

# **The 7 Characteristics of a Faithful Minister**

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Tonight I had prepared for you an 8-1/2 by 11" sheet of paper that has the whole teaching on it. This teaching that I'm going to share with you tonight, I think, is one of the most important teachings that I could do at this time in the history of our ministry and of my life. I'd like for you to turn to II Timothy. Tonight the subject is the seven characteristics of a faithful minister. I wanted to share this with the leadership Friday at International, but we had so much other business to take care of that we never got to it. So you are the people that'll have to live through it tonight. But everybody there, I think, was an ordained minister and I had been working this and I wanted to share it, but as I said, just time was not available.

This is also the truth regarding a twig coordinator. There is an exhortation of each characteristic given in this second chapter of II Timothy. The number seven, people, is the number of perfection, and this is the only place in the Bible where all the seven characteristics of a faithful minister are put together in one chapter. So all you need to do is understand this chapter, and you'll always be able to judge from the Word of God (let the Word of God do the judging) of whether the ministry of a twig coordinator or any other individual is according to the Word of God. It is these seven characteristics that I listed on your paper, because I thought you might be able to write in other things, but these seven are:

1. Son, be strong in grace.
2. Son, be strong in service.
3. Son, be a strong athlete.
4. Son, be a strong husbandman, a cultivator.
5. Son, be a strong workman.
6. Be a strong vessel.
7. Be a strong servant, a doulos.

Those are the seven characteristics given in II Timothy, chapter two, with an exhortation on each one of the characteristics. Tonight I want to go through this second chapter with you, verse by verse.

II Timothy 2:1

Thou, Therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in (whom?) Christ Jesus.

Timothy was not Paul's physical son, but he was his spiritual son. Paul was the one who had taught him the greatness of God's Word and led him to the Lord Jesus Christ and the great truths of God's Word. The first chapter of I Timothy gives a real great insight on this word "son."

I Timothy 1:2

Unto Timothy, my (what?) own son...

The literal of those words "own son" are "true child." "Unto Timothy my true child in the faith." That is basically the meaning of chapter two, verse one: "Thou, therefore, my true son, be strong

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in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” True son be strong in the grace. Grace is God's divine favor, perpendicular from God to man, unmerited and that grace is in what Christ Jesus accomplished for us. **(1).** The first requirement of a faithful minister is that he is to be strong in grace, divine favor, perpendicular. He is not to be strong in his own mental acumens or the seminaries he graduated from; that's all secondary. The primary is that he remembers to be strong in what? Grace, divine favor. That's why a true minister of God is never critical in a negative sense. He's not raising hell with people. The only people who ever raise hell with people are people who forget the grace of God and the love of God and forgiveness of God. A true son is one who remembers that it's by grace that he is a minister of the Word, and that he is to be strong in that grace. And if he remembers that, and, verse two, “The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses,” in other words, a true son stands faithful with the one who taught it to him. Paul taught Timothy, and Paul said, “The things that thou hast heard of me (Paul) among many witnesses (other people heard the same thing)...” A true minister, a faithful minister, a son strong in the grace, is concerned about committing to faithful men that same truth “...who shall be able to teach others also.” So that is the exhortation about a son who is strong in grace.

**(2).** Number two is in verse three: Be strong in service. The King James reads, “Thou, therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” It should be translated and read, “Thou, therefore, endure training, mental pressure, as a good server of Jesus Christ.” Because we are athletes of the spirit, we are not warring soldiers that go out to kill and to destroy, but we are athletes running in the spiritual race of life. “Thou, therefore, endure training as a good server of Jesus Christ.” The second great truth regarding the characteristic of a faithful minister: he is strong in what? Service. Strong in service. He endures training.

II Timothy 2:4

No man that warreth (and the word “warreth” is a deliberate forgery in the King James. The word is serveth or serves) ... No man who serves entangles himself with the affairs of this life that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier (worker, a server).

**(3).** Number three is to be a strong athlete and that is in verse five:

II Timothy 2:5

And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

The word strive in this verse is the Greek word *athleo*, from which we get our word “athlete.” Literally, this verse accurately reads, “And contending in the games, the athlete will strive to be the best (masteries) but he is not crowned except he (do what?) strive lawfully (stay within the bounds of that athletic competition as he contends in the games).” He was talking about the Roman games. So he is a strong athlete who develops himself to be absolutely the best it is possible for him to be. But he is not rewarded or he doesn't receive, he is not laced with the floral tributes, except he contend in the games according to the rules.

**(4).** The fourth characteristic is in verse six:

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II Timothy 2:6

The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits.

I figured most people didn't understand the old English usage of the word "husbandman." The husbandman is the cultivator, the one who cultivates the land, Biblically speaking. Today we would call him a farmer. This son is to be a strong cultivator. He is to cultivate people properly. He is to work with them properly like you would prepare the ground properly to receive the seed like a farmer would. That's why he says he must be first partaker of the fruits. You must be a partaker in cultivating and seeing this fruit develop if you're going to be a faithful minister, a wonderful twig coordinator. You have to work with people and you have to cultivate them. You have to prepare them to receive the Word of God. You just don't come in and bulldoze your way through a twig meeting. You love those people and so you cultivate them, you understand? Some people need help here, someone else there. That's how you get to be partaker of the fruit that you will see in their life as they grow. There are quite a few verses after verse six that set this great truth in here, and I think the reason he used this many verses from six on through fourteen is because it's such an important phase of a faithful minister's responsibility. That's why he expanded it: so we would have a greater understanding and not screw up.

The exhortation begins in verse seven: "Consider what I say..." These words, "Consider what I say" are the translation of the word "selah." "Selah" in the Old Testament; whenever you read that word in the Old Testament, class, it always means "consider what I say." Flip to Psalm 3, please. To the best of my knowledge, this is the only place I could remember where it was used for the first time. I'm not sure, but I think it is. People read the words like "selah" and they don't know what they mean. At the end of verse two in Psalm 3 - do you have it?

Psalm 3:2, 4b, Bb

Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. (then is the word) Selah.

... he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.

... thy blessing is upon thy (what?) people. (and then the word) Selah.

It means "consider what I've said." And it relates itself to the context of that which immediately follows. So back to verse seven of II Timothy, please.

II Timothy 2:7

Consider what I say; (what I have just said and what I am going to say now) and the Lord give thee (what?) understanding in all things.

The Lord give thee understanding. The reason he says that is because human nature is always to go back to what men say, or read what the world calls the most up-to-date periodicals, things that people talk about. The Word of God says that a faithful minister is to go back primarily to the Lord, for it's the Lord that's going to give him what? Understanding. See, it's always a

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temptation to go to the world and then to quote what the world says. It's wonderful to quote what the world says if it agrees with the Word, I guess. But the Word teaches that a faithful minister has to rely upon the Lord, not man, to give him understanding in what? All things.

II Timothy 2:8

Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

The reason it was his gospel is because God revealed it to him and Paul declared it.

II Timothy 2:9

Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not (what?) bound.

The word “evil doer” here is the same word that's used regarding two of the men that were crucified with Jesus. It's the word “malefactor”...kakourgai. You suffer trouble from other people because they will treat you as a malefactor. Paul said he had suffered it even to where they had put him in jail. But when he was in prison, the Word was still not what? Bound. Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians were all written from Rome when he was in prison. See, I don't think Peter was ever in Rome. Told the Corps that last Wednesday night. So if that group over there wanted to have a Pope, they should've had Paul. Paul was there, but Peter never was. So the first Pope in Rome could not have been Peter; he never was there. Well, you figure it out, I don't care. But Paul was in prison in Rome and from the prison in Rome he wrote some of the great mystery revelation because the Word of God is not bound by chains. You see, no matter what people say about you, you know your own heart. You know your own mind, and they can speak of you as a malefactor and evil doer, but you know the purity of your own soul and of your own mind, and you know that you are a faithful minister.

II Timothy 2:10

Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes (for the born again believers), that they (and then the word “also” should be there ... that they also, the elect also) may obtain the salvation (the wholeness) which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

You're a strong cultivator of the people.

II Timothy 2:11

It is a faithful saying: (The text literally reads, “Faithful is the saying:”) For if we be (are dead ... we are dead with him, not “be” but “are”) dead with him, we shall also live with him:

II Timothy 2:12a

If we suffer(ed), we shall also reign with him. (Then there should be a period. Verse twelve ought to start with the words “If we deny...”)

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“Faithful is the saying: for if we are dead with him, we shall live with him and if we suffered with him we shall also reign with him.” You see, when Jesus Christ died, we died with him. When God raised him, we were raised with him. When he was seated at the right hand of God, we were seated with him. Everything with what God wrought in Christ Jesus.

II Timothy 2:12b

If we deny him, he will also deny us:

If we deny the truth of the greatness of this, then God can't do anything else but deny us too and say, “Look, Dude, you're wrong! You're not a faithful minister.” To teach anything else but that every believer died with Christ and arose with him is to deny what Christ Jesus really did for us, and we're not faithful ministers.

II Timothy 2:13

If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: (Why? Because God) he cannot deny himself.

II Timothy 2:14

Of these things put them in remembrance, (a good cultivator puts people in remembrance) charging them before the Lord (the word Lord is God in many texts, and I think that's what it should be here) that they strive not (contend not) about words to no profit, but to the subverting (or the disrupting) of the hearers.

If you are going to be a good cultivator, a faithful minister, a good twig coordinator, you've got to remember to charge them before God that they contend not. You do not contend about words that are unprofitable. You know you can spend all night arguing about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. That would be words to no profit, and all it would do is subvert, distract the hearers.

**(5).** That's why verse 15 now comes as the fifth great truth: Son, be a strong workman.

II Timothy 2:15

Study to show thyself approved unto (whom?) God, a workman that (who) needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

You study diligently, you apply yourself as a twig coordinator, as a faithful minister, to do one thing - to stand approved unto God as a workman of the Word. Not of theologians or all that other stuff, but you work the Word, people! That's the only way you can stand approved before God ... working the Word, rightly dividing the Word of truth.

The Scriptures, the Word of God is the Word of truth, but only to the end and in the proportion that we rightly divide it do we have the true Word. And most of Christendom today is built on tradition rather than the right dividing of the Word. They are sincere, but sincerity is no guarantee of truth, people. The devil is as sincere as you are. I think, many times, more so than you are. Shouldn't be, but... Look, you will never have the true Word until we rightly divide it, and that's

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that right cutting. I think it's orthotomounta or something in the text. I teach it in the Foundational Class.

Then come the following verses regarding this strong workman. Verse sixteen: "...shun profane and vain babblings..." I put this on your paper because I doubted if too many of you would be able to understand what profane really was. "Shun profane" is the dishonorable, and "vain babblings" is intellectual stupidity; and you're constantly being tempted with that and bombarded with it in the world. So a faithful minister, a twig coordinator, has to shun (the word shun, you know, means to avoid), you avoid profane or dishonorable because we are to study to show ourselves approved unto God. The profane would be that they would lower the "Study to show yourself approved unto God." They would demand of you that you study to show yourself approved to the tradition. It's dishonorable to study to show yourself approved to tradition. The vain babblings, as I said, are the presentations that people hit you with. It sounds so intellectual and they're so intellectual, and they hold degrees from the most reputable so-called academic institutions, and so people sit back and say, "Well, he's got to be right." But what he says is contrary to what the integrity of the Word says. That's why it's intellectual stupidity.

II Timothy 2:17, 18

And their word (this intellectual stupidity) will eat as doth a canker: (and the word canker is gangrene. Then it names two fellows, Hymenaeus and Philetus) of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

Who concerning the truth have erred, (and how did they err?) saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

They did this in a very intellectual way, and so they overthrew the believing of some.

II Timothy 2:19

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, (His Word standeth sure because His Word liveth and abideth forever. God does not change. He is the same yesterday, today, forever.) having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

II Timothy 2:20

But (for) in a great house (in a big home, a big house, a big family) there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to (then King James says what?) dishonour.

That's another terrible mistake. Not dishonor, less honor; because a vessel that's of less honor is still not a dishonorable vessel. What he is giving here is an illustration out of the culture of his time. That they had vessels of gold and of silver that were used for the anointing of the head of the guest. There were vessels that were used for the washing of the hands and the face. Then there were vessels that were used for the washing of the feet, and then there were vessels that were used when you have to go to the bathroom. Now those vessels that were used for the

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washing of the feet were not gold or silver; they were lesser vessels. That's what he's talking about. And yet, very needful. Likewise the vessels that they used when they went to the bathroom. Those were considered lesser vessels. then comes the sixth great truth: Be a strong vessel, a good, strong vessel.

II Timothy 2:21

If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

You see, the lesser vessel was clean, but it was just not used for the anointing of the head. It might be used for the washing of the feet. Those vessels are meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work. In order to illustrate this, he gives the exhortation in verse 22:

II Timothy 2:22

Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, (which is the love of God in the renewed mind) peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

(6). We are to be a strong vessel unto honor, and we have to flee youthful lusts. What are youthful lusts? Well, I don't think it's particularly sexual. Maybe occasionally, but, you know when you're young you want so many things. You want to own things. You know, you want this, you want that, you want two cars, you want this, you want that, you want all new furniture in the house, you want three TV sets, all of that stuff. And that's what he says we ought to flee. God said He'd supply our need. Every faithful minister, every twig coordinator will have his need supplied. God never promised He'd fulfill our greeds, and it's in greeds that you get burdened down. When you get all these things that when you're young you think you'd like to have, you get so burdened down that you're just like the rest of the world: you get nothing done for God. All you work for is the world, and the world, for the most part, gets people so tied up they're never free to serve God. All they can do is go out there and serve the world and pay off what they've already accumulated which they didn't need.

You try to keep your life as simple as you can, if you're a faithful minister. You see, Jesus Christ came that we might have a life and have it more abundantly. But the abundance is not particularly in material things, possessions. See, I don't care who owns this auditorium as long as I have the privilege of teaching the Word in it. I don't own it. You don't own it. The ministry has it. And yet every one of us in here tonight can get blessed, see? If I owned it, I'd have a barrel of trouble. You know, then I'd have to pay tax on it, I'd have to see about all the heat, everything else. Now all I do is bless people, and they all work together as a family: we all get blessed. You know, I don't care about these material things as long as I can use them. That is why I can speak with great authority in this field: because I've been there. I was born and raised in a very wealthy family, and then of course when the time came to inherit the Wierwille stuff, we gave it all away, gave it all to The Way Ministry. The whole farm, all the money, everything else, and it's wonderful. If I still owned The Way International farm, I couldn't enjoy it as much as I enjoy it now, and yet I have the freedom of living there, have the freedom of spending my life there. What else could a man want? You know, I can walk all over that three hundred acres, every foot I

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want to walk on it; nobody throws me off. So can you. So it's not in ownership, it's just that we have the freedom to use that which is made available to us.

That's why in verse twenty-three comes up another truth, like we had earlier, only here it's stated, "Foolish and unlearned questions (do what?) avoid." Like poison ivy. They're unlearned questions because they do not represent the accuracy of God's Word. They are simply put in there to irritate you. They want to irritate you. They say something which is contrary to God's Word, you know, like they'll say, "Well, you don't believe Jesus Christ is God? Well then, explain John 1:1 to me." That's a foolish and unlearned question. You explain it! Don't ask me to explain it. Let them explain it to their friends or enemies. You see, you just don't get taken in with those things when you are a faithful minister. You don't spin your wheels with foolish and unlearned questions. You avoid them, like I said, like poison ivy or something. Why? Because you know that they will just gender strife. They are asking this of you not because they want to learn but because they want to fight, and you and I haven't got time to fight as faithful ministers and Twig coordinators. All we've got time for is to love God's people and then hold forth the Word in all of its greatness and all of its truth. Let them fight with somebody else.

(7). And then comes this great twenty-fourth verse, which winds up, which is the seventh one, which puts it into the perspective of perfection, class: son, be a strong servant.

II Timothy 2:24a

And the servant of the Lord must not strive;

The word servant is *doulos*, the marked-out minister. You've got God's brand on you, you've been branded by God. You have His stamp on you as a twig coordinator, as a faithful minister. And as a *doulos* of the Lord, he must not strive. Strive is the word battle or fight.

...but be gentle unto all...

That's the second great exhortation here. Be gentle. You see, people through the years have violently disagreed with what I stand for and what I believe to be the truth of God's Word. Yet I always endeavor to be gentle with them, as much as lieth within me. A faithful minister, a faithful twig coordinator has to be apt to what? Teach. He must be able to teach. I so believe that I am able to teach that when I finish tonight I don't expect any questions left over the subject I've taught. I expect everybody here to understand it, because I believe I've got the ability to teach. Because, first of all, the enablement came from God with the manifestations, and then I have studied to show myself approved by rightly dividing the Word. So when I teach, I expect people to understand what I teach, because I try to make it so simple that nobody is stupid enough to miss it. You just can't miss it when I teach because nobody would be that stupid. (Or else the devil'd never let you get in here, or something...)

... apt to teach, (and then you have to be) patient,



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Good Lord! That's another one of those youthful lusts: impatience. You want everything right now. A faithful minister, a wonderful Twig coordinator, is patient. Whenever you work with people, which is basically all that we work with, it just takes patience. Sometimes it takes a whole month until you see any fruit, but you're cultivating, remember? And when a farmer plants a field, he doesn't see the wheat crop immediately. He has patience. I, as a minister of God, for God - I have to have patience with people. Wait, just wait ... they'll come, sooner or later. If it doesn't come sooner or later, what have you lost? Nothing, you just wait. That's why we were able to do those thirteen major television productions, which should've been done ten years ago, but I just had to wait until the right people that were committed and had the talent that could put it together. You know, I don't like to wait either, but I cannot be a faithful minister and not wait, because if I don't I become critical, just opposite of what the Word says. Then you criticize people and find fault, and that is not being a faithful minister. So I do not criticize or find fault, I'm just apt to teach, patient.

II Timothy 2:25

In meekness instructing those (that are screwing themselves up) that oppose themselves; (who hurt themselves) ...

You'd like for them to walk the Word but you know they're not. So in meekness you instruct those that oppose themselves. The reason you can do this in meekness is because you are strong in the grace that is in whom? Christ. When you forget God's grace, that's when people become critical. That's when they begin pointing fingers. All you have to remember is what God forgives you for and you have no problem forgiving others in your twig or people that are under the ministry that God has given you and made you responsible for. So, in meekness, humility, tenderness, honey, instruct those that oppose themselves. The rest of that verse reads, accurately, "That God, at some time, will give them a change of heart to the acknowledging of the truth." Isn't that beautiful? You're a strong *doulos*. A son of God who is a strong servant, not striving. You're gentle, you're a teacher, and you walk meekly and humbly with the love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation in your life.

II Timothy 2:26

...that they may recover themselves out of the snare of (what?) the devil ....

Right. These are those that are opposing themselves. So in meekness.... and meekness is what helps them to recover themselves. You can't recover anybody; the individual has to do that. You can't get saved for me; I have to do it. These people, if you have them in your fellowship and you are a faithful minister, you will in meekness instruct them that they, by the freedom of their will, can have a change of heart. When they have a change of heart, they recover themselves out of the snare of the devil.

... who are taken captive by him at his will.

The adversary took captive of them at the adversary's will because they did not have the renewed mind, did not put on the mind of Christ yet. Every day in this ministry we've got new babies. This

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next month, perhaps we'll have a couple thousand new babies. Just here in the United States. Well, you wouldn't expect a human baby to play football the first day. Well, what about a spiritual baby? You've just got to take time, and the greatest thing I know that brings people into the greatness of all of this is the love of God in the renewed mind in manifestation and a faithful minister. That he so loves because God loved him, that he just surrounds the twig, the believers, with the love of God. I see this in our leadership, and I'm real grateful, real thankful, and I appreciate that God put here in one chapter all those characteristics of a faithful minister, a faithful twig coordinator. A twig coordinator is ministering to the twig. All you need to know is this chapter and you can make a decision according to the Word of God regarding the faithfulness of any minister any place, anywhere in the world, or in anything you read. So:

1. He is to be strong in grace.
2. Be strong in service.
3. A strong athlete.
4. Strong husbandman or cultivator.
5. A strong workman.
6. A strong vessel.
7. A strong doulos.

Those are the seven characteristics.