

“Building (Not Burning) Bridges for the Gospel:” Disciplemaking in the Pastoral Epistles¹

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Abstract

In this article, I explore what the Pastoral Epistles (Titus and 1-2 Timothy) say about disciplemaking. I deal with the goals of Paul’s teaching in the letters and the methods that he commended to Timothy and Titus and the churches they served. Goals: the twenty-seven New Testament documents emphasize different aspects of following Jesus toward maturity (i.e., goals of disciplemaking) as the situations they were written to and from necessitate. In the Pastoral Epistles, Paul’s specific goal is that his readers live virtuous lives, largely as defined by the pagan culture around them. He hopes that in so doing they will gain and maintain a hearing for the gospel. Thereby they would avoid or defuse negative stereotypes that were used against Christians and ease societal anxieties that were common in their world. Methods: in these letters, Paul commends the use of moral examples and appeals to honor and shame. He further exemplifies the use of creeds as a teaching tool for his churches. My purpose is to show that the Pastoral Epistles offer a unique perspective on disciplemaking, focusing on the importance of public witness and utilizing methods like imitation and conformity to social values. They do this to produce mature Christians who can effectively represent the gospel message in their communities.

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Introduction

A man was walking through a small, rural town and saw that several of the fences and buildings had targets, “bullseyes,” drawn on them. He further noticed that every target had a bullet hole in the very center of the bullseye. He thought to himself, “Clearly there is a serious marksman at work in the area.” He was impressed... until someone told him that the shooter had shot first and drawn the bullseye later, once the shooter had seen where the bullet had gone. Question: when it comes to disciplemaking, do we know what our target is? Or are we firing blindly and then convincing ourselves that we have hit the bullseye? We say, “We want to make mature Christians”; yes, of course. But have we thought through what “mature Christians” means in terms of specific skills, behaviors, convictions, knowledge, and commitments? Is our thinking *that* specific, that detailed?

If we who preach and teach and lead do not know specifically what our goal is, then the average person in our churches will not know either. We need to be able to answer questions such as these:

- If we want our people to impact their neighborhoods with the gospel, then what skills, knowledge, and behaviors do we need to build in them?
- What behaviors and attitudes make Christian marriages truly Christian?
- What should the life of a Christian husband, wife, mother, father, or grandparent look like?
- How should Christian business people act toward their customers? How should Christian school teachers act toward their students?
- How should being a Christian affect the way employers treat their employees? How should being a Christian affect the way an employee responds to his employer?

The central question is this: in terms of specific behaviors, convictions, skills, knowledge, or commitments, what exactly are we trying to achieve in the disciplemaking process? What do the disciples we are trying to make look like? The more specific we can be, the better. Vagueness keeps us where we are. If we can be more specific & detailed about our goals in disciplemaking, then we are more likely to progress toward those goals.

In this article, I move toward an answer to that central question. In that pursuit, I will first briefly survey what selected New Testament documents say about the purpose of disciplemaking. I will then focus on the Pastoral Epistles (Titus and 1-2 Timothy), and look more deeply into the goals and methods for disciplemak-

ing commended there. I will close with a summary of how the methods from the Pastorals might be applied to churches in Croatia and Central Europe.

1. The Goal of Disciplemaking in the New Testament (Outside the Pastoral Epistles)

All the New Testament authors address the purpose of disciplemaking, but they use different images to describe the goals of the process. They describe different facets of those goals with their statements relating to discipleship or following Jesus (what believers should strive toward) and with their descriptions of what the church should be because the church as it should be is a community of disciples.

The New Testament holds up no single specific ideal for disciplemaking. The descriptions of the goal differ from author to author, book to book, as those authors faced different needs and situations. If we look at what these authors commend for their churches, we can apply their goals to our congregations and ministries in terms of specific changes to behavior, commitment, skills, or knowledge. Let me illustrate by looking at the descriptions in a handful of New Testament documents: Matthew, the book of Acts, and Paul's middle and prison letters.

In Matthew, the church is a kingdom of servants where the last come first (20:26-28; 23:11) and the penitent are restored (18:15-35). Members of the community are to interact in ways that reflect the Beatitudes (ch. 19; cf. 5:3-12). And the church goes into the world to make disciples (28:18-20), possessing spiritual power to bind and release (16:19), sure that the gates of Hell will not stand against it (16:18). Matthew's description of discipleship is general and abstract; these are principles, not rules or commands or a program. But notice what these principles teach us about the goal of making disciples. For example: we can make Matthew's picture of "disciple" more concrete in our churches by teaching our people that when they have conflict with another believer, they should try to follow Matthew 18:15-17 ("If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. ...") by attempting to resolve the conflict personally, one-on-one, instead of gossiping or criticizing her behind her back.

In the book of Acts, the church continues Jesus' ministry after his ascension; Luke shows this in the parallels between Jesus' ministry in the gospel of Luke and the church's ministry in the book of Acts. The church lives out its devotion to God in the ways believers act toward each other and the world around them (2:42-47; 4:32-37). Believers bear witness to God's saving actions in history for Israel and the whole world (2:39; 9:15; 10:1-11:26; 15:1-29). Paul uses his conduct as a model for how Christian leaders should protect the church (20:18-35). Again, the picture is general and abstract. But we could embody some of these goals in our churches, making them more concrete, by leading our churches to practice benevolence and

generosity in ways that follow the examples of the early church in Acts 4:32-37 and 6:1-7.

In Paul's middle letters (Romans, Corinthians) and Prison Epistles (specifically Colossians and Ephesians), the church functions as the Body of Christ (Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 10:16-17; 1 Cor 12:12-27; Eph 1:22-23; Eph 2:14-16; Eph 4:4; Eph 4:11-16; Eph 5:23; Eph 5:30; Col 3:15). This image governs the way believers should treat each other and the way they should see themselves. They are part of each other and belong to each other in some way. They are also part of a larger whole belonging to Christ. Members of the Body do not stand in isolation, nor do they stand above or below the other parts of the body (for all parts are honored and all are of Christ). Again, that works as a principle rather than a specific recommendation, but we could embody this principle by urging our people to find and use their spiritual gifts, as described in Ephesians 4:11-16.

This brief survey is sufficient to illustrate the point. The New Testament authors faced different situations and problems in their churches. They responded to those different situations by emphasizing different aspects of following Jesus, ergo different aspects of the task of making disciples, to meet the needs raised by those specific situations. These are the goals of the discipling process in those situations, and they can guide us as we consider how God wants to direct our ministries in our specific contexts.

2. The Goal of Discipling in the Pastoral Epistles

The Pastoral Epistles describe the goals for discipling that Paul believes best fit the churches that Timothy and Titus serve.² The overarching goal of discipling in the Pastoral Epistles is to produce believers who will live lives of public witness, to be walking demonstrations of God's goodness through public piety and virtue. Paul asserts this goal in at least two ways.

The first way Paul asserts this goal is through frequently urging his people to prioritize their witness to outsiders. Paul expresses this desire in three ways.

2 I read the letters in the order Titus - 1 Timothy - 2 Timothy, because the logic of the story that the letters tell about Paul's life demands this order. So also e.g., Marshall 2004. I also treat the letters as a distinct corpus, due to shared features and the collective neglect with which they are treated in studies on Paul and the Pauline letters. Note also that these letters are personal but not private. In other words, though they are addressed to individuals, all three were read before the Pauline congregations; witness the second-person plural pronouns at the end of each letter. They were written to be "overheard" by the addressees' churches. Also, this way of reading the letters is not greatly affected by what one concludes regarding authorship. I treat the letters as early and genuinely connected to the Pauline mission, whether written directly by Paul or incorporating materials from Paul. But even if, as some argue, they are later and wholly pseudonymous, they are still canonical documents that address actual problems in actual churches.

1. Paul frequently commends good behaviors and specifically states that the purpose is to protect their witness and reputation. Here is a sampling of such purpose statements from the letters:

"... so that the word of God may not be discredited" (Tit 2:5).³

"... then any opponent will be put to shame, having nothing evil to say of us" (Tit 2:8).

"... showing complete and perfect fidelity, so that in everything they may be an ornament to the teaching of God our Savior" (Tit 2:10).

"... so as to give the adversary no occasion to revile us" (1 Tim 5:14).

"(Slaves must conduct themselves) so that the name of God and the teaching may not be defamed" (1 Tim 6:1).

2. In other texts from the Pastorals, Paul commands his people to live in ways that demonstrate virtue before a watching world:

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly" (Tit 2:11-12).

"Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, ... and to show every courtesy to everyone" (Tit 3:1-2).

Paul's people should "... be careful to devote themselves to good works; these things are excellent and profitable to everyone" (Tit 3:8).

"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, ... so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and acceptable before God our Savior, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:1-4).

"(Elders) must be well thought of by outsiders" (1 Tim 3:7).

"Those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves" (1 Tim 3:13).

"... so that all may see your progress" (1 Tim 4:15).

3. Paul expects his people to live out the truth that the gospel is not just for *them*, it is God's plan for making salvation available to all people. Note the universal aspect of Paul's words:

3 English Bible quotes are from the NRSV Updated Edition, www.biblegateway.com, unless otherwise noted.

“For the grace of God has appeared, *bringing salvation to all ...*” (Tit 2:11, emphasis mine).

“Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, ... and *to show every courtesy to everyone*” (Tit 3:1-2, emphasis mine).

(Paul’s people should) “... be careful to devote themselves to good works; these things are excellent and profitable *to everyone*” (Tit 3:8, emphasis mine).

“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, ... so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and acceptable before God our Savior, *who desires everyone to be saved* and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:1-4, emphasis mine).

“Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom *for all*” (1 Tim 2:6, emphasis mine).

“We have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of *all people*” (1 Tim 4:10, emphasis mine).

“I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory” (2 Tim 2:10).

(The Lord’s servant must) [correct] “his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth, and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him ...” (2 Tim 2:25-26).

“The Lord stood by me and gave me strength to proclaim the message fully, that *all the Gentiles* might hear it” (2 Tim 4:17, emphasis mine).

In all of these, Paul’s priority is clearly that his people live lives of witness.

The second way that Paul asserts this goal (that his people will live lives of public witness) is by commanding the readers and hearers to pursue and demonstrate “public virtues,” which would be seen and appreciated by the surrounding pagan community.⁴ These are the kinds of virtues that were regularly used in inscriptions to honor individuals for lives of excellence. I have in mind here particularly the following virtues:

- Piety or reverence (εὐσέβεια), traditionally translated as “godliness;” by my count, εὐσέβεια or related terms are used 16 times in the letters. Displaying εὐσέβεια meant displaying attitudes and conduct toward religion and God or the gods that people find respectful and appropriate. The opposite of εὐσέβεια was ἀσέβεια, the vice of ignorant or intentional disrespect toward

4 Public virtues were commonly mentioned in Graeco-Roman inscriptions. See Winter 1988.

spiritual things or things that people thought were holy. Akin to ἀσέβεια was "blasphemy," condemned 6 times in the letters. Such conduct was shameful and would harm believers' witness.⁵

- Dignity (σεμνότης); if εὐσέβεια refers to a person's demeanor in regard toward religion, σεμνότης refers to one's demeanor in regards to people, behaving in a way that protects one's reputation and is not scandalous or odd.⁶ "The gravitas held in esteem by the ancient Romans was the high seriousness of a person not easily moved ... deliberate and inflexible" (Quinn 1990, 130). Σεμνότης and the cognate adjective σεμνός are used 6 times in the Pastoral Epistles.
- Self-control (or sensibleness; σωφροσύνη, σώφρων and cognates), is used 10 times in the letters. This virtue, one of the four cardinal Roman virtues associated with respectability, refers to knowing what is proper in given situations, and knowing how to act and how not to act. Louw & Nida (1988, 88.94) suggest the word be understood as having "right thoughts about what one should do" and "[letting] one's mind guide one's body."
- Good works (ἀγαθὸν/καλὸν ἔργον, ἀγαθοποιέω), are commended 14 times in the letters. Performing good works was itself seen as a virtue in the ancient world (du Toit 2019, 223). This term refers to "a variety of activities that were commended by Graeco-Roman standards" (du Toit 2019, 221-22).⁷ Throughout the New Testament world, people were expected to do public service ("public benefaction") in proportion to their ability, great or small, individually or in groups.⁸ According to Winter (1988, 87) "...not only did rulers praise and honor those who undertook good works which benefited the city, but at the same time they promised likewise to publicly honor others who would undertake similar benefactions in the future."

So, with commendations of public virtues and living lives "on display," Paul commands his people to live with special care for their witness.

Why did Paul command his people to live with such care? Because his people lived amid a pagan society that did not understand or appreciate their religion.

5 Jude 8-10 illustrates the difference between ἀσέβεια and εὐσέβεια, without actually using either term. Jude here refers to Christian false-teachers who reject authority and insult heavenly beings, contrasting them (v. 9) with the demeanor of Michael the archangel, who acted respectfully when arguing with Satan over Moses' body. Jude's false teachers exemplify ἀσέβεια, Michael exemplifies εὐσέβεια.

6 But see Dibelius and Conzelmann 1972, 39 for εὐσέβεια and σεμνότης; Dibelius and Conzelmann reverse the orientations of the terms as other commentators (e.g. Marshall; Jerome Quinn, *The Letter to Titus*, Anchor Bible [Doubleday, 1990]) read them.

7 Du Toit cites Travis B. Williams 2014.

8 For inscriptions and other textual evidence, see Winter 1988. du Toit also cites Williams 2014, 68-81 and 280-95 to this end.

Roman society prized stability and conformity, and Christians did not conform. This was sufficient in itself for Roman society to see Christianity as a threat to order. Critics deemed the Christians “atheists” because they did not worship idols or have a temple. They objected to Christian social teaching because it was disturbingly egalitarian; Christians treated each other as sisters and brothers, against the clear class hierarchy that Rome found so stabilizing.

Further, Roman society in the first century was troubled by several social ills, which early Christian teaching was likely seen to exacerbate. The Pastorals advocate Christian conduct that guards against the accusation of contributing to two specific Roman social ills. The first is the emergence of what classicists sometimes call “the new Roman woman.” “Some women of means and position (married and widowed), supported in some cases by free-thinking males, flouted traditional values governing adornment and dress and sexual propriety. The emergence of this movement was so disturbing to the status quo that Augustus issued legislation against it” (Towner 2006, 196).⁹ Christianity gave unprecedented rights and freedoms to women, even women of the lower class. Romans tended to see this as a threat to societal stability. In some cases, including 1 Timothy, this particular concern was further inflamed by ill-advised Christian teaching that told women to exercise their freedom in Christ by throwing off the standard expectations of motherhood and home.

A second social problem that the Pastorals show awareness of is the fear of slave revolt. Scholars traditionally estimate that Roman Italy had a population of 6-7 million people, with as many as 2 million slaves. Perhaps half of the population of the city of Rome itself was slaves. Slavery was based on debt and conquest, not race. Therefore, slaves were not necessarily poor; a significant minority of Graeco-Roman slaves were more educated, more skilled, and (occasionally) even more wealthy than their masters. Because of the basis of slavery (debt, conquest, etc.), there were not necessarily any visual cues that differentiated slaves from other residents. This contributed to the fear of revolt. Seneca tells us that the Roman senate debated a law dictating that all slaves wear a particular uniform. The proposal was defeated because the senators did not want the slaves to realize how numerous they were (Seneca, *De clementia* 1.24.1, quoted in Ferguson 2003, 56), which might have given them dangerous ideas. The fear of revolts made it imperative for owners to maintain authority over their slaves. However, the church treated slaves and masters as equals; there are even stories of slaves who became leaders in the churches over their masters. As with the case of the equality of women in the church, making slaves and masters equal was potentially destabilizing.¹⁰

9 For the “new Roman woman,” see Winter 2003.

10 A third social ill from this period that the Pastoral Epistles acknowledge is drunkenness; witness “sober” and “not addicted to wine,” etc. in Tit 1:7; 2:2, 3; 1 Tim 3:2, 8; 2 Tim 4:5. Alcoholism, especially among the elderly, is mentioned as a problem in many sources. Dramas from this time

So, in light of these anxieties, Paul commands his audience to demonstrate public virtues that would reassure the non-Christians around them. Sean du Toit (2019, 222) notes, "Ancient Christians saw 'good works' [and other virtues] as a solution to social hostility and conflict."¹¹ By displaying these virtues and the virtuous conduct that springs from them, Paul's people could win (or at least not lose) a hearing for the gospel.

This provides the background for understanding Paul's commands to his people through Titus and Timothy. He not only commends standard public virtues to his people, but he also orders them to avoid conduct that the surrounding society sees as threatening, corrupt, or shameful. A sampling:

- In Titus, Paul commands his people to avoid debauchery, rebelliousness, arrogance; being quick to anger, addicted to wine, violent, greedy (1:6-7); causing division & disrupting families (1:10-11);¹² being defiant, stealing (2:9-10); being irreverent, overcome by lust (2:12); seeking controversy (3:9-11).
- In 1 Timothy, Paul commands his people to avoid promoting heterodox teachings that cause division (1:3-7); being habitually drunk, violent, quarrelsome, loving money (3:3); promoting asceticism that flouts societal conventions (4:1-3); idleness, being a busybody, given to gossip, saying scandalous things without regard to the damage they do (5:13); being disrespectful of those in authority over them (6:2).
- In 2 Timothy, Paul condemns teachers and learners who argue over words, profane chatter (2:14-16); those who are dominated by lust (2:22); seeking controversy (2:23); self-centeredness, arrogance, abusiveness, being disrespectful of authority, etc. (3:2-5).

Paul commands his people to avoid these vices, to pursue the public virtues, and to live exemplary lives. If the members of the church were known for these virtues (and for avoiding those vices), this would ease the anxieties of the Roman world around them. Paul's purpose is apologetic, he is defending his people against false accusations. Against the charge that Christians were atheists, Paul commands them to be respectful and reverent, so as not to give offense. Against the charge that they were anarchists, Paul urges them to be dignified, self-controlled, and proper, conducting themselves in ways that the world around them saw as stable, honorable, and virtuous.

use "the old drunk" as a stock figure.

11 See Musonius Rufus, *Discourses* 14.9; Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 1.15.3; Philo, *Special Laws* 4.58, etc.

12 Warning against teaching that produces controversy and division is a major theme in the letters, mentioned 12 times (Tit 1:10-11; 3:9-11; 1 Tim 1:3-4; 4:1-3, 7; 6:3-5, 20-21; 2 Tim 2:14, 16-18, 23; 3:6-7; 4:3-4).

But Paul's ultimate goal is not that Christians win respect or honor for their sake. As Theodoret wrote in the mid-fifth century, Paul wants his people "not to strive for honor but for virtue; not to long for reputation, but to seek the work of (real) value" (Dibelius and Conzelmann 1972, 51). Paul wants them to do all they can to help the gospel win a hearing.¹³ Furthermore, Paul commands them to act virtuously as defined by the world around them, whether those outsiders become Christians themselves or not. Sometimes, conscience would compel Paul's people to deviate from the standards of the communities around them; e.g., refusing to burn incense to Caesar.¹⁴ In those cases, they were to be different, but different in virtuous and honorable ways. They lived their lives on display, knowing that the results of that display could have eternal consequences. Outsiders were watching their conduct, looking for excuses or opportunities to reject the gospel.

In sum, Paul calls his people to act in honorable ways so that outsiders will see and acknowledge God's goodness displayed in them. When societal standards conflicted with their Christian convictions, Paul wanted them to resist in honorable ways. If they gave offense to the pagan culture around them, let it be because of Christ, not their frailties or vices. They lived their lives on display, before a watching world, and must live in ways that open doors to the gospel. This is the goal of discipling in the Pastoral Epistles.

3. Methods for Discipling

The Pastoral Epistles not only describe goals for discipling, but they also describe methods for discipling that Timothy and Titus were to implement. Paul commends at least three methods that the recipients' churches could use to build and shape people for witness. These methods are:

1. Imitation of moral examples.
2. Careful uses of honor and shame.
3. Using creeds or hymns as a teaching tool.

The first method is the imitation of moral examples. In these letters, the three main characters (Paul, Titus, and Timothy) are regularly held up as models to be imitated, and occasionally the mature members of the churches are also held

13 Compare Matthew 5:16: "Let your light so shine before people, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" and 1 Peter 2:12: "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us."

14 "In the Roman world of the early Christian period, while incense was used in many circumstances, the odor of incense seem [sic] to have triggered the notion that a sacrifice was taking place" (Caseau 2022, n.p.).

up as examples. What aspects of their character or story are worthy of imitation?¹⁵ In the letter to Titus, Paul's former life as a Jew and a persecutor of Christians is in the background of the theological material in 2:11-14 and especially 3:3-7, where his biography illustrates the implications of the gospel. Notice the story behind 3:3-7, "We were once foolish and led astray, but God saved *us* by his mercy and poured his Holy Spirit out on *us* so that *we* might inherit eternal life" (emphasis mine).

As for Titus himself, he is to be "a model of good works ... and integrity, dignity, and healthy speech that cannot be censured in his teaching" (2:7-8, author's translation). He is to provide this example to the young men of his church specifically but to the whole church generally. Further, Paul tells him to encourage mature Christian women of good character and reputation to mentor younger women on how to be Christian women (2:3-5). The parallels between this passage and the instructions regarding widows in 1 Timothy 5:3-16 suggest that there was an order of widows, supported by the church, who ministered among the women of the church in ways parallel to the ministry of the elders (Thurston 1989, 7-8). In keeping with propriety, Titus and the other male leaders should not mentor the young women themselves; compare the instructions to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:1-2.

In 1 Timothy, Paul is held up as the model of the righteous sufferer (this is also the case in 2 Timothy, below, albeit with a different focus). Paul's life serves as a demonstration (ἐνδείξεται Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς) of Jesus' patience, to show people how to be saved by faith in Jesus Christ (1:16) (Pao 2014, 743-55). The members of Paul's churches were to follow this example by likewise seeing themselves as living demonstrations of God's mercy and grace. Compare Ephesians 2:7: God "raised us up with him and seated us with [Christ] in the heavenly places ... so that in the ages to come he might show (ἐνδείκνυμι, 'demonstrate') the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."¹⁶

I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, ... because he considered me faithful and appointed me to his service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy ... and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus ... [who] came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost. But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience as an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life (1:12-16).

15 Esler 2005, 7-8, notes the importance of example for forming character in character/virtue ethics. See also McClendon 1971 and 1986; and Walker 2011.

16 See also δοκιμάζειν in Rom 12:2: "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you can demonstrate what is the will of God and that it is good, acceptable, and perfect" (author's translation).

Timothy also serves as an example for his people to follow.

Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift that is in you. ... Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. ... continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers (4:12-16).

2 Timothy focuses almost entirely on the relationship between Paul and Timothy. Central to this relationship is the idea that Timothy will follow Paul's example, both in his calling as an evangelist and missionary and in suffering for that vocation. If he follows in Paul's footsteps, he will suffer as Paul has suffered. In this letter especially, Paul is the model for Timothy to follow and to pass on to his people. This is like the story of Seneca, the 1st century Stoic philosopher and statesman. When about to be executed under the orders of his former student, the emperor Nero, Seneca passed on "the image of his life" to his students (Tacitus, *Annals* 15.62). Note how imitation works in these texts from 2 Timothy:

"Join with me in suffering for the gospel, in the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace, ..." (1:8-9).

"For this gospel, I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, and for this reason I suffer as I do. ... Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me" (1:11-13).

"Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well. Share in suffering like a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2:1-3).

"Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendent of David--that is my gospel, for which I suffer hardship, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained. Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect ... if we endure [with him], we will also reign with him" (2:8-12) (emphasis mine).

"You have observed my teaching, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, and my sufferings, ... What persecutions I endured! ... Indeed, all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (3:10-12).

In 3:14-15, Paul places himself alongside the two women of faith (1:5) who raised Timothy, his mother and grandmother.

"As for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believe, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have known the

sacred writings that are able to instruct you in salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."

"I have fought the good fight; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord ... will give to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing" (4:7-8).

Note first how Paul includes Timothy in his salvation story and ongoing ministry, (e.g., "God saved and called us," 1:8-9). Note also how Paul calls Timothy to take up his mantle, even as he warns Timothy that this is the road of suffering (e.g., 1:11-13). Notice how Paul is not the only mentor or spiritual parent in Timothy's background (1:5; 3:14-15); Timothy's mother and grandmother are also important contributors to his growth.

Also, in 2:2, note what Paul does when facing death. He gives Timothy authority over his teaching and charges Timothy to pass this teaching on to a third generation of Paulinists, who will themselves faithfully teach it to a fourth generation.¹⁷ Paul is not passing on to Timothy a mere set of documents or manuals or even a system of theology. Like Seneca, Paul is passing on to Timothy the image of his life, which (as with Seneca) encompasses more than the text of his teachings: "You have observed my teaching, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, and my sufferings ..." He expects Timothy to follow that image, that example, by developing, mentoring, *discipling* those who will have charge of Paul's teaching after Timothy.

In summary, in these letters, main and ancillary characters are held up as models for imitation, examples to follow. Paul commands and calls Timothy to follow his example. Paul commands Timothy and Titus to be examples for their people to follow. Paul holds up himself and the story of his conversion and sufferings as an example for all who come to faith in Jesus, especially those who suffer for that faith. And Paul also commands mature believers to be models for imitation, investing their time and attention in less mature believers, walking beside them in faith, through trial and difficulty.

The second method for discipling in the Pastorals is the careful use of honor and shame. *Honor* and *shame* are two of the core values of the New Testament world, although their significance can be overstated (Pao 2014, 745-46). *Honor* is worth or virtue that is publicly acknowledged. *Shame* is "the opposite of honor ... a claim to worth that is publicly denied and repudiated. 'To be shamed' is always negative; it means to be denied or to be diminished in honor. [But] 'to have shame' is always positive; it means to be concerned about one's honor" (Pilch

¹⁷ This concern (faithfully passing on what has been taught) is also the point of ὀρθοτομέω in 2 Tim 2:15 (ὀρθοτομοῦντα τὸν λόγον), which the KJV mistranslates as "rightly dividing (the word)."

and Malina 2016, 89). In English, we use the expression “Have you no shame?” in the same way; in Croatian, perhaps “Kako te nije sram?” or “Zar te nije sram?” Paul’s commands to pursue virtue and flee from vice, discussed above, were akin to him telling his people to *have* shame in this positive sense, which would motivate them to avoid shameful conduct.

Leaders had several ways of using shame to influence their people. One such tool was the rebuke, which appealed to the recipient’s protective sense of shame. In the Pastoral Epistles, Paul rebukes people by explicitly calling them out by name (e.g., Hymenaeus and Alexander in 1 Tim 1:20) and commands Timothy and Titus to use rebuke in the same way (e.g., Titus 1:13, “Rebuke them [the troublemakers] sharply.”). The purpose of this shaming rhetoric was to motivate honorable conduct, “not to humiliate or destroy ... [but rather] to admonish [those receiving the rebuke] so that their [thinking] might be transformed” (Honor-Shame 2022).¹⁸

Honor and shame in the New Testament world relate to imitating moral examples. Pao notes that “to honor is to emulate ... That which gains the praise of the one whose opinion one values would naturally become the major force that shapes the behavior of a person.” Pao quotes Plutarch: “It is fitting that the older should be solicitous about the younger and should lead and admonish him, and that the younger should honor and emulate and follow the older” (Pao 2014, 750; Plutarch, *Frat. amor.* 487A; cf. Plutarch, *Cat. Maj.* 8.4.). Further, “the values of honor and shame are instilled in the young through constant example” (Horden and Purchell 2000, 491, quoted in Pao 2014, 750).

Paul uses honor and shame in several ways in the Pastoral Epistles:

A. Rebukes:

Regarding the rebellious & corrupt teachers of Titus 1:11, who plagued Paul’s churches and might appear [or had already appeared] in Crete: “Rebuke (ἐλέχω) them (the teachers) sharply, to that they (the believers in Crete, not the teachers) may become sound in the faith, not paying attention to Jewish myths or the commandments of those who reject the truth” (Tit 1:13-14).

“Declare these things; exhort and reprove (“rebuke,” again ἐλέχω) with all authority” (Tit 2:15).

“By rejecting conscience, certain persons have suffered shipwreck in the faith; among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have turned over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme” (1 Tim 1:19-20).

“As for those (elders) who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest also may stand in fear” (1 Tim 5:20).

18 In the quote, which is based on the book Ti-Le Lau. 2020. *Defending Shame: Its Formative Power in Paul’s Letters*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, the author is speaking of Paul’s use of honor and shame in 1 Corinthians.

"As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches but rather on God, ... so that they may take hold of the life that really is life" (1 Tim 6:17-19).

"You are aware that all who are in Asia have turned away from me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes" (2 Tim 1:15).

"Avoid profane chatter, for it will lead people into more and more impiety, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have swerved from the truth" (2 Tim 2:16-17).

"I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message, be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable, convince, rebuke, and encourage with the utmost patience in teaching" (2 Tim 4:1-2).

"Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me" (2 Tim 4:10-11).

"Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will pay him back for his deeds" (2 Tim 4:14).

B. Public commendations:

"When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Make every effort to send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way, and see that they lack nothing" (Tit 3:12-13).

"Honor widows who are really widows" (1 Tim 5:3).

"Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor" (1 Tim 5:17).

"Do not ordain anyone hastily" (1 Tim 5:22).

"I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. ... rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands" (2 Tim 1:5-6).

"May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain; when he arrived in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me—may the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! And you know very well how much service he rendered in Ephesus" (2 Tim 1:16-18).

"Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me in ministry. I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus" (2 Tim 4:11-12).

C. Appeals to shame:

Regarding the teachers of Titus 1:11: “To the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure, their very minds and consciences are corrupted. ... they are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work” (Tit 1:15-16).

“In the last days, distressing times will come. For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, unfeeling, implacable, slanderers, profligates, brutes, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to the outward form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid them!” (2 Tim 3:1-5).

D. Appeals to honor:

“Let all who are under the yoke of slavery regard their masters as worthy of all honor” (1 Tim 6:1).

“In the case of an athlete, no one is crowned without competing according to the rules” (2 Tim 2:5).

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who does not need to be ashamed” (2 Tim 2:15).

“In a large house there are utensils ..., some for [honorable] use, some for [dishonorable]. All who cleanse themselves of the things I have mentioned will become [honorable] utensils, dedicated and useful to the owner of the house, ready for every good work” (2 Tim 2:20-21).

“From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness” (2 Tim 4:8).

In the Pastorals, honor and shame function to set up barriers to destructive behavior. Paul’s appeals to public virtues (σέμνος, σωφροσύνη, εὐσέβεια, ἀνεπίλημπτος) meet the prescriptions and assumptions of the surrounding culture. Christians are to live lives of public virtue, largely as defined by the culture around them. But in one regard, the Pastorals use shame in a way that subverts the surrounding culture’s definitions. That exception is the way the letters to Timothy treat Paul’s suffering. The ancient Mediterranean world generally thought that good fortune and bad fortune operated on what we might think of as a type of *karma*, where people get what they deserve.¹⁹ Therefore, Graeco-Roman soci-

19 We find several examples of this thinking in the Bible: a) The story of the man born blind, “Who sinned so that this man was born blind?” (John 9); b) Resistance to the gospel due to Jesus’ shameful death; “Cursed is anyone who dies by being hung on a tree” (Gal 3:13, quoting Deut 21:3); c) The psalmists who cry out to God, “What did I do to deserve this?” (e.g., Psalms 4 & 5); d) The reasoning behind Greek rejection of the message of the cross (1 Cor 1:18ff).

ety tended to offer little sympathy for the suffering and weak, particularly those whose conduct had been labeled shameful by someone in authority.

The persecution that the gospel brought may have been the greatest impediment to its spread, not just due to fear of harm but also due to the shame that persecution carried. Paul confronted this impediment head-on by inverting the surrounding standards of honor when it came to suffering for the gospel. In Paul's thinking, suffering and rejection are inverted, transformed from marks of shame to marks of honor. Paul valorizes the suffering that has fallen on him and he knows will in turn fall on those who follow him. This persecution is no longer shameful because he follows a crucified Messiah whom God vindicated by raising him from the dead; indeed, Paul and his people participate in that crucifixion and vindication/resurrection. Even as he awaits martyrdom, which the surrounding culture saw as shameful and weak, Paul and his followers believe him to be vindicated. "Now is reserved for me the crown of righteousness" (2 Tim 4:8).

Therefore, Paul's suffering, and the suffering of Timothy and others who follow Paul, is *not* shameful. It is valorized because it follows the example of Jesus. God himself, the authority above every other authority, accepts the suffering as honorable and vindicates the sufferer. This makes Paul "an example for those who are going to believe in [Christ Jesus] for eternal life." This specific inversion of honor and shame creates a coherent group identity for Paul and those who follow his example by redefining certain acts, heretofore regarded as shameful, by making them honorable (Pao 2014, 748).

To summarize: in Paul's world, Christians were regarded with suspicion and sometimes demonized by dishonest propaganda. In response, Paul commanded his people to pursue the highest ideals of conduct and virtue. They were to live lives that conformed to the best moral expectations of the communities around them--whenever possible. And when it was not possible, when those expectations conflicted with their allegiance to Christ, Paul expected them to differ in the most honorable, virtuous ways possible. It must be Christ (and not their failings) that gave offense. And when those differences brought suffering, Paul expected them to imitate him as he imitated Christ.

The third method is the use of creeds or ancient Christian hymns; *creeds* and *hymns* are related literary forms with some overlap. These pieces of poetically structured material are a way to teach theological content in cultures where people don't read or don't read well, whether illiterate or pre-literate (as in the New Testament) or post-literate (as in the modern West). Since the majority of its members were illiterate, the ancient Graeco-Roman church recited these texts together in worship to facilitate memorization and learning.²⁰ There are as many as 35 creeds and hymns recorded for us in the New Testament, and 8 in the Pas-

20 Gamble (1995, 3) estimates that less than 10% of the populace could read or write more than their own names.

toral Epistles.²¹ Most New Testament examples focus on Christology and meet the challenges over that topic that arose toward the end of the first century. These group recitations taught believers important orthodox truths about Jesus' work and nature.²²

The best text from the Pastoral Epistles to illustrate the early Christian use of creeds is 1 Timothy 3:16:

“We confess, the mystery of godliness is great.
He who was made incarnate in the flesh,
Was vindicated by the Spirit,
Witnessed by angels,
Preached in the nations,
Believed on in the world,
Taken up in glory.”²³

The opening “We confess” tells us that this is a confession used by the early church, something all believers were expected to affirm, covenantal (or almost legal) in nature (Marshall 2004, 522). In worship, the congregation would recite the following truths about Jesus:

He who was made incarnate in the flesh, (not a spirit or apparition, truly human)

Was vindicated by the Spirit, (*vindication* means that God says he is right and everyone who opposes is wrong; this happened at Jesus' resurrection)

Witnessed by angels, (either the fallen angels during his possible descent into hell or the heavenly angels celebrating his victory over death and hell)

Preached in the nations,

Believed on in the world, (as the gospel spreads through the world)

Taken up in glory. (his ascension to God's right hand, where he rules and intercedes)

In summary: in a world where the majority of people were illiterate, Paul and other New Testament writers, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote material for their people that would be easy to understand and remember. These statements were

21 I am following the count of the editors of the NA28. In the appendix to this paper, I have isolated the text of these hymns from the Pastoral Epistles.

22 See here the work of Martin, 1982, 37-49. See also Gloer and Stepp 2008, 105; Gloer 1996, 209-17; and Gloer 1984, 115-32.

23 Author's translation. I am following the poetic structure from the NA28.

chanted or recited together in worship. They helped preachers and teachers convey important theological truths and ethical standards.

Conclusion

In this article, I have described an approach to disciplemaking that flows from the Pastoral Epistles. This approach includes goals and methods that derive from the text of these letters. What do we do with this now? Here are my suggestions.

First, church leaders need to think deliberately and prayerfully about what they are trying to achieve when shaping people into disciples.

1. The leaders of the church--not just one person--should prayerfully work through the New Testament to discover the ways it describes mature believers and the ideal for churches. How do the inspired biblical authors describe the goals? What principles and examples do they use that can help us describe what disciplemaking should produce in Croatia or elsewhere; in Zagreb or Osijek or Sarajevo or Novi Sad; in your neighborhood, in your church, with the challenges that your communities face?
2. Be as specific as you can in your thinking. One of Satan's weapons against us is to keep us where we are by getting us to chase vague, poorly-defined goals.
3. Be prepared to repeat the process. As circumstances change in your cities and neighborhoods, as your families change, you may need to adjust. One benefit of the New Testament containing so many different goals for disciplemaking is that it proves that no one set of goals fits every set of circumstances. Choose the methods that seem to fit your situation best, and be willing to reassess.

Second, I invite church leaders to think specifically about Paul's instructions in the Pastoral Epistles and how Paul's concern for their witness might apply to believers today in *their* cities and churches. We can find important parallels between the situation Paul and his churches faced in 1st century Rome and the situations believers in Central Europe face today. The biggest parallel is that, as with Christians in the 1st century Graeco-Roman world, evangelicals in Europe today are an oddity. The people around us do not understand us, or why we are not part of them. They don't know what to do with us.

1. In some places, evangelicals face outright hostility or suspicion. In much of Europe--but not necessarily Croatia--people are generally hostile toward religion itself. In much of Europe, the attitude is "Religion is only for people who need help." And there is a deep tradition of intellectual skepticism and antagonism toward religion.

2. At the same time, and I see this, especially in Croatia there are things we could use to our advantage. Croats are more respectful and positive toward religion in general than many other European groups. This often extends to a deep respect for the Bible, so much so that Bible reading is one of the most effective evangelistic tools. Evangelicals and Catholics in Croatia sometimes speak the same religious language. And there are ways in which Croatia, being Mediterranean, is closer to ancient views of honor and shame than modern Western countries are. That similarity may make New Testament instructions more helpful for disciplinemaking here than in the individualistic, libertarian West.

Will the world around us see us demonstrate virtue in our behavior, acting in ways that benefit others and benefit the society around us? Or have we taken refuge inside our fortresses and closed the doors behind us? Brian McClaren wrote, “In a pluralistic society, religions are judged by the benefits they offer to non-adherents” (McClaren 2006, 111).²⁴ How are we serving the non-adherents, the “outsiders” around us?²⁵

To adapt a tweet I saw recently: “The harvest is plentiful, the workers are sufficient (maybe not many, but sufficient. Jesus started with 12, we have more). We need to stop wringing our hands & get harvesting.”²⁶ So teach your people that virtue and Christ-like behavior matter, not just for their spiritual health but also for the eternal destiny of the people around them. Now as then, the world is watching.

Third, churches should prayerfully consider how they might use the methods that Paul commends in these letters.

1. Imitation of Moral Examples. Use this approach by being an example of good behavior and virtue yourself. Expect your leaders to do the same. Teach your leaders and your most mature people that they must invest their time and attention in shepherding others in the church. Mature Christian couples who have a loving, exemplary marriage should be available to mentor younger couples, even those who are not yet officially engaged. Mature Christian men and women who have been good fathers and mothers should be prepared to invest their time, prayers, and attention into younger mothers and fathers, if possible, even before the babies come. Every part of the body of Christ must know that they are responsible for

24 McClaren attributes this quote to “one of [his] mentors”.

25 Of course, it is supremely ironic for evangelicals, who are outnumbered in Croatia over 1000-to-1, to think of non-evangelicals as “outsiders.” But many are outsiders to the gospel; such are the inversions that the gospel produces.

26 Rebecca McLaughlin (@RebeccaMcLaugh) Twitter, 12 April 2024, <https://twitter.com/RebeccaMcLaugh/status/1778774856181362738>. The original read: “In light of the decline in church attendance in America, I am often asked for my thoughts. Here they are (in a nutshell): The harvest is plentiful. The workers are many. We need to stop wringing our hands & get harvesting.”

investing in the other parts of the body *without expecting anything in return*. The mature Christian cannot expect favors or service in return for this investment.

One caution: remember Paul's warning about testing people before you give them responsibility; "Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands" (1 Tim 5:22; cf. 1 Tim 3:10). And remember the standards that he sets for leaders, all the character requirements of Titus 1 and 2, and 1 Timothy 3 and 5.

2. The careful use of honor and shame. Honor usually takes the form of recognition for people who have done well at something, particularly if it demonstrates virtue or sets an example for others to follow. So, celebrate happy events with your people, and set an example by being generous with honor for people in your church and even in other churches. Remember Romans 12:10, "Compete with one another to show honor to others."

Shame is difficult and dangerous to use. I hesitate to mention it, to be honest, because there is great potential for damage and abuse. But the necessity of rebuke is a reality of leadership. Leaders are sometimes required to use shame, usually through either public or private rebukes. But they should use it carefully, selectively, and gently. If possible, rebuke should be made in private and only after the leaders have made sure they have the whole story. Remember that the goal of rebuke is to correct and restore. The goal is to win back your brother or sister *and* to restore the health of the church. You are not rebuking to rid yourself of someone simply because they are troublesome. Therefore, rebukes should be made as gently and lovingly as possible, as the situation allows.

I would not advise using a public rebuke except under certain circumstances. If possible, the decision to rebuke someone, especially a public rebuke, should be a decision shared by the leadership, not at a single person's initiative, and only after much prayer and fasting. The decision should be made slowly *if possible*; some situations do not allow you to be deliberate, so pray that you catch such things early. From what I see in the New Testament, Paul reserved public rebukes for leaders who sinned (such as Peter, see Galatians 2) and for sins that endangered the reputation (see 1 Corinthians 5), health, or unity of the church.

- When someone was teaching things that went against Paul's teachings, there was probably first an attempt to correct them privately. But if they persisted, or if people were being led astray, they were rebuked publicly. Remember, teachers are leaders.
- Sexual sin also *sometimes* deserved public rebuke, because it endangered the whole church by disrupting families and by destroying the purity that Christians were supposed to treat one another with.²⁷ Because of the

27 1 Timothy 5:1-2: "Do not speak harshly to an older man, but speak to him as to a father, to younger men as brothers, to older women as mothers, to younger women as sisters—with absolute purity."

potential for scandal which damaged the church's reputation and because of the danger it presented, sexual sins were and should be subject to rebuke. If behavior can be corrected privately, do so. But if the damage is being done, or if the person in sin is a leader, you must rebuke them publicly.

- I think that financial sins *against the church* or its membership could also fall under the category of sins that need to be rebuked publicly, depending on the circumstances. For example: if one member has cheated another, or if one member has embezzled funds from the church, those circumstances probably require a public rebuke.

3. The use of creeds or creed-like statements in worship. The West is increasingly a post-literate society, where people do not read anything that is not on a screen. It's refreshing for me to see Croats reading newspapers in the *kafici*; you would not see that in the USA. But the number of people who read well and often is declining, in Europe as in the USA.

How do you teach basic standards of belief or behavior in a society where people do not or cannot read? One way is through reading together (or memorizing and reciting together) short, concise statements of doctrine. Many evangelical churches around the world use the Apostles Creed this way: "I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. ..."

Other churches do not use man-made creeds because they feel it devalues the biblical text. If that is your tradition, then use the materials you can find in the Pastoral Epistles and other New Testament texts. Read them together, or memorize and recite them together, like the first-century Christians did. There is power in speaking scripture aloud to one another. You can also use these passages as foundations for teaching series or sermon series like you would any other passage of scripture.

APPENDIX: HYMNS IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

Based on the NA28 Greek text, there are eight hymns or creeds in the Pastoral Epistles:²⁸

Titus 3:4-7

"But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,
Not because of any works of righteousness that we had done,
But according to his mercy,

28 Here I follow the structure of the NA28 text, here with slight alterations to the NRSV translation.

He saved us through the water of rebirth
And renewal by the Holy Spirit.
Which he poured out on us richly
Through Jesus Christ our Savior,
So that, having been justified by his grace,
We might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

1 Timothy 2:5-6

"For there is one God;
There is also one mediator between God and men,
The man Christ Jesus,
Who gave himself a ransom for all,
The testimony at the appropriate time."

1 Timothy 3:16

"We confess, the mystery of godliness is great.
He who was made incarnate in the flesh,
Was vindicated by the Spirit,
Witnessed by angels,
Preached in the nations,
Believed on in the world,
Taken up in glory."

1 Timothy 6:7-8

"For we brought nothing into the world,
So that we can take nothing out of it,
But if we have food and clothing,
With these things we will be content."

1 Timothy 6:11-12

"But as for you, man of God, shun all this;
Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith,
Love, endurance, gentleness.
Fight the good fight of the faith;
take hold of the eternal life to which you were called

And for which you confessed the good confession
In the presence of many witnesses.”

1 Timothy 6:15-16

“He who is the blessed and only Sovereign,
The King of kings
And Lord of lords.
Who alone has immortality,
Dwelling in unapproachable light,
Whom no one has ever seen or can see;
To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.”

2 Timothy 1:9-10

“Who saved us and called us with a holy calling,
Not because of our works but according to his own purpose and grace,
Which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began
And has now been revealed through the appearance of our Savior Jesus
Christ,
The one who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light
through the gospel.”

2 Timothy 2:11-13

“If we have died with him, then we will also live with him;
If we endure, then we will also reign with him;
If we deny him, then he will also deny us;
If we are faithless, he remains faithful—
For he cannot deny himself.”

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Perry L. Stepp

**„Izgradnja (a ne rušenje) mostova za evanđelje“:
učeništvo u Pastoralnim poslanicama**

Sažetak

Ovaj članak istražuje što Pastoralne poslanice (Titu te 1 i 2 Timoteju) kažu o stvaranju učenika i bavi se ciljevima Pavlova učenja u ovim pismima i metodama koje je preporučio Timoteju i Titu te crkvama u kojima su oni služili. Ciljevi: dvadeset sedam novozavjetnih dokumenata naglašava različite vidove slijeđenja Isusa prema zrelosti (tj. ciljeve učenja) kako već zahtijevaju situacije iz kojih su pisane i zbog kojih su napisane. U Pastoralnim poslanicama Pavlov je specifični cilj da njegovi čitatelji žive kreposnim životima, velikim dijelom definiranim poganskom kulturom koja ih okružuje. On se nada da će oni na taj način zadobiti i zadržati interes kulture za evanđelje. Time će njegovi čitatelji izbjeći ili ublažiti negativne stereotipe koji se koriste protiv kršćana i popustiti zategnute društvene odnose uobičajene u njihovu svijetu. Metode: u ovim pismima Pavao savjetuje korištenje moralnoga primjera i pozivanje na čast i sram. Osim toga, pokazuje kako koristiti vjeroispovijedi kao alat za poučavanje svojih crkava. Nakana je pokazati da Pastoralne poslanice nude jedinstvenu perspektivu u pogledu stvaranja učenika usredotočenu na važnost javnog svjedočanstva i korištenja metoda poput nasljedovanja i usklađivanja s društvenim vrijednostima. Ovo čine kako bi podigle zrele kršćane koji mogu učinkovito predstaviti poruku evanđelja u svojim zajednicama.