

NEW TESTAMENT CHALLENGE: WEEK SIX

Devotional #24 (Nov. 1)

A Guarded Treasure

2 Timothy 1:14

Explore: In Paul's second letter to Timothy he says, "Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you." Paul obviously wants Timothy to do something. To find out what Paul wants Timothy to do we have to figure out what he means by the words "guard" and "treasure." The word "treasure" usually refers to what? That's right! We must commonly use the word "treasure" to describe gold, jewels, money or something else of extreme value. The treasure that Paul refers to isn't an actual treasure, but something he sees as being just as important and special as a treasure. Can you guess what it is? It's the Gospel. Paul has entrusted the message of the Gospel to Timothy, something as precious as any treasure you could find.

Application: Paul says that he wants Timothy to guard this treasure. What do guards usually do? Right, they protect and oversee the treasure. Paul is asking Timothy to do the same thing. Paul wants Timothy to protect the Gospel, meaning that he doesn't want the Gospel message to be destroyed or changed in any way. He also wants Timothy to oversee the Gospel, meaning he trusts Timothy to share the Gospel message with others. In a sense, we are also Guardians of the treasure. It's our job as well to make sure that the truth is spread and remains true to the original message.

Discussion for the family: What are some practical ways to help us guard the treasure of the Gospel? (Read 1 Tim. 4:6-7, 16; 6:20-21; 2 Tim. 2:1-2; 2:15; 3:14-17)

Prayer: Father, may we always be reminded of this wonderful treasure we have been entrusted with, the saving Gospel message of Jesus Christ. Help us to guard it, defend it, and share it no matter the trial and cost.

NEW TESTAMENT CHALLENGE: WEEK SIX

Devotional #21 (Oct. 27)

Qualities Worth Imitating

1 Thessalonians 2:1-11

Explore: As we begin to read 1 Thessalonians, chapter two, we quickly get a picture of what Paul was like and how he preached. So, let's play a game. I'll list a quality of how Paul preached, and you begin reading from the beginning of chapter two until you find that quality. Once you've found it, stop reading, and I'll give you another quality to find. Sound like fun? Let's begin. The first quality: With boldness. (vs. 1-2) Hey, you did great! Let's try another: With truth and honesty. (vs. 3) Super! You're really catching on. How about: Pleasing God, not men? (vs. 4) Without flattering or greed? (vs. 5) Without seeking glory from men? (vs. 6) With gentleness and affection? (vs. 7-8) Working day and night? (vs. 9) Devout, upright, blameless? (vs. 10) Fatherly? (vs. 11) Great job! You had no problem with that at all. I wish acting out Paul's qualities was as easy as identifying them. Think of all the people who would come to church to learn about God if we all acted a little more like Paul.

Discussion for the family: Go over the qualities we just listed and come up with ideas on how we can imitate Paul at school. Then discuss how that might affect others.

Examples:

Boldness – Be the first to introduce yourself to someone you don't know and you might make friends much faster and easier.

Truth and honesty – Always practice these. You'll find you keep your new friends much longer.

Pleasing God, not men – Don't give in to peer pressure. You might be made fun of, but most likely others will respect you and want to know more about being a Christian.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us to develop the kind of Christians qualities revealed in Your Word. May we desire to please You, and not men. May we live our lives so that we speak as men and women approved by God.

NEW TESTAMENT CHALLENGE: WEEK SIX

Devotional #22 (Oct. 28)

Priorities

Luke 16:13

Explore: (Read Luke 16:13) The fact that you cannot serve God and money is just a basic rule of life. Let's examine this rule. I'll give you a few scenarios, and you stop and talk about each one. If someone loves money first they... (1) Care more about work than going to church and spending time with family. (Example: Taking extra hours that conflict with worship or take time away from family.) (2) Care more about toys than about friends. (Example: Not sharing.) (3) Care more about themselves than they do others. (Example: Buying things for ourselves that we don't need and give less to the church.) Read 1 Timothy 6:10, and discuss how this verse ties in to what we just talked about.

Now let's look at a few scenarios that involve loving God first. If someone loves God first they... (1) Will make God and family a priority, then schedule everything else around that. (Example: Pass up a promotion that will take time away from worship or time away from family.) (2) Will give to others without thinking of themselves. (Example: Share with others.) (3) Support the work of the Lord's church and do so freely. (Example: Putting off material things to meet the needs of the church.) Read Matthew 22:37-39; 6:33, and discuss how this verse ties into these ideas.

Application: Let's make sure we understand the lesson. It's not wrong to work longer hours to provide for your family. It's not wrong to have or want money. However, life is all about priorities and we must have our priorities straight! Godly living must not suffer at the feet of self-gratification. Use the money God has given you as He directs, or it will become your master!

Prayer: Father, thank you for all of my blessings, both spiritually and materially. Lord help me have the wisdom to use them in ways that honor you, bless others, and bring you joy.

NEW TESTAMENT CHALLENGE: WEEK SIX

Devotional #23 (Oct. 31)

Not Just a Kid

1 Timothy 4:12

Explore: A phrase that kids cannot stand to hear is, "They're just a kid." As in, "Oh, don't mind her, she is just a kid," or "Why should I listen to you? You're just a kid." No one wants to feel like their opinion doesn't matter. No one likes to feel like they are unimportant. Just because you might be young doesn't mean that you don't count. Just because you are not as old as some, doesn't mean that you can't make a difference.

Paul had some words of encouragement for Timothy who was relatively young to be in ministry and was having a hard time with his ministry because of it. Paul writes in 1 Timothy 4:12, "Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe."

Application: Paul encourages Timothy not to listen to those who say, "Why should we listen to you? You're practically a child!" Instead Paul encourages him to live by his example and through his actions show that he IS someone to be listened to. None of us should expect to be respected and taken seriously just because we think they should, but through our actions show that we ought to be taken seriously.

Discussion for the family: How can we set good examples for those who are older than us? (By being respectful. By listening. By treating others with kindness.)

Prayer: Father, help us to set a good example, in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. May you empower our service, bless our service and keep our hearts pure as we grow and mature in your service.