

Chuck Smith in *The Word for Today Bible*:

- His Enablement
- I am so thankful that God has counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry. But I am even more thankful that He has enabled me.
- We often hear the call of God in our lives, to serve Him in some capacity. But it doesn't take long before we come across a situation where our natural abilities just aren't enough and we feel like we are over our heads.
  
- At that point, we have to decide whether we will try to obey, or whether we will just quit, giving in to our natural limitations.
- God's callings are always accompanied by His enabling. He will never call us to do something without also enabling us to do it.
  
- Many times the Lord asks us to do something that is impossible. And then, working in us, by His Spirit, He proceeds to do the impossible.

***The person who receives the most from God's grace is not the one who has the most forgiven, but the one who is the most transformed.***

Paul's Life as an Example 1:12-17

- v.12 Paul is using **faithful** here in the sense of "trustworthy."
- Christ enabled Paul. He gave him the power to live a transformed life.
- See **2 Corinthians 3:4-6**
  
- v.13 This was Paul's life without Jesus.
- Paul was intelligent and well educated – but he didn't know the truth.
- He was also deeply religious – yet in his heart he was opposed to God.
- **Insolent** means "rude or disrespectful."
- The Greek word is *hubristēs*, from which we get our word "hubris."
  
- v.14 God's grace transformed Paul from what he was – a rude, blaspheming persecutor of the church, to what he later became – the early church's most active missionary and primary theologian.
- Paul describes God's grace as "exceedingly abundant" – literally, "hyper-abundant."

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- v.15 This is Paul’s opinion of himself.
- In other places he describes himself as:
  1. The least of the apostles (1 Corinthians 15:9)
  2. Less than the least of all the saints (Ephesians 3:8)
  
- v.15 Paul gives us five “faithful sayings” in the Pastoral Epistles. Here they are:
  1. **1 Timothy 1:15**
  2. **1 Timothy 3:1**
  3. **1 Timothy 4:8-9**
  4. **2 Timothy 2:11-13**
  5. **Titus 3:8**
  
- v.16 The word Paul uses for **pattern** is used to describe a sketch or a rough draft – something a painter might do before he begins the actual picture.
- Christ intended Paul’s life to be a pattern – an example or sketch – on which he would base His later work in the lives of others.
- We are the others who have believed on Jesus for everlasting life.
  
- v.16 It is vital that we know and understand that God wants to transform us the same way He transformed Paul.
- v.17
- To God be the glory, great things He has done.

### **Three Things You Need to Believe**

1. Jesus Christ wants to transform you.
2. Jesus Christ wants to make you an example to others of His transforming power.
3. By this He will receive much more glory than if you are simply forgiven, but still remain largely untransformed.

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### Paul’s Orders to Timothy 1:18-20

- v.18 When we enlist in Christ’s service, we must be ready to fight spiritual battles of an intensity we have never before experienced.
- Victory is assured, but the casualties will be very real and the stakes will be very high.
- Bill Goodrich’s first question to me, my first day in the office as a pastor at Horizon NE:
- **“Are you ready to go to war?”**

- v.19-20 We need both faith and a good conscience. See v.5.
- We begin the Christian life as weak as babies in a new spiritual world.
- There are two paths we can now follow:
  1. **The Path of Faith and a Good Conscience**
  2. **The Path of Shipwrecked Faith**

### **The Path of Faith a Good Conscience**

- We observe that our desires often conflict with our conscience.
- When conscience agrees with Scripture (and it often does) we conclude that our desires are wrong.
- We decide by faith to act in accordance with conscience.
- Our desires begin to follow – a sign of spiritual growth.
- We continually develop our conscience by faith, conforming it to the standards of God’s word.

### **The Path of a Shipwrecked Faith**

- We observe that our desires often conflict with our conscience.
- We conclude that our conscience is wrong.
- We decide to act in accordance with desire rather than conscience.
- Our conscience becomes less sensitive – numbing to the presence of sin.
- We adopt standards that allow for our sin, making God look evil for disagreeing. **Smash.**

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### **Three Things You Need to Do**

1. Remember that the power for obedience comes from God and not from you.
2. Start now, taking simple, concrete steps of obedience to God’s revealed will.
3. Keep doing that and don’t ever quit.

The famous atheist Friedrich Nietzsche made an interesting observation:

“The essential thing "in heaven and in earth" is ... that there should be **long OBEDIENCE in the same direction**, ... thereby ... has always resulted in the long run, something which has made life worth living.”

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Next Week: A Lesson on Prayer 1 Timothy 2:1-8

### Scripture References:

**2 Corinthians 3:4-6(NLT)** We are confident of all this because of our great trust in God through Christ. It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God. He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant. ...

**1 Timothy 3:1(NKJV)** *This is a faithful saying:* If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.

**1 Timothy 4:8-9(NKJV)** For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.  
*This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.*

**2 Timothy 2:11-13(NKJV)** *This is a faithful saying:* For if we died with *Him*, We shall also live with *Him*. If we endure, We shall also reign with *Him*. If we deny *Him*, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.

**Titus 3:8(NKJV)** This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.