

2 TIMOTHY

EXPECT WHAT?



TEACH IT TALK SESSION 8

This talk guide is just that: a guide. It's not intended to be a manuscript to read aloud. It's here to give you ideas, structure, and stories to blend with your personal study (Prep It) as you prepare your talk.

The content complements the other Teach It guides and allows you to give a talk on the same topic students are studying in other settings, such as small groups, without too much overlap.

1. Materials (Optional)

- Projected images: a diamond and a piece of coal
- Video clips: scenes from *The Karate Kid* of “meaningless” chores: (1) waxing a car, Chapter 12, “Training Begins”—DVD counter cues 00:54:50 to 00:56:35 and (2) sanding a deck, Chapter 15, “Sanding the Deck”—DVD counter cues 1:06:13 to 1:07:36

2. Optional Openings

VIDEO CLIP

Show the clips of Daniel-san performing “meaningless” chores. If you don't show the clips, tell students about the different chores that Mr. Miyagi made Daniel (or Daniel-san, played by Ralph Macchio) perform as part of his training—waxing a car, refinishing a deck, things that apparently had absolutely nothing to do with karate.

After viewing the clips, point out—

Daniel had no idea that each of these chores was strengthening and training his muscles for the exact karate moves he needed. He didn't know it at the time, but the chores were making him exactly what he wanted to be—a world-class karate fighter.

VISUAL ILLUSTRATION

In split-screen fashion, project two images: a diamond and a piece of coal.

Explain—

The primary element used to make a diamond out of coal is pressure. Coal has no idea why it's undergoing pressure. But if it knew the outcome, it would probably say: Bring it on!

QUOTATIONS

Share a few of these quotations to introduce the idea that we grow through adversity.

Character is what you do and how you act when no one is watching.
—author unknown

In great matters men show themselves as they wish to be seen; in small matters, as they are.
—Gamaliel Bradford (1863-1932, American biographer and poet)

When the Japanese mend broken objects, they aggrandize the damage by filling the cracks with gold, because they believe that when something's suffered damage and has a history it becomes more beautiful.

—Barbara Bloom (1951-present, American artist and sculptor)

PERSONAL STORY

Tell a personal story about a time when you were asked to do something and had no idea why, but now you know the reason. Here's an example:

When I took my driver's training, I couldn't get through my head why they kept telling us to "drive defensively." What did that mean? It sounded to me like driving was one big game. All the other drivers were on offense, and I was on defense, trying to keep them from scoring. It made driving sound like one big demolition derby, which actually seemed kinda fun.

After I received my driver's license and had driven for a few months, I began to see what my instructor was talking about. I learned that other drivers aren't as smart as I am. I need to watch out for them, too. I need to drive in a way that doesn't trust that the other driver is going to do what he's supposed to do. I don't know if it's because I came to this understanding on my own (eventually), but I now actually try to make defensive driving the hallmark of my driving.

The other day I was driving with a lot on my mind and came to a four-way stop. I made my dutiful, habitual stop, and without thinking or looking around, I let my foot off the brake to head through the intersection. For whatever reason that defensive driving concept flashed into my mind, and I decided to make sure all other drivers were obeying the four-way stop. Just as I looked up, a car raced through the intersection as if the stop sign wasn't there. I could have been killed.

The defensive driving lesson made no sense to me when I first heard it. However, that day at the four-way stop sign, it saved my life.

Life is a lot like that experience. How often do you ask a parent, "But why do I have to _____ (fill in a chore or responsibility)?" and then your parent tries to explain. Typically it took me many mistakes before I started to understand why I wasn't allowed to play in the street, or drive when I was 11, or...I could go on and on. Every one of us is part of something bigger that we can't see. Naturally, this causes us to ask questions—questions that begin with the word why.

OPTIONAL MIX-INS

You may want to point out some background on 2 Timothy:

-In Paul and Timothy's world, Christians were being persecuted from two directions: from the Jews and from the Roman government.

-What's more, many behaviors that went with being a Christ-follower were totally contrary to the common practices of the day. In fact sexual fornication was actually encouraged in some religious practices. Behaviors encouraged by the Bible writers, such as sexual purity, were considered flat-out weird.

-At that time Christianity wasn't even a recognized faith; it was seen as an offshoot of the Jewish faith, a faith that received little respect in the Greek culture.

-The Greek word for persecution can also be translated pressure—as in the pressure it takes to turn coal into diamond.

3. Digging In

Continue—

I was thinking the other day about what a world would be like if it didn't have any suffering—a world where nothing bad ever happened, where people lived to the expected ripe age of 90, where tragedy didn't strike—a world where things happened in the natural order.



And then it dawned on me that there would still be some level of bad that would be a part of that world, too. The scale would just be different. It might go something like this: Did you hear the news? It's tragic. Jason scraped his knee when he fell off his skateboard. The doctors said it would take a week to 10 days to heal. Unbelievable. That guy has more problems. Five years ago he had a headache for an entire hour. He's like Job.

I'm not making light of tragedy. It's just that there is always going to be some kind of bad—at least as long as we live in a world bound by and measured by time. Especially a fallen world bound and measured by time. Especially a fallen, ungodly world bound and measured by time. And when you seek to live a godly life in an ungodly, fallen world, you won't have an easy time of it. It would be nice if it was easy, but it's not.

We're told in 2 Timothy 3:12—

“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

Think about that for a second. [Reread the verse.] That doesn't sound like something anyone would sign up for. Trying to live a godly life is hard enough, let alone having to navigate guaranteed persecution. It's like putting sand traps on golf courses. The game is hard enough as is. Why do they need to actually go to the expense of creating more difficulty? Seeking to live a godly life has its own challenges, but we have to add persecution on top of that?

I appreciate the fact that God didn't keep this his little secret. He's giving us fair warning, and he must be pretty sure that it's not going to scare us completely away. Maybe it's because of a couple other things he said in his Word, like—

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.
(Psalm 34:18)

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. (1 Peter 5:8-10)

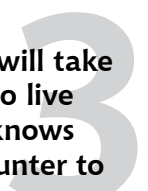
There's something you can count on when you're suffering. God is close.

Psalm 34:18 says that God is close to the suffering. He's right there. And he himself is the one who saves those who are crushed in spirit. He's the one who personally restores you and makes you strong.

I'll admit, sometimes these sound like empty words from God. It's like being broke and asking a friend for money for food, and the friend says “I'll pray for you.” That's nice, but I need food. Being restored by God sounds good, but I'd rather have the problem taken away by God.

The thing is, God does restore. He comforts us with the Holy Spirit, and his Spirit is an actual deposit from heaven. God sends his Holy Spirit from eternity into a fallen world bound by time. And that something begins to heal us on the inside—it massages our hurt, it smoothes over our jagged edges, but most importantly, it gives us a glimpse of our experience from the perspective of eternity. It might just be a whisk of a glimpse, but it begins to restore us.

Did you notice that the Scripture passages I've just mentioned don't really say that God will take away the suffering? In fact, it's like he guarantees we'll experience suffering if we seek to live a godly life. He doesn't save us from every little bit of suffering in our lives because he knows on some level it will make us better. He also knows that life in a fallen world will run counter to



life in him. But we can count on knowing him better through the suffering. We may experience something with God we never experienced before or something few others know.

Seeking to live a godly life in an ungodly world will open up a whole new realm in our faith journey. It may sound like it's asking for trouble. And it is. But it's also counting on the fact that God will be enduring the trouble with us. We will be closer to God than we could have ever imagined. And that's not a bad thing.

4. Taking It Inward

Continue—

Some of you have already suffered more than your fair share. How have you reacted to it? Have you let yourself get bitter or angry, or have you let God's Spirit smooth over your jagged edges? Have you caught a glimpse of your suffering from the perspective of eternity?

Some of you have been persecuted more than your fair share. Maybe you come from a home that's unsupportive, especially of your Christian faith, or you go to school with people who tear you down because you try to live right. Are you counting on God to make you firm and steadfast?

Paul's words in 2 Timothy make it clear—we will be persecuted if we seek to live a godly life. God is asking us to go through the fire with him. We've all heard stories about how close soldiers became with each other when they faced death in a combat zone. They faced an enemy together and saw things together that no one else has seen. No enemy is more treacherous, more deceptive, or more destructive than Satan. He will make sure you face persecution. Thankfully, we don't have to face him alone. In fact we have the best friend and fellow soldier who will fight alongside us. God wants to face the Enemy with us and bring us out alive.

5. Wrapping It Up

Finish with—

There are some questions we can ask that may help us experience the closeness of God rather than bitterness from the situation.

God, what could you be teaching me in this crisis?

God, where should I stand on this issue?

God, how do you see me moving forward in this area of my life?

God...um....help!?