

***FANNING THE FLAME:  
FUELING AN UNDYING PASSION FOR CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH***

Introduction —

There are spiritual highs and lows in ministry — Ps. 23 echoes both themes. Cf. also Ps. 55:13, 20, 21; 56:1-2, 5-6. Sometimes this is the result of struggling with the lust of the flesh or the lust of the eye and the boastful pride of life. And others are struggling with the betrayal of friends or untrue rumors about you. And others are struggling with modern day “Philistines” who want you to run the church their way and not God’s way. Or some may just be weary and tired because those in our care are not responding to our leadership. And some are here because of mental pain and physical exhaustion.

How do you keep fanning the flame for ministry so that we can be faithful?

What are some foundational **TRUTHS** that we need to embrace as we attempt to faithfully serve the Lord?

1. God call us first and foremost to be sincere **SLAVES** of His Son. Cf. Mk. 12:29-31. Every ounce of our being should be in love with and enslaved to Christ. Cf. Prov. 1:7.

Beware of the danger of professionalism in the ministry — doing the tasks of ministry and excluding our intimate relationships and fellowship with Christ. Our ministry becomes an idol in our lives at the expense of fellowship with Christ.

2. Live a disciplined life of **INTEGRITY** based on the Word of God. Ps. 15:1-2. He will never allow the righteous to be shaken. Cf. Prov. 2:7; 10:9. Also 2 Tim. 1:3 — he serves with a clear conscience.

3. Always keep in mind that we are under-shepherds of the **CHIEF-SHEPHERD**, Jesus Christ. It’s **HIS** kingdom work and His **CHURCH**.

Really believe that the church is God’s and He will continue to build her no matter what (Mt. 16). This means that we must trust in God’s sovereignty in everything that we do.

God’s divine decrees — God’s eternal **PURPOSE** according to the council of His will whereby for His own **GLORY**, He has **FOREORDAINED** everything that happens.

God has general decrees: e.g., Is. 46:9-10; Eph. 1:10-11.

**Providence:** God’s continuous operation of **ALL THINGS** according to His will and for His own glory and the **GOOD** of believers.

E.g., Rom. 8:28-29. We see such providence in the life of Joseph — Gen. 37; 39:21; 45:7-8; 50:20. We have to trust God for the issues that arise in the context of ministry and His sovereign outworking of His kingdom plans will directly impact how much peace that we have.

Do you trust Him and His Word? We trust the Lord for our salvation, so why do we have so much trouble trusting him for the other issues of our lives? Are we attempting to be sovereign? Are we attempting to work out a works-based salvation?

1 Timothy 4:14-16 — to make sure we do not shipwreck our faiths, we need to:

1. “Pay close attention to **YOURSELF**.”

It is so easy to be distracted by ministry that we can ruin ourselves for ministry. Pay attention to yourself as a man of God (e.g., 6:11ff). Pursue holiness.

*Keep studying and reading.* Even at the end of his ministry, Paul still called for books so that he might continue to study and understand (2 Tim. 4).

*Keep praying.* This is the most important battle and is fought on the inside where no one else can see. Are we leading ministry in our own strength or in Christ’s strength?

*Keep shepherding your family.* Cf. 1 Tim. 3:4-5. The mission field starts in the home; before we shepherd people in the church we shepherd the people in our home. Understand and live with your wife in an understanding way (1 Pt. 3:7). Know and shepherd the hearts of your children. They are our ministry.

2. “Pay close attention to your **DOCTRINE**.”

Keep learning and studying the things of God. Study doctrine and the things of God. Continue in the things you have learned. E.g., Tt. 1:9 — doctrine is the main weapon in the battle against falsehood.

He is stressing both our lives and our doctrine.

Let’s turn to Second Timothy to look at some of Paul’s instructions to Timothy, a “good soldier of Jesus Christ,” that will help us to “**FINISH** the course well.”

Remember God’s **GRACE** (2 Timothy 1:6-12)

Keep being **FAITHFUL** to your calling (2 Timothy 4:1-5)

**PASS** on the ministry (2 Timothy 2:2)

**SUFFER** Hardship (2 Timothy 2:3)

God has **ORDAINED** hardship (2 Timothy 3:10-12)

Remember God's **CHARACTER** (2 Timothy 4:16-18)

Follow the **EXAMPLE** of Paul (2 Timothy 4:6-8)

Spend time with other like-minded **BROTHERS** (2 Timothy 1:4; 1:16-18)

### **Points of Application:**

Harington Evans, a well-known pastor in England stated:

R. Chapman has just left us. He slept here last night, after preaching for me at John Street Chapel. Oh, what a man of God is he! What grace does he exhibit! Courage, meekness, self-denial, tenderness, perseverance, love for souls — all springing out of love of Christ and God — seem beautifully blended together in beautiful symmetry. [*Agape Leadership*, Peterson and Strauch p. 10; Lewis & Roth Publishers]

Proverbs 4:18 — “But the path of the righteous is like the light of the dawn, That **SHINES** brighter and brighter until the full day.”

1 Corinthians 15:58 — “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be **STEADFAST**, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, **KNOWING** that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.”