

II Timothy 2:11-26

I was a manager of a space technology department for a spacecraft manufacturer. I often had to hire new engineers. In the interview process, I had to assess his/her commitment to the department and company because some candidates just want a job due to unemployment. I also had to assess one's technical knowledge and willingness to learn. Then, I had to think of the amount and what type of equipping that he/she needs to be truly able to perform for this position. Finally, I need to assess would he/she be a good performing worker after training. This process is really based on the Bible for the 4 main steps of leading one to be an approved worker for God from the book of II Timothy.

The book of II Timothy is a letter written from Paul to Timothy at about AD66 under Emperor Nero. Paul was put into a prison in a cold dungeon (II Tim. 2:9 & 4:13) which was not like his previous house-imprisonment. This time he knew his life was near the end. Although this letter was addressed to Timothy but it was also for sharing it among churches in Ephesus. The key points of this book are for Christians to have steadfast service, to know and follow sound doctrine, to ask Timothy to come and to prepare for his last days. Today we concentrate on the topic of following God and be His good worker.

1) Loyal to the faithful Lord

Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself. (II Tim. 2:11-13). It is clear that we must die with Him first, so that we can live with Him. Then we need to endure and keep to be loyal to Him. This commitment to God is a must when we follow God although we are faithless but He remains faithful!

2) Know His teaching well

Be loyal is the foundation of belonging to God. We need to know more about God and His teaching. In the later part of II Tim. 2:15, it states that we need to teach others correctly about the message of God's truth. How can we teach others correctly if we don't know it ourselves? Thus, this verse also means we need to know God's word. II Tim. 2:16-18 talks about the false teachings that

we need to be able to recognize them and avoid them. II Tim. 3:16-17 clearly states “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

3) Equip to be a useful instrument

The last paragraph states we need to know His words well before we can be fully equipped. For example, Verses 2:16 & 22-26 gave some of the acts that we should do and should not do as we are in the sanctification and equipping process.

II Tim. 2:20-21 “In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.” Cleansing and equipping process is not easy but we need to be committed to it. Let God works on us. Knowing/learning God’s word in 2) above is mainly to put emphasis on intellectual, and here is more about equipping in action like practicing. However, in reality they often occur in parallel.

4) Be an approved worker

One translation of II Tim. 2:15 “ Do your best to win full approval in God's sight, as a worker who is not ashamed of his work, one who correctly teaches the message of God's truth.” After we have been equipped, to a level be used by God, we need to do our best in our assigned tasks. Each one has a different calling from God. However, God has general calling to all His children such as spread the Gospel, teaches God’s word and live a holy life that can glorify God.

This same process can be clearly seen in Moses life. Moses was loyal to God and accepted the calling. Moses was initially lack of faith but God is faithful. Then, he was learning God’s heart and word. God used 40 years to equip him. Finally, He was God’s approved workman.

I can see similar process in my life. Shortly I became a Christian, I was asked to lead a Bible study for a week. I was lack of faith on my capability, but I am committed to serve whenever God called me. The Bible study leader helped me to understand the passage. I was in the process of being equipped and learning God’s word more

in depth. Finally, I was able to lead Bible study for that college group. God's equipping on me has not done (on going) and thus I can't be a truly approved workman. I encourage you to stay on this process so that God can use you and approval of you as His worker. We also can learn from this spiritual process to apply in our daily life such as the interview and training process I used to equip my staff members.

May God find you as an approved worker for Him! May your employer find you as an approved worker, and all glories go to God.