

The Kind of People God Uses

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Bible Text: 2 Timothy 2:1-7

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Serve the Lord Sunday

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Introduction: Open your Bible **2 Timothy 2:1-7**. The title of the message this morning is "The Kind of People God Uses". I want to be used. I want to have my eye always on the goal. "If you aim at nothing, you'll hit it every time". I want to aim at a life that counts for God. God calls every one of us to a life of making disciples for Him! These disciples will exist within the local church. He calls us to "baptize" them. They are to be under the training of His evangelists, pastors, and teachers so they can be trained to "do the work of the ministry" (**Ephesians 4:11-12**).

Everything rises and falls on leadership. All of us are called leaders—we are called to lead people in the ways of Christ—to make disciples of every nation! We are either leading people for God's glory or to our own hurt and the hurt of others, but we are all leaders.

The Navigators use an acronym to describe the person God uses. God only uses FATT Christians.

We need to be
F-Faithful
A-Available
T-Teachable
T-Training Others

Let's see this in our text this morning. Would you stand as we read 2 Timothy 2:1-7? **2 Timothy 2:1-7**, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 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. 3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. 5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. 6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits. 7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things."

[Prayer for Guidance]

Your life will be one that molds the lives of others. Are you a disciple maker? Christ told us to go into all nations and not just evangelize, but to "make disciples" and to ground them in all things He commanded. God can use you to do that! What kind of person does God use to make disciples conformed to the image of Jesus Christ?

The example used in this passage is a farmer. The farmer puts the hard work in. He sets aside his agenda and makes himself available to do the work of farming. And of

course, as Paul says, the one who labors in the field is always the first one to enjoy the fruits. The farmer is fruitful. Of course Paul is not speaking mainly of agriculture, but of people's lives. Are you seeing God moving in people's lives? Are you seeing fruit?

- A. Jesus Christ is our perfect example in all these things. He was:
- F-Faithful:** He obeyed the Father in all things. He was fully committed to everything he put His heart to!
 - A-Available:** Christ gave Himself completely in the Cross
 - T-Teachable:** **John 15:15**, "all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."
 - T-Training Others:** Jesus Christ trained twelve who went out and made disciples of all nations across the Roman Empire.

Are you seeing God move in your life on a consistent basis? If not, you need to look at how you can be used of God.

- I. **F-Faithful** A simple definition of "faithful" is "fully committed". If you are going to be used of God you've got to be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ. You've got to be faithful in the little things!

The **GOAL** of the Christian life is faithfulness. God does not call us to be great, but faithful. We want to hear the Lord's words to us when we see Him in **Matthew 25:21** "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." How can we be faithful?

- A. You must be a faithful **MODEL** of the Christian life in the little things before God will ever use you in the big things. Are you modeling obedience to the Lordship of Christ in your own life?

Luke 16:10-11, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. ¹¹ If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"

Application: Are you a reliable person? We've got to be absolutely faithful, dependable, and consistent. Like a wheel on your car. We need consistency 100% of the time.

- B. Second, you must be faithful in **SOLVING** your own problems. How can God use you in the lives of others if you can't solve your own problems?

1 Timothy 3:5, "For if a man know not how to rule his own house [affairs], how shall he take care of the church of God?"

- C. Areas of Faithfulness in the "little things".

1. Faithful with our **Bible knowledge**. — **Luke 12:48**, "To whom much [is] given, of him much shall be required". You are to use your understanding of Christ, not simply on yourself, but in living out before others. All the Bible knowledge we have is not only to consume by ourselves, but to INVEST in others! Are you faithful with all the Bible knowledge you have?

2. Faithful in **worship**.

- a. **Family** worship. Your first ministry must always be to your family. **1 Timothy 3:5**, "For if a man know not how to rule his own house [affairs], how shall he take care of the church of God?"

You are called in Deuteronomy 6 to teach the practice of God's Word to your children "diligently". **Deuteronomy 6:7**, "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up".

Timothy was a great man of God, but who taught him? His "grandmother Lois, and [his] mother Eunice" (**2 Timothy 1:5**). Be faithful in personal and family devotions! Meditate in the Law of the Lord "day and night" (**Psalms 1:2**). You cannot be too radical for God!

- b. **Corporate** worship.

- i. Faithful in **Engagement**. When we come together we are here to worship the Lord! We should be totally engaged.
- ii. Faithful in **Attendance**. You cannot be engaged if you are not here. God called us out of the world that we should worship the Lord together. He even put in the **forth commandment** so that we would not fail in gathering together with His people.

We should always be together when Christ's church is **gathered**. That means at the bare minimum, you should attend the stated services of the church and minister to the saints while there. If you do not come yourself, how can you make disciples of Christ?

If you cannot come, you should call. If a child cannot come, then one of the parents comes. We come to worship Christ, to receive grace from Him through the fellowship of the saints and the ministry of the Word. We also come to demonstrate a good example.

Spurgeon Example: There was a dear sister, now in heaven, who attended this Tabernacle for years, though she was so deaf that she never heard a word that was spoken. The reasons she gave for being here were that, at any rate, she could join in the hymns, and that, had she stayed away, she would have felt as if she was disassociated from the people of God; and other people, perhaps, might not have known the reason for her absence, and it might, therefore, have been a bad example to them.

3. Faithful in **ministry**. God is going to use faithful people. All of us are to be faithful in ministry. God ordained "some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; ¹² For the perfecting of the saints, for **the work of the ministry**, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (**Ephesians 4:11-12**).

4. Faithful in managing our **earthly treasures**. **Proverbs 3:9-10**, "Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine”.

D. Examples of Faithfulness.

1. **Elisha. 2 Kings chapter 2. Elisha the servant of Elijah** who was so faithful that when it came time for Elijah to go up into Heaven in a whirlwind, Elisha had earned the rights to Elijah's mantle (ministry). People do not realize that when Elisha was called to follow Elijah, he spent many years as Elijah's servant; washing, cooking, cleaning, etc. Because he was faithful to serve, he became the great Prophet of God.
2. **Joseph** was faithful when no one was looking, in hard times—he never made excuses! Where ever he was, whether he was in a pit, in the prison, or in the palace, Joseph was always faithful to God. God blessed him for it.
3. **Paul** was faithful in a prison cell writing letters to the churches. God used him mightily!

- II. **A-Available – 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”. Availability is “the willingness to reprioritize according to God’s agenda and to commit to that which is most important”. Available people have no more hours in a day than any one else.

You can always make time to do what you WANT to do. The question is do you WANT to do what God wants you to do? Are you doing what God wants you to do? Are you 100% AVAILABLE to do what God wants you to do?

You might say, “I don’t have the ability to do what God wants me to do”. God only requires of us what he enables us to do. You don’t have to be able, you just have to be available. Most people do not make themselves available to God because they are too busy. They are committed to the wrong things. When someone is too busy, that means they have **WRONG priorities**. We must have our PRIORITIES right. We all have 24 hours in a day. We can all do whatever we WANT to do. We do not lack any ability. God has the ability for us to do anything. Jesus said, “Without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:15). All we need is availability.

Transition: Turn over to **Isaiah 6:8**. There we see the example of availability from Paul.

A. **Isaiah** laid aside his **agenda** for God’s agenda. “Here am I Lord, send me” (Isaiah 6:8). He made himself available. Like Isaiah, we need to be the first to volunteer if we can. Set the example and tone. If you aren’t willing, why should anyone else be willing? Be ready to fill in at a moments notice. Available people find it a privilege to serve. They do not gripe but instead GIVE and lay down their lives for the brethren.

B. **Esther** laid aside her **comfort** for God’s agenda. Esther made herself available to ask the king to spare the Jews. And she said in **Esther 4:16**, “if I perish, I perish”. Are you willing to be available no matter what the cost?

Applications:

1. That means seeking a job where you have Sundays and Wednesday evenings off.
2. That may mean getting out of bed early on Saturday morning for evangelism. Christ gave his life on the Cross and calls us to be ambassadors, and we can't even get out of bed?
3. Laying aside your comfort means you plan ahead and encourage the brethren. Ladies, be there for your quarterly fellowships. Men I've been so encouraged at your good attendance at Men's Prayer Breakfast. It's early, but you always come. Keep being available.

Transition: Now turn over to **Philippians 3:4-8**. There we see the example of availability from Paul.

C. **Paul** set aside his **prestige** for God's agenda. He said in **Philippians 3:4-8**, "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: 5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. 7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things **but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord**: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them **but dung**, that I may win Christ".

Transition: Now turn over to **Joshua 14:12**. There we see the example of availability from Caleb.

D. **Caleb** laid aside any **excuses** for God's agenda. He had a good excuse. He was too old. He was too tired. He had already been mightily used of God with Joshua. Yet he was 85 years old when he said to the Lord, "Give me this mountain". He was ready to take down the Anakim giants and fenced cities to take that mountain! Caleb said in **Joshua 14:12**, "Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said".

E. **Ezekiel** said God sought for a man to stand in the gap. He found none! **Ezekiel 22:30**, "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none." Abraham stood in the gap for Sodom and rescued Lot. Moses stood in the gap for Israel and rescued God's people. Gideon stood in the gap. The walls of protection are torn down in our society. Satan takes people captive at will. Who will stand in the gap against the enemy for the people of Hanover Park and Chicago? Who is available?

F. Other examples.

1. **D. L. Moody** was an unknown shoe salesman in Chicago when he started his own Sunday School in an abandoned freight car. D.L. Moody simply made himself available. The school became so large teaching 1500 children a week that the Mayor of Chicago gave him the hall over the city's North Market for his meetings, rent free.

During his first trip to England while Moody was recovering from a spiritual depression and fatigue, he heard these words, "The world has yet to see what God will do with and for and through and in and by the man who is fully and wholly consecrated to Him. D.L. Moody again, made himself available. Moody said, "The world has yet to see a man fully consecrated to God—he did not say a great man, nor a learned man, nor a rich man, nor a wise man, nor an eloquent man, nor a smart man, but simply a man. I am a man, and it lies with the man himself whether he will or will not make that entire and full consecration."¹ "By the grace of God, I'll be that man." D.L. Moody made himself available.

2. **C. H. Spurgeon** was an unknown young preacher at age 17. At only 17 years of age, two years after his conversion, he took the pastorate of a very small church, Waterbeach Baptist Chapel. Then at age 19, he took the New Park Street Church in London. (With a new building it later became known as the Metropolitan Tabernacle). Spurgeon was an unknown, but he made himself available. There were 232 members then. During his pastorate, 14,692 were baptized and joined the Tabernacle. Spurgeon made himself available.

3. **Susana Wesley** was a mother of 18 children, and she made herself available as a "keeper of the home" and changed the world through her love for God.

4. **Jim Elliot** and the other four martyrs to the Auca Indians were not extraordinary people. They just made themselves available to God! And what about Rachel Saint along with Elizabeth Elliot who went in after her husband's death to live among the savage Indians who killed her husband to point them to Christ? These were not amazing people. They were regular people with an amazing God. They made themselves available.

III. **T-Teachable 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". Are you someone that is committed to learning as this verse says? The word "commit" means "to deposit for safe keeping". Are you a deposit of God's word?

Have you heard it all? Is there spiritual pride in your life? You must have a humble attitude or God will never use you. **1 Peter 5:5**, "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

There are some who want to know the Word of God for curiosity's sake. But the person that God uses needs the Word of God. The person God uses is constantly growing and changing and is a living example of Christ living in them.

A. **Examples** of those with a Teachable Spirit.

1. Asaph. He said in **Psalm 81:10**, "...open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." Do not think you have arrived in any area of doctrine or practice. You can always be taught in a deeper more profound way. Have a childlike

¹ William R. Moody, The Life of Dwight L. Moody, (Sword of the Lord Publishers: Murfreesboro, TN; 1900), 134.

attitude, ready to learn. **Asaph wanted to take in the Word of God and apply it to his life.**

2. Paul. This teachable spirit is described by none other than the Apostle Paul in **Philippians 3:10-14**, Paul says... My desire is... "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 12 **Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after,** if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, **I count not myself to have apprehended:** but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

The word "**follow after**" means to "to pursue swiftly in order to catch a person or thing". What was Paul following after? What was he looking to apprehend? Christlikeness. If you are not there yet, then you ought to have that hungry, teachable spirit. **Paul wanted to take in the Word of God and apply it to his life.**

Unless you've already attained perfect Christlikeness, then you need to have a teachable spirit—an attitude that says, "I'm still hungry for Christ". "I need the Word, I need to learn from all those around me!" **Are you hungry to learn?**

B. The opposite of a teachable spirit is found in **2 Timothy 4:2**, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

The opposite of being a deposit for the Word of God, keeping it pure and unadulterated, is shifting with the fads of the world. We do NOT want a **popular** church, we want a **powerful** church! We must teach the Word of God not because it is popular, but because it is powerful. And we must be committed to being taught by it continually so that we can teach others also.

Finally, we do need to make disciples of Christ.

IV. **T-Teaching Others.** To be used of God is not just to be a deposit of God's truth. It is to apply that truth of knowing and growing in Christ to others also. Listen to what Paul says. You are to mentor and make disciples of others. **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**". Are you someone that is "teaching others also"?

We are not called to use up the resources God gives us but to **INVEST** them!! We are not just to teach people truth, but to train them how to apply it to their lives!

There is a great difference between knowledge and application.

Illustration: Imagine a carpenter approaches his doctor friend and asks how he performs an appendectomy. The doctor explains his operation procedure and leaves. A sick person approaches the man and tells him what his problem is. He needs an appendectomy. The carpenter takes a knife and says he can help. The poor sick person screams and runs away.

What was the problem? The carpenter was not experienced to help the sick person. The doctor's coaching was not enough. The man did not have the experience or tools.

Conclusion: As we close, let me ask you...

ARE YOU A PERSON GOD IS GOING TO USE?

Remember our acronym: F.A.T.T.

Are you...

F-Faithful. In order to be used of God you must be faithful in the little things before God will entrust you with more.

A-Available. Are you available? Are you willing to put aside your agenda for God's?

T-Teachable. Are you teachable, or do you have an attitude of spiritual pride? God resists the proud. Are you ready to learn from any one? Are you hungry and being taught continually?

T-Training Others. Are you training others? We are not called simply to evangelize but to "make disciples" of every nation.

Where can you start?

1. Start coming to evangelism on Saturday mornings. Learn how to give the Gospel to lost people. God is not going to give the increase until you effectively learn how to plant and water.
2. Be in a place where you are faithful in the little things. Be faithful to the services of the church. Be here when the church is gathered. Be dependable.
3. When you see a person come to know Christ in your sphere of influence, you can take them under your wing. Discipling is not just going through a Bible study. You should do that. But it is answering the hard questions with the Word of God and learning how to apply it to all of life's situations.

May we all be someone God uses. May we be:

F-Faithful

A-Available

T-Teachable

T-Training Others