

Transformation Through Exhortation

Scripture Reading — 2 Timothy 4:1-5

*In view of [Christ's] appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge ...
2 Timothy 4:1 —*

Some of us need to be told to get off the sofa and be productive. Sometimes we just need to receive an order. That's why there are many commands in the Bible.

Paul motivates Timothy through exhortations, such as Preach, be prepared, correct, rebuke, encourage. Paul says, "You've got an important job to do. I've encouraged you; I've equipped you; I've given you an example; and now I charge you to get down to God's business."

The more I get to know myself, the more I realize that I often need a push to volunteer for service in God's army. I need God himself as my drill sergeant.

We are all born with different personalities. Hearing a command motivates some while frustrating others. Prohibitions against disgraceful behavior can actually stir up a desire to disobey. Tell Jeannie to stay away from the cookie jar, and soon you hear its lid rattling. Similarly, a "KEEP OFF THE GRASS" sign will actually prompt some to deliberately walk on the grass. But although commands might not work for all, most of us need a word of authority in our life.

God is the ultimate authority in all of our lives. We follow his commands because we know he cares for us, has our best in mind, and acts from an eternal perspective. God's criticism is always constructive. And his exhortations are priceless advice. He charges us to obey.

Prayer

Lord, sometimes we dismiss your orders and argue with your commands. Instill in us the reverence and humility to receive your commands as transforming exhortations. Amen.

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