

INTRODUCTION 引言

Training and testing prepare one for the real world. For example, graduates starting a new job or new phones ready to be released. Paul wrote two letters to his student Timothy, as the young man would become a solo pastor. Our college freshmen are about to face some transitions too. Moms will no longer cook for them and dads will not give them rides. Parents will not serve as their alarm clock or calendar either. But they will still be children's ATM machines for a few more years. Long gone is the voice-activation function at home. Big boys and girls cannot just yell: "Mom, I need clean clothes" and expect laundry service. Growing up can be inconvenient but exciting at the same time. Maturity requires a switch of mentality. Young people have to make their own decisions after they leave home. But freedom comes with responsibilities. Paul's encouragements to Timothy are useful to new students and all of us. Skillful learners should become successful leaders. Imitators will turn into influencers. Questions are: who do you imitate after and who will you influence?

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Set Aside Trivial Matters 與平凡的事分開

Paul asked Timothy to make some adjustments to make him a better servant. First, he must set aside some trivial matters. Paul compares honorable to dishonorable vessels. We all have simple dishes and utensils for daily use. You do not feel too bad when you scratch and even smash a few of them. Besides, some people have a set of fine China and fancy utensils stored up in a cabinet. They are reserved for special occasions like family reunions or hosting guests. Both honorable and dishonorable vessels are used for eating. But they have different values. Paul urged Timothy to go beyond ordinary and pursue extraordinary things. He suggests in verse 21: **... set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.** Timothy could become a valuable instrument when he allowed God to set him apart. There were some routine duties Timothy had to handle. For example, assigning people to serve, visiting the sick and caring for the poor. As a pastor, Timothy's major ministry was to teach the Bible. He should not be burdened by trivial matters and forget God's calling for him. When his perspective was clear, then he could be more effective for God's Kingdom. Besides, he could convey the truth even when he was not holding a Bible on a podium. He instilled virtues like faithfulness and diligence to coworkers. He showed God's love by serving needy people. When we are clear about our calling, then we will keep the main thing the main thing. Students: God's calling for you is to study. You do well in school not only to please your parents and to keep your scholarship. Your GPA is a way to glorify God. You can barely meet the minimum requirements, or you can make a difference through what you do. If you are a Christian, you are sent by God as His representative to the campus. All you say and do should bear witness to your status. It will actually protect you if people know that you are a believer. Hopefully, they will respect you and not ask you to participate in sinful activities. On the positive side, you should influence them by your good behavior. You are like a living Bible to others. You are a leader to them even though they are not your followers. You display godly attitudes, speech and actions. You show people that qualities

such as honesty and humility are not just good ideas, but they are practical values in the real world. You can be useful to the Lord when He sets you apart as a holy instrument.

2. Sit Beside Truthful Members 和敬虔的人同坐

Timothy had to set aside trivial matters. Moreover, he must also sit beside truthful members. Like-minded people share burdens and cheer each other up. Paul advises Timothy in verse 22: **So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.** “Youthful passions” can be some immature traits such as self-centeredness, impatience or stubbornness. Older people can have those immature qualities too! Those issues may dissolve unity and disrupt God’s ministries. Paul tells Timothy to run away from immature mindsets. Instead, he should partner with godly people to pursue four virtues: righteousness, faith, love and peace. Righteousness is more than simply right. It is what God sees as true. When we act by faith, we look beyond what we can see now and expect God to do great things. In addition, we need to show love toward others in what we do. We should be mindful of their needs and feelings. That is why Paul also brings up peace. Peace is also like a glue that binds people together. Things that do not promote peace will lead to conflicts. Godly people will help us grow in these four areas. College freshmen: building the right friendship is critical when you go to a new environment. You may feel lost in the campus the first few weeks. You should not feel lost in God’s family. You must find a faith community. It can be a campus ministry or a church. It is a safe haven where you are accepted without criticism. You will find people who are on the same page with the Bible. Let me elaborate four things with the word PAGE. P stands for prayer. Truthful members do not only pray for you. They will spend time to pray with you. A is authentic. Authentic people do not put up a disguise. They are the same whether or not others are watching. G refers to give. They are willing to give you their time, help and advice. They will give you a ride and advice where to get the best pizzas. Finally, E is about emotions. Being serious does not mean wearing a poker-face. Even Jesus showed genuine emotions such as mercy, sympathy and joy. True friends will laugh with you and shed tears for you. When you meet people like that, you will soon become one of them. You will support and care for each other. Even when you are alone on campus, you will not feel lonely.

CONCLUSION 結論

Skillful learners should become successful leaders. Imitators will turn into influencers. Timothy was a student of Paul. But ultimately, both persons were imitators of Jesus. That made them into great influencers in God’s Kingdom. Children in their upbringing learn from parents, teachers and peers. All the knowledge and experience will shape them to be mature people. Let me close by giving some encouragement to the young people who will move on to college. You are blessed if you grow up in the church. If you continue to be imitators of Jesus, then you can be effective influencers for Him. Your identity will determine your purpose. Identity is not just about who you are. People know you by name, the school you attend and you major. The more important part is whose you are. If you are a Christian, then you are a child of God and a citizen of the Heavenly Kingdom. Your purpose in life is more than what you want to achieve, but also what God can achieve through you. Then you will not become a result of mass production of the world. Rather, you will become a masterpiece of the Lord.

2 Timothy 提摩太後書 2:20-22

INTRODUCTION 引言

訓練與考驗是為了迎接現實生活。例如，畢業生開始新工作，或是手機準備要上市。保羅寫了兩封信給他的學生提摩太，因為這位年輕人即將獨自擔任牧師。我們中間的大學新生也快要面對人生的一些轉變。媽媽不再為他們做飯，爸爸也不再接送他們。父母也不再是他們的鬧鐘或行事曆。但在接下來的幾年裡，他們仍然繼續扮演孩子們的提款機角色。在家中的「語音啟動」功能不再存在。大孩子們不能再只喊一句：「媽，我需要乾淨的衣服！」就期待有人幫他們洗衣服。成長雖然帶來不便，但同時也充滿了興奮與期待。成熟需要心態上的轉變。年輕人在離家之後，必須自己做決定。但自由是與責任息息相關的。保羅對提摩太的勉勵，也是對新同學以及我們每個人的勉勵。熟練的學員應當成為成功的領袖。模仿者將會成為影響別人的人。問題是：你模仿誰？你又會影響誰？

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. Set Aside Trivial Matters 與平凡的事分開

保羅要求提摩太作出一些調整，讓他成為更好的僕人。首先，他必須與平凡的事分開。保羅比較貴重的器皿與卑賤的器皿。我們都有日常使用的簡單碗盤和餐具。就算你刮到甚至打破這些用具時，你也不會覺得太可惜。此外，有些人擁有一套精緻的碗盤和餐具，放在櫥櫃裡，只在特別的場合使用，比如家庭團聚或招待客人。無論是貴重還是卑賤的器皿，都是用來食飯的，只是價值不一樣而已。保羅勸告提摩太要超越平凡，追求卓越的事情。他在第 21 節中建議：**...成為聖潔，合乎主用，預備行各樣的善事**。當提摩太讓神把他分別出來時，他就能成為一個有價值的器皿。提摩太有一些日常要處理的職責。例如，安排服侍人員、探望病人和照顧窮人。作為牧師，提摩太的主要事工是教導聖經。他不應該被瑣碎的事情困擾，以致忘記了神對他的呼召。當他的眼光清晰時，他就能更加有效地為神的國度效力。此外，就算他沒有拿著聖經或是站在講台上，他也能傳遞真理。他可以灌輸忠心和勤奮等美德給同工，並透過服侍有需要的人來彰顯神的愛。當我們清楚自己的呼召時，我們就能集中做最重要的事情。同學們：神對你們的呼召是學習。你們在學校的表現，不只是為了取悅父母和保住獎學金。你的成績是榮耀神的方式。你可以只是達到最低要求，或者你可以通過你所做的事情帶來改變。如果你是基督徒，你是被神差派到校園作為祂的代表。你所說的每一句話和做的每一件事，都應該見證你的身份。其實，當人們知道你是信徒時，這能保護你。期望他們會尊重你，不會要求你參與犯罪的活動。在積極方面，你應該透過你的美德來影響他們。對他們來說，你就像一本活的聖經。縱使他們不是你的跟隨者，你依然是他們的領袖。你展示出敬虔的態度、言語和行為。你向人們顯明誠實

和謙卑等品格不只是好主意，而且是在實際生活中行得通的。當神把你分別為聖成為聖潔的器皿時，你就能被祂使用。

2. Sit Beside Truthful Members 和敬虔的人同坐

提摩太必須與平凡的事分開。此外，他還必須和敬虔的人同坐。志同道合的人分擔重擔，並互相鼓勵。保羅在第 22 節中建議提摩太：**你要逃避少年的私慾，同那清心禱告主的人追求公義、信德、仁愛、和平。**「少年的私慾」可能是一些不成熟的特徵，例如自我中心、缺乏耐性或固執。成年人也可能有這些不成熟的品格！這些問題可能會破壞合一，並擾亂神的事工。保羅告訴提摩太要遠離不成熟的心態。相反，他應該與敬虔的人成為伙伴，並追求四項美德：公義、信德、仁愛與和平。公義不只是做正確的事情，而且做神認為真實的事。當我們憑信心行事時，我們便能超越眼前所見，期待神成就偉大的事。此外，我們需要在行為上表現出對他人的愛。我們應該關心他們的需要與感受。這也是為何保羅提到和平。和平就像是粘膠，把人們緊密聯繫在一起。那些不促進和平的事物將導致衝突。敬虔的人會幫助我們在這四個方面成長。大學的新同學們：當你進入新的環境時，建立正確的友誼非常重要。在校園的前幾週，你可能會感到迷失，但你不應該在神的家裡感到迷失。你必須找到一個信仰社群。這可能是一個校園團契或是一個教會。它是一個沒有批評、接納你的避風港。你會找到那些與你在聖經上心意相同的人。讓我以英文“PAGE”的四個字母來說明四個要點。P 代表禱告。敬虔的人不只為你祈禱，他們也會花時間與你一起禱告。A 代表真誠。真誠的人不會戴上假面具，無論是否有人在場，他們都是表現一致的。G 代表給予。他們願意給你時間、幫助和建議。他們會給你搭便車，並告訴你哪裡有最好吃的披薩。E 代表情感。嚴肅並不等於沒有表情。就連耶穌也會表現出真實的情感，如憐憫、同情和喜樂。真正的朋友會和你一起笑，為你流淚。當你遇到這樣的人之時，你很快也會成為他們中的一員。你們會互相支持與關心。縱使你在校園裡獨自一人，也不會感到孤單。

CONCLUSION 結論

熟練的學員應當成為成功的領袖。模仿者將會成為影響別人的人。提摩太是保羅的學生，但最終，他們都是模仿耶穌的人。因此，他們在神的國度中成為偉大的影響別人的人。孩子們在成長過程中向父母、老師和同輩的人學習。他們獲得的知識和經驗塑造他們的品格，使他們成為成熟的人。讓我在結束時鼓勵即將進入大學的年輕人。如果你在教會中成長，那你是蒙福的。如果你繼續模仿耶穌，你便可以藉著耶穌影響別人。你的身份將決定你的目的。身份不只是關於你是誰，人們知道你的名字、你就讀的學校和你的專業。更重要的是你屬於誰。如果你是基督徒，那麼你是神的兒女，是天國的公民。你人生的目標不只是你想要達成的事，也包括神能夠通過你成就的事。這樣，你就不會成為這個世界大規模生產的結果，你將成為主的傑作。