

Hear, Entrust, Repeat (2 Timothy 2:1-3)

Big Idea: To spread the gospel: hear, entrust, and repeat.

Okay, is anyone else confused?

Last week, on Monday, the WHO [announced](#) that asymptomatic transmission of COVID-19 is very rare. A day later they [pretty much said the opposite](#). It's a "really complex question." "Information pertaining to the spread of coronavirus is still unknown."

There's so much we don't know! I'm not trying to pick on the WHO. There's still so much we don't know about the virus and how it spreads. We're all still learning, even the experts.

We may not know how the coronavirus spreads, but we know how the gospel of Jesus Christ spreads.

We just read these verses: "You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:1-2).

Here's how the gospel spreads. Three stages: hear, entrust, repeat.

Hear

Paul just assumes, rightly, that Timothy has heard what Paul had taught him. Timothy had heard, and he wasn't alone. Paul says that he had heard these words in the presence of many witnesses.

What did Timothy hear? We don't have to guess, because we can find about ten of Paul's sermons in the book of Acts.

Paul consistently proclaimed God's Word. Paul said these amazing words in Acts 20:

I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ ... Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. (Acts 20:20, 26-27)

Paul continually talked about Scripture, and at the heart of that is repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, what Jesus has done for anyone who wants it: transforming us from light to darkness, from death to life, making us completely new creatures. That's what Paul preached and what Timothy heard.

This shapes the kind of church we need to be.

In his amazing book [What Church Can Be](#), Matthew Kruse describes what this looks like at the church he pastors.

If you spend a month at Seven Mile Road, you'll notice Scripture flavors everything. Every gathering, setting, situation, and rhythm encounter the words of Scripture read, heard, believed, loved, and obeyed. Sunday mornings, gospel

communities, staff meetings, baby dedications, leadership development tracks, planning retreats, membership interviews, conflict resolutions, and yes, even business meetings: all begin with Scripture. Hearing from, thinking on, marveling at, and submitting to the canon is the norm. Our songs, sermons, classes, podcasts, liturgies, prayers, and random conversations are always referencing, quoting, and bringing Scripture to bear.

...God's words are eternally true. He has spoken on the pages of Scripture, and we are convinced that our deepest joy intersects with our clearest comprehension of what He has said to be true about who He is, what He has done for us, and how He calls us to live. We want all of our thoughts about God and ourselves to be shaped by the words of Scripture.

Can I get an amen to that?

That's the kind of church we want to be. We want to hear and speak and hear again the truth of Scripture. Your presence here right now, hearing Scripture preached, is part of that.

So friends, love your Bible. If you're going to be contagious with the gospel, that's where it starts. Get a good case of the Bible yourself so that you can pass it on. As Kruse says, get "wrecked, corrected, moved, enlivened, inspired, and changed by it" on a weekly basis.

If you don't have a Bible, I'd love to help get you one. If you don't have a regular Bible habit, it's one of the best habits you could ever develop. Don't just read it. Let it into your life. Allow it to shape the way you see the world. Look for Jesus in it. Meditate on it. Become a Psalm 1 kind of person who meditates on Scripture day and night. And keep showing up here with open Bibles. Never take my word for it. Check the Scriptures as I preach to see if what I'm saying is true (Acts 17:11).

That's the first of three stages: hear. Keep on doing this.

Here's the second stage.

Entrust

“what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men...” (2 Timothy 2:2).

Okay, so here's what it looks like. Look around for reliable people around you. The word “faithful” in this verse means ready to receive the Word of God. It means that they don't lose, ignore, neglect, or falsify it. Remember: Timothy was had some people around him who opposed the truth (2:25) and who could not endure sound doctrine (4:3-4).

So look around. Who are the people who lean in when the Bible is opened? Who shows an interest in learning more? Continually be on the lookout for those people. They don't have to be very far along. Their faithfulness to receive the Word matters more than how far along they are spiritually. They could be a brand new believer. I would even be willing to do this with someone who wasn't a believer but who was hungry for God's Word.

David Helm [says](#):

Start by praying that God will lead you to someone to whom he is already looking to reveal more of himself. You can be sure that those people exist, because Jesus has already told us that the harvest fields are “white for harvest”. Certainly, there will be someone in your sphere of relationships who knows that you

are a Christian—someone who might be interested in reading the Bible with you. Start asking God to lead you to that person.

And when you find them, entrust what you've heard to them. What does this look like? I have a t-shirt at home that says "teach everything you know." I like that. It doesn't mean that you know everything. It just means that you are faithful to teach what you *do* know.

What do you wish you had known when you started following Jesus? You can teach that. What does it look like for you to follow Jesus? What struggles have you faced? What victories have you won? How have you learned how to pray? What are you learning from God's Word right now?

Still don't know what to entrust to them? Just open a Bible together. In his book [*One on One Bible Reading*](#), David Helm says:

Any committed Christian is capable of initiating a good conversation on a biblical text ... Be encouraged! Invite someone to read the Bible with you. Rest on the power of the gospel that is in his word. And know that, in the power of the Spirit and through the instrumentality of his word, God will honor your commitment to be in discussion with someone on the message of the gospel.

Friends, as they say, this is not rocket surgery! But it's powerful. If you want to learn how to do this, pick up a copy of David Helm's book *One on One Bible Reading*. It's so simple. All you need is hunger and faithfulness.

This is what it takes. Hear, entrust, and then there's one more step:

Repeat

Here is the final step, and it is in fact what's happened throughout history. "What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, *who will be able to teach others also.*"

So it's like a relay race. You pass the torch, but the goal is that the person who receives the torch passes it on, and so on. We don't know a lot about how coronavirus spreads, but we know a lot about how the gospel spreads, and this is it. Hear. Entrust. Repeat. Our church can do this. All of us can be engaged in this.

Think about if our church was a hardware store. We could be like one of those big box hardware stores with 30-foot ceilings and thousands of items, but where you are pretty much on your own. Or we could be like the hardware store Kevin Miller talks about: Hooper Wolfe's hardware store, with an old wood door, painted white—except where the paint was worn off near the handle, with two narrow aisles. The counters were filled with merchandise, shelves were overflowing, and stuff was hanging from the ceiling. You'd think, No way am I going to find anything in here.

But you didn't need to. As soon as you walked in, Clarence from behind the counter would say, "Help you today?" My dad would say something like, "I want to hang a light out back."

Clarence would come out from behind the counter and ask questions. "Where you going to hang it? Over the patio? Well then"—and he would start rummaging through shelves until he pulled off just the right light—"you want a light like this. And don't use these bolts here; they're good for indoor stuff, but for outdoor, you want something galvanized."

"Your wall is brick, isn't it?" Clarence asked. (Even though our town was small, I was impressed he knew what our house was made of.) "Well, to run the conduit

through there, you want this masonry drill bit. If we don't have that in stock, you can get one over at Miller's Lumberyard." Then Clarence would pull a flat carpenter's pencil off his ear and get out a little piece of paper and sketch it all out. "The conduit goes here ... and make sure you don't mount the light too close to the soffit."

Kevin Miller says:

A similar thing has happened in the ... church. We have programs that are amazing, with Disney-level quality and technological sophistication. But something's missing: Clarence. We all need a Clarence, someone who knows more than we do and who will guide us to grow in Christ.

Throughout the Bible this is the primary way faith has been passed on. Moses trains Joshua in how to lead; Eli trains Samuel in how to pray; Jesus teaches the apostles; Timothy's grandmother Lois trains up her daughter Eunice, who trains up her son Timothy; Paul calls Titus his "son" in the faith. When it comes to helping people grow into spiritual maturity, the Bible gives us "the Clarence Principle": the older teach the younger, and those more mature in the faith guide those who are newer in the faith.

Hear. Entrust. Repeat.

Help us to do this, Lord. Help us to hear your Word, to be wrecked, corrected, moved, enlivened, inspired, and changed by it. Help us to be on the lookout for others so that we can entrust it to them. And may this repeat to the tenth generation. In Christ's name. Amen.