

### **MY GENERATION (part-five of a six-part study)**

With the warning issued in vv3-4, Paul now presents to Timothy and us, the all-important **challenge** which we must fulfill in order to counteract this negative trend. So, he writes the following, in 2 Timothy 4:5 – **“But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”** Paul’s admonition begins with the expression “but you.” He makes it clear that Timothy’s ministry must consist of the very opposite of what is taking place in vv3-4. In order for that to occur, we must first “be sober in all things.” The word “sober” speaks of being vigilant and alert in regard to what is taking place around us (cf. 1 Peter 5:8). Second, we must be willing to “endure hardship.” Why? Swimming upstream is far more difficult than going with the flow. If we naively go along in order to get along, we will suddenly find ourselves living in vv3-4, without knowing how we got there, or how to get out.

Third, whether we are in fulltime Christian ministry or not, we must be actively involved in evangelistic outreach. Meeting the spiritual needs of our fellow believers is priority one, in what I call “the discipleship dynamic.” But if we are to fulfill the Great Commission mandate given to us, winning the lost cannot be overlooked and neglected. It is how the discipleship dynamic is initiated. There is no other way to make a disciple and thus fulfill that mandate, than by leading a sinner to the Savior, and then by bringing them to spiritual maturity in Christ.

The significant implication to be derived from this critically important passage is stated by Paul in v2 as well as v5. The apostle admonishes his disciple Timothy to preach the word (v2) and do the work of an evangelist (v5). These instructions stand in direct contrast to the negative trend described in vv3-4. In other words, that trend will de-emphasize evangelism and discipleship. The two primary responsibilities of Christians during the Church Age will be set aside in favor of other pursuits. For my generation, this has consisted of engaging on a mission of political activism, as a substitute for the Great Commission. It has also resulted in a foolish fascination with secular psychology in a misguided attempt at Christ-like growth and development. Over the course of the last thirty years, the “teachers” mentioned in v3 have been remarkably successful in systematically brainwashing Evangelicals, so that the “time” warned about in v3 has arrived upon my generation in full force. As a result, this has become God’s calling to me, in these last days, at the very end of the Church Age; for the express purpose of confronting this negative spiritual condition of the Christian faith in America, described by Paul in 2 Timothy 4:3-4.

So, I encourage you, by the grace of God, to break free from this addiction to political activism. Such a lifestyle is never portrayed or endorsed anywhere in the New Testament. The men in Israel who combined religion with politics, during our Savior’s time on earth, were the scribes and the Pharisees. How well did Jesus get along with them? What quid pro quo deals did He strike with them? When do we ever read of an apostle resorting to political activism in order to advance the cause of Christ in our world? Paul declares the very opposite to be true in 2 Corinthians 10:3-4. He did not rely on weapons of the flesh but those which were and are divinely powerful; namely, the Word of God and prayer (Ephesians 6:17-18). Did not Paul also warn us about seeking after resources outside of our relationship with Christ, in Colossians 2:6-10? So, I encourage you to also break free from your dependence upon secular psychology as a means to Christian growth and development. Instead, embrace the foundational principles for Christian living revealed in Romans, chapters six through eight. Employ them every day of your life. It will transform you into the person God wants you to be, in perfect harmony with His will for your life.