

# Talent Plus Preparation and Practice

*"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

2 Timothy 2:15

## Preparation Positions Your Talent

Achievement follows preparation. Talent wants to jump into action, but preparation positions talent to be highly effective. Talent plus preparation often leads to success. Talent minus preparation often leads to disaster.

Talent will frequently provide you with an opportunity for success, but preparation is essential to actual achievement of success. Talent may get you a spot on the starting line, but preparation is necessary for you to reach the finish line. A famous general in World War II said it this way, *"The more you prepare in peace, the less you bleed in war."*

Why do leaders fail to prepare? There are several reasons:

1. They fail to see the value of preparation before \_\_\_\_\_.
2. They fail to appreciate the value of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. They are unwilling to invest the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ required to prepare.

## Preparation Principles

Let's look at some principles that will help us understand the power of preparation and all the benefits that come with it:

1. Preparation allows you to tap into your \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Preparation is a \_\_\_\_\_, not an event.
3. Preparation precedes \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Preparation for tomorrow begins with the right use of \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Preparation requires continually good \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Good preparation leads to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Remember:** Leadership develops daily, not in a day. If you are PREPARING today, you will not be REPAIRING tomorrow.

## Three Keys to Preparation

1. Good preparation always begins with \_\_\_\_\_.
  - What is my goal?
  - What will it cost in time, effort, and resources to get there?
  - What obstacles am I likely to face?
  - What are my personal limitations?

2. Good preparation requires \_\_\_\_\_.
  - What is the use of climbing the ladder of success only to find that it is leaning against the wrong building?
  - What is your God-given purpose in life?
3. Preparation requires a right \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Do you believe in yourself?
  - Do you believe in what you are doing?
  - Do you believe God will empower you?

**Discussion:** What is one goal you have for your ministry or business? What must you do to prepare YOURSELF to reach this goal?

### **Biblical Case Study: Timothy (2 Timothy 2:2-26)**

For many years, Paul mentored young Timothy. Paul exhorted him to stir up his leadership gifts. Paul knew that giftedness alone is not enough. He helped Timothy prepare to lead in tough times. He challenged him to commit to a lifetime of faithful service to the Lord Jesus.

Paul helped Timothy with preparation through wise instruction. In chapter two of 2 Timothy, the apostle uses seven leadership metaphors. These pictures portray a leader who is generous, disciplined, patient, rugged, tenacious, pure, hardworking and sacrificial. Paul motivates Timothy to develop these qualities and attributes.

Right after Paul encourages Timothy to be strong (2 Timothy 2:1), he gives him seven portraits to help him understand what he must become:

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ (v.2) - A leader must mentor others.
2. A \_\_\_\_\_ (vv.3, 4) - A leader must be committed.
3. An \_\_\_\_\_ (v.5) - A leader must possess discipline.
4. A \_\_\_\_\_ (vv.6, 7) - A leader must be a hard worker.
5. A \_\_\_\_\_ (vv.15-19) - A leader must be diligent.
6. A \_\_\_\_\_ (vv.20-22) - A leader must be pure.
7. A \_\_\_\_\_ (vv.23-26) - A leader must serve others.

Paul knew that Timothy must prepare for the task before him. Preparation would be crucial for his four-fold assignment:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ the Word. (2 Timothy 4:1,2)
2. Do the \_\_\_\_\_. (2 Timothy 4:3-5)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ the race. (2 Timothy 4:6,7)
4. Finish \_\_\_\_\_. (2 Timothy 4:8)

## Practice Sharpens Your Talent

Preparation positions talent and practice sharpens it. All coaches of championship teams agree that there are two keys to going from good to great: the preparation of the team and the practice of the players. Consider these three factors that every leader must know about practice:

1. Practice enables \_\_\_\_\_ - If you desire to grow and improve, you must practice.
2. Practice demands \_\_\_\_\_ - The harder you work, the harder it becomes to surrender.
3. Practice leads to \_\_\_\_\_ - If you commit yourself to practice, here are a few things you are likely to learn:
  - Practice shows and builds commitment.
  - Your performance can always be improved.
  - The growth process is better in an arena where you are allowed to make mistakes.
  - You must be willing to start with small things.
  - Very small improvement, consistently practiced, will produce major results.
  - Practice requires time and hard work.

Five elements of practice that sharpens our talent:

1. An excellent \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Your best \_\_\_\_\_.
3. A clear \_\_\_\_\_.
4. High \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The right \_\_\_\_\_.

**Remember:** There is no use whatever trying to help people who do not help themselves. You cannot push anyone up a ladder unless he is willing to make the climb.

**Discussion:** How can you practice now to help prepare yourself to meet your future goals?

## Biblical Case Study: Jesus and His Disciples (Matthew 17:14-21)

Jesus desired that His disciples would put into practice what He had taught them. He believed very much in on-the-job training. When Jesus came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, He found nine of His disciples trying to cast a demon out of a boy. He again became a mentor to His men. He saw their failure as a moment for learning and growth. What can we learn from Jesus, the master of all mentors?

1. He \_\_\_\_\_ that His disciples could not do the job. (v.17)
2. He began to \_\_\_\_\_ for them what they needed to do. (v.18)
3. He assessed their \_\_\_\_\_ and explained why they had failed. (vv.19-21)
4. He affirmed the \_\_\_\_\_. (v.20)
5. He held them \_\_\_\_\_ to embrace it. (v.21)

Jesus instructed them, showed them, allowed them to try it themselves, and then evaluated what happened.

## **Assessment and Application**

### **Assessment:**

Are you including in your daily routine the five essential elements of effective practice? Think about each one: an excellent teacher or mentor, your best effort, a clear purpose, high goals, and the right resources.

### **Application:**

Are you currently involved in activities that are wasting your time and energy? How can you replace these with activities that will sharpen your talent?