

## **We Equip Servants Because Showing Up is Not Good Enough**

2 Timothy 2:1-2

You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

Long before the legendary Iditarod Dog Sled Race was first run in 1973, a more important race took place in Alaska. On January 21, 1925, the lives of countless children in Nome were at stake. An epidemic of diphtheria had broken out, and the gold rush city did not have a sufficient amount of antitoxin. Dr. Curtis Welch telegraphed Fairbanks, Anchorage, Seward, and Juneau, asking for help. There were 300,000 units of the serum at a hospital in Anchorage, and it was the only serum in the entire state.

The problem was to get it to Nome in the shortest time possible. With the Bering Sea frozen and no railroad or roads extending to Nome's remote location, dog teams were the only solution. The hospital packed the 300,000 units were packed in an insulated container and transported them to Nenana on an overnight train.

Once the serum arrived, a 674-mile relay race by dog teams awaited. Musher who delivered the mail normally covered that distance in a month. The first musher took the insulated cylinder of serum 52 miles, where he passed the lifesaving baton to the second musher, who traveled 31 miles. From musher to musher the relay continued until a total of 20 dog-sled drivers had cooperated to get the needed medicine to Nome by February 2nd. The lifesaving serum arrived in only 127 ½ hours due to the cooperative effort of individuals willing to brave the austere Alaskan wilderness, sub-zero temperatures, and blinding blizzards.

This life-saving mission is a picture of how God works through many people over time to bring salvation to those who need it. These heroes of the faith include godly grandparents, Sunday school teachers, faithful friends, spiritual mentors.

Greg Asimakoupoulos, Naperville, Illinois; source The 1925 Serum Run to Nome

## **Memory Verse**

**2 Timothy 2:2**

**“You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”**

Woody Allen famously (might have) said, "80% of success in life is just showing up." I always took that as the ultimate slacker's manifesto. Hey, just showing up is all you can ask of me. Anything else, well, don't expect much.

In the classic, "Rio Bravo," John Wayne's character summed up the essence of his cowboy philosophy by declaring to a less-than-perfect sidekick "Just showing up doesn't get the job done!"

**Show up prepared “...be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”**

**1 Corinthians 9:24-27**

**Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat**

**my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.**

Learn to be:

Always in God's Presence

Focused on God's World

Listen for God's direction in your life

Ever a learner – build depth in your life and breadth will come

Available – Timely phone calls and emails.

How to think clearly.

who will also be qualified to teach others

Teach grace by doing it.

Find their gift and encourage, challenge and train to reach potential.

I am told the attention span of the normal American is 3 minutes.

I was reluctant to believe that until this past week I noticed something confirming the report.

People who sit at long traffic lights lose concentration just before it turns green.

Don't let your concentration fall.

Find some way to keep your eyes and mind on the lord.

A volunteer is one who takes action by choice of the will. Sin is a voluntary action. The action is not forced by others in any way. Servant is one who is subject to the command of another either because they volunteer to place themselves under that person or are forcibly placed.

**Showing up does not justify my life, "...the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."**

Anyone who has faithfully "shown up" and then blissfully slept through 8 a.m. chemistry lectures, Monday morning staff meetings, Friday afternoon faculty meetings, Sunday morning worship services (!!!) knows that sometimes showing up is just the beginning.

Move them out of their comfort zone. Be yourself but be more than yourself. Be confident in your strengths and understand and overcome your weakness. Moving out of the comfort zone gives an opportunity to learn of other strengths and makes us realize where we may have other areas of strength.

People do what we expect them to do.

Believe in the potential of all people. Give people you are mentoring Hype.

Want what is best for the other person.

Pastor and freelance writer Mark Buchanan tells about a conversation he had with a young philosophy student who was a healthy, good-looking man in his early twenties. Mark had officiated a wedding on a gorgeous day on the Sunshine Coast of British Columbia, and at the reception the student asked Mark if he really believed all that religious stuff he had spouted at the church.

Mark writes:

I said I did. He smirked. I asked him what he believed. "I tried your religion for a while," he said. "I found it's just a burden to carry. You know what I've figured out? Life justifies living. Life is its own reward and explanation. I don't need some pie-in-the-sky mirage to keep me going. This life has enough pleasure and mystery and adventure in it not to need anything else to account for it. Life justifies living."

"Good," I said. "Very good. And I believe you. Today, here, now—feel the warmth of that breeze, listen to the laughter of those people, smell the spiciness of that shrimp cooking, look at the blueness of the sky. Yes, today I believe you. What a superb philosophy. Life justifies living.

Bravo!

"Only, I'm thinking about someone I met last February. Richard. Richard was 44, looked 60, and had been living on the streets since he was 12. He was a junkie. To support his habit, he was a male prostitute until he got too old and ugly and diseased for that. Now he has AIDS.

"The last time I saw Richard was on a gray, rainy day in winter. I bought him a bus ticket and put him on the bus. He was going to his mother's home in Calgary. He hadn't spoken with her in almost 15 years, but he was hoping he could go home to die. Almost incoherent, he sputtered, 'I wish I'd never been born. My whole life has been a mistake. My whole life has been misery.'

"I'm thinking about Richard. And I'm thinking about Ernie. Ernie was a man on the rise. While he was in his twenties, he was already vice president of a thriving national business. He was tough-minded, hard-driving, prodigiously skilled, hugely ambitious. He was a superb athlete, a natural at any sport. He had a beautiful wife. They were unable to have children of their own, so they adopted four, three from Africa and one from Mexico. On the day the fourth adoption became final, Ernie got the results back from some medical tests he had undergone to account for some dizziness, blurring of eyesight, and tingling in his hands. The tests came back with stunning news: Ernie had multiple sclerosis.

"Yes, I'm thinking about Richard and Ernie. And I have a question about your philosophy: How exactly do I explain to them that life justifies living?"

The young philosophy student had no response. He said he'd have to think about it and get back to me. I gave him my address and asked him to write me when he came up with something. I never heard from him. Because life does not justify living. Eternity does.

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### **How to show up and make an impression**

#### **Deuteronomy 6:6-9**

**“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”**

#### **Show up first with your family**

If you are going to be a teacher you must look for the possibilities instead of the problems. Several years ago I made a confession to my staff. In “religiousees” I had a “critical spirit” but in more common terms I was an SOB – you know son-of-a-boss. I knew it but kept thinking of it as appropriate – the staff deserved it and if they did a better job I wouldn't have to be so critical. That was when I noticed a particular speech pattern. In almost every conversation I had with staff my response to them would begin, “the problem is...” or “here's your problem...” Once I had confessed this my attitude improved because I stop looking for problems and began looking for potential.

One of the best things we could teach our children is that failure is always an option. the key is to fail forward, as author and speaker John Maxwell points out in his book, "Failing Forward." When Winston Churchill was asked what school experience had best prepared him to lead Britain and those dark first years of World War II he said it was the two years he had to spend that the same

level and high school. "Did you fail?" "No," replied Winston. "I had to opportunities to get it right." We best equipped our children, family, friends and followers by teaching them that brilliance is not as important as perseverance.

In the Iditarod race, dog mushers from around the world annually compete for the prestige of first place in a grueling test of endurance. The famous Iditarod trail begins in Anchorage and concludes 1,100 miles later in Nome. It winds through Alaska's treacherous passes, over the frozen Yukon River, and along the windswept Bering Sea. In any given year it takes the first-place musher between eight and twenty days to complete the course.

On March 13, 2003, Robert Sorley, a Norwegian fireman, was the first to pass under the famous burl wood arch on Front Street in Nome. Even though it was two o' clock in the morning and the temperature was below zero, a crowd of some two thousand was on hand to celebrate his accomplishment. Sorley was greeted by the mayor of Nome and the governor of Alaska.

Two hours later an Alaskan musher, Ramey Brooks, crossed the finish line, where the Norwegian champion, Sorley greeted him and honored his achievement. Several hours later, Jeff King arrived with his team of dogs in third place, and both Sorley and Brooks welcomed him. As fourth place finisher Martin Buser crossed the finish line with his dog-drawn sled, the three previous finishers were on hand to rejoice with him. On and on it continued.

Although it is not mandatory, mushers greet mushers at the end of the 1,000-mile trail as a way of celebrating each person's achievement. Having already completed their own race, they cheer on those who are about to reach their goal.

The scene of mushers cheering mushers is a beautiful picture of Christians who have completed the race of faith who wait in heaven for those still completing their journey.

Citation: Submitted by Greg Asimakoupoulos, Naperville, Illinois

### **Always show up in character**

**vv 8-9**You cannot equip others to do what you yourself do not do. If your family sees you giving in to temptation and offering excuses, they are not going to be impressed with their ability to overcome temptation just because you instruct them.

It is the extreme times of life we learn what we believe – as someone once said of a Christian funeral in which all the attenders wailed for their loss, "It makes as much sense for Christians to be in despair at the loss of a loved one as it does for caterpillars to grieve over an empty cocoon."

Posing as an equipper will be soon discovered.

### Communion:

What would it mean if we were to become disciple-making churches?

A tourist collected a few of the signs in English that monolingual Americans traveling abroad must contend with. In an airline ticket office in Copenhagen, there is this promise: "We take your bags and send them in all directions." A Swiss restaurant announces to its customers that "Our wines leave you with nothing to hope for." A rather severe Acapulco hotel posts a sign assuring its customers that "The manager has personally passed all the water served here."

But my favorite is a sign spotted in Paris. One of the city's finer hotels invites its visitors to "Please leave your values at the front desk" (Taken from unpublished remarks by Jeanne M. Fox, regional administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency, Region II).

