

October 3 - October 15

LAYING HOLD ON
ETERNAL LIFE

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GOD'S DISPENSATION
VS DIFFERENT
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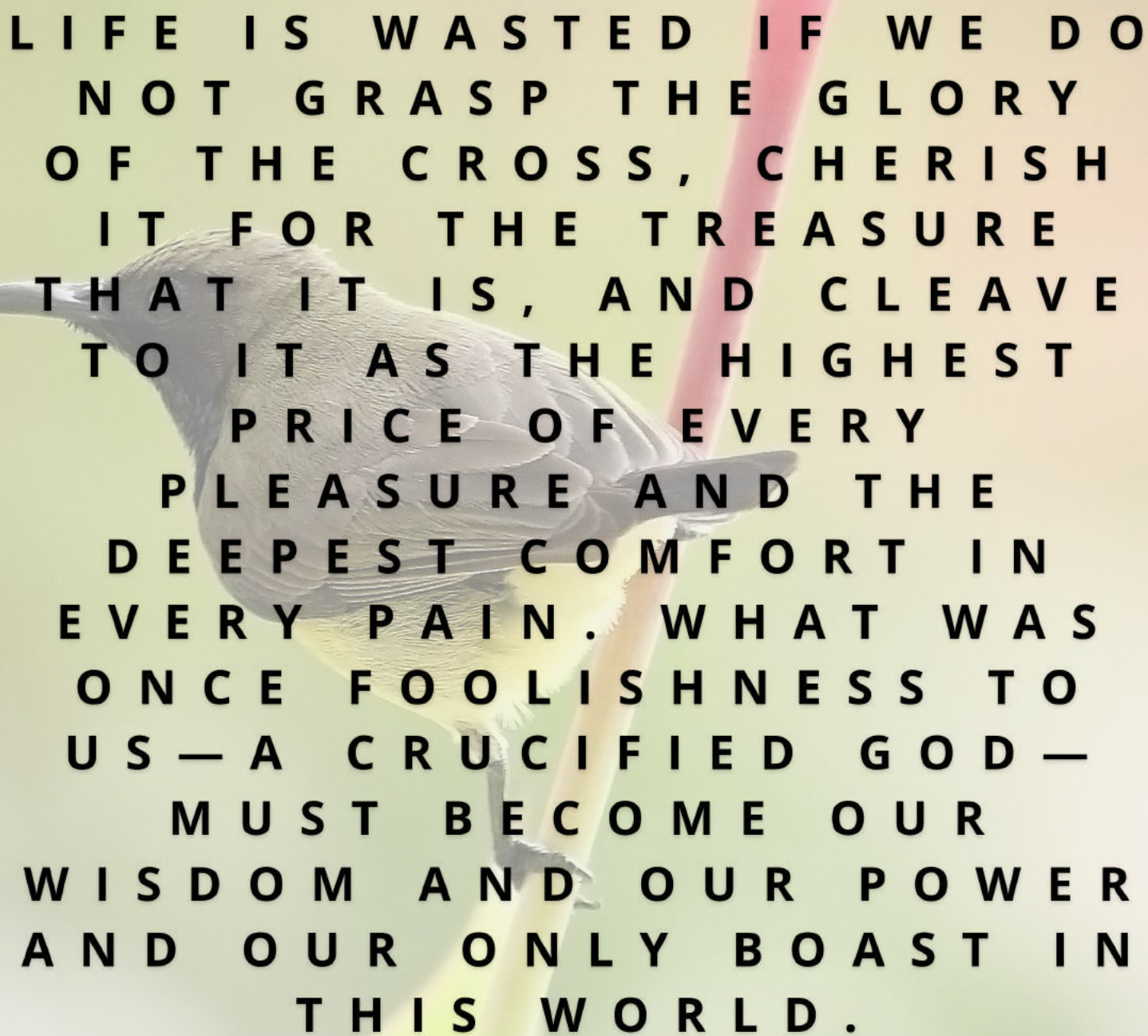
WHO WAS JOHN THE
APOSTLE IN THE
BIBLE?

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A white dove is perched on a pink flower stem. The dove is facing left, with its head turned slightly towards the viewer. The background is a soft, out-of-focus mix of yellow and green, suggesting a garden or field. The text is overlaid on the image in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

LIFE IS WASTED IF WE DO
NOT GRASP THE GLORY
OF THE CROSS, CHERISH
IT FOR THE TREASURE
THAT IT IS, AND CLEAVE
TO IT AS THE HIGHEST
PRICE OF EVERY
PLEASURE AND THE
DEEPEST COMFORT IN
EVERY PAIN. WHAT WAS
ONCE FOOLISHNESS TO
US—A CRUCIFIED GOD—
MUST BECOME OUR
WISDOM AND OUR POWER
AND OUR ONLY BOAST IN
THIS WORLD.

- JOHN PIPER



L A Y I N G H O L D O N E T E R N A L L I F E

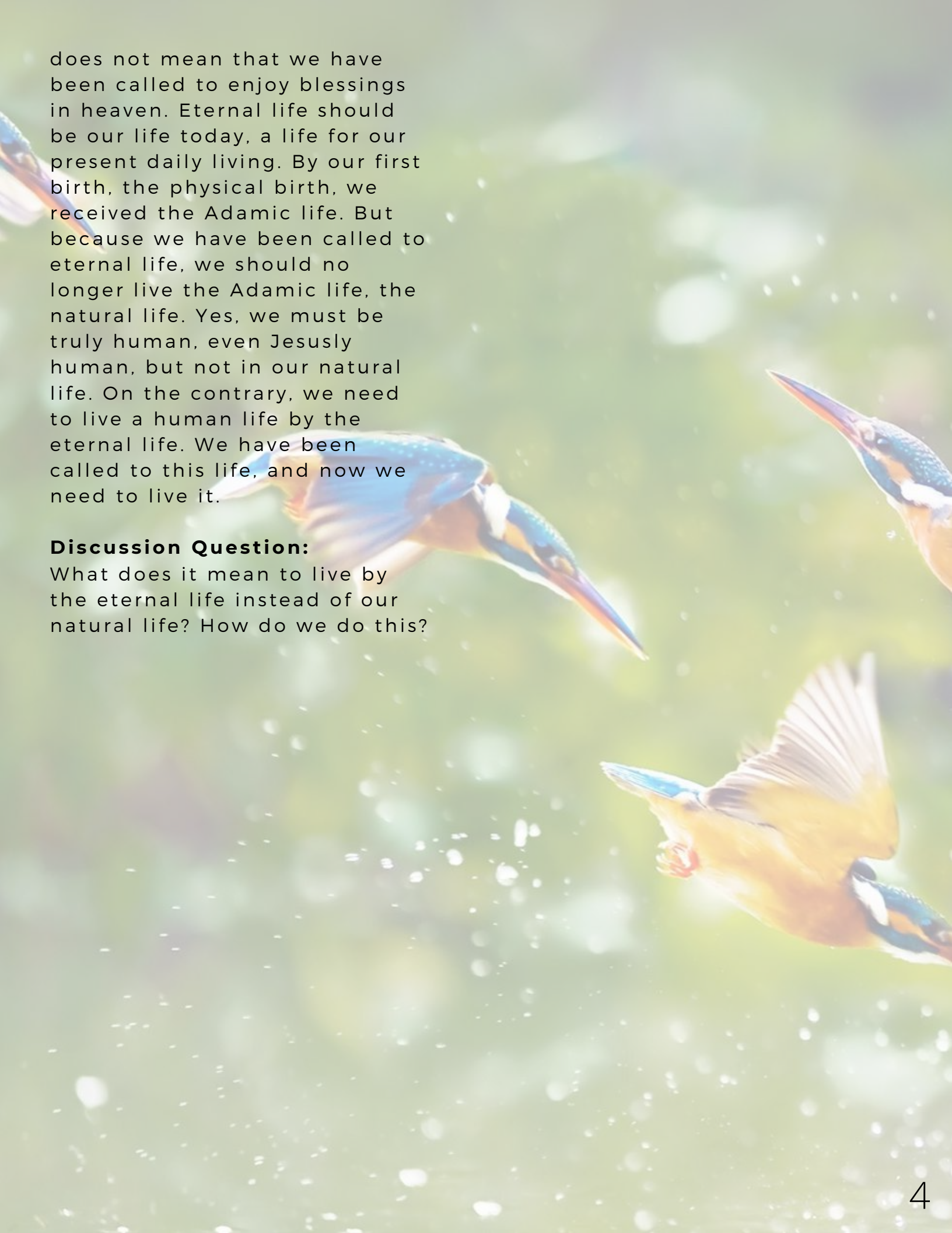
1 Tim 1:6 Fight the good fight of the faith; lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called and have confessed the good confession before many witnesses.

In verse 12 Paul also says, “Lay hold on the eternal life to which you were called and have confessed the good confession before many witnesses.” The eternal life here is the divine life, the uncreated life of God, which is eternal. Eternal denotes the nature more than the time element of the divine life. To fight the good fight of the faith in the Christian life, especially in the Christian ministry, we need to lay hold on this divine life and not trust in our human life. Hence, in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, the eternal life is stressed again and again (1 Tim. 1:16; 6:19; 2 Tim. 1:1, 10; Titus 1:2; 3:7). To bring forth God’s dispensation concerning the church in 1 Timothy, to confront the process of the church’s decline in 2 Timothy, and to maintain good order in the church life in Titus, this life is a prerequisite.

We have been called to the eternal life of God. We were born of the human natural life, but we were reborn of the divine eternal life when we were called by God in Christ.

Verses 11 and 12 are a marvelous summary of nearly the whole New Testament. A man of God should pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and meekness; he should fight for God’s New Testament economy and lay hold on eternal life. We should not do anything apart from this life. We should speak to our husband or wife and to our children not by the natural life, but by the eternal life. Even in the matter of buying a pair of shoes, we should live according to the eternal life to which we have been called. As today’s Timothys, we need to lay hold on eternal life.

In verse 12 Paul specifically says that we have been called to eternal life. No other book in the New Testament speaks of “the eternal life to which you were called.” This is a particular characteristic of 1 Timothy. Do you realize that you have been called to eternal life? This eternal life does not mainly refer to blessings in the future. To be called to eternal life

The background of the page is a soft-focus photograph of three kingfishers in flight. The birds are vibrant blue, orange, and white, with long, pointed beaks. They are captured in various stages of flight, with wings spread, against a bright, greenish-yellow bokeh background that suggests a natural, outdoor setting. The lighting is bright and airy, creating a sense of movement and vitality.

does not mean that we have been called to enjoy blessings in heaven. Eternal life should be our life today, a life for our present daily living. By our first birth, the physical birth, we received the Adamic life. But because we have been called to eternal life, we should no longer live the Adamic life, the natural life. Yes, we must be truly human, even Jesusly human, but not in our natural life. On the contrary, we need to live a human life by the eternal life. We have been called to this life, and now we need to live it.

Discussion Question:

What does it mean to live by the eternal life instead of our natural life? How do we do this?



GOD'S DISPENSATION VS DIFFERENT TEACHINGS

1Tim 1:19 Holding faith and a good conscience, concerning which some, thrusting these away, have become shipwrecked regarding the faith;

1Tim 2:4 Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth

1Tim 2:7 For which I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I speak the truth; I do not lie), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth

What is the focus of God's revelation, the focal point of God's economy, His dispensation? God's economy is to dispense Himself in Christ through the Spirit into His chosen people so that they may have the divine life and nature to be Christ's Body, the new man, the church, to express God in the universe.

The problem among Christians throughout the centuries has always been the differing teachings versus God's revelation. Some may argue that when they teach people to be immersed,



they teach according to God's revelation. Although this may be true, immersion is not the main point of the divine revelation. The crucial point is not related to immersion, to whether we use wine or grape juice at the Lord's table, or to whether we believe in a rapture that is pre-tribulation, post-tribulation, or mid-tribulation. How pitiful that Christians have argued over the type of water used in baptism, but have altogether neglected God's dispensation! It is vital for us to see that God's economy is God's dispensing of Himself as the wonderful Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—into His chosen ones so that, having His very life and nature, they may become His many sons, the members of Christ, to manifest Him in the universe. This is the central revelation in the Scriptures; it is what the Bible speaks of as God's dispensation.

There were some during Paul's time who were teaching

differently, just as there are today. They were teaching things that were versus God's dispensation. However, Peter, John, James, Paul, and the rest of the apostles preached the same thing—Christ and the church.

Because the apostles taught and preached Christ and the church, they all had one ministry. For this reason, Paul could say, "We have this ministry" (2 Cor. 4:1). The apostles were many, but they had received just one ministry. In chapter one of Acts there is a further indication that all the apostles were in one and the same ministry (v. 17). Any so-called ministry that is different from the ministry of Paul and the other apostles is actually not a ministry at all; it is a different teaching. According to the New Testament, the one ministry is to minister Christ to God's chosen people so that the church may be formed. This is God's economy, and it is versus all manner of differing teachings. God's economy certainly is not a matter of head covering, foot-washing, and regulations about eating or the keeping of days. God's dispensation is versus these differing teachings.

Life-study of First Timothy
Message 1

Discussion Questions

1. What is God's economy? How is that related to your daily life?
2. How do we preach and speak the same thing as the apostles did?

WHO WAS JOHN THE APOSTLE IN THE BIBLE?

The Apostle John is the author of five New Testament books: the gospel of John, the three short epistles that also bear his name (1, 2, and 3 John) and the book of Revelation. John was part of Jesus' "inner circle" and, along with Peter and James, John was given the privilege of witnessing Jesus' conversation with Moses and Elijah on the mount of the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9). His importance in the twelve grew as he matured, and after the crucifixion, he became a "pillar" in the Jerusalem church (Galatians 2:9), ministered with Peter (Acts 3:1, 4:13, 8:14), and finally was exiled to the island of Patmos by the Romans, where he received from God the majestic visions that comprise the book of Revelation.

Not to be confused with John the Baptist, the Apostle John is the brother of James, another of the twelve

disciples of Jesus. Together, they were called by Jesus "Boanerges," which means "sons of thunder," and therein we find a key to John's personality. Both brothers were characterized by zeal, passion and ambition. In his early days with Jesus, at times John acted rashly, recklessly, impetuously, and aggressively. We see him in Mark 9 forbidding a man to cast out demons in Jesus' name because he was not part of the twelve (Mark 9:38-41). Jesus gently rebuked him, saying no one could cast out demons in Jesus' name and then turn around and speak evil of Him. In Luke 9:51-54, we see the brothers wanting to call down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans who refused to welcome Jesus. Again, Jesus had to rebuke them for their intolerance and lack of genuine love for the lost. John's zeal for Jesus was also influenced by his natural ambition, as seen in his request (through his mother) that he and his brother be seated on Jesus' right and left hands in the kingdom, an incident that caused a temporary rift between the brothers and the other disciples (Matthew 20:20-24).

In spite of these youthful

expressions of misdirected passion, John aged well. He began to understand the need for humility in those who desired to be great. John's is the only gospel that records Jesus washing the disciples' feet (John 13:4-16). Jesus' simple act of servanthood must have impacted John greatly. By the time of the crucifixion, Jesus had enough confidence in the young man to turn the care of His mother over to him, a charge John took very seriously. From that day on, John cared for her as if she were his own mother (John 19:25-27). John's rash request for special honor in the kingdom had given way to a compassion and humility that would characterize his ministry in his later life. Although he remained courageous and bold, his ambition was balanced by the humility he learned at Jesus' feet. This willingness to serve others and suffer for the sake of the gospel must have enabled him to bear his final imprisonment on Patmos where, according to reliable historical sources, he lived in a cave, cut off from those he loved, and was treated with cruelty and reproach. In the opening of the book of Revelation, which he received from the Holy Spirit during this time, he referred to himself as 'your brother and companion in the suffering



and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus" (Revelation 1:9). He had learned to look beyond his earthly sufferings to the heavenly glory that awaits all who patiently endure.

A H Y M N A D A Y K E E P S
Y O U H U M M I N G A L L T H E
W A Y



FOR WHICH CAUSE
2 Tim 1:6-8

For which cause, I remind you
To fan into flame the gift of God
Which is in you
Through the laying on of my hands,
You fan into flame the gift of God,
Which is in you.

For God has not given us
A spirit of cowardice,
But of power and of love
And of sobermindedness.

Do not be, be not ashamed
Of the testimony of our Lord
Nor of me;
Suffer with me and with the gospel,
It's the testimony of our Lord
For the gospel.



B I B L E C H A L L E N G E

GOAL: TO READ THE ENTIRE NEW TESTAMENT IN ONE YEAR

5 CHAPTERS A WEEK



WEEK ONE (10/3-10/8)

MONDAY: 1 TIMOTHY 1

https://text.recoveryversion.bible/54_1Timothy_1.htm

TUESDAY: 1 TIMOTHY 2

https://text.recoveryversion.bible/54_1Timothy_2.htm#FTi2

WEDNESDAY: 1 TIMOTHY 3

https://text.recoveryversion.bible/54_1Timothy_3.htm#FTi3

THURSDAY: 1 TIMOTHY 4

https://text.recoveryversion.bible/54_1Timothy_4.htm#FTi4

FRIDAY: 1 TIMOTHY 5


https://text.recoveryversion.bible/54_1Timothy_5.htm#FTi5



B I B L E C H A L L E N G E

GOAL: TO READ THE ENTIRE NEW TESTAMENT IN ONE YEAR

5 CHAPTERS A WEEK



WEEK TWO (10/10-10/15)

MONDAY: 1 TIMOTHY 6

https://text.recoveryversion.bible/54_1Timothy_6.htm#FTi6

TUESDAY: 2 TIMOTHY 1

https://text.recoveryversion.bible/55_2Timothy_1.htm

WEDNESDAY: 2 TIMOTHY 2

https://text.recoveryversion.bible/55_2Timothy_2.htm#STi2

THURSDAY: 2 TIMOTHY 3

https://text.recoveryversion.bible/55_2Timothy_3.htm#STi3

FRIDAY: 2 TIMOTHY 4

https://text.recoveryversion.bible/55_2Timothy_4.htm#STi4