

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP (LESSON 63)

PERPETUITY OF THE TYRANNUS PLAN. The Tyrannus model is the Holy Spirit's plan for training disciples in the church age. It is the Biblical plan for developing church leaders. That is part of the work of the ministry. Paul started it in Ephesus, and it grew into a movement, reaching all of Asia Minor with the Gospel of Christ. Halley observes, "Yet without seminaries, without church buildings, and in spite of persecution, the church made more rapid progress than any time since, because it had to keep its mind on the essentials of Christianity rather than on peripheral issues." In short, the Tyrannus plan kept intact the principles taught by Jesus, and it perpetuated the essentials of discipleship. II Timothy was written about five years after I Timothy. Paul wrote from a Roman prison while awaiting his martyrdom. This was the last of Paul's epistles. Significantly, it was written to Timothy, the lead pastor in Ephesus, the home of the Tyrannus vision. In this letter Paul made the appeal to continue what was started in "the school of one Tyrannus." In spite of the fact that some were not enduring sound doctrine, Paul encouraged Timothy to remain steadfast as a disciple of Jesus in the face of threats and difficulties. Paul had finished well and was about to meet the Lord (II Timothy 4:6-8). He exhorted Timothy to preach the word, to be watchful, to endure afflictions, to do the work of the ministry, to do the work of an evangelist, and to fulfill his ministry (4:1-5). The main goal was to keep the Tyrannus vision going. What worked in Ephesus would work anywhere, as long as the vision wasn't compromised. I am concerned about the compromise of this vision for discipling today. Many churches are adrift when it comes to making disciples. Radical disciples today are considered extreme, fanatical, and on the lunatic fringe. For the most part the American church today is first class entertainment. The church, for the large part, has lost its vision for making disciples of all nations. The only hope for the church to be as it was created to be is a return to the model Paul used in Ephesus.