

# THE REACH

*filtering everyday life through the word of God*

David Platt, in his book, **Radical**, states, *“The gospel does not prompt you to mere reflection; the gospel requires a response.”*

So, let's respond to the gospel as we look at 2nd Timothy and filter everyday life through the word of God. This book is Paul's final recorded words written to encourage young Timothy. He was struggling to lead a church in Ephesus, a community given over to false teachings. Read 2nd Timothy 2:8-10. It is as if Paul is saying, Timothy, remember, Jesus endured suffering to the point of death... I will too, and you might also. But, the gospel is not chained! Respond with boldness and action! Clearly, Paul had found something worth losing everything for.

Oddly, our husbands are employed to do the opposite. They do everything to keep from losing. Yet, similar to Ephesus, where Timothy was trying to make it, our husbands coach student-athletes given over to false teachings and self-promotion.

- **Of course, there is a big difference between actually losing your life for your faith, and a losing season. To literally compare the two dramatically diminishes Scripture, and that is not what we are doing here. But, God's word is not chained, and we can apply this to our everyday life. Consider the demands of your community. The chains on your coach are getting tighter and tighter while the demands grow louder. How have these chains tightened?**

*“God delights in using ordinary Christians who come to the end of themselves and choose to trust in his extraordinary provision.”* – David Platt

Our coach, while paid to win, endures an increasingly loud culture obsessed with self-importance. Student-athletes are involved in this more than ever through their social media obsession. Many parents are pushing this selfish mindset as well. It is all egged on by an American prescription of daily doses of self-care, well-being, mental health, physical health, positive thinking, safe boundaries, etc. And yet Jesus said, hey if you want to come after me, “Deny yourself, and follow me.” (Matt.16:24) Ironically, America prizes self, but the gospel says **DENY YOUR SELF!**

- **Jesus said this because we all need to examine who we really are and not lean toward our own selfish understanding. Read Prov. 3:5-6. Can you share a time when you made a decision based on a self-examination of what YOU thought was best, without really seeking the Lord? What was the result?**

Taking a short drive to a local shopping center proves true to America's first love of self. Within a small radius, I have access to a variety of hair salons, mani/pedis, waxings, massage spas, facial spas, foot spas, lash lounges, supplement stores, etc., further shining a spotlight on what is best for ME. Overwhelmingly, the spa industry in America generates \$30 billion, a \$10 billion increase from 2022. Ironically, in May of 2022, the Global Bank, in response to the global food crisis, announced that \$30 billion could address worldwide food insecurity over a period of only 15 months. In other words, one year of our self-loving, American spa money could wipe out the devastation of hungry babies, children, and their starving moms and dads... in a little over a year... across the globe! But again, our American culture prizes and profits off of this message, “Take care of your SELF.”

- Re-read 2nd Timothy 2:20-22. Basically, Paul is saying you've got your nice dishes and you've got your everyday dishes. Don't choose to be an everyday dish, choose an honorable, important dish. Don't hyper-focus on everyday vein appearances, flee youthful lusts, and instead, hyper-focus on the gold... your heart! How do we balance that focus?

Read 2nd Timothy 3:2-5. This is a powerful passage with a strong punchline! What makes certain times so difficult? Well, it's people! It's our co-workers, our student-athletes, our neighbors, our church family, and honestly, it's you and me; we love our stuff and we love our self. Opening this list, "lovers of self" summarizes OUR human nature and the other characteristics flow naturally from this issue of self-centeredness.

Consider the following insert from David Platt's, *Radical*, *"We are giving in to a dangerous temptation to take the Jesus of the Bible and turn him into a version of Jesus we are more comfortable with. A nice, middle-class, American Jesus. A Jesus who doesn't mind materialism and would never call us to give away everything we have."* *"A Jesus who brings us comfort and prosperity as we live out our Christian spin on our American dream."* *"But do you and I realize what we are doing at this point? We are molding Jesus into our image. He is beginning to look a lot like us because, after all, that is whom we are most comfortable with."*

- I find Platt's statements jarring. Predominantly because it hits close to home, forcing me to look back and see where I have shifted as time goes by. In other words, certain cultural things that really bothered me a few years ago, I accept as the way things are now. In a subtle way, when I choose to turn a blind eye, I am creating an American Jesus by going with the flow! Can you relate? Please share an example.

Self-advancement, self-esteem, self-sufficiency, no doubt these are the things our country was built on, AND, these things are tearing it down. While they have a place, without a **desire** to deny yourself and follow Jesus, we slowly blend in with the world around us. As Christians, we must look different. Read Matthew 5:16. This passage tells us that simply by our works, we can convince others to follow Jesus. What are our works? Our actions... and our reactions. How do we do that? We repay evil with good, a harsh word with a kind word (and a clean word), an unfair ruling with acceptance, a slanderous statement with forgiveness, etc. Then, THEN we are shining a light to Jesus. It is our differences, not our similarities that draw others to the power of God working in our life!

- Basically, Paul's message to Timothy was one of endurance, keep on keeping on! This gets harder and harder in our self-centered culture. But, for the sake of the gospel, we must continue. What specific gift or strength do you possess that makes you useful for God for the sake of the gospel? How can you improve and refine this gift?

*"God's revelation in the gospel not only reveals who he is, but it also reveals who we are."* – David Platt

