

Christ Community Covenant Church
The Little Letters - Pass it on
2 Timothy 2.1-10
Pastor Anthony Testa – February 27, 2011

2 Timothy 2:2 (ESV) — ...and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Intro: short clips from the “into the wilderness” video (see <http://gallery.me.com/anthony.testa#100626>)

Build relationships with people from other age groups.

2 Timothy 2:1–2 (ESV) — 1 You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, 2 and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Soak in God’s grace.

One gift that God has given to us in Italy through a young couple is the use of their summer and winter “apartments.” We don’t deserve these places, but we have spent many “solitude retreats” and family getaways at these two locations.

We have also seen God provide for all our needs, but not wants, for eight years. Financial provision is God’s grace. We have also received the grace to be able to share the gospel with hundreds of unbelievers around our table in Italy for the last seven years.

Finally, we have had so many others in the body of Christ in Italy serve us. We have had people help us get bureaucratic documents, learn the language, get things fixed, find an apartment, apply for church association and lead different trips and outreaches in the Italian’s culture that we could have never done on our own. This is God’s grace. These people are God’s grace that we just have to enjoy and thank God for!

Spend time with older and younger people.

Acts 16:1–3 (ESV) — 1 Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. 2 He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

Just think of one practical way you can serve both someone younger and someone older than you, one way to meet a need in the life of someone who could be a spiritual parent or child. This is always the first step to passing it on. You establish trust. You show someone that they have value to you. This is how God saved me at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Invest in people worthy of trust.

2 Timothy 2:2–7 (ESV) — 2 and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 3 Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. 5 An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. 6 It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. 7 Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

Trustworthy people are DEVOTED soldiers.

Who show up ... To serve, to give, to listen, to study, to go, to clean-up, etc. These are people who are in traction.

I am drawn to these type of people. Two of them in Italy are Andrea Testa and Alessandro Salute. The first Sunday Andrea came to our service after God saved him he said, “I noticed that you don’t have many musicians in the church, do you need a bass guitarist?” My response, as the new worship leader who barely spoke any Italian was, “YES!” Andrea saw a need and offered his time and talents. He then would travel 2 hours the night before service to practice and stay the night with us. The next morning we would have breakfast together and then go to service.

Trustworthy people are PREPARED athletes.

Who get time with God ... by praying, by reading, memorizing, meditating on and **obeying** God's Word! The first thing I did after God save Alessandro was to gift him a Bible. I noticed that Ale was an entrepreneur, which is rare for most Italians, and I wanted to see how he would respond to God's word. When we would spend time together, we would study the Bible and talk about how to apply it in our lives. I would regularly give Ale an assignment and see if he would carry it out. He rarely did. So at our next meeting I would ask him when he intended to carry it out. Then I would lovingly say, "Ale, you let me know when you have accomplished the goal you set out to do and then we will meet again." Several weeks passed and I received a call, "Anthony, I am ready to meet again." He finally understood that God desires trustworthy people to pass on His work to others.

Titus 2:6 (ESV) — 6 Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled.

Paul's comment to Titus is this. He is really concerned with building men who have their passions and desires under control. They can say yes and no to them based on God's training regimen for them. Today, Ale is my sidekick in "Into the Wilderness." I have been able to entrust him with marketing the adventures to other churches, to leading certain aspects of the adventures, and with the arrangements of payments for the trips. I can count on Ale, not just with ministry items, but also with my family. I trust Him with my kids and my wife's protection. Our friendship is much more akin to family.

Trustworthy people are DILIGENT farmers.

Who just keep on ... planting, watering, tilling, weeding and harvesting the soil where God is at work. Now, I am not a farmer. I do not have a green thumb. I eat vegetables, that is my connection to the farming industry. However, Italians are extremely well versed in farming. Anyone who has a plot of land, has a garden, fruit trees, etc. They know that the most important quality is the constancy and diligence in the process of gardening. This is especially important when the weather is bad (too hot or too cold), the fruit is invisible or they just plain old "don't feel like it."

It is the same way with making disciples. There are so many distractions, disappointments and difficulties in planting, watering, tilling, weeding and harvesting in people's lives.

According to a study that Greater Europe Mission did in 2008, Africa is 12% evangelical, Asia is 8% evangelical and Europe is 4% evangelical. Italy really pulls down the bell curve as less than 1% of Italians are certain of a saving relationship with Jesus. Furthermore, according to Operation World, Turin has the second largest occult population in the world. In 2008, they posted on the front page of the most widely read paper in Torino of how they spent \$31 million Euro on occult business: everything from fortune tellers, to magic tours to the Satanic occult. This is just the 2.4 million people of Torino.

Paul says that we are to reflect and ponder deeply these things. And, if you want to invest in these type of people, you need to be them. Like attracts like.

Keep the Gospel at the center of your relationships.

2 Timothy 2:8-10 (ESV) — 8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, 9 for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! 10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Remember Jesus.

One of the goals of our wilderness adventures is to connect the Gospel, why Jesus had to die on the cross, to real life through experience. We have learned the value of not just sharing the Gospel, but showing it. One of the greatest problems in Italy is that the Gospel has been removed from the church. People call themselves Christians and don't even know why Jesus had to die on the cross.

Suffer like Jesus.

When the majority of people hear about us serving in Italy, they think, "that must be rough, I would love to live in Italy." Or, "they are suffering for Jesus with the food and wine." Or, what one missions pastor told me on the phone, "Italy, how plush!"

To most I would simply reply, have you ever lived there? And what are the spiritual challenges facing God's servants in Italy?

When you face hardship, you have to lean into Jesus and, as a result, you tend to look like Jesus and consequently show Jesus to others. One Romanian said, Christians are like nails. The harder you hit them, the deeper they go.

Invest in the Gospel through our relationship

Invest in the Gospel through prayer

***Ephesians 6:19 (ESV) — 19** and [PRAY] also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,*

Pray for our family, that we would grow in the gospel. Pray for our church and “into the wilderness”, that we would share and show the gospel to many and that God would open the hearts of people to believe. Pray for our financial support, that we could return to Torino and serve God full-time and not have to constantly raise funds.

Invest in the Gospel through creative ways

***Acts 9:36 (ESV) — 36** Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity.*

We have a significant need for the “into the wilderness” ministry. We served over 70 people last summer and very few had sufficient gear for the backcountry trips. We still need to purchase jackets, climbing gear, ice axes, crampons, tents, camp pads and cooking gear to be able to serve these young people well. A European college-aged student doesn’t have any of these items and they CANNOT rent them from their local Army Surplus store, REI or EMS.

Several people have given us good, used gear that they rarely use in order to reach more people in the outdoors. In addition, someone in this congregation decided to donate to us their REI dividend. It deeply encouraged us!

Invest in the Gospel through finances

***Luke 8:1–3 (ESV) — 1** Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, **2** and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, **3** and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod’s household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means.*

We are working with college-aged youth, cannot work in Italy due to our visa, raise our support in dollars and live off of euros (with an exchange rate of 1 Euro equals .7 Dollars) and still have to raise \$1300 a month to pay for our operating costs. I would ask you to ALL consider meeting that need. You might be able to do just \$15 a month, THAT IS AWESOME, or you may be able to do upwards of 2 or 3 hundred dollars a month. You know what would be generous and sacrificial.

There is a card in your program that you can fill out, drop it in the offering or give it to me and I will contact you to see how you would like to invest in the Gospel in Italy.

Conclusion: Let me pray for you.