need to answer a question this morning. When you come to church, there ought to be two things that you have on your mind. One is to get clean so you can get the truth of God's Word. The other one is praying that God gives you a door of utterance. Because they're going to come through that door right there.

He says, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without," understanding them, realizing that it's no accident that they're here. It's no accident that you people, I hear it all the time, "So and so gave me your website. I just found your website by accident." No, you didn't. The hand of God gave you what you were looking for. Sometimes God will bring them in here, and they're looking for something, and we are so busy talking about whatever that we just never see them as the opportunities. He said, "Speech seasoned with salt," that's the Word of God, "and grace." That's knowing how to use the Word of God. Knowing how to answer every man. Seeing people and seeing that God brought them to you. God brought them here. We all are going to be oblivious to it.

#### SEC: The Danger of Comfort Zone Christianity

I said last week, and I get this, the older we get, I understand this, and this is the danger. I'm speaking to myself now: the older we get, many times the more unproductive we become. We just don't want to move outside our comfort zone. We like things the way they are. We like the status quo. When we get a curveball, we all have to shake the cage, so to speak. We just don't want to move outside our comfort zone. We're coasting through our Christianity.

I would like to get two sets of T-shirts and have them in the bookstore. One of them would say, "We Own the Night," preached on that a couple weeks ago. The other would simply say, "Coasting Through My Christianity," because that's where Christianity is today, and most of them are coasting. I want to tell you something, if you're allowing me to be clear, there are very few opportunities to work with somebody and help them live within your comfort zone. Christ left His comfort zone to come down to be part of this sick world. If you're not going to be willing to move out of yours...

Last week, I gave you two really good examples of what we should be. The first one I gave you was Epaphroditus. I showed you six powerful aspects to his Christian life that should be in ours. We talked about him being, Paul said, "He's my brother. He's my companion. He's my fellow soldier. He's my messenger. He's a minister. He's my fellow laborer." I went through each one of those, and I showed you how the key ingredient in this guy's life was: he was sick unto death, but he cared more about the people that God had given him than where he was.

I said last week, I don't even know where to begin with this guy. I mean, I'm telling you, that is so foreign to our mindset in 20th and 21st century Christianity. It is absolutely outside the box. I might say, as I said last week, guys like him in the Bible, that's a slap in the face to every one of us. Yet we see things like that. We hear things like that, and even that isn't enough to move us off square one, out of our comfort zone.

Bob Jones Sr. used to say, when he was president of Bob Jones University, he used to say, "The last 24 hours of a man's seminary training down here, I wish I could suspend him over the pit of hell and let him for 24 hours hear the screams and the cries and the agony of the people that are in hell. And then after that time, turn him loose on the world." That's great preaching material. That'll get you a lot of "Amens" and a lot of hype going out there. But I'll tell you, with God's people today, it won't do any good. It won't do any good. We've got a bunch of God's people that

are saved and on the way to heaven that are saved Jehovah's Witnesses. "I don't believe in hell either."

We live our lives every day shouldering with people who were opportunities in our life. But you know what? It's going to take us stepping out of our comfort zone. Boy, how I hate the stench of the 20th and 21st century. How I hate this time period that we live in. How I loathe the cowardice of God's people all across this country, how that they cannot see what the real issues are.

#### SEC: The Father-Son Relationship in Ministry

Then I showed you Timothy and Paul's relationship as a father and son in the Lord, and how important that is in our lives. God giving you, as He did me, somebody in your life that made the difference for you, that held you tight in those early years. Everybody in this church who is in a level of doing some ministry and moving along on whatever level you are, you had somebody in your world, or many of you have somebody right now.

You know what Paul thought about that? I gave you the example of Timothy. But you know what he said to the church at Corinth? Now remember, the church at Corinth was giving him a lot of problems. The church at Corinth was giving him all kinds of issues about ministry, and they were really whacked out, much like we are today. They were rejecting him as their father; many of them were rejecting him as their spiritual father in the Lord, just like a lot of God's people do today with the man or the woman that God puts in their life.

You know what he said to them? I gave you a verse at 1 Corinthians chapter 4, verses 14-16. I gave you verse 14 last week. Here's what he said:

#### *1 Corinthians 4:14*

*I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.*

I gave you that verse last week. Then look what he says in verse 15, and I saved this for this week:

#### *1 Corinthians 4:15-16*

*For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.*

*Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.*

You know what he said? He said, "You have 10,000 people that are out there. You can hear them preach. You can get on the website. You can listen to them all over the country. You can read everybody's books on the planet." But he's saying, "You'll have 10,000 people that will instruct you, but you're only going to have one father in the Lord." He uses himself again as Timothy.

The relationships you build and building Timothys in your life will forge an eternal relationship of ministry together, taking you all the way to the judgment seat of Christ. Only passing on what you have and God has given you to somebody who will carry it on. That's all it is. You've heard

me preach a lot that that's what a family is. You're supposed to have a father who is a good leader and a good spiritual mentor to his children and to his wife and to his family. The things that he learns, he puts into his family. The mother and the father, in their individual roles, bring up the children, and the children carry on that tradition. The Bible calls it a heritage of the Lord. That thing goes on as an unbroken chain.

It's true in ministry with church families. Second Timothy 2:2 has become a very familiar verse:

*2 Timothy 2:2*

*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

It's true in churches. It's true in families, and it's true in churches. Their job is to forge that unbroken chain. I'll tell you right now, you know as well as I do, I've been in this business a little while, I understand. It would be nice if everybody that was saved got on board with that. You know that's not going to happen. That's not a reality.

SEC: The Timothy Project: Developing Future Leaders

Today, I want to develop this idea of mentoring somebody. I call it "The Timothy Project." You'll hear that a lot coming up here in the next couple of weeks. This is what we do here. We develop in people's lives what God wants them to do and be. I want to show you the process for that. Today, I want to take what we talked about last week, and then I want to go down on the inside of this concept of Paul and Timothy. I want to show you the very process. If you've got any brains about you at all, and you've been around here for any length of time, you'll say to yourself, "Wow, that's exactly what we're doing here." Maybe not the exact same way, but the same material.

This study is a lot like Acts chapter 8. I always tell you that Acts chapter 8 is the greatest place in the Bible that allows you to go down inside and see every aspect of a man in the New Testament getting saved. God took Philip, pulled him away from everything else he was doing, put him on the desert, gave him a Gentile, an Ethiopian eunuch, and in that story, it's like the TV cameras pan down, and you get your first real picture of everything that has to happen in the New Testament church for a man to get saved.

I'm going to show you that now if you're ever going to be a Timothy. If you're ever going to be a Paul in somebody's life, or if you have somebody in your life, this is what you want to see. Paul and Timothy is an incredible, great study on his development and his progress to be Paul's replacement. You see, Paul wasn't just looking for somebody to teach the Bible to. Paul knew that his time was going to come to an end, and he wanted to make sure he left a legacy of young men and young ladies who were going to carry on in his stead. May I ask this question? I know this is probably a stupid question: Who's going to carry on in your legacy when you're gone? Who have you invested your life in that's going to pick it up?

He develops his like-mindedness. We talked about that last week. And his natural ability that Paul takes what he's got from God and then puts it in young Timothy to give it to others. Now

understand this, and this is, you need to get this clear: just as the church of Jerusalem is not the model church, and if you go to Bible College today, every Bible College, every seminary will teach you, and probably most Baptist churches, certainly the evangelical crowds, they'll all teach you this one heresy that the church of Jerusalem, which is found in the early book of Acts, is the model church for us. Of course, we as Bible students know that that's not true. We know that it's not the church of Jerusalem. We know it's the church in Antioch, Acts chapter 11, where they're first called Christians.

Just as Paul many times is taught as the model Christian, and I'm not saying there isn't a boatload of things that you can learn about your Christian life from Paul's life, certainly there is, but in this laying out of the Bible, Paul is not the model Christian for you and me to follow. It's Timothy. In fact, if you want the scenarios as the Bible lays them out:

1. Paul is the model missionary. You want missions? Study Paul.
2. Timothy is the model Christian or pastor.
3. Titus, another one of Paul's sons in the Lord, he'll be the model for stewardship.
4. Philemon, another boy he won to Christ and mentored, will be the model servant.

Four great models in the New Testament. Most people who approach the New Testament don't even have a clue about that. They just read through it and then wonder what they're reading and why they're reading it. There's no purpose behind God's people. God, I hate the 20th and 21st century today. We all have a form of godliness, but when it comes down to the rubber meeting the road, we're on the rim.

In Timothy and Paul, we get another inside look, like Acts chapter 8, learning from the models that God provides for us. You've heard me talk about models for years. You know why? Because I built my whole ministry on models, not theology, not Bible college, not some man's systematic theology, but the models that are clearly in the Bible given to us for that exact purpose. In Timothy's life, like our life, we see all the key areas that he sets for each of us, the example of God putting someone in our life and our response to it.

Paul trained him, but I want to see today not only that Paul trained him, but what he trained him in and why. Without a doubt, what I'm about to give you is the most absolute complete picture of mentoring somebody as Paul did Timothy. The reason why I took another week to do this is because that's exactly what you need in your life, and in time, that's exactly what you need to do in somebody else's life.

Let's have a word of prayer and then we'll move into this and we'll begin to look at it. We thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We love you. We thank you, Father, for those that are here today, both downstairs in the foyer out here and upstairs. Lord, I just pray, Father, that you'll bless us today, that you'll give us what we need. I'm sorry, Father, that the TV upstairs didn't work and we had to pull the one out of the foyer to take upstairs and those kind of things happen. But I guess the truth of the matter is, if they're paying attention, they're going to be writing so fast this morning, looking at me on the screen isn't going to help them any. We thank you, Father, for all you've given us, all you do for us, and your goodness and your kindness to us. Lord, how we are so unthankful for that. I thank you, Father, for putting all on the line for us. Lord, I just

pray, Father, that this church is willing to put it all on the line for you. We'll thank you and praise you in Jesus' name for us. We ask it. Amen.

### SEC: Timothy's Journey: From Young Christian to Paul's Replacement

The Timothy Project. I'm going to define that for you next week in an incredible way. The first time you find Timothy mentioned in your Bible is Acts chapter 16. The last time he's mentioned in the Bible is Hebrews chapter 13, verse 23, I believe it is. You'll also find, if you do a study of his life, 24 times in the New Testament, he shows up.

Now what I want to do is I want to start from the beginning. I know everybody's beginning is a little different, but that's okay. I want to begin from the beginning in his life and show you how it goes through a process. I get it. Everybody's different. Everybody has a little different beginning. I understand all that, but the process is still the same. Let's look at how God used a man in his life, from a young Christian to a man whom Paul trained to replace himself within ministry.

#### *Acts 16:1-2*

*Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:*

*Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.*

Today, like I said, I want to develop this for all of us, not only from where we have come that you can maybe better see it and help you understand where I'm going. It's hard to see sometimes where you're going if you can't look back and understand where you've come from. I want to develop this idea of mentoring someone as in the Timothy project found in the New Testament. As I said, this is what we do here. It's about development and taking us farther than the day you got saved.

I want to go down through this thing and see this. I'm sure Timothy, I mean, he's no perfect person. I'm sure that just like you and me, when we were at that young age, I'm sure he struggled with everything that you all struggle with and I struggled with as a young man. I mean, I'm sure he did. The Bible doesn't go into all detail, but you know, the Bible doesn't have to go into detail on human nature. We all know what it's like to begin with. The greatest man in the Bible will have struggles. But the greatest Christians out there walking around today are going to have struggles. If you're a young Timothy, let's not pretend you aren't going to have your struggles. Timothy did.

Here's the first thing you find in Acts chapter 16. We don't know how, we don't know why, we can speculate. But the end of the day is the first great thing that happened to him: he got into a church. That's where it has to start for you. You'll never be the man or the woman God wants you to be without getting into a Bible-believing New Testament church. Now this one may not work for you. I get that. I'm not saying all that so I can twist your arm to think that this is the church for you. You have to decide that. I can't decide that for you. All I do is lay it out as close to the Bible as I can. Some people love that, want that, others don't care for that. I get it. But the first thing we see about him in chapter 16 is he got into a church. That's the first thing you have to do.

There used to be a thing in a paper where it listed all the churches that were in Kansas City and then a big thing that says, "Go to the church of your choice." You don't ever want to do that. You don't ever want to go to the church in your life of your choice. You want to go to the church in your life of God's choice. You want to go to the one that's going to do what He wants you to do.

Secondly, it says his mother was a Jew. Then it goes into detail that says that she was a believer. Then it says his father was a Gentile, but it says nothing about him being a believer. Probably in most cases, we have a mixed biblical marriage here where the mom is saved and the dad is not. That's the indication anyhow. We certainly have a mixed culture from a Jew to a Gentile. He's a Greek, which would put him into the philosophical class if you knew anything about the history of the Greeks, but now that's speculation. But the indication is, you've got to ask yourself, why did the Holy Spirit of God make sure He told you she was saved but didn't say that he was? You've got to look for things like that.

Then we saw in 2 Timothy chapter 1, verse 5, how that the mom and even the grandmother gave him a good foundation. We can go back there, and Paul makes reference to that. But when you read that, if you've got any kind of spiritual insight at all, you can see that he had a great mother and a great grandmother. But there's something lacking there. He had no father in a spiritual sense. No man in his life with God to be a role model. There are so many of you that were just like that when you came in here. I'm not saying your father was a bad guy. You know as well as I do, in some cases they were, but not all the cases. But they weren't what you needed spiritually.

So God's hand saw deep inside you what you really wanted and what God saw in you what He needed. So God brought you to, you're going to say, "Oh, oh, oh, you mean old past Baptist church?" No. God brought you to the processing center last week. The moment you walked through those doors and you sat down, you started a processing process in your life. "Do I want this or do I not? Is this what I'm looking for or is this what I'm not looking for?" I'm okay with that either way. I'm not a guy who gets offended if somebody says, "Well, I didn't like your church service." I'm not. I just look back and say, "Well, I didn't like you being here." So it's okay. No. I never, those things, because I understand. The pastor who gets so insecure because he thinks that if you don't like his church, there must be something wrong with you. That's pretty, that's insecurity. I know going in that what I'm looking for and what I want to accomplish and what I want to do, most people aren't going to fit that pistol. They're just not. I mean, I realize that I'm looking for somebody that's over and above. I'm looking for somebody who's going to go beyond the distance. I'm not interested in just giving it what you got. I'm interested in where you're going to go over and above what you got.

When Jesus was walking and He was struggling with the cross, it says that He fell down, and then it says they got up, one of the greatest unknown little things in the Bible. You know what it says? It says, "And then he went a little farther." We're all going to fall down. You know what my question is? When you get up, are you going to go a little farther? Or are you going to say, "I can't go anymore?" Oh, there are so many little things like that in the Bible that are incredible.

Now chapter 16, verse 2, where we first found him, we see that he got involved in that church, didn't he? He got involved in ministry. The Bible says that he is a disciple, so he's following

Christ. That's what a disciple is. He's disciplined himself to New Testament Christianity principles. But he needs a man to guide him. Here again, I go back to Acts chapter 8. What a great, there are so many principles in Acts chapter 8. Philip gets pulled out of the revival. He's standing there. He sees that black Ethiopian eunuch over there sitting on the back tailgate of the chariot reading the prophet Isaiah. He goes over there and he says, "Hey pal, you got the Old Testament. That's Isaiah 53. Do you understand what you're reading?" The answer is the classic statement for all of us. You know what he said? "How can I, except some man should guide me?" In your early New Testament Christian years, how can you except some man guide you? Paul and Timothy. Just like he has, he had with Timothy to guide you, guide him. In time, he wants you to be able to, somebody to guide you. And then in time for you to guide somebody else.

Timothy first proved himself. Timothy's obviously a good kid. I mean, I'm sure he's just like everybody else, but I want to show you the qualities that Paul will look for is what I look for in my model. He responded to responsibility and accountability. Those are the basic fundamental breaking points of a good leader. The Bible says that he was well reported among the brethren. So that means that he earned a good title of faithfulness. To stay in the church and to be what he was, he had to follow and submit himself to the authority of his New Testament local church.

Here it is, Paul just happened to show up at that church. Really? God had brought Timothy to a point and then brought Paul to Timothy. God set the whole thing up just like God brings you here, except as Paul, do you see the Timothys that walk through that door? Or are you busy just gibber-jabbering, talking about this or talking about that? You see, God set it up. God always sets it up.

I remember the first time I met Mel Sabaka, my father in the Lord. Long before I ever got right with God, they had a youth activity over the roller rink. I had to be 10 or 12, 13 maybe, and I was about as far away from God. I don't even know why I went that night. But I didn't roller skate, and I really didn't know anybody. So I'm over there, and so I'm playing a pinball machine. Now, obviously, folks, there's nothing wrong with a pinball machine. Back then, it was. Things change. I'm over there playing a pinball machine, and old Mel Sabaka, who was a lot younger then, comes over and says, I'll remember to this day, he says, "I'll waste your money on that, kid. It ain't no good." And he yanked out the plug. Now, I didn't like him after that point. I didn't care for him because I didn't like what he did because he disrupted my little world at the pinball machine, which obviously today was no big deal. I don't think it was a big deal back then. But he didn't want that.

Years later, I looked at that and thought about that because it tainted me a little bit. I thought this guy was a mean guy, and I didn't want anything to do with him. I had no idea until I looked back later that God orchestrated that. God didn't like pinball machines either. I don't know. But God orchestrated that first meeting. I had never forgotten that. Then after my dad died and I got out of the army and I went back to that church, guess whose class I first showed up in? It was his. You know why? Because I'd learned some things. I'd learned that I needed some structure and discipline. From that little event back there at the old ping, whatever you call those things, machines, I knew I could find structure in him.

I'm telling you right now, if you think everything in your life is just happenstance, and you think you're not here today, or if you were here last week, or God has brought you through these doors, and you're on the website this morning, God somehow got you connected to us. If you think that's all an accident, you don't know much about how God works. I have something for all you people out there next week that actually will make you part of this church without you moving here. That will be the next thing you'll want to do. I guarantee you.

Paul takes him. Paul sees him. Paul sees how he was in the church, that he proved himself there first. There always has to be a proving of people. Now it doesn't always run the same way. There are variances to it, but the fundamental process is the same. So then Paul takes him on his second missionary trip. What happens here is one of the most unbelievable things that will ever happen to you. Paul gives him on that missionary trip the very best training he could ever get. You know what it is? On-the-job training with a man that God put in your life.

I had five years with Mel Sabaka where I worked by his side in ministry. God developed that on a weekly, monthly basis to the point that by the time I was ready to move out here, when he wasn't there, I was preaching for him. I was teaching his Bible studies. It was a thing where the best training you'll ever have is on-the-job training when a man is willing to take you and you side by side with him. Can he invest in your life? On-the-job training. Best experience in the world.

You go to Bible college and you get taught how to build a church by a guy who never built one. You get taught the Bible by a guy who thinks it's got full of mistakes. You go to Bible college and be taught the ministry. It's like a guy born with no leg is going to teach you Olympic running. You want to get with somebody who knows what they're doing and is doing it, and then as Paul and Timothy, you join yourself and you learn the ministry from somebody who understands the ministry, who had God's blessing in the ministry, and then you learn from that.

What Paul saw is what I see in many of you. Again, I keep going back to Acts chapter 8. But there are so many other principles there that go beyond salvation. When Philip got pulled off the revival there in Samaria and he finds himself beamed into the back of the desert there someplace and he sees that guy sitting over there and the Holy Spirit of God says to him, you see, God had the prepared sinner and God had the prepared servant. All God wanted to do is get the two of them together, and you'll find that in the Timothy project. You'll find a man or a woman who has got the goods, and then you'll find the saved young Christian who needs the goods, and then God puts them together.

I'm just telling you, I look across this room, and I walked upstairs a little earlier, and I walked out there and talked to people, and I'm just telling you, I can't tell you how many times I've met some of you young guys and some of you gals that you're with me in my ministry today. I can't explain it. I wouldn't even try to. I don't want to sound spooky or charismatic on you, but I'm just telling you right now, I've seen a guy or I've seen a gal, and just like in Acts chapter 8, the Holy Spirit of God said to me, "Go join yourself to that man's chariot." They've said, "Bob, see that kid? See that guy? You see that girl? Yes, sir. Give them whatever they need. Spend as much time with them as you can. Put the best people around them that you've got because they're profitable in the

ministry." It comes down to seeing Paul saw in Timothy what Timothy could not see in himself. That's the real key to ministry.

I don't know that you all have character, but you all are a character. I look beyond that because I will see in you after all these years, I'll see in you what I'm looking for. God brings us here some of the absolute best people you'll ever find in your life. Now look, I know we got our idiots. I don't mean that a wrong way. Every church has got them. I'm not talking about anybody here. I'm not talking about one guy sitting in the back there. I'm not talking about anybody here. You know this thing. Look, wherever you got light, you got bugs. Just go out into your light on your thing and turn the backlight on and see the bugs circling around. It's just the way it is. But in this place here, with God knowing where I'm at and what I want to do and my stand on the book, God for the last almost 50 years of my life has brought me the cream of the crop. I have it today.

We see after enduring his trip with Paul, we see the real depth that Paul got into with him. We actually see from the writings, everything else that Paul writes, what he is giving him. The depth, the meat, the doctrine that Paul gave him in the books that Paul writes, not only writes to him, 1 and 2 Timothy, but what he gave him through the whole thing. You see, you have to give a kid a chance to define himself or herself. You've got to find out what they're made of. You've got to find out if they're going to stand with you or they're going to just play the middle. I'm always looking when push comes to shove, what side of the fence are you coming down on?

For us, it's discipleship one, discipleship two. We have the Bible Institute. We have the people ministry and obviously the one-on-one that we do. They form for us what we need to know to be like-minded by what Paul gave him. It formed for us the model. You will find these exact same things that I give to you, maybe not in the same format, but I give them to you as my Timothy, and you give them to your people as your Timothys, your sons and daughters in the Lord. You teach them to be flexible. You teach them to be adaptable. You teach them to be compatible. You teach them to be durable. We teach you through my preaching, we teach you to adjust to whatever the situation is we face. We have a job to get done, and this church will never wave the white flag of surrender.

#### SEC: Building Layers of Ministry

I've been talking to you about Operation Remnant, and of course, next week I'm going to lay it completely out. It's a thing where one of the aspects is going to involve my single people, my young adults, or whatever you want to call them. I'm going to use the time that we're in to continue to do what we're doing and build people. We just got to adjust it.

Five years ago, I knew that tough times were going to come. I mean, it gets old to preach it every Sunday, but I knew that tough times were going to come, and we would talk about it on Thursday night Bible study, or we would talk about it in all the things that we did. We certainly talked about it one-on-one. We'd look at the current events and bring up questions in Bible studies. I don't know how many years now, but about five years ago, I started working with the young singles. I saw the value of them, and I began to work with them, and they are definitely the cream of the crop. Many of them have gotten married now, and you have your own young

families, and you are on the next level up, husband and wife team, you're invaluable to me of what you do. It just keeps going up level. At the same time, the young singles keep coming in.

It's a thing where some of the older folks that are here in their 50s and their 60s, hey, you're right in there with them. You're here every Thursday night. We're out on the street. You're there. You're doing whatever we do. You're all about people. You'll do whatever needs to be done. I mean, I get that, and it's a total effort here.

When I took the young kids, I had three phases to it.

5. The first thing I did was we took a Saturday morning once a month, and we just, remember we put up the tables, and we just talked about ministry. I began to talk to you about what the ministry really is because I wanted to build that like-mindedness in you, and it was open to anybody, but not everybody wanted to come. I began to work with you and walk you through those things, and we just spent what, the first year maybe? Just talking about ministry. Just talking about the things you find in the ministry. I let you ask questions about the ministry, and you asked incredible questions.
6. The next phase is I brought you into the people ministry. We started the people ministry right around that same time, maybe a little bit before. I brought you into that, and there's where we really got into the depth of problem. We just simply started in the beginning of the Bible, and I began to walk you through every counseling problem, scenario that people are going to have by the models in the Bible. We're still in it. We're shut down right now, but that's where we're at. I think we're in the New Testament now. I hope we are. I dreamed out the other night. I hope that dream was correct.
7. The next third phase I did was the Bible Institute. You see, I brought you through a progression because I wanted to get you to a place in your life through on-the-job training by my side. My goal through all of that was to develop a like-mindedness with us, a natural mindset of ministry with me that we could then go back out and deal with the ministry whatever it may be, whatever I had to do.

I say all that because I had a meeting last Sunday with the Singles, 30 of them if I'm correct in that number. They're going to head up one of the most powerful ministries that you've ever seen, and it's called the Timothy Project, and 30 of them. I laid it all out to them in how that it was going to take much work and much labor. I laid everything out of what they were going to do, and it's going to be a real investment for them. I understand some of them are in school. Some of them have jobs. Some of them, you know, they have other things going in their world. I totally get it. So I made it very clear. I didn't want it to be a pressure because, you know, sometimes when I ask you to do something, you just do it when you don't want to do it because you're afraid I'm going to get mad at you if you don't do it. That's not true. I don't like you to begin with. I'm always mad at you. No, it's a thing where, you know, I don't ever look at it that way.

I told these kids because I wanted nobody to do it because it's going to be a job. Maybe that's going to be one of the greatest building things for not only, well, we'll talk about it next week. So I told them, I said, "Hey, look, guys, you guys have nothing to prove to me. I'm laying this out, and you're here because you earned the right to be here. If you feel that for whatever reason, this

is not for you or you can't do it, I totally get it. I need to know today because but there'll be nobody looking at you. Like I said, in my mind, you are the best of the best. I understand, I give this to you because you earned it. But you don't have to take it because I know there'll always be something else you can do." You know what? All 30 of them stayed with me. Not a one of them quit. There are some busy people out there, not a one of them. Some of them are in college, some are doing this, some are not a one of them. Not a one of them.

I go back to the investment of building that like-mindedness. They see the seriousness of where our church is at. They see the seriousness of the world we're living in. They're not about to quit. So it's a thing where it's just, it was unbelievable to me. You know when I say that, I never really thought anybody would. I understand that sometimes you have to because of other things.

I've built over the years, I've built four basic layers to this church body.

8. Zach and Jenny, you know Zach and Jenny, when they both came here, they were both single. They were a classic example. They were great for me as singles. Then they got married. That is our high school class grew to the point where it needed to be segregated out. God called Zach to do it and called Jenny to do it. We have an incredible high school, and I wouldn't know of anybody that could do it any better than them.
9. The next layer was the single ministry. Because I saw the older you kids got, you were the money in the bank for this church. You were the future of this church. So I enlisted my other couples to help me with that. We worked and built that and had activities and built things into your world, built things into your life and just to get that like-mindedness where it needed to be.
10. The next level is the young marriage. They're invaluable to reaching other couples. Some of them work with Zach. They all work with me in one way or the other. They help me in many, many things.
11. The fourth layer is our, what I call the oldies but the goodies, the midlife folks. They're people that, you know, and I love the fact now that I'm in this business for almost 50 years. Back in the day, I invested in a lot of people's lives, and God is bringing them back to me one at a time. It is the joy of my life to have those people who were once with me to come back to be with me because you know what? They don't have to do that. Honestly, the great thing about them, they know what they're getting with me. They know that I haven't lost my bite. They know that if I ever lose my teeth, I'll gum you to death. It doesn't matter to me. But they don't know, and they're invaluable to me. They are the foundation. I just, I appreciate them. Through this bad time, they're right there by my side.

I've built over the years, I've built four basic layers to this church body.

I've been talking to you about Operation Remnant, and of course, next week I'm going to lay it completely out. It's a thing where one of the aspects is going to involve my single people, my young adults, or whatever you want to call them. I'm going to use the time that we're in to continue to do what we're doing and build people. We just got to adjust it.

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