

## **LIFE Group Leader Handout**

**Mother's Day, May 14, 2017**

**When It's Not Perfect—*The Triumph of God in the Midst of Life's Realities***

Pastor Mike O'Connor

### **Scripture—2 Timothy 1:3-7**

*I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. 4 As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. 5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. 6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.*

### **Main Idea—It Does Not Need to be Perfect for God to Use It**

**God thinks generationally**—both physical and spiritual reproduction are the very heart of God.

**God developed Timothy into a choice disciple even though the circumstances were not perfect.**

#### **What Wasn't Perfect?**

- **Their faith**--but it was sincere. They schooled Timothy in the Scriptures: (2 Timothy 3:14-17) *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*
- **Their circumstances**—an unbelieving or perhaps deceased father, but they committed Timothy to the wider community and encouraged him to follow the Lord's pathway for him.
- **Timothy's growth**--but God was not finished. Paul encouraged his ministry and prayed.

#### **Application—**

- How is your story like that of Timothy—not perfect, but God is still able to use it?
- As a parent, or one who is influencing the lives of others in discipleship, how was this message encouraging? Challenging?

# FINISHING STRONG

By Bryan Brunke

This is the time of year when many leaders are starting to feel tired and the issue of burnout starts to creep in. All of us who have ever lead a small group have felt this way at some point in time and we want to share with you three tips:

**Remember your purpose.** Burnout or boredom are often byproducts of misunderstanding your role as a group leader. It's your job to create a safe environment where people can grow spiritually and connect with one another. You provide opportunities, but it's up to group members to show up, join in, and be real.

**Be proactive.** When you're faced with a challenging group situation or difficult interpersonal dynamics, it's easy to be reactive. You may feel whipsawed and helpless. This can lead to a desire for a break from leadership. Instead of running, re-engage with a clear purpose. Remember why your group exists (to grow people to spiritual maturity), and do something to engage in that purpose. Maybe you need to take on a service project. Maybe you need to shake up the way you pray for one another. Maybe you need to have a conversation about tensions within the group and make an effort to reset everyone's expectations of what being in a group is all about. Being proactive can reinvigorate and refocus your group.

**Ask helpful questions.** Your job as a leader isn't to make people take the next step on their spiritual journeys. It's to offer encouragement and guide your group members by asking questions--questions that encourage them to move in God's direction and help them to own their spiritual growth. Here are some examples of good questions: "If this group is the best group you are ever a part of, how will you be different at its conclusion?" Or "What is holding you back from moving to a more intimate relationship with God?" "What can you do to step out of your comfort zone?"

Don't give up on leadership. Remember that God grows you through the ups and downs. Even when you face challenges and difficulties, God will use them to grow you. Keep encouraging those you lead. Keep asking the questions that no one else is asking. Don't let leadership get boring.

*God who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 1:8b-9)*