

Equipping Students for Ministry

Message 01 of 03 in the series: "Next is Now!"

A. Paul equipped his young disciple Timothy for ministry because he believed Timothy was ready, able, and willing.

"Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. Until I get there, focus on reading the Scriptures to the church, encouraging the believers, and teaching them. Do not neglect the spiritual gift you received through the prophecy spoken over you when the elders of the church laid their hands on you. Give your complete attention to these matters. Throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone will see your progress."
1 Timothy 4:12-15 (NLT)

B. At Centerpoint, the next generation of young disciples, like Timothy, are ready, able, and willing to do ministry right now!

1. God loves to use young people to accomplish His purposes.

"Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young." 1 Timothy 4:12a (NLT)

"Don't worry about this Philistine,' David told Saul. 'I'll go fight him!' 'Don't be ridiculous!' Saul replied. 'There's no way you can fight this Philistine and possibly win! **You're only a boy**, and he's been a man of war since his youth.' But David persisted. 'I have been taking care of my father's sheep and goats,' he said. 'When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, I go after it with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death. I have done this to both lions and bears, and I'll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God! The Lord who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!'" 1 Samuel 17:32-37a (NLT)

"...God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, **to a virgin named Mary**. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, '...you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.'" Luke 1:26-31 (NLT)

Life Application: God loves to use people of any age to accomplish His purposes.

"**Moses was 120 years old** when he died, yet his eyesight was clear, and he was as strong as ever."
Deuteronomy 34:7 (NLT)

"Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations. They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were **both very old**... While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him... the angel said, 'Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. **Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son**, and you are to name him John. You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord... He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. And he... will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord.'" Luke 1:6-17a (NLT)

2. God wants young men and women to live out their faith publicly as powerful examples of what Christ-centered lives look like.

"Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity... Throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone will see your progress."
1 Timothy 4:12b & 15b (NLT)

"David replied to the Philistine, 'You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of Heaven's Armies—the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. Today the Lord will conquer you... and **the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel! And everyone assembled here will know that the Lord rescues his people...**'"
1 Samuel 17:45-47a (NLT)

"Mary responded, '**I am the Lord's servant**. May everything you have said about me come true.'"
Luke 1:38a (NLT)

Life Application: God wants all of us to live out our faith in Jesus publicly.

“You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, **let your good deeds shine out for all to see**, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.” Matthew 5:14-16 (NLT)

3. God gives spiritual gifts to young men and women so they can do their part in building up the church.

“Do not neglect the spiritual gift you received through the prophecy spoken over you when the elders of the church laid their hands on you.” 1 Timothy 4:14 (NLT)

“In his grace, **God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well**. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.” Romans 12:6-8 (NLT)

Note: Our staff has the responsibility of equipping believers of all ages for ministry. “Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. **Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ**. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.”
Ephesians 4:11-13 (NLT)

Life Application: God has given me spiritual gifts so I can do my part in building up the church.

“...The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.” Luke 10:2 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions:

Read 1 Timothy 4:12-16 and then discuss the following questions:

1. What was your spiritual life like when you were a student in high school? Were you involved in a student ministry/youth group? If so, how did it impact you?
2. What roles can young people play in our church? In your opinion where can they lead, serve, teach, etc.?
3. How does it make you feel to learn that David (1 Samuel 17:32-47) and Mary (Luke 1:26-38) were very likely teenagers when God used them to do amazing things? How does it make you feel to learn that Moses was leading the nation of Israel at 120 (Deuteronomy 34:7) and Elizabeth was a very old woman when she gave birth to John the Baptist (Luke 1:5-17)? How young/old do we need to be for God to use us?
4. Read Matthew 5:14-16. What do you think Jesus meant when He said, “You are the light of the world”? How can students let their lights shine? How can the rest of us do this?
5. Read Romans 12:6-8 and Ephesians 4:11-13. What spiritual gift(s) has God given you? How can you use your gift(s) to build up our church? What role do our pastors and staff play in helping people discover and use their gifts?
6. How important is student ministry to any church? How can we encourage teenagers in our church?
7. Spend some time as a group praying for students in our church and for our student ministry. Ask God to raise up leaders (Luke 10:2). Ask God to work powerfully in the lives of our students giving them maturity and godly wisdom and the spiritual gifts they need to build up our church. Ask God to show our staff how to equip and empower our students to study the Bible, pray, serve, lead, and share their faith. Pray for a spiritual awakening in our local schools.