

The Leader Timothy

Series: The Early Days

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Someone I heard recently reminded me that if Jesus were alive today selecting His apostles He would probably be looking for them among the millennials. At first that was a scary thought. Most, if not all, of the apostles were young men in their 20's, no later than 30's, when called to follow Jesus. John the apostle lived to nearly 100 AD. If 20 when chosen by Jesus in AD 30, he would have been 90 when he died. Most of the apostles were dead before they reached their 60th birthday.

LifeWay Research released its student dropout survey on Tuesday. The Nashville-based entity interviewed 2,002 U.S. adults ages 23 to 30 who attended a Protestant church two times or more a month for at least a year in high school. The interviews were conducted from Sept. 15 to Oct. 13, 2017, and showed that 66% dropped out of church as young adults.

- Nearly all — 96 percent — cited **life changes**, including moving to college and work responsibilities that prevented them from attending.
- Seventy-three percent said **church or pastor-related reasons** led them to leave. Of those, 32 percent said church members seemed judgmental or hypocritical and 29 percent said they did not feel connected to others who attended.
- Seventy percent named **religious, ethical or political beliefs** for dropping out. Of those, 25 percent said they disagreed with the church's stance on political or social issues while 22 percent said they were only attending to please someone else.
- And, 63 percent said **student and youth ministry reasons** contributed to their decision not to go. Of those, 23 percent said they never connected with students in student ministry and 20 percent said the students seemed judgmental or hypocritical.

When George Barna published his **1992** findings in *Today's Pastors*, the median age of Protestant clergy was **44 years old**. One in three pastors was under the age of 40, and one in four was over 55. Just 6 percent were 65 or older. Twenty-five years later (**2017**), the average age is **54**. Only one in seven pastors is under 40, and half are over 55. The percentage of church leaders 65 and older has nearly tripled, meaning **there are now**

more pastors in the oldest age bracket than there are leaders younger than 40.

I want to talk to you about Timothy today. As I grew up, he was always called young Timothy. We first find him in Acts 16:1-5,

1 Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. 2 The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. 3 Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. 4 As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

2 Tim.1:5 gives us some more background. 5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

- He came from a mixed marriage: Greek/Hebrew
- The Christians in the area “spoke well of him.”
- Paul wanted him on the journey (as opposed to Mark)
- He submitted to circumcision to be more acceptable to the Jews

What else do we know about Timothy?

- On this second missionary journey as Paul and Silas were strengthening the churches they planted on the first, Timothy was learning the value of working with young churches (not just planting new ones). Acts 16:5 (When he received the letters from Paul he was in Ephesus.)
- On this second missionary journey Timothy was able to see parts of the world he had never seen expanding his vision for saving souls. Acts 18:5, 5 When Silas and Timothy came (to Corinth) from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. This took place in Europe.
- On these journeys Timothy learned to work with a lot of different men. First with Paul and Silas. Acts 19:22, 22 He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer. And Acts 20:4, 4 He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia.
- On these journeys Timothy gained the respect of the apostle Paul. He calls him:
 - Rom.16:21, 21 Timothy, **my co-worker**, sends his greetings to you, as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my fellow Jews.

- 1 Cor.4:17, 17 For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, **my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord**. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.
- Phil.1:1, 1 Paul and Timothy, **servants of Christ Jesus**, To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons
- Phil.2:22, 22 But you know that Timothy has **proved himself**, because as **a son with his father** he has served with me in the work of the gospel.
- 1 Tim.1:2, 2 To Timothy **my true son in the faith**: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.
- 1 Tim.6:20, 20 Timothy, guard what has been **entrusted** to your care.
- 2 Tim.1:2, 2 To Timothy, **my dear son**: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Two letters are addressed to him and we can learn much about his ministry, but I only want to give you two passages:

1 Tim.4:12, 12 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

2 Tim.1: 6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

Our message to the Christian young men in our lives is:

- It is not a big deal to be young
- You can still set a powerful example
- Fan the flame of God in your hearts
- Don't be afraid

The church certainly has a huge challenge to raise up young men to be strong leaders in the church. We need to beat the bushes to find them and when we do we need to pour into them as much as we can so that they will not stray away from the faith. We need some Timothys.